



FORT PAYNE  
**FORWARD**

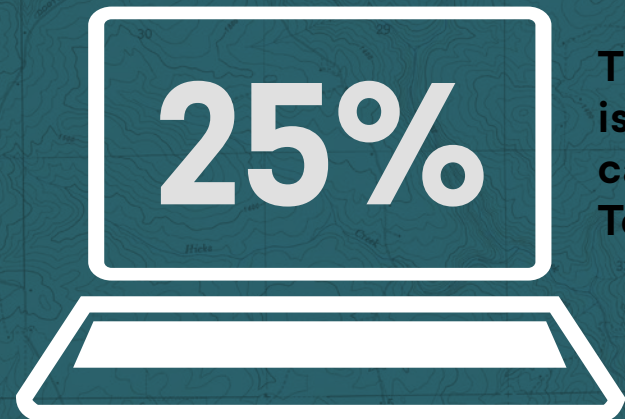
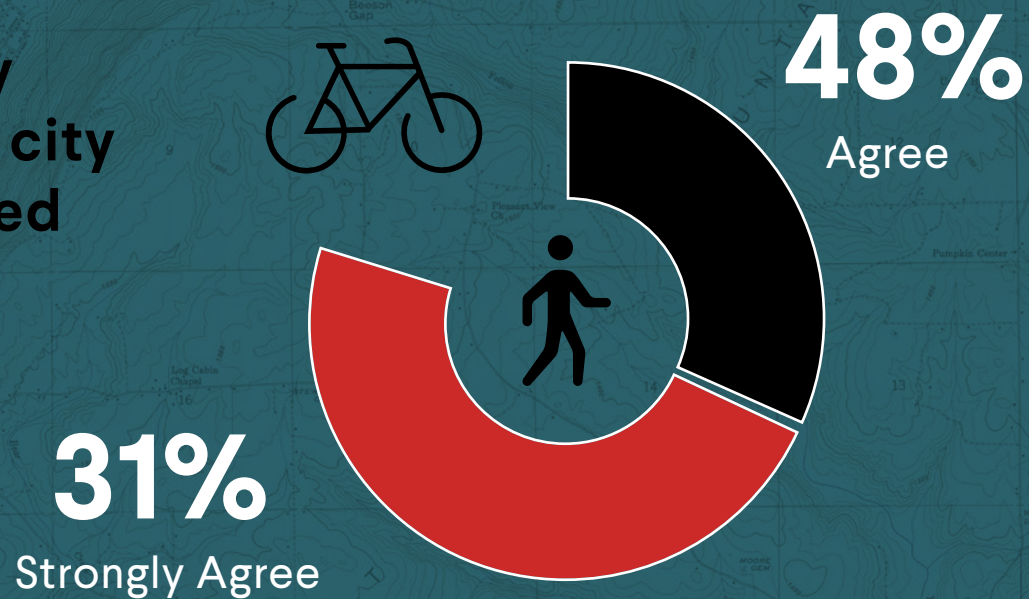
# Summary of Community Engagement Activities



# Community Survey Results & Trends

**1,000 responses**

85% of survey takers say the city needs improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure



Think there is a market to cater to the Tech industry

**75%**

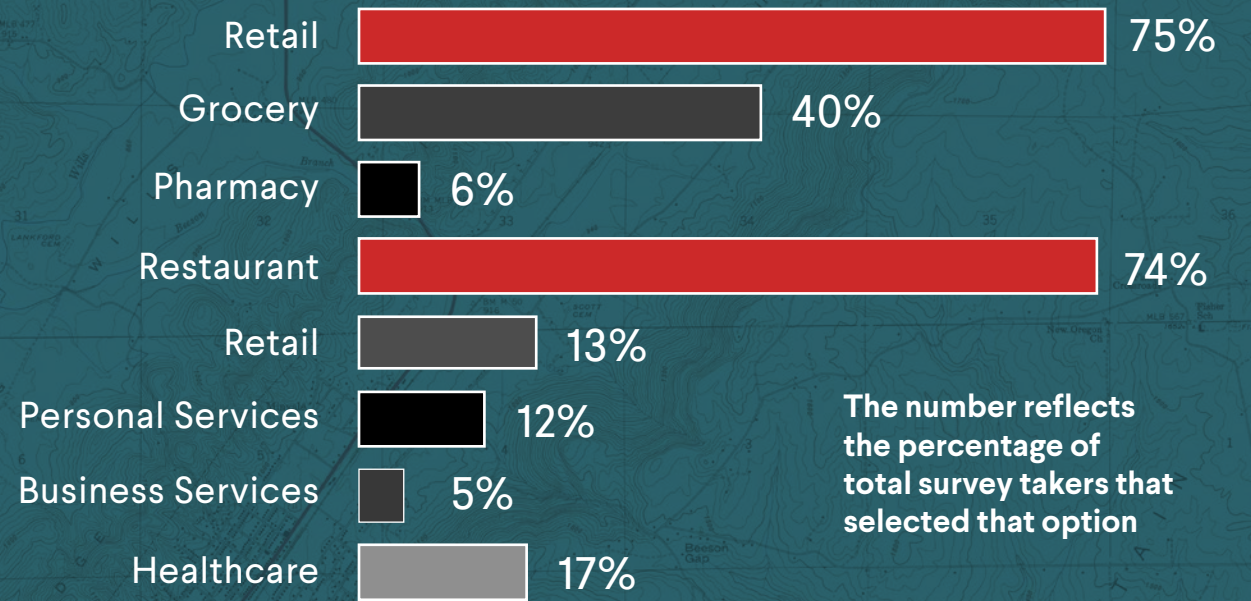
of respondents want new housing to support continued population growth



High demand for rentals  
More lofts / apartments  
Balance market-rate with affordable development  
Streamline regulations


**Housing**

## What kinds of businesses would you like to see?



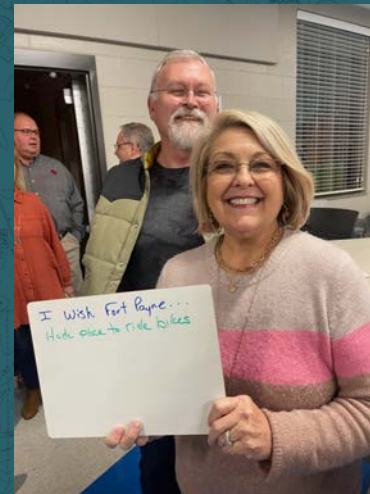
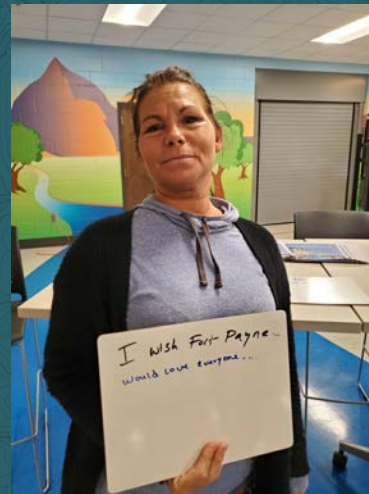
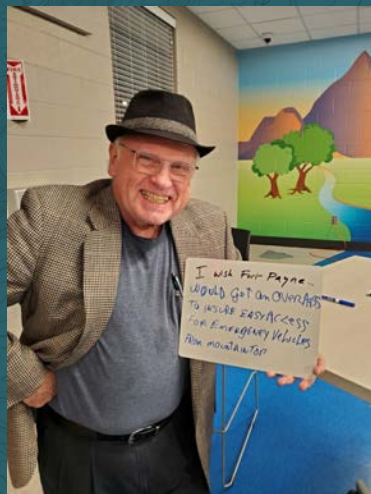
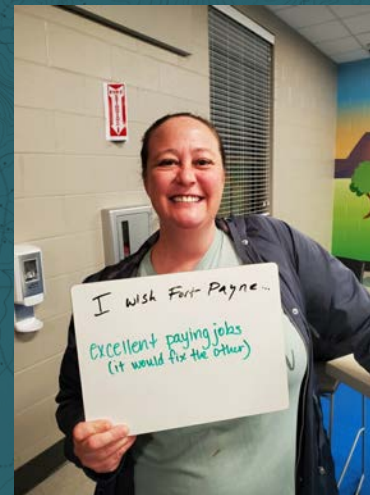
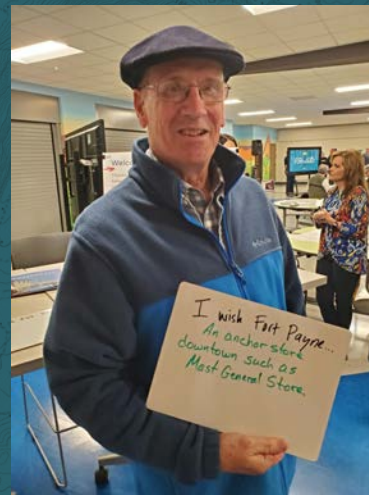
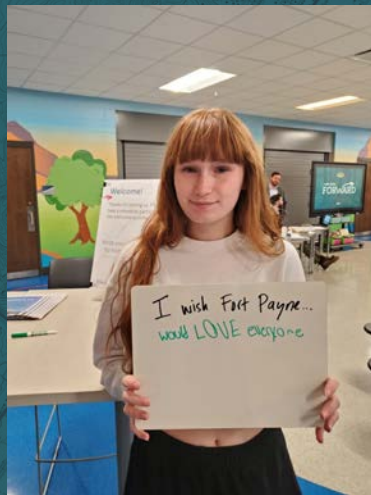
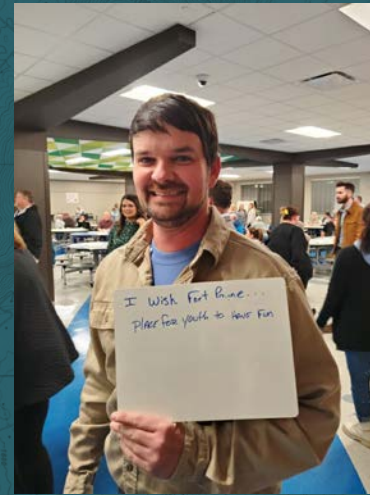
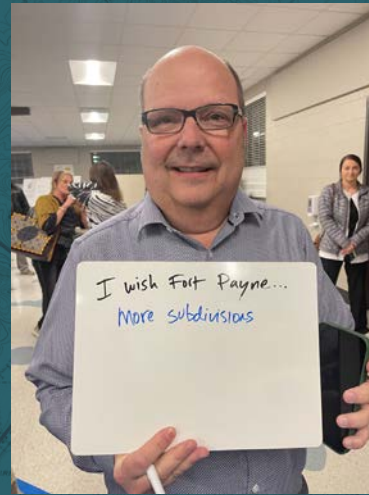
The number reflects the percentage of total survey takers that selected that option

1. Movie theater
2. Bowling alley
3. Walking/ biking/ hiking trails
4. Skating rink/ skate park
5. Trampoline park
6. Mini-golf
7. Public sports fields/ courts
8. Arcade
9. Amphitheater/ concerts
10. Rock climbing gym

**92%** 

Favor increased recreational options & opportunities

# Welcome Exercise



**Welcome!**

Thanks for joining us. Please take a minute to participate in the welcome activity

Write your vision for Fort Payne

I wish Fort Payne...

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We invited attendees to the public meeting to participate in a welcome exercise that gave them an opportunity to share their dream for Fort Payne. The activity was well received and we had a substantial number of people interested in sharing their ideas. Here are a few of the wishes from the citizens:

Cooperation  
Places for Youth  
More housing  
General Store

Better jobs  
Overpass  
Bike lanes



# Theme Ranking Exercise

Arrange the themes in order of importance

Least Important ← ----- → Most Important

Prioritize the Big Ideas or add specific project ideas

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 <b>Housing</b> What type? For who?	 <b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b> Access and distribution	 <b>Land Use &amp; Zoning</b> Develop where?
 <b>Transportation</b> What are our priorities?	 <b>Infrastructure &amp; Utilities</b> What areas do we serve?	 <b>Wild Card</b> Add your own

## Ranking Board


The theme ranking exercise was a group activity that concluded the first public meeting in the city. The exercise invited small groups gathered around tables in the Intermediate School cafeteria to rank the emerging themes.

The groups were challenged to engage in conversations that would stimulate healthy debate of how to rank the themes by priority. This not only surfaced many perspectives among the attendees at the meeting, but it also resulted in consensus around each table as to how the themes should be ranked.

## Theme Cards

The cards represented the planning themes that were beginning to emerge through previous meetings with the steering committee, department heads, and city administration.

# Theme Ranking Exercise Results



**Parks & Recreation**  
Access and distribution

Lowest Ranked



**Infrastructure & Utilities**  
What areas do we serve?



**Transportation**  
What are our priorities?



**Land Use & Zoning**  
Develop where?



**Housing**  
What type? For who?

Highest Ranked

After compiling the results from the table exercises, the highest ranked priority from the public meeting attendees was Housing. Parks and Recreation ranked last on this list of priorities for the city. Fort Payne currently has a generous number of parks in its downtown and surrounding area, and because of the geography of the city, there is a lack of housing.

The results from this activity do not provide an exclusive direction for the next phases of the process, they must be balanced with the extensive input from the community survey, as well as direction from the Steering Committee and city leaders. For example, we know from the community survey there is a large number of supporters for improving the parks networking and individual park programming.

# Housing

## More diverse mix of housing



Condos      Rental units      New single-family  
 Multifamily      Lofts      Retirement



Affordable housing

Homeless shelters  
 Safe house

Mixed use development  
 New housing (infill) downtown

# Land use

- Zoning - More flexibility in the code
- Signage
- Store fronts
- Sidewalks
- Parking garages close to business districts
- Need more mixed-use
- Restrictions on new industrial & big box stores
- Repurpose unused industrial buildings
- Group industrial uses
- Contain urban footprint to protect natural land
- Entertainment district (open container)
- Food truck venues
- More commercial on Gault
- Hotel development
- Rooftop restaurants
- Develop around existing parks in town

# Parks

Maintenance of existing parks

## Planned trail system

- Connection to Little River Canyon
- Rails to trails
- Highlight Trail of Tears

## Lookout Mountain

- Chairlift up Lookout Mountain
- **Overlook park on Lookout Mountain**
- Citadel Overlook

## Recreational Facilities

- Sports complex
- Amphitheater
- Better event venues needed
- Improved ball fields
- Dog park
- ADA/autism park
- Youth activities

## Historical/Cultural

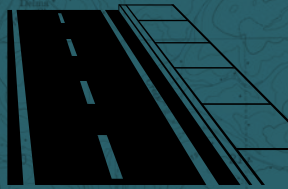
- Cherokee history museum



During the public meeting participants were also asked to list individual projects related to the theme after they ranked them, or during the ranking discussion. This compiled data is more granular and provides a greater level of detail and insight into the thought behind some of the priority rankings from the citizens.

# Transportation

**Infrastructure:**  
 improving roads  
 repairing sidewalks



**PROVIDE public transportation**

Improving Joe's Truck Stop, better access to DeKalb Plaza shopping center, and improving the Airport Rd intersection.

## Safety and Lighting

Installing LED street lights to improve visibility and safety.



## Airport Area Development

# Infrastructure & Utilities

## Infrastructure

- Electricity
- Water
- Sewer
- Train overpass
- Expand sewer system to support new housing development
- Bury lines where possible
- Repair roads and bridges
- Northern substation

## Community development

- More transparency and oversight on utility board appointments so there are fewer conflicts of interest
- Sidewalk conditions need improvement
- Reclaim vacated alleys for new homes
- Better internet needed

# Write-in

These were specific project ideas from each category

## Economic Development

- Recruit new Industry
- Retail and restaurant development
- Breweries
- Small business incentives
- Entrepreneurial center
- Better paying jobs

## Infrastructure

- Sidewalks w/ landscape buffers
- Broadband access
- Improved entry signage to city
- ADA compliant sidewalks

## Community Services

- Healthy food choices
- Affordable grocery (ALDI)
- More daycares
- Improved healthcare services
- Support for educational system
- Movie theater
- Better support for low income

## Collaboration and Diversity

- Improved collaboration/ shared vision in the city
- Solicit minority voices
- Collaborate with Cherokee Nation

# High School Student Online Survey

As part of the community engagement process we also distributed a survey to high school students. The survey was unique to the students, it was shorter and asked targeted questions on specific areas of town.

## Top 3 Needs

1



Theater

2



Bowling

3



Shopping

Do you plan on living in FP when you are older?

The recurring themes in the responses are that many of the students do not plan on living in Fort Payne when they are older because of the **lack of job opportunities** and the town's **limited activities**.

Some students mentioned wanting to explore new places and travel, while others expressed a desire to live in bigger cities with more opportunities.

A few mentioned that they would consider living in Fort Payne depending on their career field or if the town developed more job opportunities and activities.

## Likes



Community feel and friendliness of people

Natural beauty and scenery (e.g., Little River Canyon, mountains)

Opportunities (e.g., career pathways, outdoor activities)

Small town feel (e.g., calm, peaceful, not too crowded)

Downtown area (e.g., historic buildings, places to eat, walking areas)

Schools and educational opportunities

## Dislikes



Lack of activities/entertainment

Traffic and transportation issues

Size of the town (not much to do)

Lack of diversity

# Community Visioning Activity



## Vision Exercise Results

Composite statements based on feedback



1

“Our vision is to create an inclusive, safe, and memorable community, where history, culture, and nature are preserved and celebrated, while promoting sustainable growth that benefits all citizens.”

2

“Our aim is to foster a thriving mountain town that is environmentally conscious and provides equal opportunities for employment and education, creating a beautiful place for families and visitors to live and visit.”

Write a "vision statement" for the city.

The Purpose of a plan is to get action. But a community vision has to be set to ensure that individual actions are being taken by our surrounding citizens. A simple statement that frames and guides the work to come out of this plan. You can find examples in the accompanying materials. A plan with a vision that is crafted by the community is most likely to be implemented.

Exercise: As a group write a vision statement to describe a Fort Payne you would hope to see twenty years from today.

Notes & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Fort Payne

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