# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

ROUND 1 | JUNE - SEPTEMBER, 2026

WESTERVILLE®

MKSK + B&N +



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# Engagement Overview



# Engagement Methods

### Advisory Committee

Recurring meetings with elected and appointed officials to build understanding of the plan, confirm its direction, and prepare members for future policy and implementation decisions.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Individual and group discussions with stakeholders to gain deeper insight into perspectives, challenges, and opportunities related to the South State Street Focus Area.

### Community Open House

An in-person meeting to share out key conditions and trends, seek feedback with the community, test whether findings reflect lived experience, and identify which topical areas are of highest priority.

### Pop-Up Events

Pop-ups at Fourth Friday and the Westerville Farmers Market raised awareness of the plan to a broader audience and allowed residents to provide feedback on the challenges, assets, and opportunities in the South State Street corridor and citywide.

### Online Platform

A dedicated website with interactive tools allowed residents to participate in all public meeting activities and receive plan updates from anywhere.

# Engagement by the Numbers






**4 Advisory Committee Meetings**

**OPEN HOUSE**
*June 23, 2026*

**70+ attendees**

**4TH FRIDAY**
*June 26, 2026*

**50+ attendees**

**FARMERS MARKET**
*June 27, 2026*

**65+ attendees**





**10 Insightful Stakeholder Conversations**



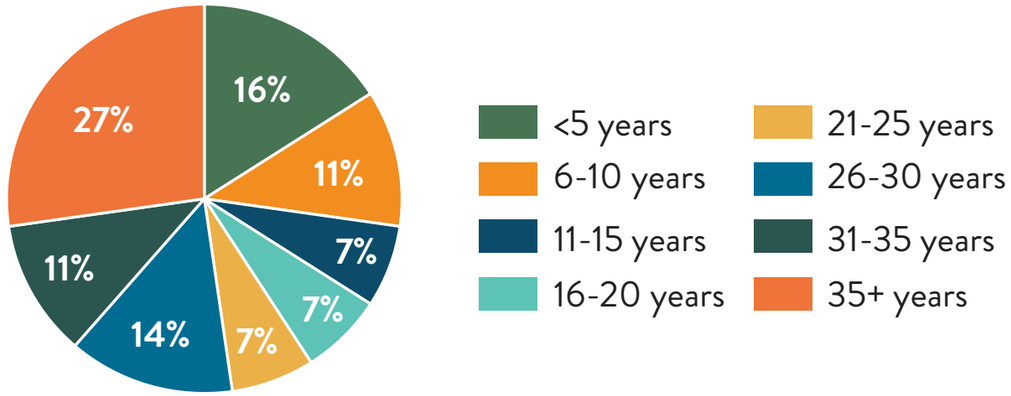
# Who We Heard From

**290+** Unique Voices

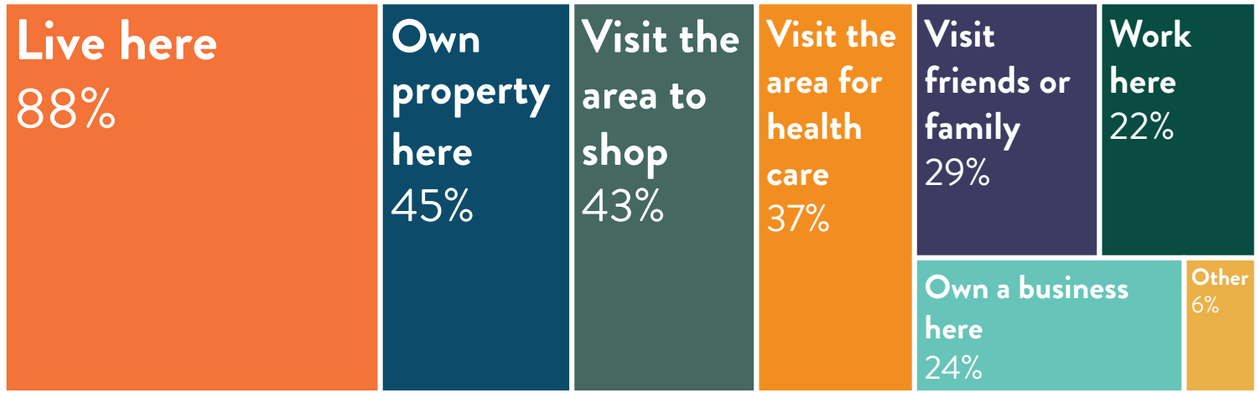
**530+** Contributions

**98%** City of Westerville Residents

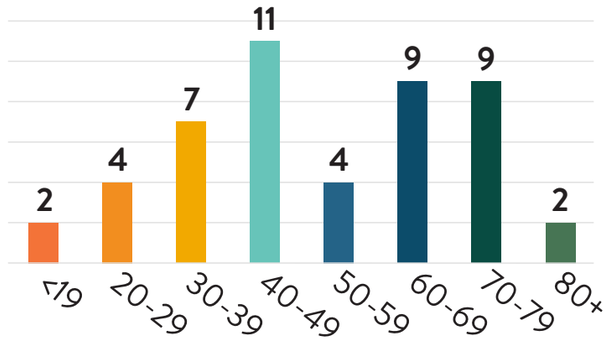
## Years Lived in Westerville



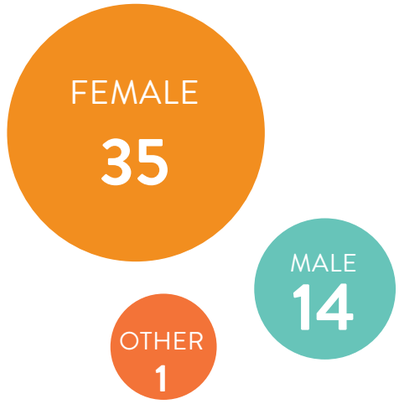

## Relationship to the City of Westerville




## Age




## Gender



# Stakeholder Conversation



# Stakeholder Interviews

*Who we met with*

**Property Owners**

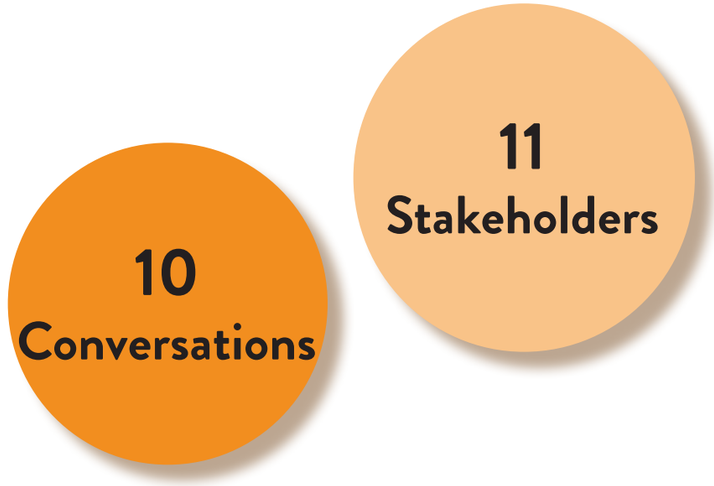
- **Brad Guy,** Director of Development, North High Brewing
  *Owner of CoHatch & North High Brewing*
- **Jason Schone,** Chiropractor, Health First Chiropractic and Property Owner, J & J Schone Investments LLC
  *Owner of 480 & 490 S. State Street*
- **John Royer,** Commercial Real Estate Broker and Developer, KRG Associates Inc.
  *Owner of Rita's Frozen Custard Property*
- **Scott Hrabcak,** Director of Commercial Real Estate, Hanna Commercial Real Estate
  *Owner of office building at Bishop Dr & S. State Street*
- **Carole Burns**, Optometrist, Professional Vision Care Westerville
  *Owner of Professional Vision Care property*
- **Gary Gitlitz**, Co-Owner and Legal Counsel, Adams, Babner & Gitlitz, LLC
  *Co-owner of Waffle Way Cafe property*

**Local Business Representatives**

- **Matt Lofy**, President & CEO, Westerville Area Chamber
- **Laura Stimmel**, Financial Center Manager, Heartland Bank
- **Laurie Pfeiffer**, Market President, Heartland Bank
- **Yes Press Representative,** Yes Press Graphics

**Resident**

- **Tony Meuser,** 50 Lee Terrace



# Stakeholder Interviews

*What we heard*



## What's Working

- COhatch as an example of adaptive reuse
- Community anchors: North High Brewing, farmers market
- Ohio-to-Erie Trail
- Newer developments (Waffle Way Cafe, new apartment buildings)
- Some traffic signals and curb cuts



## What's Not Working

- Traffic during peak times
- Difficult to access certain properties
- Inconsistent building character
- Underutilized and vacant buildings
- Parking shortages during events
- Uninviting trail segments
- Poor walkability
- Misaligned expectations among property owners
- Basic infrastructure repairs needed



## Trade-Offs to Consider

- Desire for street-facing retail vs. parking and access challenges
- Denser, more walkable development vs. shallow parcel depths and adjacent single-family neighborhoods
- Traffic calming design vs. traffic efficiency
- Interest in redevelopment vs. coordination difficulties

# Round 1 Public Engagement



# Community Open House

*June 23, 2026*

- The first public meeting was an open house-style workshop designed to present residents with initial findings on the South State Street Focus Area and on citywide conditions and trends research.
- Participants offered input and ideas through five activities:

**South State Street Focus Area Activities**

  - *Shaping the Future:* Select preferred images displaying different corridor features and explain why you chose them.
  - *Shaping the Goals*: Review draft goals for South State and provide any feedback or ideas.
  - *Design Your Ideal South State Street:* Using different roadway elements provided, design a new streetscape on the South State corridor.

**Citywide Activities**

  - *Community Snapshot:* Residents reviewed conditions & trends research and suggested additional topics to explore related to the findings that were presented.
  - *Where Should We Focus Next*: On a map, place a dot in the areas the city should explore in future planning efforts.



**70+**
Attendees

**185**
Activity Contributions



# Pop-Up Events

*June 26 & 27, 2026*

- In late June, the planning team had a booth at two public events to further promote the plan and receive additional feedback from residents
    - Fourth Friday, June 26th
    - Farmers Market, June 27th
- This event consisted of one activity:
    - *Building Westerville Together:* Residents chose from a selection of prompts, some pertaining to the South State area and some the city as a whole, then posted their written answers on a board.

**Activity Prompts**

- What makes Westerville feel like Westerville?
- Where do you see opportunities for new development or reinvestment in the city?
- Where should we focus planning efforts next?
- What destinations are missing along South State?
- What would make South State feel more comfortable and attractive?



# Online Survey Platform

*June 24 - September 22, 2026*

- From late June to late September, Westerville residents had the opportunity to share their input virtually via Open Point, an online survey and mapping platform.
- Four activities of the activities from the June 23rd Open House were available to participants to gather additional input:

**South State Street Focus Area Activities**

  - *Shaping the Future:* Select preferred images displaying different corridor features and explain why you chose them.
  - *Shaping the Goals*: Review draft goals for South State and provide any feedback or ideas.

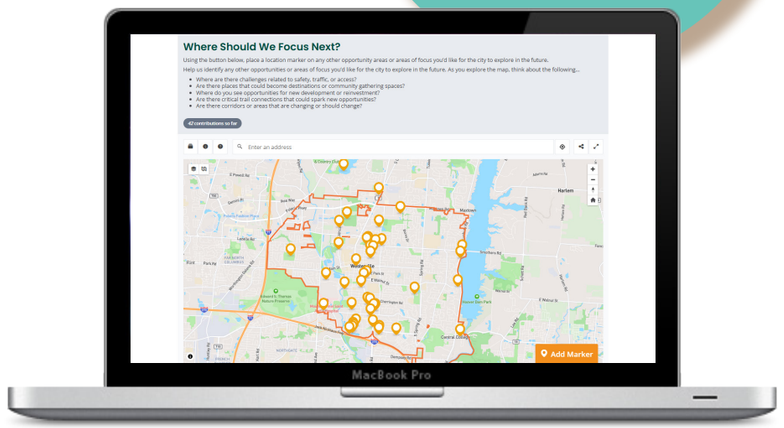
**Citywide Activities**

  - *Community Snapshot:* Residents suggested additional things to study related to the topics that were presented.
  - Where Should We Focus Next: On a map, place a dot in the areas the city should explore in future planning efforts.

**89**
Unique Contributors

**300**
Online Contributions

**1,500**
Website Visits



# Key Takeaways

*Themes that emerged from Round 1*

## Improving Multimodal Safety & Connectivity

Residents identified pedestrian and bicycle safety as a key priority, with support for improved sidewalks, crossings, streetscape enhancements, and Complete Streets concepts along South State Street.

## Addressing Traffic & Mobility Challenges

Traffic congestion and roadway capacity were common concerns, particularly during peak periods, with residents emphasizing the need to balance future growth with transportation improvements.

## Injecting Nature & Green Character

Residents value Westerville's natural features and "City in a Park" identity, with strong support for additional trees, landscaping, parks, and open space opportunities.

## Guiding Thoughtful Growth & Development

Residents expressed support for new investment and higher-density development along South State Street in appropriate locations, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining community character and ensuring development benefits existing residents.

# Key Takeaways

*Themes that emerged from Round 1*

## Creating Walkable Mixed-Use Destinations

Community members expressed interest in more opportunities to live, shop, dine, and gather along the corridor, with support for development that blends Uptown's walkability with Westerville's suburban character.

## Enhancing Westerville's Existing Identity

Residents value the community's neighborhood-scale environment and expressed a desire for future development that feels compatible with Westerville's existing character.

## Building Trust Through Engagement

Residents highlighted the importance of transparency, clear communication, and data-driven decision-making throughout the planning and development process.



# Results Overview



# Conditions & Trends

*What we heard about citywide conditions*

After reviewing research into citywide conditions and trends, residents were asked: ***what additional topics should we study?*** Below are the top recommendations, which span five research topics and highlight what matters most to residents.

## Legacy, Identity, & Vibrancy



Preserve History & Character



Responsible Growth



Preserve Green Space

## Demographics & the Community We're Becoming



More Engagement & Transparency



Support for Changing Demographics



Inclusive Outreach

## Housing Mix & Markets



Affordable Housing



Diverse Housing Types



Mixed-Use Development

## Market Volatility, Economic Development & Competition



Sustainable Building Reuse



High Quality Jobs



More Cultural Destinations

## City Systems



Infrastructure Investments



Preserve City-Managed Utilities



Environmental Stewardship

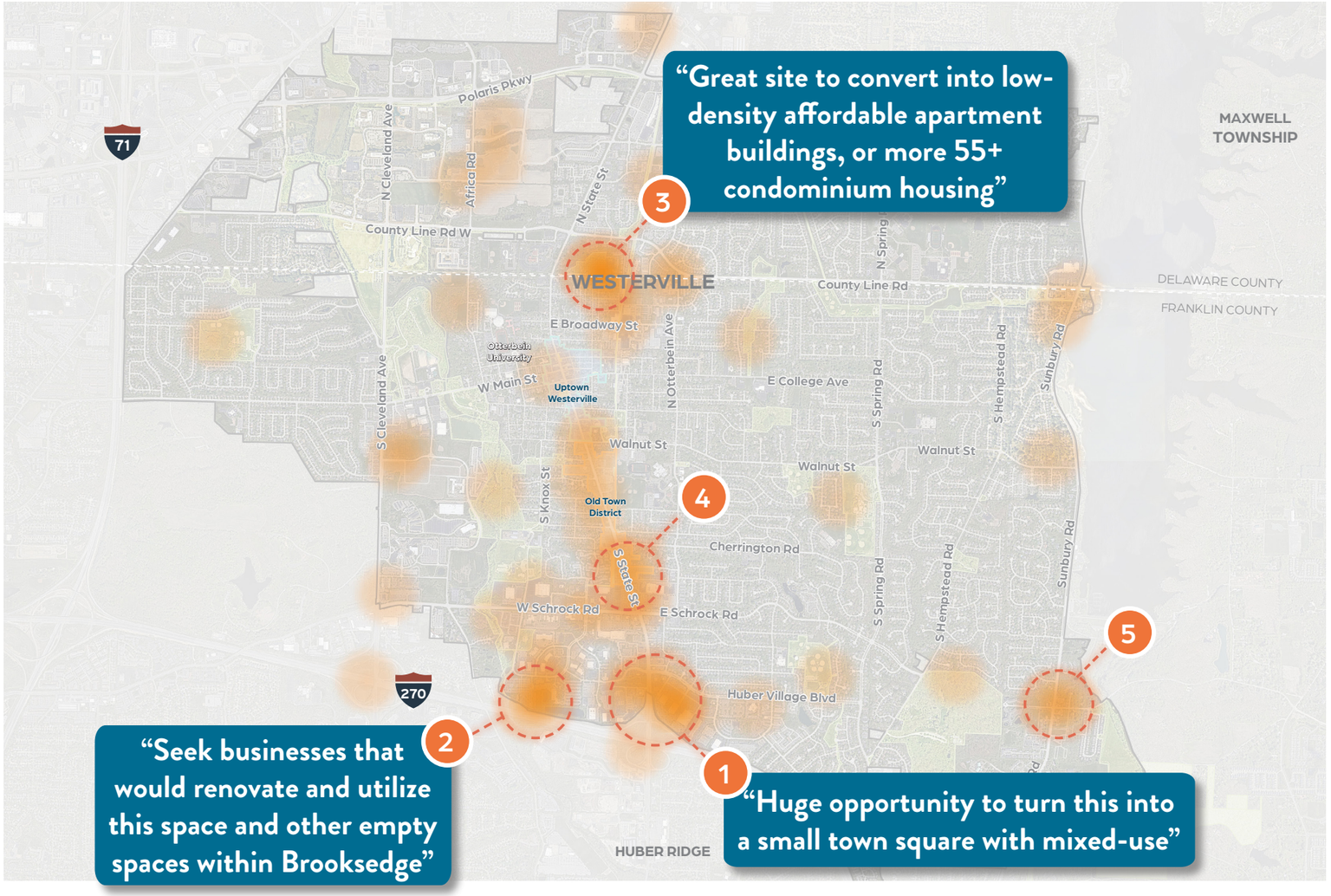
# Where Should We Focus Next?

*Priority areas for future planning efforts*

Residents identified locations on a map of the city to tell the planning team where they see ***additional opportunities, priorities, or areas of focus for the City to explore in the future.***

## Priority Area Hot Spots

1. State Street and Huber Village Blvd area
2. Chase office site south of Brooksedge Blvd
3. West of Old County Line Road Ohio to Erie Trail intersection
4. South State Street Focus Area corridor
5. Sunbury Rd and Central College Road intersection



# South State Street Goals

*What residents think about proposed goals*

Residents reviewed the proposed goals for the South State Street Focus Area and answered: ***what do you think about these goals?*** Below are the themes that appeared most often in responses.

### Goal 1
Create a corridor with a sense of place and clear identity that is unique to Westerville.

### Goal 2
Elevate the pedestrian experience through safe and comfortable streetscape enhancements that extend Uptown's walkable core.

### Goal 3
Enhance the character, comfort, safety of the Ohio Erie Trail, while providing meaningful east/west connections to and from the trail.

### Goal 4
Introduce traffic calming measure and engaging streetscape enhancements that provide safe and comfortable movement for all modes of transportation.

### Goal 5
Establish a consistent development pattern that is well connected to adjacent neighborhoods and provides opportunities for incremental infill and redevelopment along the corridor.

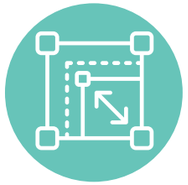
## Top Themes



Residents want to **retain the city's unique character and identity**



Residents want the street design to **enhance pedestrian safety and comfort**



Residents are **hesitant about heavy development** and some prefer moderate density along South State Street



Residents support **investment that brings retail, dining, and entertainment** to the area

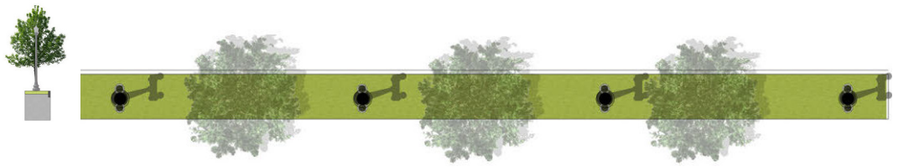
# South State Street Design

*What should South State Street look like?*

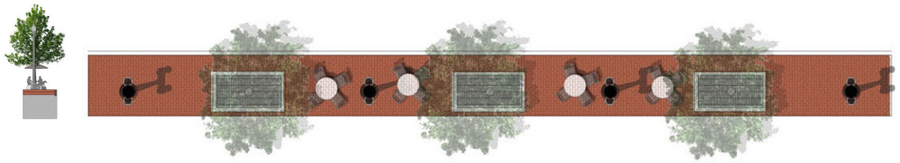
Residents used a variety of streetscape elements to build their own version of South State Street and tell us: ***what does your ideal South State look like?*** Below are the streetscape components that were chosen the most times.

## Top Street Design Elements

**8' Tree Lawn**
69% of responses



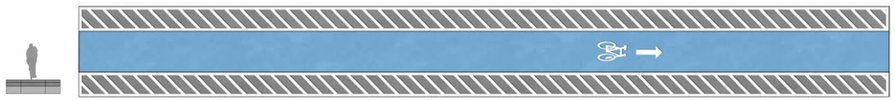
**6-8' Amenity Zone**
50% of responses



**6-8' Sidewalk**
44% of responses

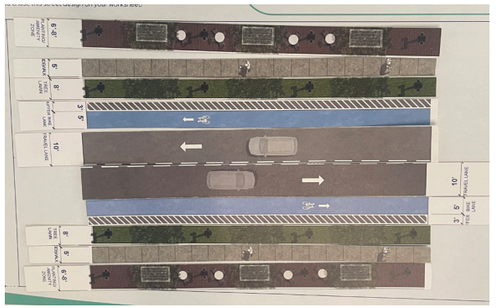


**5' Bike Lane w/ 3' Buffer**
44% of responses



*My Vision Is...*

**"Traffic calming has made it possible to enjoy walking in Westerville."**



*My Vision Is...*

**"Road diet and cycle track with better pedestrian infrastructure."**



*My Vision Is...*

**"Visually and pedestrian friendly with multi-modal transportation."**



**This activity was only completed by in-person Open House attendees.*

# Shaping the Future of South State

*What do you want the corridor to look like?*

Residents viewed images that represented different characteristics of South State Street and answered: ***which images best represent what you'd like to see in the focus area?*** Below are the photos in each category that received the most votes.

## Top Images

### Corridor Vision

What do you see when you picture the future of South State?










### Public Realm & Infrastructure

What do you envision for the future streetscape and pedestrian experience of South State?










### Land Use & Development

What scale and density of development do you envision along South State?










### Mobility & Safety

What elements would make South State feel safer and more comfortable as a pedestrian or cyclist?









# Shaping the Future of South State

*What do you want the corridor to look like?*

Residents chose the images that best represented what they'd like to see on South State and told us: ***why did this resonate with you?*** Below are the themes that appeared most often in the comments.

## Top Themes



### Pedestrian Experience

- Shade trees
- Barrier between road and sidewalk
- Wide sidewalks
- Off-street paths



### Street Design & Traffic Safety

- Clear crosswalks, wide sidewalks
- Safe, separated bikeways
- Road design that minimizes traffic



### Density & Mix of Uses

- Residential with ground floor retail
- Entertainment, dining, and retail within walking distance of housing



### Parks, Recreation & Green Space

- Improved trail connectivity
- Space for parks and native greenery
- Landscaping and trees in urban areas

*Corridor Vision:*

**"Intentionally designed streets, sidewalks, and architecture that allows for new businesses, green space, and public third spaces."**

*Mobility & Safety:*

**"Wide, safe sidewalks/multi-use paths for pedestrians and bikes. Clearly marked crosswalks with flashing lights."**

*Land Use & Development:*

**"I like the idea of both more living spaces and more commercial spaces in close proximity and in high density."**

*Public Realm & Infrastructure:*

**"Lots of trees, wide sidewalks, and bike paths encourage people to be a part of the community and exist within the spaces rather than just driving through and making pit stops at destinations."**

# Pop-Up Activity Results

*Residents wishes for South State Street and beyond*

We asked residents to choose from several questions related to their desires for the South State Street Focus Area and planning across the city as a whole. Below are the themes we heard most.

## Questions

- What makes Westerville feel like Westerville?
- Where do you see opportunities for new development or reinvestment in the city?
- Where should we focus planning efforts next?
- What destinations are missing along South State?
- What would make South State feel more comfortable and attractive?

*What would make South State feel more comfortable and attractive?*

**"Please build more bike trails that connect to the Ohio-to-Erie Trail."**

*Where do you see opportunities for new development or reinvestment in the city?*

**"Central Collage roadway improvements, bike trails, small businesses, third places."**

*What destinations are missing along South State?*

**"More retail, restaurants, and family destinations."**

*What makes Westerville feel like Westerville?*

**"Commitment to preserving history and envisioning a brighter future."**

*Where should we focus planning efforts next?*

**"Protect the authentic feel of Uptown, including the broader fringe area."**

## Top Themes

### Retail, Entertainment, & Dining Options



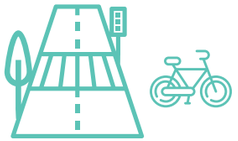
32% of responses

### Family-Friendly Gathering Spaces



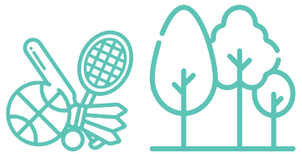
30% of responses

### Traffic & Mobility



18% of responses

### Parks & Recreation



18% of responses