

PHASE 2 | VISIONING

Engagement Summary



The Webster Groves Comprehensive Planning Team actively engaged the community to gather input and feedback on preliminary planning goals and future opportunity areas. This engagement process was designed to ensure the community's voices are at the forefront of shaping Webster Groves' future.

Key engagement opportunities included a community workshop held on Tuesday, October 22nd, which drew participation from over **40 community members**, and a follow-up online survey that garnered **responses from 276 residents and stakeholders**. Residents were invited to participate in the survey and attend the workshop through social media, text, email, and the City's Friday Page. Together, these activities provided valuable insights into the community's priorities, aspirations, and preferences.

This document presents a detailed summary of the feedback received during the workshop and through the survey. These insights will play a critical role in refining the goals and strategies of the comprehensive plan, shaping the guidelines for opportunity sites, and setting a clear direction for future development and community enhancements.

The summary is organized around key engagement activities:

- **Planning Framework:** Exploring community pillars and goals to guide future investment.
- **Envision the Future:** Gathering input on Webster Groves' long-term vision.
- **Opportunity Areas:** Identifying strategic locations for future development and investment.
- **Visual Preference:** Understanding community aesthetic preferences for design and development.
- **Survey Respondent Demographics:** Analyzing the diversity of survey participants to ensure broad representation.

This engagement process represents an essential step in building a shared vision for Webster Groves, grounded in community values and aspirations. Visit the project website to learn more about the planning process, review workshop exhibits, and stay updated as the comprehensive plan evolves.

JourneytoWG.com



Planning Framework

To gain a deeper understanding of the community's perspective on the Comprehensive Plan's framework and high-level goals, a survey and workshop were conducted to engage participants in learning about the framework and sharing their feedback.

The Planning Framework serves as a blueprint for achieving the community's vision for the future. The Journey to Destination WG Framework is structured around seven Community Pillars. These pillars do not imply a hierarchy of importance or equal weighting; instead, they provide a way to organize the diverse planning issues facing the City of Webster Groves.

The Community Pillars were developed through extensive conversations and workshops with residents, business owners, city staff, and other key stakeholders. The planning team carefully analyzed community feedback, identifying Webster Groves' priorities, aspirations, and cherished characteristics. Each pillar represents a fundamental element of the city—a primary focus area to be supported and nurtured through the Comprehensive Plan.

The following summary highlights key feedback from the survey and workshop regarding the Planning Framework and initial goals.

Webster Groves Community Pillars



When asked for thoughts on the planning framework for Journey to Destination WG, community members shared the following feedback:

- 67% of write-in responses affirmatively support the Planning Framework. Most other responses were generally supportive but offered very granular suggestions.
- The most mentioned item not specifically captured in the pillars was education, including quality public schools, the importance of Webster University, and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Other common observations on topics not specifically addressed in the pillars are community security, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and the importance of racial and ethnic diversity to Webster.
- Comments about housing diversity and attainability were often in sharp contrast. Some comments affirmatively support diversifying Webster's housing stock, while an approximately equal number oppose it.



Resilient Neighborhoods

PILLAR 1

Four goals, each accompanied by initial strategies, were presented to the community. Participants generally agreed that the goals effectively address the key issues and opportunities for fostering resilient neighborhoods. All goals received a score of 2.3 or higher out of 3, indicating community support for their inclusion in **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?

Goal 1: Expand and **diversify housing options** to meet the needs of downsizing residents, seniors wishing to remain in Webster Groves, and young families.

- **Strategy 1:** Conduct a housing study for Webster Groves.
- **Strategy 2:** Review and modernize existing zoning, code, and permitting processes.
- **Strategy 3:** Leverage development incentives to promote housing aligned with community priorities.
- **Strategy 4:** Foster leadership and community engagement in housing diversification.

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Goal 2: Promote the development of **attainable housing** to ensure accessibility for a wider range of income levels, including the local workforce (e.g. teachers, firefighters, etc.).

- **Strategy 1:** Require inclusion of price-accessible units in new residential developments.
- **Strategy 2:** Support homeowners with critical maintenance, home repairs, and upgrades, notably in North Webster.

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Goal 3: Preserve and enhance the **distinctive character** and charm of Webster Groves neighborhoods.

- **Strategy 1:** Develop house pattern books and design guidelines for new construction and remodels.
- **Strategy 2:** Implement regulatory changes that discourage teardowns.

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Goal 4: Maintain **North and South Webster** as accessible and diverse neighborhoods within the city.

- **Strategy 1:** Develop neighborhood plans for North and South Webster.
- **Strategy 2:** Incentivize housing maintenance preservation.

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When asked if there were any other high-level (general) goals or specific strategies you think would support **Resilient Neighborhoods** over the next 10 to 20 years the community felt:

- » Issues around increased housing density (e.g., townhomes or multi-family), diversity of housing typologies, and attainable housing elicit complicated reactions. More than half of comments related to housing diversification view it as a priority that would enhance the city's neighborhoods and residents' options. But many respondents see it changing the character of Webster, lowering property values of existing homes, or as a regional issue that doesn't need to be addressed within the city.
- » Many respondents view the plan approval and building permitting process as cumbersome and one that needs simplification.
- » The topic of teardowns was mentioned in about 12% of comments, but views are varied. Most respondents see teardowns (and replacement with much larger homes) as undesired and changing the character of Webster. A few see any regulation of teardowns as interfering in private property rights.
- » The topic of home maintenance was mentioned in about 10% of comments. Many see a need for a combination of incentives and enforcement, particularly with regard to rental properties.
- » Many respondents (throughout all survey questions) expressed concerns about design regulation (facades, home additions, fencing).
- » At the same time, many comments are supportive of historic preservation.
- » Comments related to North and South Webster, while acknowledging that these two neighborhoods have a larger stock of "starter homes", mostly note these neighborhoods should not be considered separately from the rest of the city when addressing attainable housing.





Economic Vitality

PILLAR 2

Three goals with accompanying initial strategies were shared with the community, who agreed that the goals effectively address the city's opportunities for economic vitality. Each goal received a score of 2.4 or higher out of 3, reflecting strong community support for their inclusion in **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?	
<p>Goal 1: Maintain and manage traditional business districts for long-term vibrancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 1: Establish a commercial district management program for active promotion and administration of the three districts. • Strategy 2: Reimagine the potential for a greater mix of uses in the three commercial districts. • Strategy 3: Maintain the focus on independent businesses in the three districts, which has served to set them apart from other shopping venues. 	<p>27</p>
<p>Goal 2: Promote retail and mixed-use development along key commercial corridors, in existing shopping centers, and on underutilized sites within the business districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 1: Encourage and incentivize mixed-use development in strategic locations. • Strategy 2: Explore the use of form-based codes. • Strategy 3: Partner with Webster University on a long-range plan to rethink the Old Orchard Center. 	<p>26</p>
<p>Goal 3: Strengthen Webster Groves' economy and tax base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 1: Grow the city's commercial and retail uses. • Strategy 2: Grow the city's industrial sector. • Strategy 3: Develop for-sale and for-rent multi-family housing to grow the taxable residential base. 	<p>24</p>

When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **Economic Vitality** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » The importance of commercial uses to support the city's tax base was the most frequently mentioned issue, in about 23% of comments. While residents want more commercial development, there were mixed views on the intensity of development they would support, with some support for mixed-use and little support for big-box retail. Comments express a strong preference for independent businesses, especially in retail and restaurants.
- » Several comments note the importance of reimagining commercial development on Watson Road and a few comments note the need for a hotel in Webster.
- » Parking was mentioned in about 8% of comments. While a few comments advocated the importance of adding parking, most comments suggested reducing parking minimums, considering shared parking, and other creative solutions.



City of the Arts

PILLAR 3

Four goals with accompanying initial strategies were shared with the community, who agreed that the goals effectively address the city's creative economy, culture, and the arts. Each goal received a score of 2.4 or higher out of 3, reflecting strong community support for their inclusion in **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?	
Goal 1: Expand the creative economy . <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: <i>Attract creative businesses.</i>• Strategy 2: <i>Support creative businesses.</i>	25
Goal 2: Support and expand creativity in public spaces . <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: <i>Design places for people and art.</i>• Strategy 2: <i>Surprise and delight through unexpected temporary public space interventions.</i>	24
Goal 3: Champion historic preservation and quality new architecture throughout the city. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: <i>Continue to preserve and protect the city's historic neighborhoods and commercial districts.</i>• Strategy 2: <i>Set a standard of excellence for new architectural design in the city.</i>	26
Goal 4: Build on Webster's reputation for creative public events . <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: <i>Expand Webster's calendar of creative events.</i>• Strategy 2: <i>Collaborate with local and regional organizations to expand the City's cultural offerings.</i>	27

When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **City of the Arts** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » A great majority of respondents broadly embrace this pillar, even if they have different ideas of how it should be supported (e.g., city government or private sector) or what it means to them (e.g., historic preservation, murals, public sculpture, music, festivals, artists-in-residence – or “third places” to hang out). Several noted that Webster cannot attract artists unless it is affordable.
- » Many comments touched on historic preservation. Some see it as central to the identity of a creative city while others see it as constraining creativity. Some suggest that less regulation of new construction or exterior changes would allow for more creative architecture.



Quality of Life

PILLAR 4

Goals and strategies aimed at enhancing the city's quality of life were presented to the community. The results indicated strong alignment with community priorities, as each goal received a score of 2.6 or higher out of 3, demonstrating support for their inclusion in the **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?

Goal 1: Ensure that all residents have a **park or green space** within a safe and comfortable walking distance from their homes.

- **Strategy 1:** Enhance and modernize existing parks and green spaces.
- **Strategy 2:** Expand green space access, particularly in South Webster.
- **Strategy 3:** Build community partnerships to grow and sustain the green space network.
- **Strategy 4:** Create an interconnected network of green spaces, pedestrian paths, and bike lanes that connects community assets.

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Goal 2: Design spaces that foster opportunities for **social interaction and community connection**.

- **Strategy 1:** Create inviting gathering spaces in key community hubs.
- **Strategy 2:** Host regular, inclusive community events in public spaces.
- **Strategy 3:** Expand and diversify public and recreational programming.
- **Strategy 4:** Develop inclusive, community-oriented spaces that are accessible to all members of the community.

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Goal 3: Preserve green spaces and **natural areas** for long-term environmental sustainability.

- **Strategy 1:** Explore opportunities for native planting, stormwater management, and wildlife habitats in public spaces.
- **Strategy 2:** Expand environmental education and engagement efforts.
- **Strategy 3:** Preserve and grow the urban tree canopy.

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When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **Quality of Life** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » Virtually all comments express very strong support for Webster's parks and green spaces.
- » Many comments speak to the importance of expanding sidewalk connectivity and enhancing safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists as a top priority, notably between parks.
- » Individual comments noted the poor sidewalk and pedestrian connectivity in South Webster and in crossing from South Webster over the Interstate.
- » Individual comments suggested the inclusion of basketball courts in public parks, and the addition of "micro parks" throughout the city, the importance of designing public spaces for healthy lifestyles, and including orchards in public parks.
- » Comments expressed differing opinions on mowing of public and private lawns, some supporting reduced mowing and others finding it unattractive.
- » Many comments addressed the importance of sustainable practices, including managing for flood mitigation through sustainable interventions, and reducing and eliminating invasive plant species.



Operational Excellence

PILLAR 5

Four goals, accompanied by initial strategies, were presented to the community to support the city's creative economy, culture, and the arts. Feedback showed strong alignment with community priorities, with each goal receiving a score of 2.4 or higher out of 3. This positive response highlights broad support for their inclusion in the **Journey to Destination WG** comprehensive plan.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?	
<p>Goal 1: Strengthen regional partnerships to improve service coordination and expand amenities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to identify opportunities for sharing services.• Strategy 2: Leverage regional resources to expand access to amenities.• Strategy 3: Create joint task forces with regional partners to address common challenges.	<div>26</div> <div></div>
<p>Goal 2: Invest in city services to maintain and elevate service standards, ensuring efficient, high-quality support for residents, businesses, and institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: Attract, develop, and retain high-quality staff.• Strategy 2: Renovate and modernize facilities to meet contemporary standards.	<div>26</div> <div></div>
<p>Goal 3: Continuously evaluate and communicate emerging community issues with residents, businesses, and institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: Create consistent, accessible channels for community input and dialogue.• Strategy 2: Provide educational workshops and forums on emerging issues.	<div>26</div> <div></div>
<p>Goal 4: Streamline the public review and entitlement process to encourage both public and private reinvestment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 1: Simplify and clarify the review process with comprehensive resources.• Strategy 2: Enhance transparency and communication in the entitlement process.• Strategy 3: Offer pre-application consultations and fast-track options.	<div>27</div> <div></div>

When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **Operational Excellence** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » Numerous comments emphasized the importance of collaborating with neighboring municipalities to foster regional cooperation and avoid duplicating services across cities.
- » Several respondents highlighted the need for greater transparency and accessibility in permitting processes, as well as improved communication between the city and its residents.
- » Feedback on modernizing city facilities was mixed, reflecting varying opinions on the necessity and priorities for such updates.
- » A common theme among responses was the importance of attracting and retaining top-tier city staff, spanning administrative roles to safety and police personnel.



Complete Streets for All

PILLAR 6

Three goals, along with initial strategies (detailed strategies can be found in the exhibits on the project website), were presented to the community to enhance the city's streets and pedestrian and bicycle networks. Feedback showed strong alignment with community priorities, as each goal received a score of 2.6 or higher out of 3, demonstrating broad support for their inclusion in the **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?

Goal 1: Reduce dangerous driving on **Webster Groves'** streets.

- **Strategy 1:** Implement traffic calming measures.
- **Strategy 2:** Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.
- **Strategy 3:** Collaborate with St. Louis County to improve safety along Laclede Station Road and Big Bend Boulevard.

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Goal 2: Implement and maintain a complete, safe, and accessible **bicycle network** that connects all residents to commercial districts, parks, schools, transit and neighboring communities.

- **Strategy 1:** Implement a bicycle network primarily comprised of neighborhood greenways.
- **Strategy 2:** Work towards implementing the trail and bicycle facility recommendations included in the St. Louis County Action Plan.

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Goal 3: Develop and maintain a complete, safe, and accessible **pedestrian network** that effectively connects all residents to city assets and neighboring communities.

- **Strategy 1:** Address gaps in the sidewalk network and widen sidewalks that do not meet ADA accessibility standards.
- **Strategy 2:** Create pedestrian zones.

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When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **Complete Streets** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » Pedestrian safety emerged as a recurring theme in community feedback, with specific areas highlighted for improvement, including the Watson Road corridor, segments of Elm Street, Summit Avenue, Interstate 44, and South Webster.
- » The majority of respondents expressed strong support for efforts to enhance walkability and improve connections to key community assets, schools, and neighborhoods.
- » Many comments proposed various safety enhancements for pedestrians and cyclists, such as installing crosswalks, implementing traffic-calming measures, and improving wayfinding and signage.
- » Some respondents also noted the need to expand and improve public transportation options.
- » Maintaining and repairing existing sidewalks was identified as a top priority by several participants.



Essential Systems

PILLAR 7

Three goals, along with initial strategies (detailed strategies are available in the exhibits on the project website), were presented to the community to address the city's services and sustainability. Feedback showed strong alignment with community priorities, with each goal receiving a score of 2.5 or higher out of 3, demonstrating broad support for their inclusion in the **Journey to Destination WG**.

On a scale of 1 to 3, should this be a goal for Journey to Destination WG?

Goal 1: Expand and enhance city utilities and infrastructure to ensure equitable distribution, while maintaining efficiency, sustainability, and adaptability to meet the community's evolving needs.

- **Strategy 1:** Collaborate with private utility companies to improve and expand the water and sanitary systems to ensure sustained infrastructure.
- **Strategy 2:** Analyze existing civil and building infrastructure to determine whether sewers and water mains are functioning properly and efficiently.

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Goal 2: Strengthen stormwater management practices to enhance the city's resilience against current and future weather events, including periods of flooding and drought.

- **Strategy 1:** Monitor stormwater capacity to support new growth and development.
- **Strategy 2:** Evaluate and analyze the natural environment for floodplain management purposes.

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Goal 3: Promote energy conservation and sustainability practices to build a resilient future, improve quality of life, and position Webster Groves as a regional leader in sustainability.

- **Strategy 1:** Enhance energy efficiency and renewable energy use in municipal facilities, operations, and regulations.
- **Strategy 2:** Develop incentive-based programs for energy and environmental conservation.

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When asked to suggest additional high-level (general) goals or specific strategies to support **Essential Systems** over the next 10 to 20 years, the community provided the following feedback:

- » Community feedback highlighted a strong desire for education on emergency preparedness and energy efficiency initiatives.
- » Flooding and stormwater management were identified as top priorities, reflecting widespread concern about these issues.
- » Many respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring that private utility companies prioritize the community's needs above all else. Some comments focused on improving recycling and waste management systems, including suggestions to make these services more accessible and affordable.
- » The potential for partnerships with non-profits to advance sustainability and energy conservation efforts was also noted as a valuable opportunity.
- » Opinions were divided on whether the city should purchase properties within floodplains, with some supporting the idea and others expressing reservations.

Envision the Future

To begin capturing the community's vision statement, the survey and workshop invited participants to "Envision the Future" through a series of interactive exercises. A vision statement serves as a guiding framework, outlining what the community envisions for the city's future—typically over the next 10 to 20 years. It reflects shared values, priorities, and desired outcomes in areas such as economic growth, quality of life, environmental sustainability, and more. This statement encapsulates the community's aspirations and long-term goals for Webster Groves. Below are the responses gathered.

In 2040 Webster Groves will be ...

Community members were invited to share three words they hope will describe Webster Groves in 2040. Through the survey and workshop, over 400 words were submitted. Below is a selection of the most frequently mentioned responses.

Safe *Charming* DIVERSE
Vibrant *Destination* WELCOMING
Historic **Inclusive** Thriving
Community *Green* Walkable
Innovative Sustainable *Affordable*

Let's Prioritize

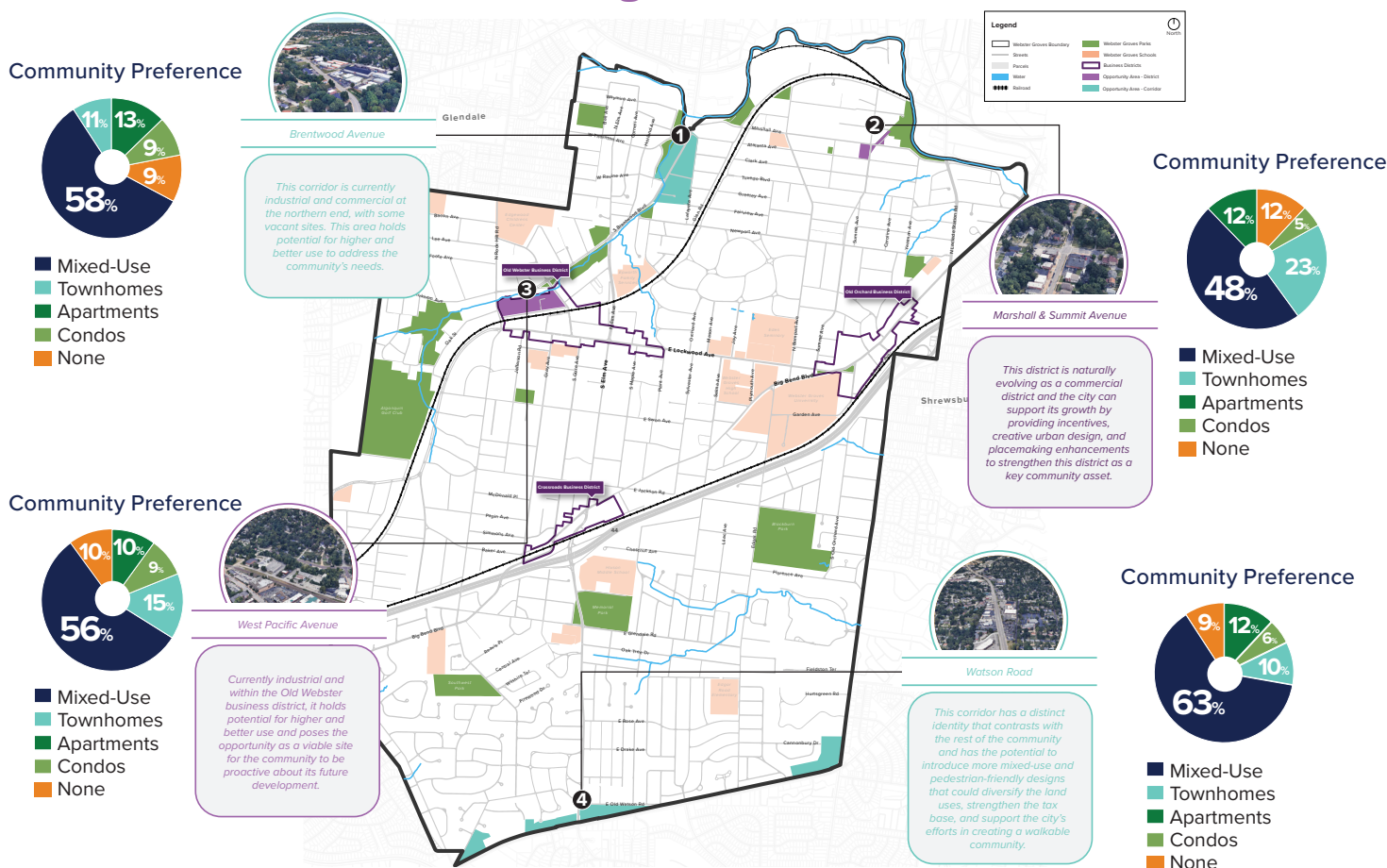
When asked to select the top three planning initiatives Webster Groves should prioritize from the ten options provided, the community ranked **Walkability**, **Strengthening the Tax Base**, and **Webster Groves as a Destination** as the top three priorities. Below is the full community ranking for all ten planning initiatives.



Opportunity Areas

Webster Groves is a built-out community, yet like many suburban areas, it faces opportunities for change at key locations. These areas may offer strategic value to the community and have potential for change due to various factors, including developer interest, existing land use patterns, ownership, market realities, and location. The community should identify and understand these areas to anticipate and manage potential shifts in land use, ensuring they align with local goals and aspirations. Opportunity sites, outlined on the map below, have been identified by city staff and through community conversations as locations within the city that present unique potential for development. The purple sites are ‘**District Opportunity Areas**’ and the blue sites are ‘**Corridor Opportunity Areas.**’ Community members provided input on the types of new development they would like prioritized in these areas, as well as any other key areas they believe should undergo change. Below are their responses.

Potential For Land Use Change



When asked if there were other areas where they would like to see land use changes, the following suggestions emerged:

- » Many respondents expressed support for developing a plan for the identified opportunity areas that is guided by the community and city, rather than being developer-driven.
- » Additional areas mentioned included Rock Hill, Pacific Ave, Elm Ave, flood-prone areas, and Big Bend Boulevard, particularly in the Crossroads and Old Orchard districts.
- » A few respondents expressed concerns that the city should not be the driver of such change in these areas.

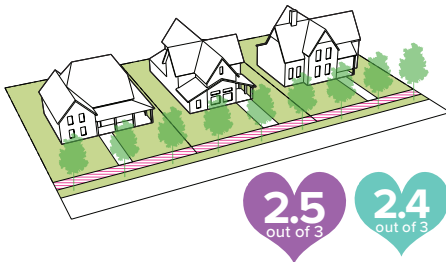
District & Corridor Opportunity Areas

Community members were invited to share their vision for future development in the **District Opportunity Areas** and **Corridor Opportunity Areas**. Feedback showed strong support for new development in these areas, with the majority favoring **Mixed-Use** for housing typologies and **Main Street or Neighborhood Mixed-Use** for commercial uses.

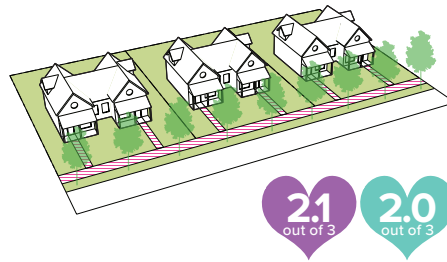
For a detailed view of the community's preferences for each type of development, refer to the visuals: purple hearts represent preferences for District Opportunity Areas, while blue hearts indicate preferences for Corridor Opportunity Areas.

Housing Typologies

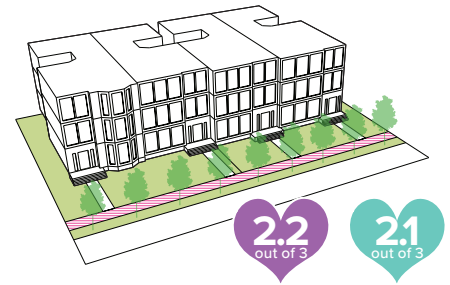
Small-Lot Single Family



Single-Family Attached



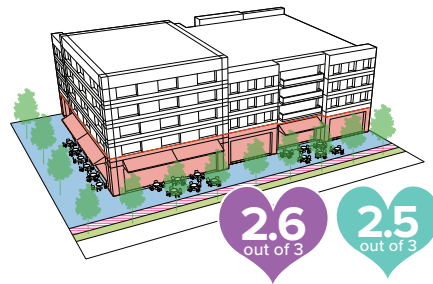
Townhomes



Apartment / Condominium

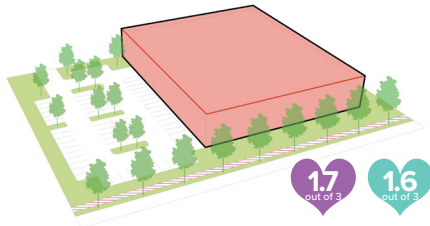


Mixed-Use



Commercial Typologies

Stand Alone Commercial



Shopping Center



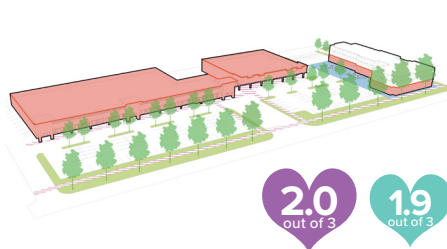
Main Street



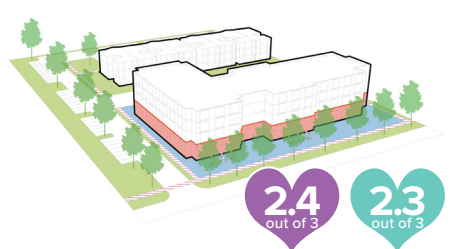
Neighborhood Mixed-Use



Infill Mixed-Use



Mixed-Use



Visual Preference

Public Spaces & Placemaking

A series of images depicting public space and placemaking initiatives were shared with the community from plaza spaces to murals to community identifiers and cultural events. Respondents ranked these on a scale of 1 to 3 if they would like to see these initiatives in Webster Groves. Enhanced Streetscapes, Outdoor Dining, and Farmers Markets were the most favored while Reclaim Parking Spaces, Gateways, and Community Identifiers were the least favored.



Walkability & Connectivity

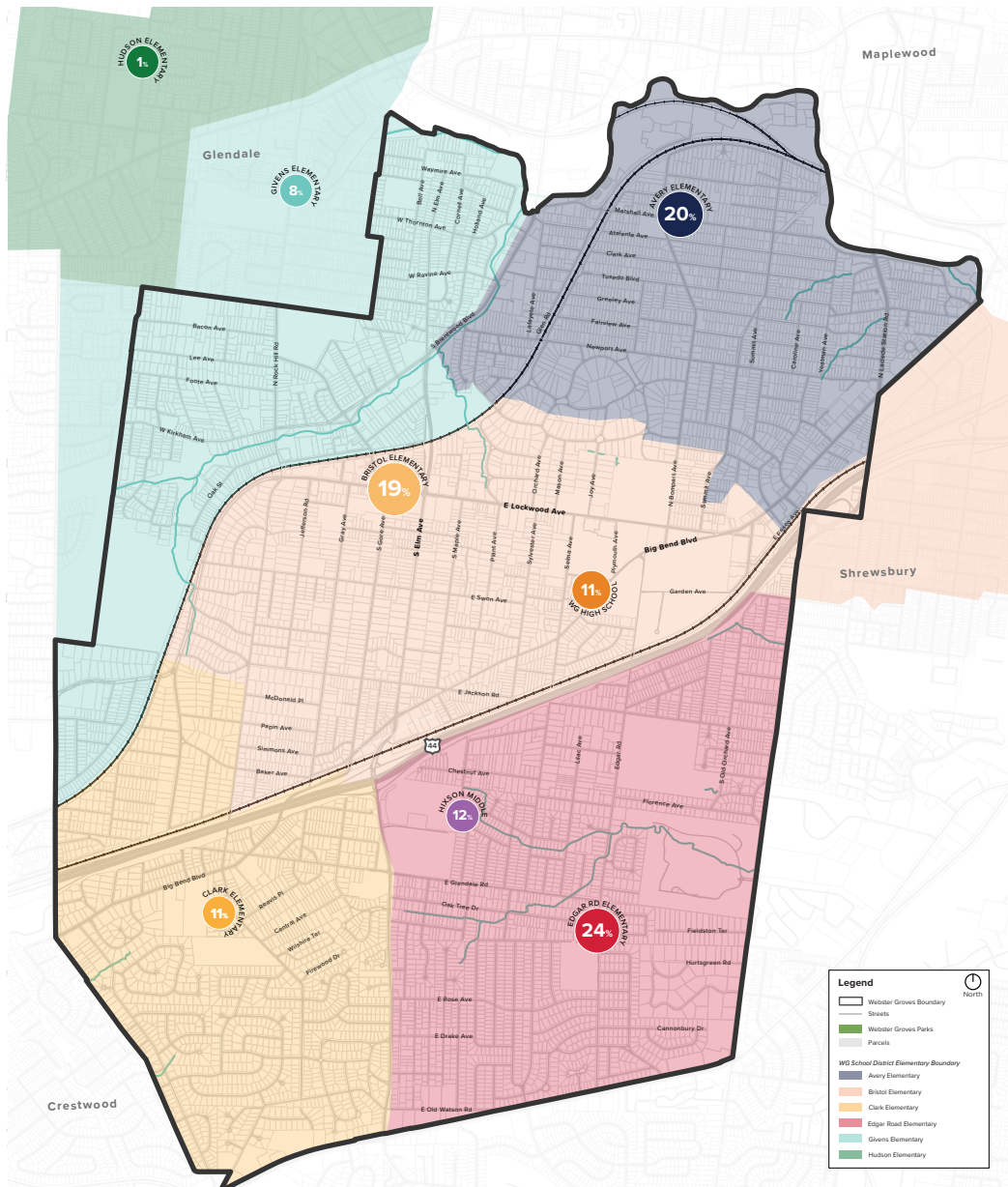
A series of images depicting mobility improvements were shared with the community, from curb bump-outs to raised crosswalks and neighborhood greenways. Respondents ranked these on a scale of 1 to 3 if they would like to see these initiatives in Webster Groves. All improvements were liked and seen as a way to improve safety and comfort but Separated Facilities and Neighborhood Greenways were the most favored while Mini Traffic Circles and Complete Street Road Diets were the least favored.



Survey Demographics

Voices of WG – Engagement Map

Check out the voices of WG map to see the geographic distribution of respondents and to get a geographic understanding of who is involved in the planning process. (Survey respondents were asked to name the public school nearest to their home as a proxy for their neighborhood.)



The demographic profiles of survey respondents were broadly in line with expectations. As is common with community surveys, respondents were more highly educated (93% have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 71% of the general WG adult population), and more women (60%) responded than men. By age, about 59% of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old, compared to 24% of Webster Groves' adult population. Somewhat surprisingly, seniors (65+) were under-represented in the survey response pool, at 14% compared to 21% of the city's adult population.