

# PHASE 2: VISIONING

## Engagement Summary

### **Gretna Speaks | Planning Scenarios and Framework**

The Gretna Comprehensive Plan engaged the community to gather thoughts and feedback on future visioning scenarios and preliminary planning goals. The engagement opportunities included a community workshop held on February 8th and pop-up events at Gretna Crossing YMCA, Hy-Vee, and the Children’s Library, which received support from over 100 community members. The follow up online survey had 150 participants. This summary outlines the community input, presents the preferred hybrid growth scenario, and includes the survey responses.

#### **What We Heard**

Through a comprehensive analysis of engagement, it becomes evident that Gretna’s residents are invested in steering Gretna towards a trajectory that balances economic growth, community involvement, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life. Though participants have different perspectives, many see Gretna becoming a regional destination with concentrated growth in key economic districts, with emphasis on vibrant and livable spaces and a diverse land use mix. Still, there are many other participants who favor a more regulated approach to growth, as well as those who would like to see a continuation of more suburban, scattered, low-density growth patterns.

Almost all participants agree that activating Gretna’s Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is important. They envision a charming and historic area that is walkable and filled with small businesses and larger commercial anchors, alike. Some would also like to see more residential density in this area.

Community members deem housing diversity as a crucial component of Gretna’s future growth. They would like to see the development of various housing types and sized to accommodate different demographics, such as age, income, and household size. The preferred vision for housing in 2040 is diverse, attracting young families, the workforce, and empty nesters.

Regarding activity centers, the majority of participants prefer multiple centers, including historic and mixed-use areas, while few favor dominance by big box shopping centers. Access is important to residents, and they want to be able to reach amenities and services regardless of where they are located in the City.

Participants have many desires for Gretna’s future, including affordability, preserving small-town charm, promoting diversity and inclusivity, managing traffic and infrastructure, enhancing recreation and community services, ensuring public safety, and incorporating environmental considerations.

Respondents generally support the Regional Destination and Vibrant and Active City planning scenarios, but with some reservations and suggestions for improvement, including more emphasis on quality of life, trails, open spaces, small businesses, traffic management, and environmental sustainability. The preferred scenario responds to this feedback and proposes a hybrid scenario.

# Preferred Growth Scenario

## GRETNA 2040: Vibrant, Managed Growth



### A managed approach to today's development patterns.

In the envisioned future of Gretna 2040, the city thrives as a dynamic destination fueled by significant population and employment growth. This expansion is strategically centered around key economic hubs such as Gretna Landing, The Crossings Corridor, and Downtown, as well as major commercial routes including Highways 370, 6, and I-80. The emphasis lies on establishing robust economic centers, cultivating vibrant living spaces, and promoting a diverse mix of land usage. Local planning initiatives and economic development strategies aim to enhance quality of life, diversify housing options, and bolster connectivity networks.

**115%**  
GROWTH

Planning Area Demographic Estimates

**28,000**  
MORE PEOPLE

**9,170**  
MORE HOUSEHOLDS

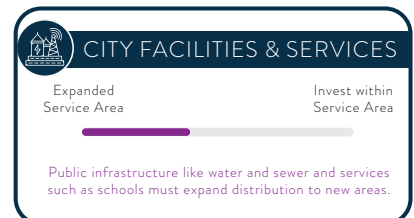
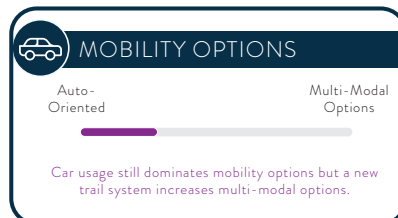
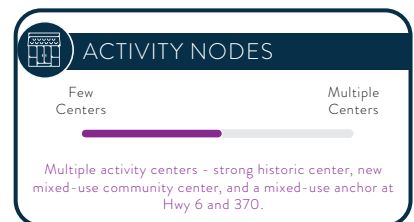
**9,500+**  
HOUSING UNITS ADDED

**11,400**  
MORE JOBS

### IN 2040...

- **THE DOWNTOWN:** The downtown area is charming and historic, anchored by commercial uses that foster community events like the Farmers Market and Gretna Days. It provides a safe, walkable environment with diverse businesses attracting locals and visitors. This growth has led to more residential options in the surrounding neighborhood, including townhomes, apartments, and small-lot single-family homes.
- **HOUSING:** Residential development is diverse, offering a variety of housing options at varying price points bringing in new young families, the workforce, and options for empty nesters.
- **ECONOMIC NODES:** The growth rate has accelerated as the local economy expands and diversifies, leveraging the community's strategic location in the region. A new civic center east of Highway 6 spurs mixed-use development and activates the area surrounding Gretna Crossing Park.
- **THE CORRIDORS:** Zoning regulations and a wayfinding & signage program have strengthened Gretna's visual identity along Highway 6 and 370. A new interchange alleviates traffic patterns on both highways and brings to life a new commercial corridor. New commercial sites along the corridors have been designated to meet demand and provide a range of commercial services.
- **PARKS & OPEN SPACE:** Gretna is well-served by parks and open space and a City-wide initiative creates a community-wide trail system connecting City assets.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES:** Utility extensions, transportation improvements, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas will be needed to support new development. This intensity of growth will impact schools, police, fire, waste management, and other essential services.

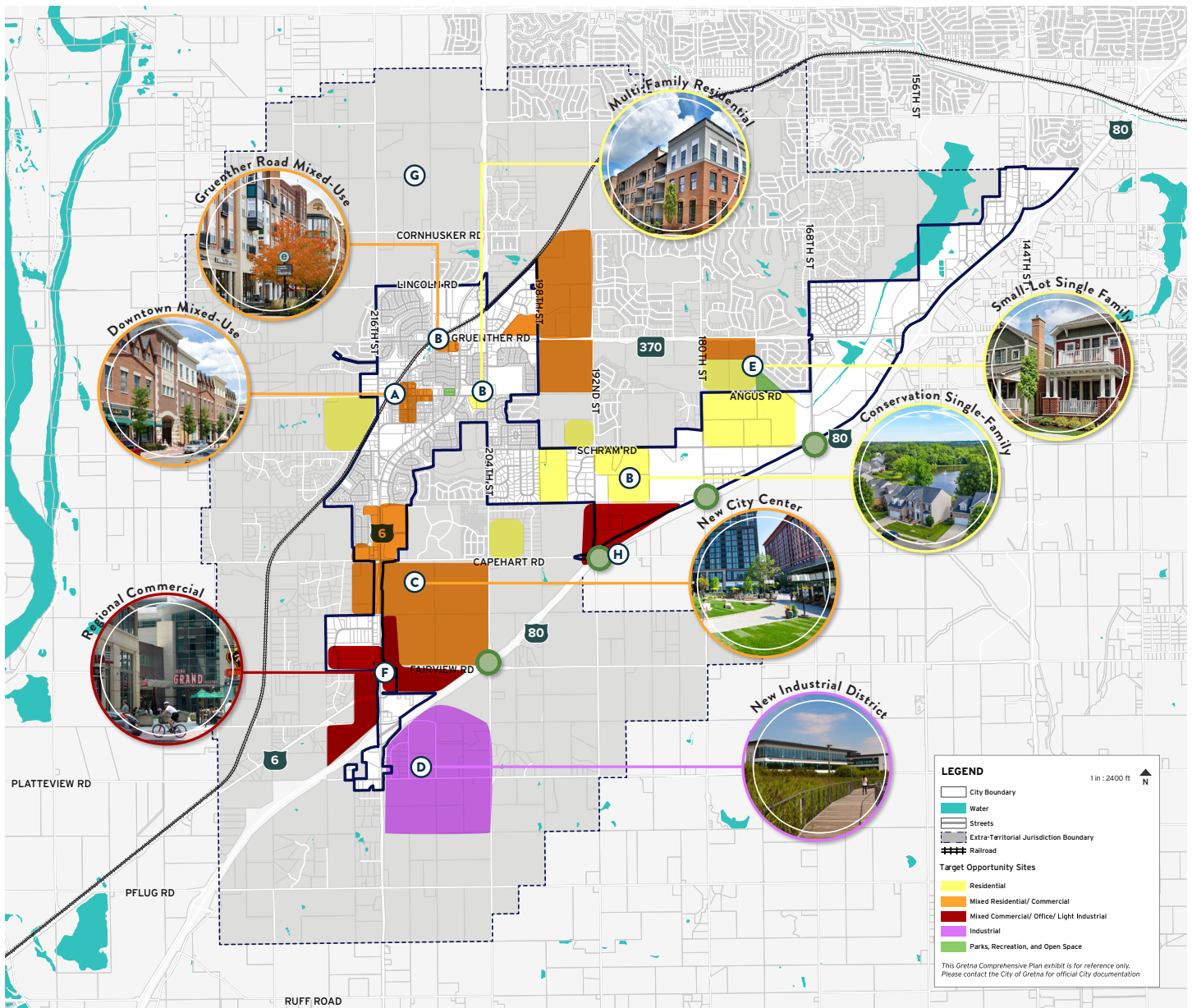
### DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES IN 2040



# Preferred Growth Scenario

## GRETNA 2040: Vibrant, Managed Growth

### GROWTH FRAMEWORK



### DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS

- Ⓐ Investment in the historic Downtown spurs redevelopment opportunities and infill residential to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Ⓑ New infill residential within City limits.
- Ⓒ New civic center off Gretna Crossing Park activating the Gretna Crossings Corridor and bringing a new vibrant city center.
- Ⓓ New industrial and commercial growth south of I-80 defining an industrial district.
- Ⓔ Focus on new mixed residential neighborhoods around the periphery of the City with City services, connectivity, and vibrancy as the focusing development principles.
- Ⓕ New regional commercial and business park along Highway 6 in the Crossings Corridor.
- Ⓖ Open space and agricultural preservation along the periphery of the City for anticipated growth and development.
- Ⓗ New interchange off I-80 alleviates traffic on highway 6 and 370 and brings to life a new commercial corridor.

# Online Survey Responses

Below is an overview of survey responses, some of which have been summarized for brevity.

## 1. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

**46%** In 2040...Gretna is a regional destination, driven by substantial population and employment growth within the City. This growth trajectory is concentrated in and around key economic districts, including Gretna Landing, The Crossings Corridor, and Downtown, as well as along major commercial corridors such as Highway 370, 6, and I-80. The focus of this growth is on establishing economic centers, creating vibrant and livable spaces, and ensuring a diverse land use mix (with housing in proximity to commercial, open space, and other desirable land uses).

**28%** In 2040...Gretna is set to undergo significant growth and development. Consistent with recent development trends, the City of Gretna evolves with a scattered pattern of growth across the entire Planning Area. Anticipated growth maintains a preference for single-use, low-density development, with higher-intensity development (commercial and industrial) surrounding suburban development.

**25%** In 2040...Gretna is a vibrant and active City that experiences significant, but regulated growth in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) with a focus on mixed-use (e.g. residential units over first-floor retail) development within the City's corporate limits. Local planning efforts and economic development strategies improve quality of life, diversify the housing mix (e.g. additional townhomes and apartments), and strengthen the connectivity (biking, walking, and transportation) network.

## 2. How important is it to activate Gretna's Downtown along McKenna Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods?



Majority of participants feel it is important to activate Gretna's Downtown, with 42% of people saying "definitely" and 24% of people saying "somewhat."

## 3. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

**57%** In 2040, Gretna's DOWNTOWN, along McKenna Avenue...is charming and historic with a few anchor commercial uses that create a distinct sense of place and reinforce the City's community events, such as the Farmers Market and Gretna Days.

**37%** In 2040, Gretna's DOWNTOWN, along McKenna Avenue...is a safe, high-quality, and walkable environment with small commercial and entertainment businesses and new residential that attracts both locals and visitors. The surrounding neighborhoods now offer more housing options such as townhomes, apartments, and small-lot single-family.

**6%** In 2040, Gretna's DOWNTOWN, along McKenna Avenue... is thriving with neighborhood-serving commercial uses, infill mixed-use in vacant lots, and new residential bringing more people to the historic downtown.

## 4. How important is it to offer housing diversity (different types and sizes of housing) in Gretna that can support the workforce, young families, and empty nesters?



Majority of participants feel that housing diversity and affordability is important, with 58% of people saying "definitely" and 17% saying "somewhat".

5. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

- 54%** In 2040, Gretna's HOUSING...is diverse, offering a variety of housing options at varying price points bringing in new young families, the workforce, and options for empty nesters.
- 30%** In 2040, Gretna's HOUSING...is predominately single-family, for-sale with development in suburban subdivisions along the periphery of City limits.
- 14%** In 2040, Gretna's HOUSING...offers a variety of housing choices with an emphasis on new mixed-use and multi-family residential. Residential development is concentrated on infill in vacant parcels within City limits and around the periphery of the City.

6. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

- 56%** In 2040...there are multiple activity centers - a strong historic center, a new mixed-use community center, and a mixed-use anchor at Hwy 6 and 370.
- 22%** In 2040...there are many new economic activity centers concentrated around commercial districts and corridors, such as downtown.
- 12%** In 2040...there are a few neighborhood centers, with shopping centers dominating the commercial market.
- 9%** None of the above.

7. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

- 63%** In 2040, Gretna's COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS (Highway 6 and 370)...have a strong visual identity through wayfinding & signage and beautification efforts along Highway 6 and 370. The City has improved walkability along the corridors.
- 27%** In 2040, Gretna's COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS (Highway 6 and 370)...have infill commercial and mixed-use to meet demand and provide a range of commercial services. Mobility improvements have increased walkability and multi-modal transportation.
- 10%** In 2040, Gretna's COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS (Highway 6 and 370)...are dominated by strip centers, big boxes, and shopping centers and continue to be auto-oriented in nature.

8. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

- 52%** In 2040...car usage still dominates mobility options but a new trail system increases multi-modal options.
- 32%** In 2040...most growth and development provides the option for walking, biking, and new public transit.
- 16%** In 2040...car usage is required to meet daily needs.

9. Which statement best reflects your vision for Gretna?

- 64%** In 2040...Gretna's job market and housing market has diversified, establishing the community as a place to live and work.
- 26%** In 2040...diversity in housing options and new employment creates more potential for employees to live within or near Gretna.
- 10%** In 2040...service jobs dominate Gretna's employment and 85% of employees live outside the community.

10. Keeping in mind that these questions represent big picture growth frameworks, is there anything you don't see in these scenarios that you would like to see for Gretna in 2040?

Overall, respondents are excited about the prospect of Gretna's growth. However, several voiced concerns about Gretna's future, and want to make sure the Comprehensive Plan takes these factors into account:

Affordability

There are many concerns about rising property taxes and some people (particularly seniors and lower-income families) are worried that they will be priced out of their homes. Some see Gretna as a town for the wealthy, and they want to make sure there will still be space for them as Gretna grows.

Maintaining a Small Town Vibe

Many respondents want to protect the small-town charm of Gretna. They are worried that growth will erode the facets of Gretna that made it attractive in the first place. They would like to preserve Gretna's identity and charm by focusing on making Downtown more walkable and introducing a mix of local businesses and restaurants.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Some respondents are concerned about the homogeneity of Gretna. Some mentioned that they have experienced discrimination and want to make sure Gretna is more diverse and welcoming to minorities.

Traffic and Infrastructure

There are concerns about the impact of development on traffic flow, especially along major streets like 204th. Respondents requested traffic management improvements and plans to reduce congestion.

Recreation and Community Services

Respondents emphasized the need for recreational facilities, such as parks, skate parks, and walking/biking trails. There were also requests for more activities for teenagers and families, regardless of financial means. Respondents want to see this implemented throughout the community, not just near commercial centers.

Public Safety

As Gretna grows, respondents are worried that crime will increase. They would like there to be a dedicated police station and police force to ensure safety.

Environmental Considerations

Respondents would like there to be a focus on universal design and eco-friendly practices when planning for the City.

11. On a scale of 1 to 3, how do you feel about this planning framework as a guide for Gretna’s future?

2.6  
out of 3

Majority of participants feel this framework is a great guide for Gretna’s future, with 59% of people responding “definitely” and 37% of people responding “neutral.”

Gretna 2040 Planning Framework.

*Small actions can be taken to achieve broader community visions!*



12. On a scale of 1 to 3, do these principles resonate with you as a guide for Gretna?

2.6  
out of 3

Majority of participants resonate with the principles, with 68% of people responding “definitely” and 27% of people responding “neutral.”

Gretna 2040 Guiding Principles.

1

**Principle: Foster livable neighborhoods that offer housing diversity, access to premier community services, and a rich fabric of parks, green space, and trails.**

*Livable neighborhoods are characterized by a balanced blend of amenities and features that contribute to a high quality of life for residents. The livable neighborhood goals and strategies seek to ensure residents can meet their daily needs, feel safe, and enjoy a sense of community and well-being.*

2

**Principle: Build a diverse land use mix and economy that includes a vibrant downtown, retail and housing variety, attractive commercial corridors and districts, and resilient industrial areas.**

*With Gretna’s rapid residential growth, it will be important to maintain the qualities that attracted people to the city. Harmonious growth goals and strategies strive to expand Gretna’s economy and diversify the land use mix in ways that enhance the quality of life, making the city and its residents more prosperous.*

3

**Principle: Cultivate an authentic sense of place through quality neighborhoods, distinct commercial corridors, and vibrant city centers that contribute to human-scaled, walkable environments.**

*Gretna’s sense of community for residents and its small-town charm are critical aspects of the City’s character. The fabric of Gretna’s character includes the downtown, corridors and districts, neighborhoods, and community spaces. The authentic place-based goals and strategies will capitalize on what makes the city unique, ensuring that, as the population and physical footprint of the city continues to grow, Gretna remains true to its core values.*

4

**Principle: Integrate a robust mobility network to support growth and connectivity and accommodate a wide range of users including cyclists, pedestrians, vehicles, and transit.**

*The City of Gretna’s transportation infrastructure plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality of life for its residents and fostering economic vitality. The connectivity goals and strategies aim to facilitate connections to City assets, improve safety along existing roadways, and prioritize multi-modal transportation throughout the community.*

5

**Principle: Provide high-quality community facilities, services, infrastructure, and utilities to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses, enhance their quality of life, promote health and wellness, and incorporate sustainable practices.**

*The City of Gretna offers residents and visitors a robust system of community resources - libraries, the park system, schools, infrastructure, and natural features. The Thriving Quality of Life goals and strategies will enhance Gretna’s community systems and support a sustainable and vibrant future.*

13. Have any other thoughts about the guiding principles?

Few people had additional comments. Several comments or themes that stood out are listed below:

- Maintaining quality of life should be the utmost priority, rather than growth.
- Trails, open space, and recreational spaces should be prioritized, either by preserving existing assets or creating new ones.
- Focus on Gretna’s historic downtown.

14. On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Gretna 2040?

PRINCIPLE 1: LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS	
<p><b>GOAL 1:</b> Stimulate and guide the creation of mixed-use neighborhoods that provide a diverse range of housing types and densities and ensure access to neighborhood serving commercial and services for varied needs and socioeconomic groups.</p> <p><i>(Strategies may include diversifying housing options, introducing compatible uses to neighborhoods, and encouraging infill residential.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 2:</b> Provide premier City services and facilities to accommodate Gretna's growing population, support health and wellness, enhance quality of life, and improve safety.</p> <p><i>(Strategies may include a new a community center/civic use, supporting community services, and improving access to quality educational institutions for all ages.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 3:</b> Expand the City's system of parks, green space, and trails to serve current and future needs of the growing population.</p> <p><i>(Strategies may include developing an interconnected trail system and ensuring access to recreational areas from all neighborhoods.)</i></p>	

15. Are there any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies for Livable Neighborhoods you think would support Gretna from now until 2040?





16. On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Gretna 2040?

PRINCIPLE 2: HARMONIOUS GROWTH	
<p><b>GOAL 1:</b> Foster a diverse land use mix to support a growing and sustainable tax base and economy.  <i>(Strategies may include balancing the land use mix, targeting growth areas within City limits for density, and developing an annexation program.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 2:</b> Promote community-wide economic development efforts to enhance the vibrancy of Gretna's commercial and industrial areas.  <i>(Strategies may include developing economic development strategies for the commercial corridors, the Downtown, and for the interstate.)</i></p>	

17. Are there any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies you think would support Gretna from now until 2040?



18. On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Gretna 2040?

PRINCIPLE 3: AUTHENTIC PLACE	
<p><b>GOAL 1:</b> Foster dynamic, well-maintained, and inviting public spaces.  <i>(Strategies may include promoting high-quality design, integrating a public art program, and encouraging thoughtful urban design.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 2:</b> Promote walkable, human-scaled environments in the city centers and neighborhoods.  <i>(Strategies may include investing in downtown Gretna and embracing a cohesive identity.)</i></p>	

19. Are there any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies you think would support Gretna from now until 2040?



20. On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Gretna 2040?

PRINCIPLE 4: MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY	
<p><b>GOAL 1:</b> Facilitate connectivity through and to the community for all modes of transportation.  <i>(Strategies may include improving access from the interstate and introducing additional transportation options for the community.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 2:</b> Expand and improve the roadway network.  <i>(Strategies may include upgrading the roadway network to “complete street” principles and promoting alternative transportation modes.)</i></p>	

21. Are there any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies you think would support Gretna from now until 2040?

Improve and maintain traffic infrastructure and roadways

Develop trails that connect new developments together

Address safety and law enforcement concerns

Improve pedestrian accessibility

Develop protected bike trails and lanes

22. On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Gretna 2040?

PRINCIPLE 5: THRIVING QUALITY OF LIFE	
<p><b>GOAL 1:</b> Support the expansion and improvement of City programs, facilities, and services to ensure equitable distribution throughout the community.  <i>(Strategies may include updating utility systems and collaboration regionally and locally to meet the needs of a growing population.)</i></p>	
<p><b>GOAL 2:</b> Develop energy conservation and sustainability practices.  <i>(Strategies may include implementing local sustainability efforts and promoting energy conservation.)</i></p>	

23. Are there any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies you think would support Gretna from now until 2040?

Create pollinator gardens,

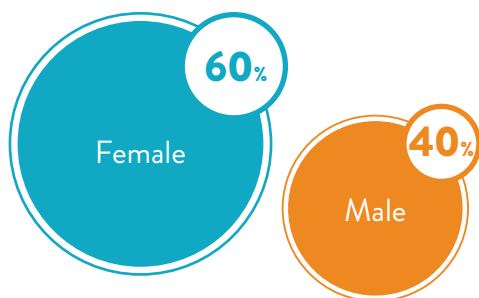
Develop prairie areas and nature trails

## 24. Do you have any other thoughts?

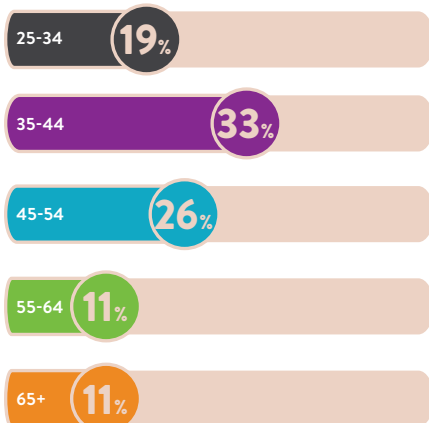
Participants focused on the following:

- **Development and Uniqueness:** Participants want unique dining and shopping experiences rather than traditional options.
- **Community Facilities and Infrastructure:** Participants are concerned about the quality and planning of public facilities such as baseball fields and road structures.
- **Economic Growth:** Some participants would like to attract businesses like IKEA and Trader Joe's, and see the need to bring in more amenities to stimulate spending.
- **Community Involvement and Representation:** Some called for better representation on city boards and consideration of resident feedback in decision-making processes.
- **Preservation of Green Spaces:** Some participants have concerns about over development and emphasized the importance of maintaining open spaces and green areas.
- **Taxation and Affordability:** Participants would like to lower property taxes and ask the city to consider the impact of taxation on current and future residents.
- **Historical Preservation:** Participants suggested preserving Gretna's historical identity.
- **Infrastructure Planning:** Participants would like proactive planning of infrastructure to support future growth and development.

## 25. What is your gender?



## 26. What is your age?

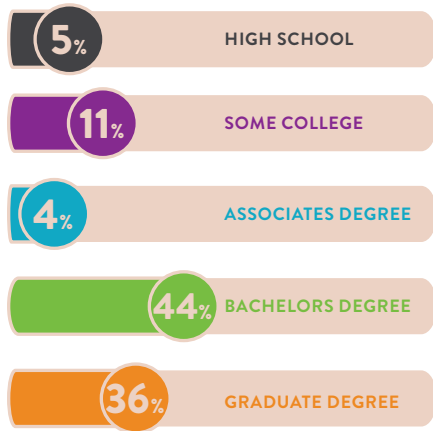


## 27. What is your relationship with Gretna, NE?

Choose all that apply.



28. What is the highest level of education you have completed?



29. What is your total household income?

