



CITY OF SPRINGFIELD
Strategic Economic
Development Plan

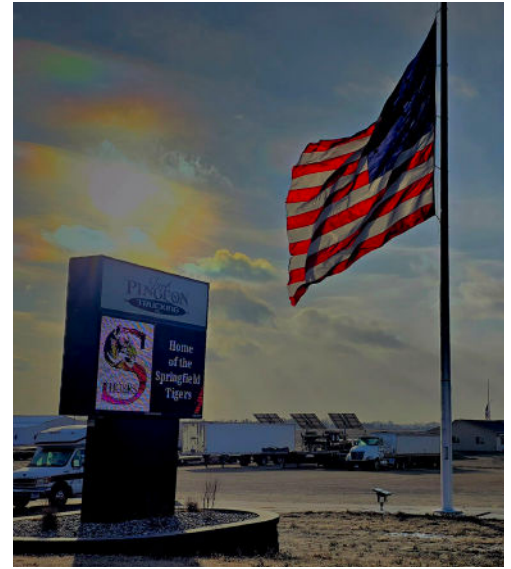
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

RNDC would like to thank the numerous individuals who contributed time and energy to creating this plan. The vision set forth in this plan was developed in partnership with the City of Springfield, the local EDA, and the residents and other stakeholders of Springfield. Your input, energy, and ideas enriched the planning process and helped set a course for the future of Springfield.

In addition, RNDC would like to thank the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) and its Small-Town Grant Program, which seeks to build sustainable and vibrant communities by engaging residents, enhancing existing leadership, and amplifying opportunities for new leadership to emerge. Through this program, SMIF awarded the City of Springfield funding to create a long-term vision for the city through a strategic planning process with broad community input, which made this plan possible.



Springfield City Staff

Amber Dale, City Manager

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Prepared by:
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Dear Springfield Community Members,

On behalf of the City of Springfield and the Economic Development Authority (EDA), we're excited to share an important step in shaping the future of our community.

Thanks to a grant from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), Springfield is partnering with the Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan and housing study. This initiative will help us better understand our community's strengths and challenges and provide a thoughtful, realistic framework for future growth.

Springfield is a special place. Our small-town atmosphere, strong sense of community, and high quality of life are deeply valued. We also recognize that preserving these qualities requires careful planning and smart, intentional change. This plan is about building a sustainable local economy—one that supports both current and future generations.

This is not just about growth; it's about *smart* growth. By identifying our unique assets and anticipating future needs, we aim to keep Springfield a vibrant and resilient place to live, work, and do business.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our community survey. Region Nine noted that Springfield's response was among the best they've seen—an inspiring sign of our community's pride and shared commitment to the future.

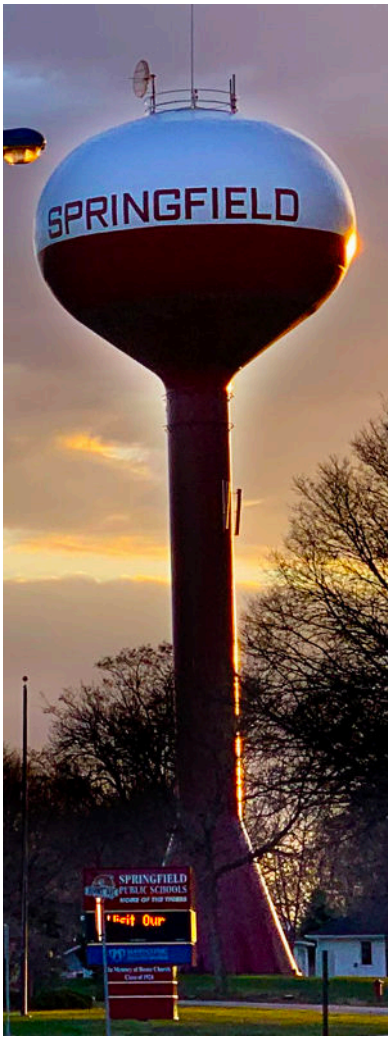
We are also deeply grateful to our partners at Region Nine and SMIF for helping to make this project possible.

With the adoption and future implementation of this plan, we believe Springfield will continue to thrive as the welcoming, forward-thinking community we all call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Amber Dale'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amber Dale
City Manager



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Springfield is a vibrant small-town community in Brown County that has demonstrated both resilience and future economic potential. Contrary to broader county and regional trends of population decline, Springfield has experienced modest growth in the past decade. Its strategic location along U.S. Highway 14, and proximity to regional hub centers like New Ulm and Mankato, provides the city with a competitive advantage.

Springfield's local economy is anchored in three key industries, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail. Demographic trends in Springfield reveal a growing presence of young families, youth, and older adults, creating opportunities for targeted workforce development, business development, diverse housing options, and community investments that benefit all residents. With a lower cost of living, strong homeownership rate and stability, and community amenities, Springfield has unique opportunities for long-term growth and prosperity.

In 2024, the City of Springfield secured funding from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) through its Small-Town Grant program to conduct a Strategic Economic Development Plan. Upon receiving the grant, the City of Springfield partnered with Region Nine Development Commission to create a plan informed by community input and focused on strengthening economic resilience and sustainable development.

This plan envisions Springfield as a thriving community with a diversified economic base, ability to weather economic stressors, and prepared for long-term growth.

The plan was structured through a three-step process:

1. Economic Development Assessment and Market Analysis
2. Stakeholder Outreach
3. Development of Recommended Strategies and Implementation

ABOUT RNDC

Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) serves nine counties in South Central Minnesota: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan, collectively known as Region Nine. RNDC takes great pride in working with and on behalf of these counties, their cities, townships, and school districts. Since 1972, being a partner for progress has led to the development of programs in the areas of economic development, business development, healthy communities, transportation, community development, and leveraging regional resources. RNDC is governed by 40 regional leaders. These leaders include elected officials representing nine counties, 72 cities, 147 townships, 32 school districts, the Minnesota Valley Council of Governments, and public interest groups including, Health and Human Welfare, Minority Populations, and Youth.

RNDC receives an annual planning grant from the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) to conduct economic development planning activities within the district. Activities range from developing and maintaining the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), leading regional-based economic development goals and strategies, facilitating the regional Community and Economic Development Planning Committee, hosting regional grant opportunities and workforce forums, and assisting communities who are interested in seeking Federal EDA funding.

CHAPTER 1 - PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Strategic Economic Development Plan for the City of Springfield serves as a guiding document that outlines the community's economic vision and long-term goals based on community input. Through a comprehensive assessment of local resources and assets, this plan provides a framework to guide economic and community development efforts in the years ahead.

Developed through a comprehensive engagement process, this plan reflects a broad range of viewpoints in the community. While Springfield is a primary driver of this initiative, the success of the planning process depends on the support and participation of the whole community. Cross-sector collaborations with local organizations, foundations, and community groups will also be fundamental to accomplishing the goals laid out in this plan.

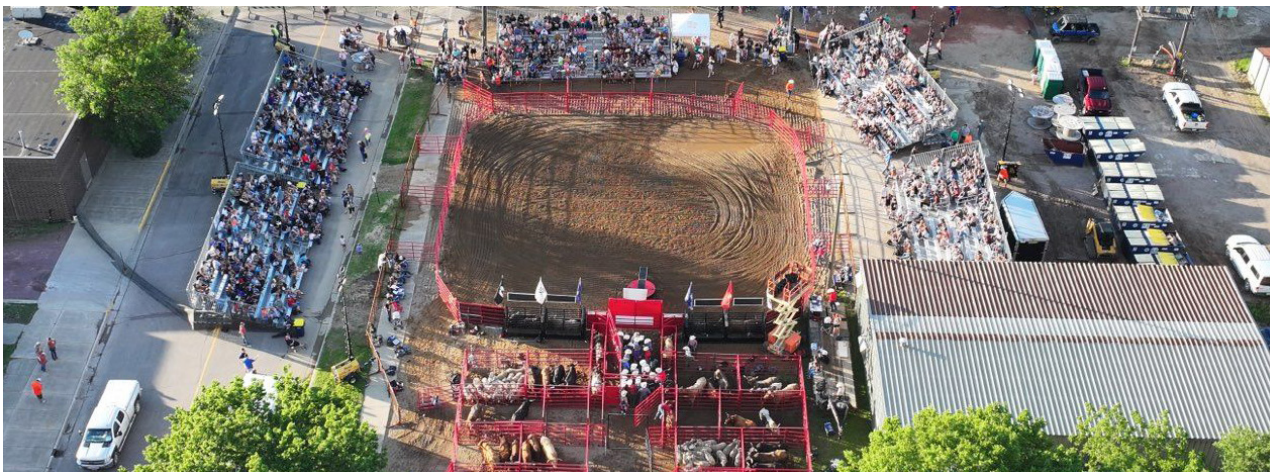
This initiative represents an intentional step towards realizing a shared vision for Springfield. The following sections describe a southern Minnesota community characterized by its high-quality school, family-friendly atmosphere, and potential for economic growth. These local strengths position Springfield for continued innovation and transformation, while building upon the unique assets that can make it a vibrant place to live and work.

Why strategic planning?

"Strategic Planning is a living vehicle for community leaders to think strategically, to make sound decisions in a sea of game-changing circumstances, to focus efforts, and to develop consensus for collaboratively solving problems."

- International Economic Development Council (IEDC)

Having a strategic economic development plan in place helps communities identify long-term goals and guides economic development strategies to achieve them. It serves as a roadmap that allows communities to be more responsive and better positioned to attract funding opportunities. Most importantly, it helps communities build consensus across different stakeholders, aligning efforts that can improve the local economy and that consider local resources, constraints, and opportunities.



Process Overview

The plan is the result of a seven-month initiative conducted between January and July 2025. It represents the input of over 350 engaged residents. The plan was developed through the multi-step process illustrated below.



The planning process incorporated different opportunities for public input including a community-wide survey, focus groups, and presentations to local community groups. Through this engagement process, residents described Springfield as a safe, family-oriented community with quality schools and small-town atmosphere. However, they also identified challenges, specifically in the areas of housing, business and job growth, and healthcare access, among others. Despite these concerns, respondents also expressed optimism about Springfield's future.

Public Engagement

Public engagement was a crucial part of designing this plan. Outreach efforts were designed to make participation convenient and accessible through different channels.



Public Survey

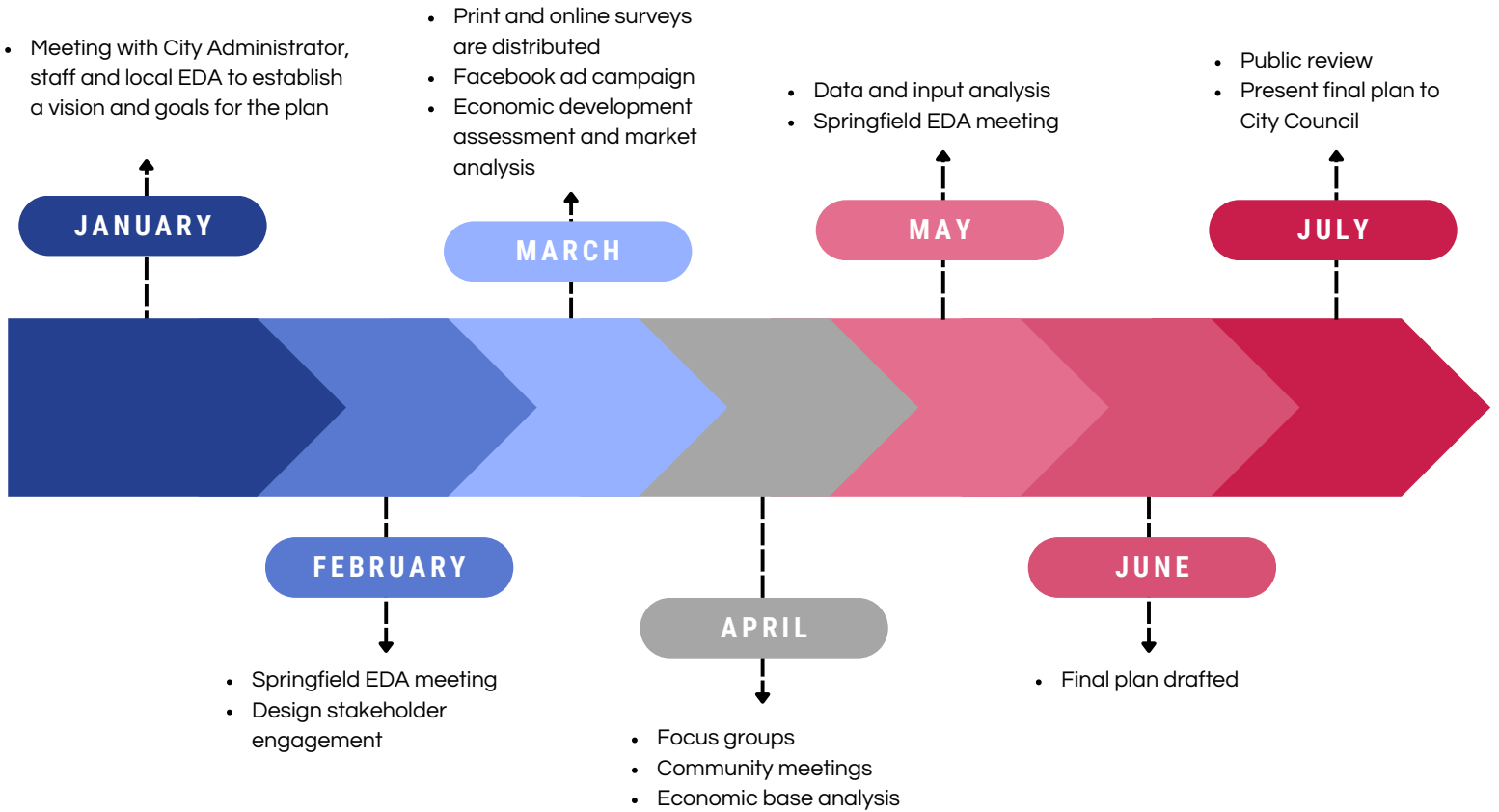
A community survey was shared with Springfield residents in both online and paper formats between March 1st, 2025, and March 31st, 2025. The survey focused on identifying priorities, challenges, and opportunities for Springfield's future. In total, 350 responses were collected, representing a strong level of engagement for a community the size of Springfield.

See the City of Springfield Resident Survey in the Appendix section of this report.

Stakeholder Outreach

Other stakeholder engagement opportunities included small focus groups, meetings with the local Economic Development Authority (EDA), and presentations to community groups, such as the Rotary Club. A social media advertisement campaign was also developed to engage local residents.

PROJECT TIMELINE



CHAPTER 2 - ECONOMIC & MARKET ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an economic snapshot and market analysis of Springfield, exploring the demographic and economic trends shaping the city's residential, retail, and employment sectors. Understanding the size, composition, and connections among local housing markets, retail trade areas, and the regional workforce helps paint a clear picture of Springfield's economic landscape and growth opportunities.

LOCATION & ACCESS

A community's location relative to major population centers and transportation corridors significantly influences the types of businesses that can be supported and sustained.

Springfield, platted in 1877, is a city in Brown County with a population of 2,209¹. It lies partially within North Star Township and is located along U.S. Route 14, its main east-west corridor which connects the city to Mankato to the east and the South Dakota border to the west. Springfield businesses mainly rely on U.S. Highway 14 as their primary transportation and distribution corridor. Minnesota State Highway 4 runs north-south through the region, connecting Springfield with Sleepy Eye to the north and Jackson to the south. The city is located in the Minnesota River Valley and within Region Nine's service area.

PROXIMITY TO AIRPORTS:

61
MILES

West of Mankato Regional Airport (MKT)

145
MILES

Northwest of Rochester International Airport

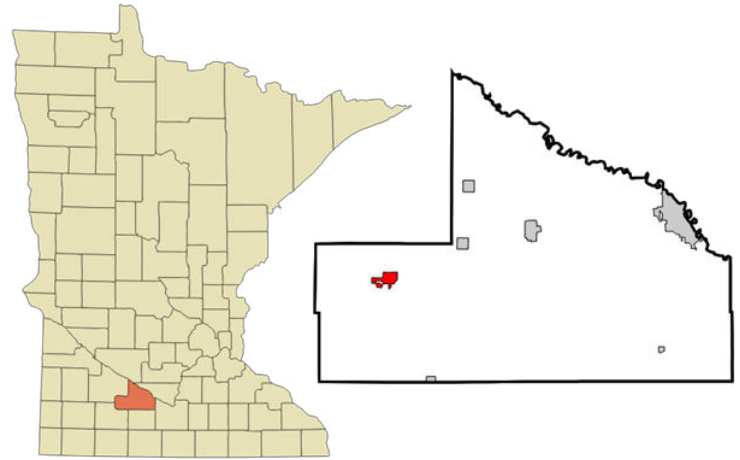
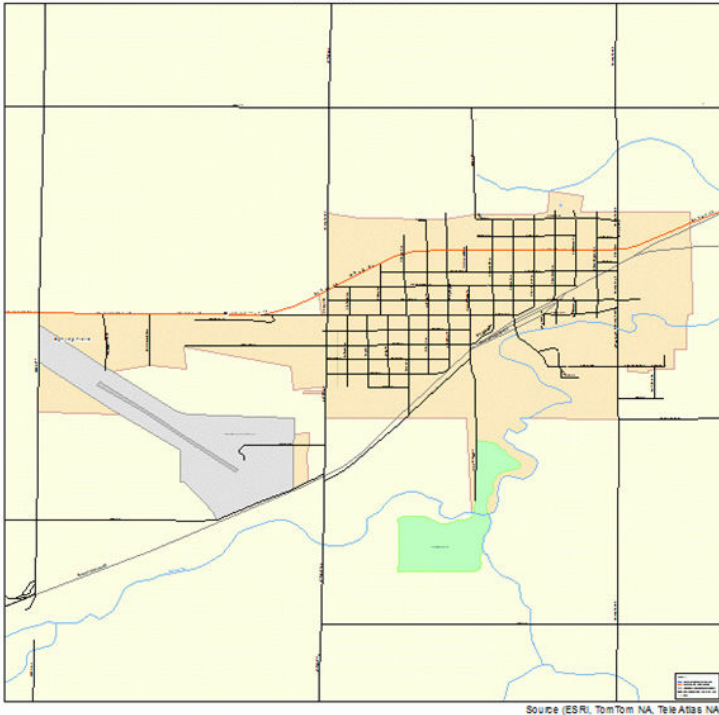
118
MILES

Southwest of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport

Note on the data: Analysis for the City of Springfield is based on data from the Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, American Community Survey, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, and other public and private sources.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

MAP OF SPRINGFIELD, MN



DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding demographic trends in the City of Springfield is key to determining effective economic development strategies. Demographic trends reflect the city’s overall vitality, workforce capacity, and housing demand. This section provides a snapshot of how Springfield’s demographics have shifted over the last decade, in contrast to regional, state, and national trends.

POPULATION

Based on 2020 Decennial Census data, Springfield had a population of 2,027. Between 2010 and 2020, the city experienced a slight population decline of 3.49%, decreasing from 2,100 in 2010 to 2,027 in 2020. During the same period, Brown County as a whole saw a population decrease of 0.45%, while the state of Minnesota experienced an 8.86% increase in population.

TABLE 1: CITY, COUNTY, STATE – POPULATION

POPULATION DATA	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA	UNITED STATES
POPULATION (2020)	2,027	25,912	5,706,494	331,449,281
POPULATION (2010)	2,100	26,030	5,241,914	303,965,272
POPULATION CHANGE (2010-2020)	-73	-118	464,580	27,484,009
POPULATION PERCENT CHANGE (2010-2020)	-3.48%	-0.45%	8.86%	9.04%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census

FIGURE 1: POPULATION PERCENT CHANGE (2010 TO 2020)²

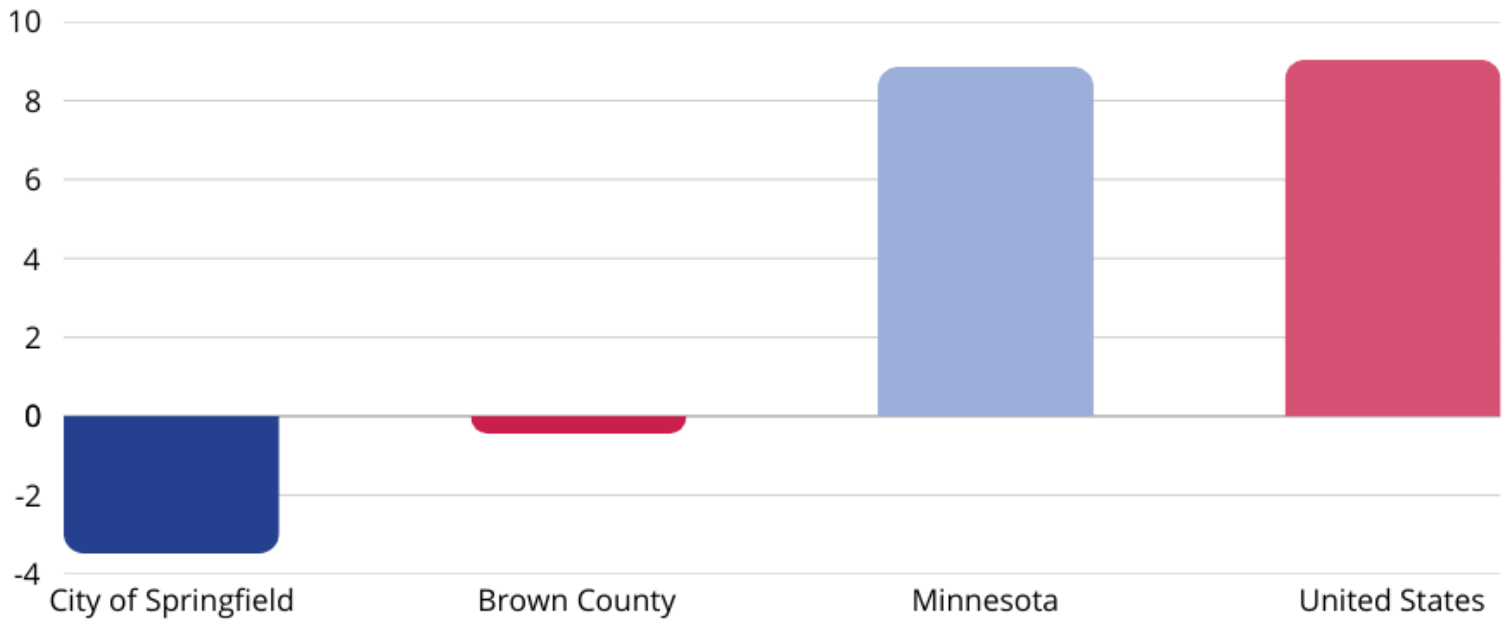
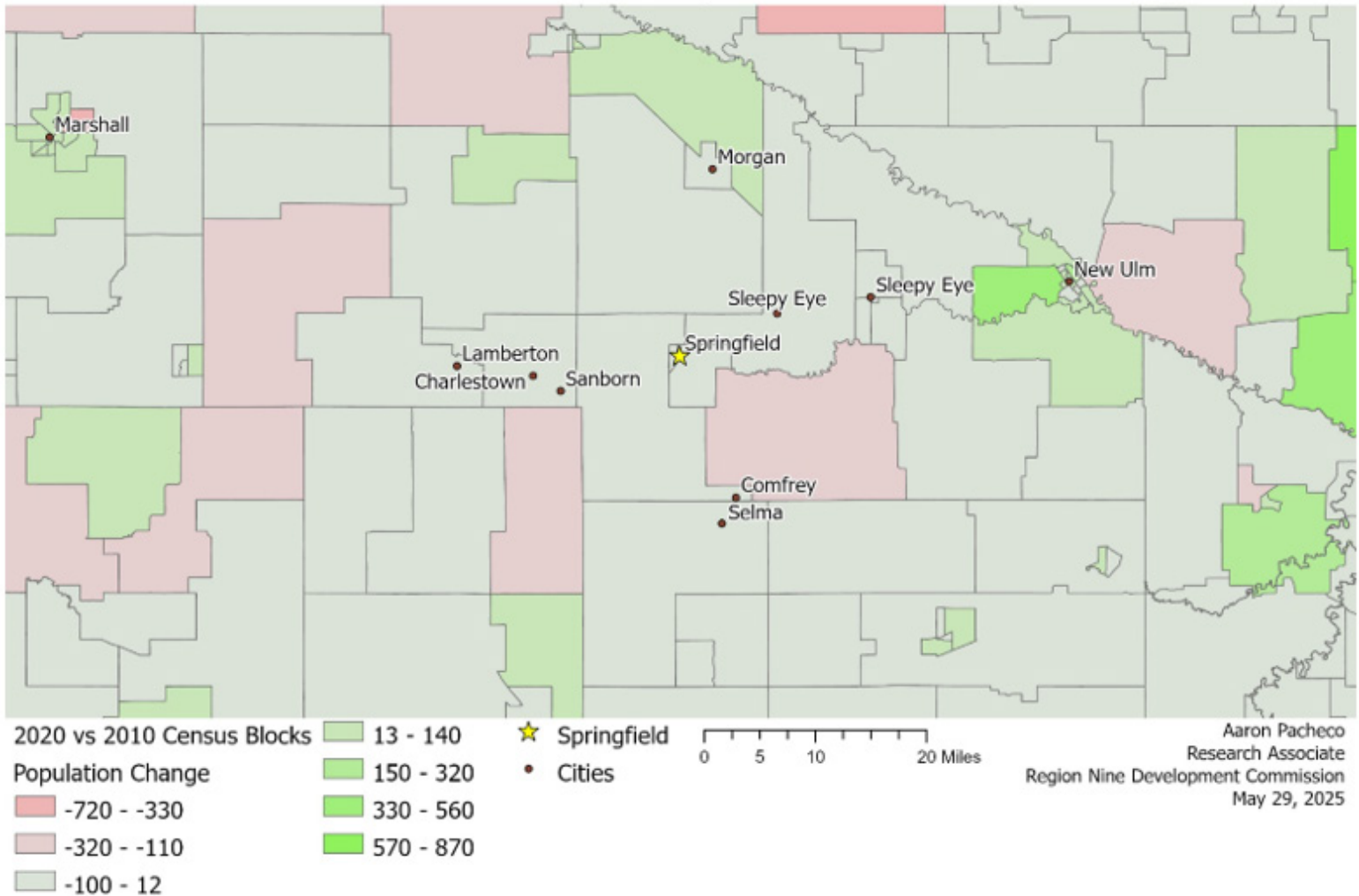


FIGURE 2: SPRINGFIELD POPULATION TRENDS 2010-2020³



² 2020 Decennial Census

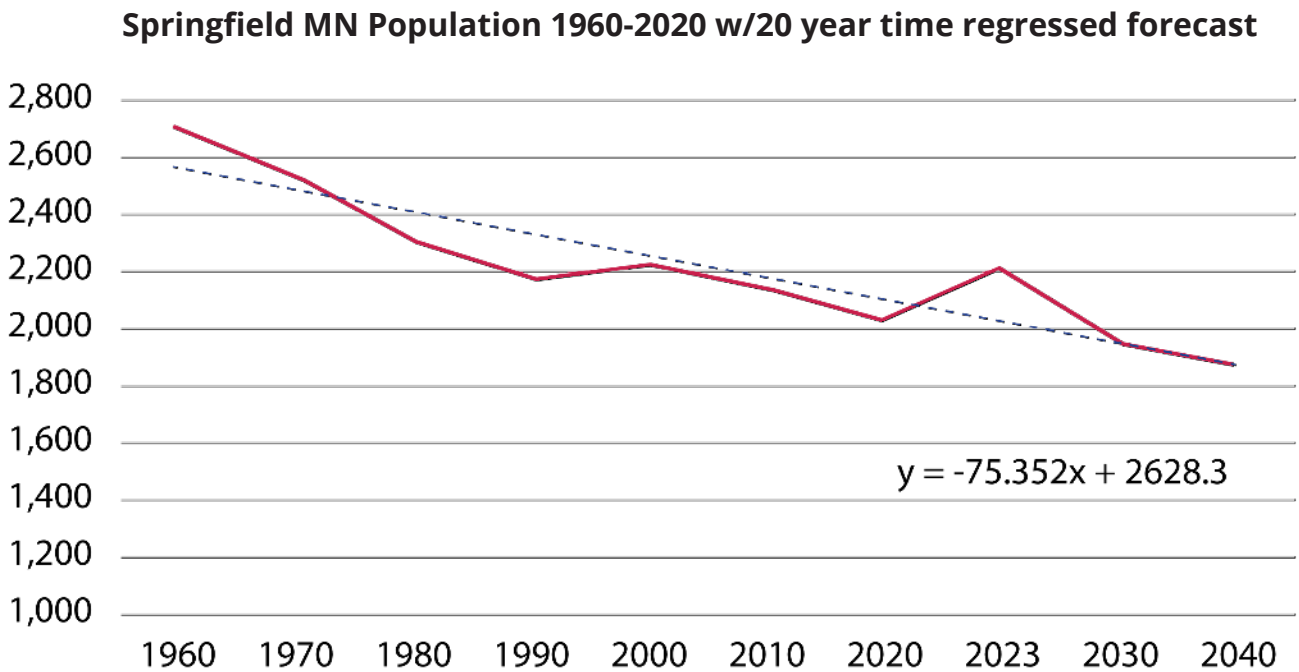
³ U.S. Census (Decennial Census years 2010 and 2020). Statistics estimated through apportion of 2010 data within 2020 Census boundaries. Census block values organized using the Jenks Natural Breaks

Figure 2 illustrates population changes across census blocks in and around Springfield, Minnesota. The population trend map for Springfield reveals that from 2010 to 2020, Springfield experienced minor population decreases or relatively stable population numbers. Surrounding areas show a mix of trends as many nearby blocks are shaded in red and pink, reflecting larger population losses, while some areas to the south and east appear green, indicating growth. Overall, the map highlights Springfield’s relatively small losses within a region experiencing mixed demographic shifts. This data showcase Springfield’s need to attract and retain residents through targeted economic development strategies, as the next chapters describe.

SPRINGFIELD POPULATION ESTIMATES

Population projections estimate that Springfield’s population could decline and fall below 2,000 by 2040. To address this potential steady decline, Springfield’s economic development strategy should focus on attracting and retaining new residents by investing in housing, community amenities, and quality of life improvements, combined with business and workforce development efforts to make the city an attractive place to work and live.

FIGURE 3: POPULATION PERCENT CHANGE



Note: The graph above shows population projections for Springfield based on trends from 1960 to 2020. These estimates were developed by RNDC using regression analysis and standard demographic methods to forecast how the population may change in the coming years.

POPULATION BY AGE

Springfield has a unique demographic profile with a higher ratio of both older adults and preschool-age children compared to Brown County, the broader region, and the State of Minnesota. This suggests a strong presence of young families and seniors, presenting opportunities to invest in amenities and services tailored to these age groups.

However, the city has a smaller share of college-age (18-24) and young adult (25-44) residents. This trend might reflect potential challenges in retaining and attracting younger adults. Addressing this gap will be critical to the long-term sustainability of Springfield's workforce.



TABLE 2: CITY, COUNTY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, STATE - PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY AGE⁴

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	REGION NINE AREA*	MINNESOTA
PRESCHOOL (0 TO 4)	8%	5.6%	5.5%	5.9%
SCHOOL AGE (5 TO 17)	18.1%	16.4%	16.3%	17.1%
COLLEGE AGE (18 TO 24)	5.1%	9.3%	12.3%	8.7%
YOUNG ADULT (25 TO 44)	21.3%	22%	23.8%	26.5%
ADULTS (45 TO 64)	21.1%	24.9%	23.7%	24.9%
OLDER ADULT (65 PLUS)	26.5%	21.8%	18.4%	16.8%

**Region Nine is the designated Economic Development District for the nine-county area of South-Central Minnesota (Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan Counties)*



Springfield's school-age (5-17) and preschool (0-4) share of residents is higher than the county, the region, and even state averages. **This demonstrates a growing demand for childcare services, playgrounds, and school capacity.**

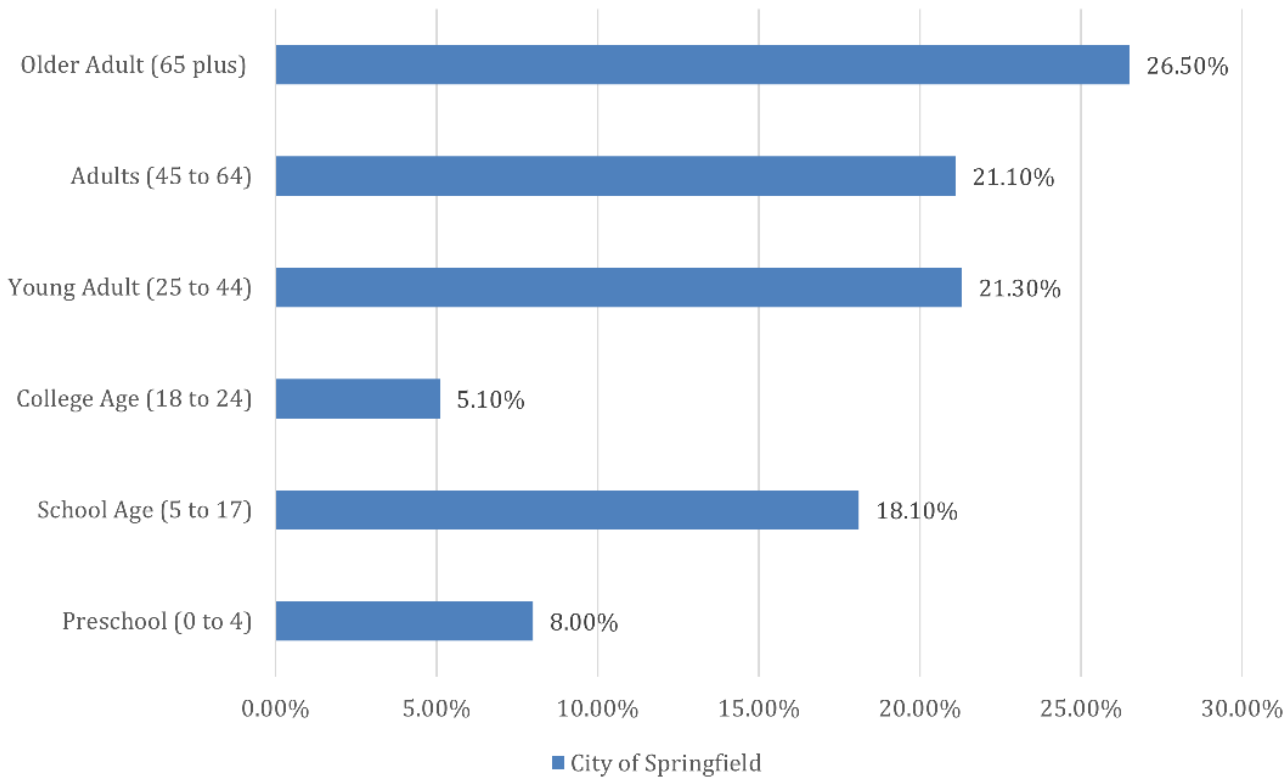
Only **5.1%** of Springfield's population falls into the 18-24 age bracket, showing that young adults are leaving town for higher education or employment opportunities elsewhere. **This highlights the need for youth retention strategies.**

Springfield's prime working-age population (25-44 and 45-64) is slightly below regional and state averages, indicating a local workforce that remains competitive but may experience challenges in the future. **This supports the case for workforce development efforts.**

Springfield's largest share of residents is older adults (65 plus), which make up 26.5% of the city's population. **This trend underscores the need for senior-oriented services, housing options, and community support.**

⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

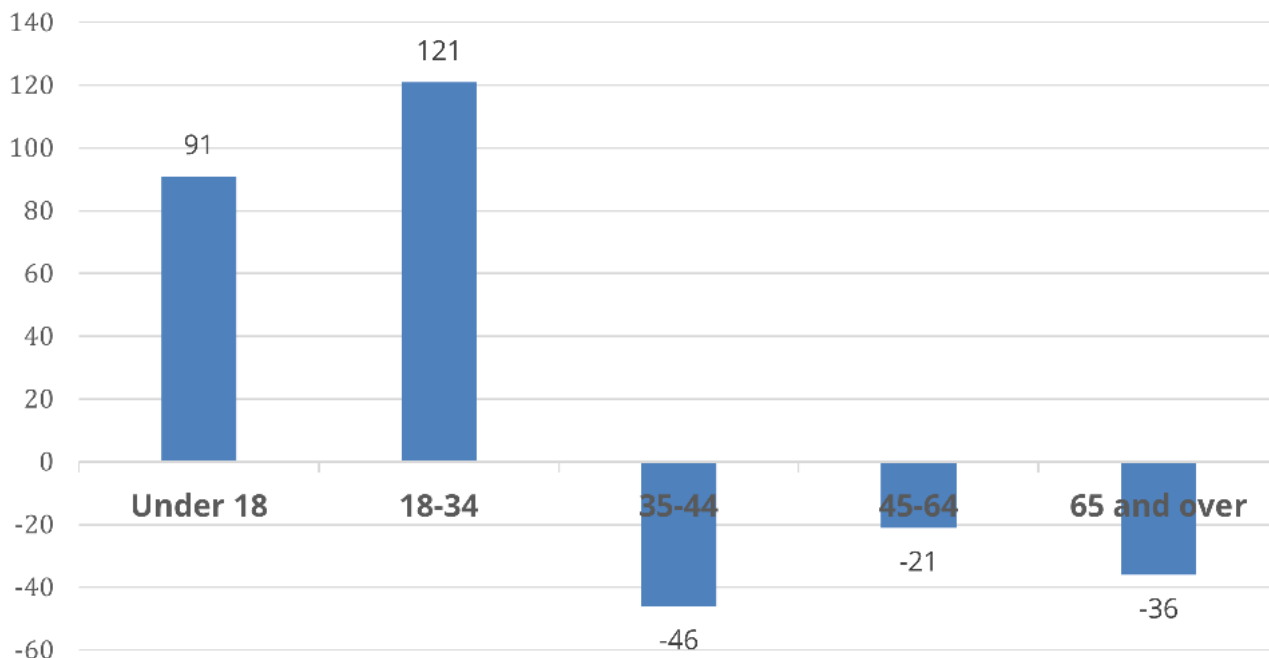
FIGURE 4: POPULATION BY AGE IN SPRINGFIELD⁵



AGE DISTRIBUTION

During 2010 and 2023, Springfield experienced significant changes in its age distribution. The largest increases were among residents under 18 and those aged 18 to 34, suggesting an influx of young family and early career professionals. On the other hand, the population aged 35 and older has seen a slight decline, indicating a potential out-migration from mid-career workers and older adults. From a strategic economic development perspective, these changes highlight a need to invest in services supporting young adults and youth, such as housing, childcare, and workforce opportunities, while also investing in maintaining infrastructure and amenities that serve seniors and the aging population.

FIGURE 5: CHANGE IN AGE DISTRIBUTION 2010-2023⁶



⁶ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

TABLE 3: POPULATION BY GENDER⁷

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA	UNITED STATES
FEMALE	1,141	12,898	2,851,582	167,842,453
MALE	1,068	12,928	2,862,134	164,545,087

MEDIAN AGE⁸



Springfield: 44.2
Brown County: 42.4
Minnesota: 38.6
United States: 38.7



POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Springfield’s population is predominantly White, with 91.1% of residents identifying as White alone. This is significantly higher than the state average of 78.4%. The city has a small Black or African American population at 4.3%, which is larger than that of Brown County. Overall, these figures indicate that Springfield is currently less racially diverse than the state.

However, projections from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)⁹ suggest that southern Minnesota will become increasingly diverse in the coming years. Hence, it will be important for Springfield to adopt strategies to effectively prepare for future demographic shifts.

TABLE 4: POPULATION BY RACE¹⁰

	SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
AMERICAN IND. OR ALASKAN NATIVE ALONE	0.8%	0.3%	0.9%
ASIAN ALONE	0%	0.6%	5.1%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN ALONE	4.3%	0.8%	6.8%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PAC. ISL. ALONE	0%	0%	0%
WHITE ALONE	91.1%	94.2%	78.4%
TWO OR MORE RACES	3.2%	2.8%	6.2%
SOME OTHER RACE ALONE	0.6%	1.3%	2.7%

FIGURE 6: POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY IN SPRINGFIELD¹²

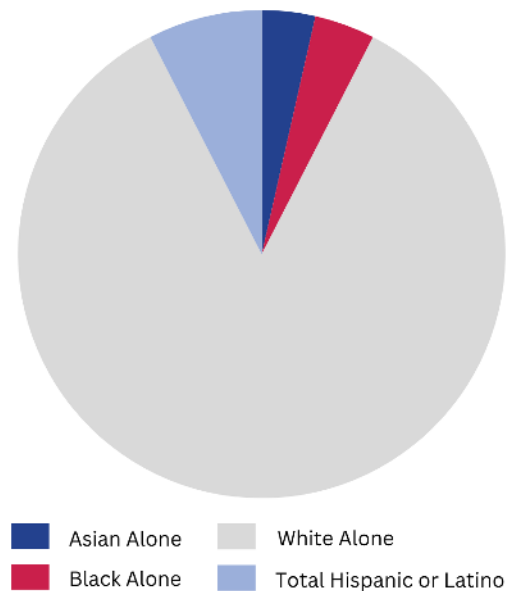


TABLE 5: POPULATION BY ETHNICITY¹¹

	SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
TOTAL HISPANIC OR LATINO	3.8%	4.8%	6.2%

7 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

8 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2022. Census Bureau

9 Minnesota’s Diversifying Workforce. Timothy O’Neill – Twin Cities Labor Market Analyst. 2022.

10 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

11 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

12 Source: Data Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION

Springfield has a comprehensive school system served by Springfield Public Schools (District 85), which is centrally located within the community. In 2022, Springfield Elementary School was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for Exemplary High Performance by the U.S. Department of Education, honoring its academic excellence and positive school culture.¹³

Educational attainment data from the city highlights both opportunities and challenges for Springfield’s workforce and economic development. Approximately 31.6% of Springfield’s residents hold a high school diploma as their highest level of education, significantly higher than the state average of 23.5%. This indicates that a considerable portion of the population lacks technical and advanced skill sets often required for specialized positions. As a result, Springfield can face challenges attracting businesses looking for highly skilled talent, which can hinder economic growth. Additionally, the proportion of residents with bachelor’s and

graduate degrees is lower than the state average, potentially contributing to “brain drain” as college-educated individuals seek opportunities elsewhere.

Despite this, there are key opportunities for workforce development. The percentage of Springfield residents with some college or an associate degree is comparable to state levels, offering a foundation for educational initiatives. Additionally, school enrollment for ages 3 and up is higher in Springfield than the state average, reflecting advancement in early childhood education.

To build on these strengths, Springfield can pursue partnerships with regional colleges, universities and training providers to expand access to credentialing and upskilling programs and foster cross-sector collaboration between industry and education. These efforts will be critical to strengthen the community’s talent pipeline and support business development.

TABLE 6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN 2020¹⁴

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
LESS THAN 9 TH GRADE	3.7%	2.6%	2.7%
9 TH TO 12 TH , NO DIPLOMA	5.4%	4.5%	3.5%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE (INCL. EQUIV.)	31.6%	35.1%	23.5%
SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE	20.0%	21.2%	19.8%
ASSOCIATE DEGREE	13.2%	12.4%	11.7%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	17.5%	16.6%	25.3%
GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	8.5%	7.6%	13.6%

School Enrollment (Ages 3 & up)

72.8%

Springfield population enrolled in K-12

69.7%

Minnesota population enrolled in K-12

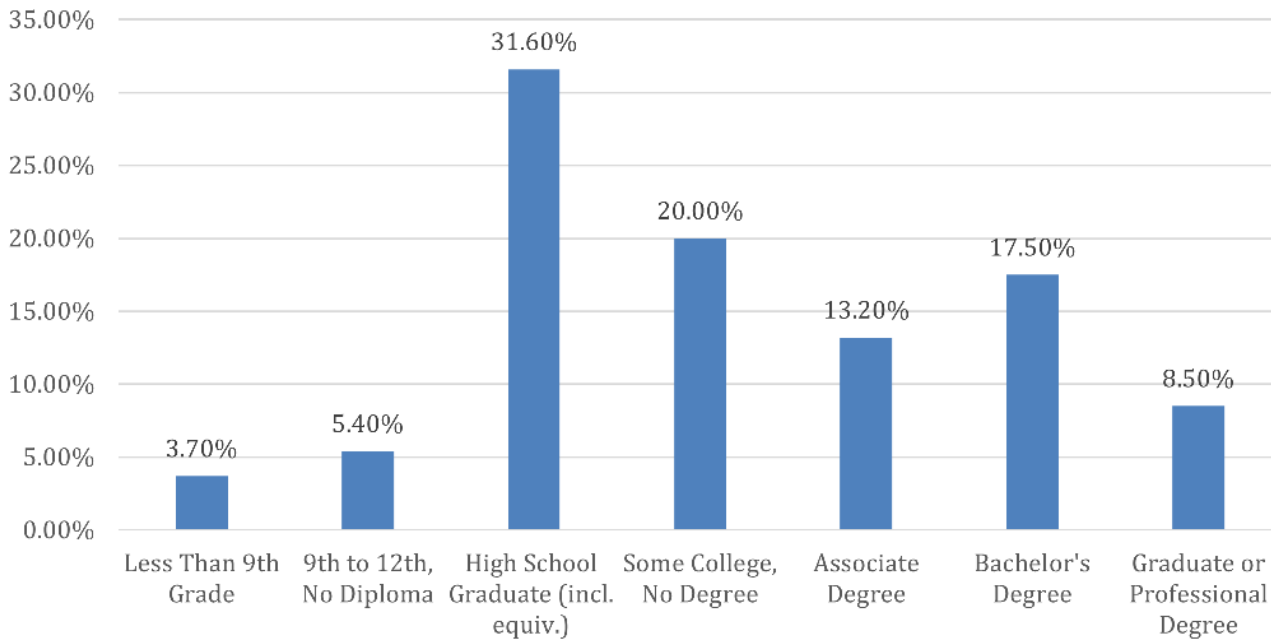
Why is this important?

According to Headwaters Economics, “Education is one of the most important indicators of the potential for economic success, and lack of education is closely linked to poverty. Studies show that areas with a higher-than-average-educated workforce grow faster, have higher incomes, and suffer less during economic downturns than other areas.”

¹³ The Secretary of Education Washington, DC 20202

¹⁴ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 7: CITY OF SPRINGFIELD EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2023¹⁵



HOUSING

Housing plays a critical role in successful economic development by shaping quality of life, availability of homes for new residents, and enabling individuals across different age groups to transition into housing options that meet their changing needs. As of 2023, the City of Springfield has 1,020 housing units, with a homeownership rate of 74.8%, higher than the state average of 72%, and the nation 65.2%.¹⁶ This higher rate of homeownership reflects long-term community investment and stability. Yet, Springfield’s relatively smaller housing stock can limit future demand and the city’s ability to seek growth.

As Table 7 shows, 23% of Springfield housing units are renter occupied, highlighting the importance of rental housing options for young professional, young families, and new residents who typically rely on renting as their first point when moving into a community.

To support Springfield’s growth and competitiveness, future development efforts could prioritize expanding diverse housing options that meet the needs of a changing workforce.

TABLE 7: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS IN 2023*

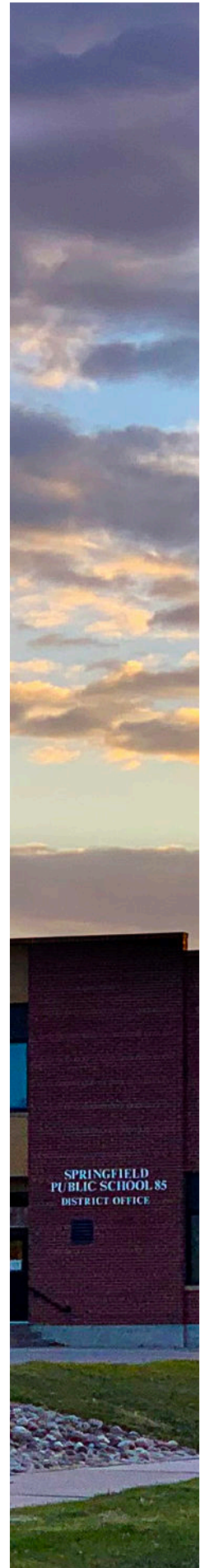
	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	%	BROWN COUNTY	%	MINNESOTA	%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	1,020	100%	11,802	100%	2,519,538	100%
OWNER-OCCUPIED*	697	68.3%	8,695	73.7%	1,652,534	65.6%
RENTER-OCCUPIED	235	23%	2,251	19.1%	630,433	25%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

*A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for.

15 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

16 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates



Homeownership Rate (2023)¹⁶

74.8%

Springfield

72%

Minnesota

Housing Mobility Since 2021¹⁷

13.1%

Springfield

24.7%

Minnesota

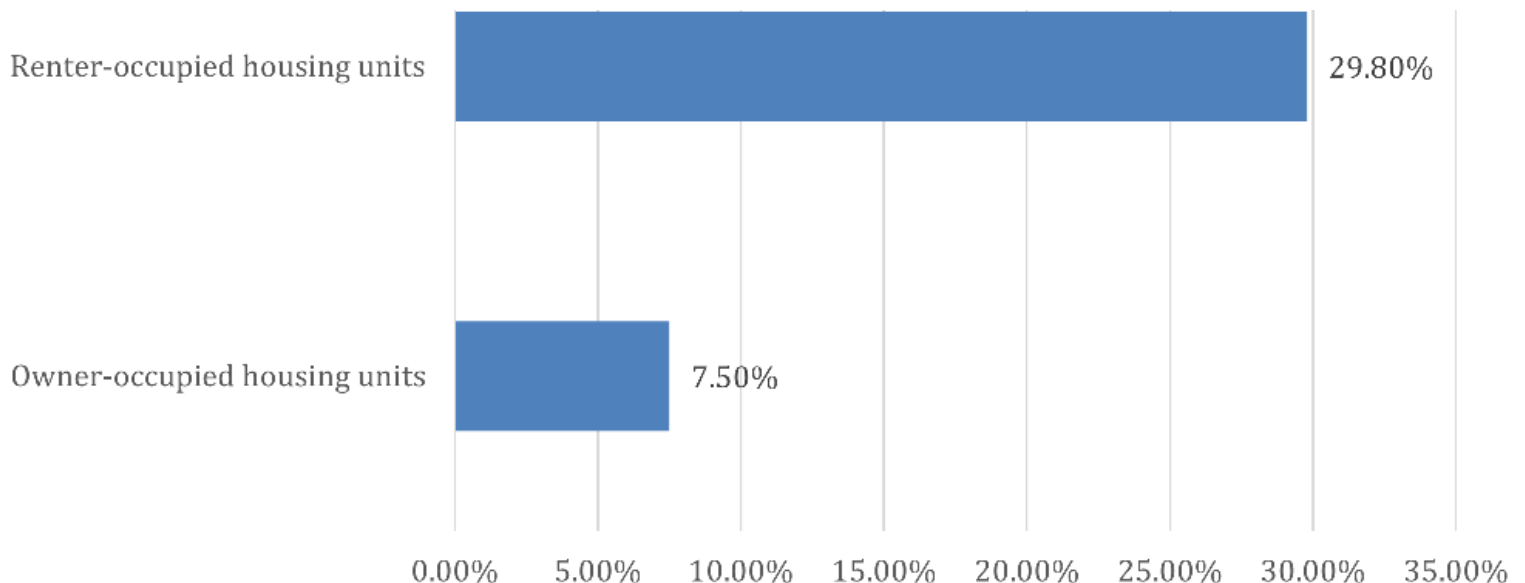
These figures include both new residents and individuals who relocated to their current residence since 2021. The results indicate that residents in Springfield tend to remain in their homes longer.

This higher residential stability suggests a close-knit community, a unique strength of Springfield. However, this can also indicate limited housing turnover, which can restrict options for new residents to find suitable housing. To address this, Springfield's housing development strategy can focus on developing entry level housing options and transitional housing.

RECENT MOVES BASED ON HOUSING TYPE

Since 2021, nearly 30% of new residents (relocating from within or from outside the city) in Springfield have been renters, compared to 7.5% of homeowners who are recent movers. This contrast shows that most homeowners in Springfield stay in their homes long-term, benefiting from stable or declining mortgage costs. On the other hand, 30% of recent move-ins are from renters who are more vulnerable to housing instability. This showcases the need to support recent renters who are increasingly impacted by rising rental costs, and limited pathways to homeownership. Increasing affordable rent options and implementing strategies to help renters transition into homeownership should be key components of Springfield's housing development strategies.

FIGURE 8: MOVED 2021 OR LATER INTO OCCUPIED HOUSING UNIT BY TYPE OF UNITS¹⁸



17 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles.

18 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles.

As shown in Table 8, Springfield’s housing stock is considerably older than that of Brown County and the state. Nearly 40% of homes (36.7%) were built between 1940 and 1969, with the median year of construction being 1950—older than the county and state averages. The rate of new housing development has also slowed since the 1940s, mirroring trends in the county and statewide. This limited recent construction presents both challenges and opportunities for economic development. To support long-term vitality, Springfield should prioritize maintaining and updating its existing housing stock while also encouraging new development to attract and retain families and a robust workforce.

TABLE 8: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS¹⁹

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
BUILT 2010 OR LATER	2.5%	5.7%	9.1%
BUILT 2000 TO 2009	5.3%	7.6%	13.3%
BUILT 1990 TO 1999	4.7%	8.8%	12.7%
BUILT 1980 TO 1989	6.8%	7.9%	12.3%
BUILT 1970 TO 1979	12.9%	13.4%	14.3%
BUILT 1940 TO 1969	36.7%	25.6%	22.6%

MEDIAN YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT



Springfield: 1950
Brown County: 1961
Minnesota: 1978

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability remains a key opportunity for Springfield to strengthen its economic development efforts and attract new residents. Compared to regional and state averages, Springfield offers lower housing prices than surrounding cities, Brown County, and the state. This is a key competitive advantage for the city.

However, challenges remain. As showing in Table 9, nearly 60% of renters in Springfield are cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their household income on rent and utilities. **This indicates that many tenants struggle to afford basic housing costs.**

Homeowners tend to fare slightly better, with lower housing costs and generally greater housing stability.²⁰ They also benefit from lower median mortgage costs compared to county and state averages.

Addressing housing access and affordability, particularly for renters, represents a key opportunity for the city to strengthen Springfield’s long-term economic success. By incentivizing diverse housing options, the city can better meet the needs of young families, early-career professionals, essential workers, and new residents who are more likely to rent.

TABLE 9: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY²¹

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
PERCENT OF COST-BURDENED OWNER HOUSEHOLDS*	31.3%	20.4%	22.4%
PERCENT OF COST-BURDENED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS*	58.7%	41.9%	44.6%
MEDIAN MONTHLY MORTGAGE COST (2023)	\$1,043	\$1,355	\$1,890
MEDIAN MONTHLY GROSS RENT (2023)	\$781	\$931	\$1,235

Renters in Springfield are nearly twice as likely to be cost-burdened as homeowners.

*HUD defines cost-burdened families as those “who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing” and “may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.”

19 Data Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.
 20 U.S. Department of Commerce. 2022. Census Bureau
 21 Data Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

TABLE 10: HOUSING COSTS²²

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	SLEEPY EYE	ST. JAMES	REDWOOD FALLS	NEW ULM
MEDIAN MONTHLY MORTGAGE COST (2023)	\$1,043	\$1,180	\$1,182	\$1,244	\$1,373
MEDIAN MONTHLY GROSS RENT (2023)	\$781	\$757	\$805	\$824	\$974



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (2010-2023)²³

Change in mortgage cost (2010-2023)= -\$374

Change in gross rent (2010-2023)= \$163



From 2010 to 2023, the median monthly cost to mortgage a house in Springfield decreased by \$374, while the gross cost to rent increased by \$163 per month.

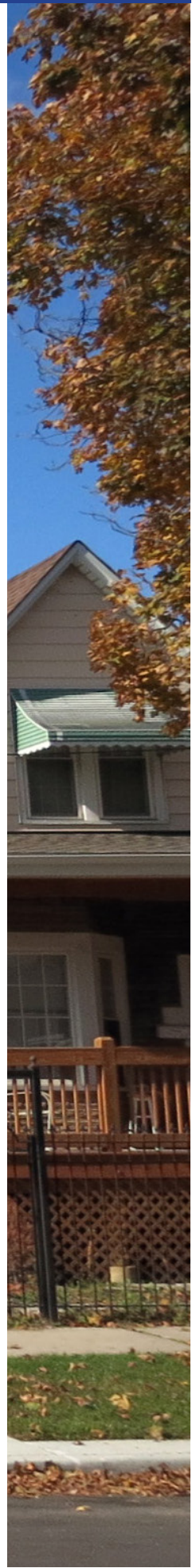
Data from the Department of Commerce shows that Springfield is in a unique position to leverage declining mortgage costs and stronger homeownership rates than state averages. However, data also reveals there is a higher level of transitions among renters, who are increasing paying higher rent. To support inclusive growth, the city should also prioritize the needs of renters by promoting affordable rental options alongside homeownership opportunities.

To address these, Springfield’s economic development efforts should center around:

- Expanding affordable housing and rental options
- Increasing local income through workforce development and business attraction
- Developing first-time homebuyers’ programs targeting young families, early-career professionals, single-parent households, and lower-income households

²² Data Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

²³ U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics’ Populations at Risk, headwaterseconomics.org/par/.”



EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE

INCOME

In 2023, the median household income in Springfield was estimated at \$59,412, and income per resident was \$28,931. While Springfield enjoys lower housing costs compared to the state and county averages, workers also have lower wages, and there is a high share of lower income households. Economic development initiatives should focus on increasing wages and attracting livable-wage industries, as well as prioritizing housing that matches local salaries, and not regional or state averages.



Springfield (2023)²⁴

- Per Capita Income: **\$28,931**
- Median Monthly Household Income: **\$59,412**

Brown County (2023)

- Per Capita Income: **\$36,580**
- Median Monthly Household Income: **\$68,690**

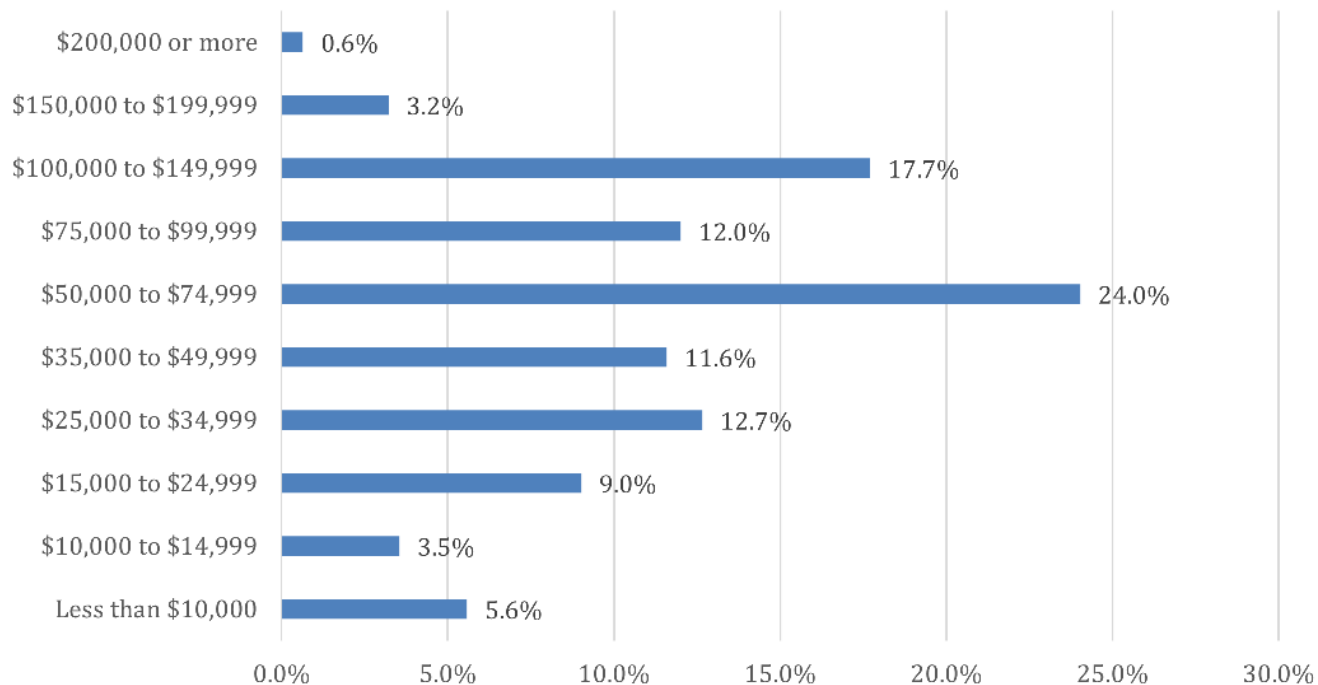
Minnesota (2023)

- Per Capita Income: **\$46,957**
- Median Monthly Household Income: **\$87,556**

TABLE 11: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION²⁵

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
LESS THAN \$10,000	5.6%	3.9%	3.5%
\$10,000 TO \$14,999	3.5%	2.9%	2.8%
\$15,000 TO \$24,999	9.0%	6.5%	5.4%
\$25,000 TO \$34,999	12.7%	8.0%	5.8%
\$35,000 TO \$49,999	11.6%	11.8%	9.6%
\$50,000 TO \$74,999	24.0%	21.3%	15.7%
\$75,000 TO \$99,999	12.0%	14.6%	13.5%
\$100,000 TO \$149,999	17.7%	20.3%	19.7%
\$150,000 TO \$199,999	3.2%	6.4%	10.9%
\$200,000 OR MORE	0.6%	4.2%	13.1%

FIGURE 9: HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME IN SPRINGFIELD²⁶



24 U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.
 25 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.
 26 U.S. Department of Commerce. 2022. Census Bureau

POVERTY

Poverty is an important indicator of economic well-being. In Springfield, overall poverty levels are slightly higher than county figures, but on par with state averages. Springfield is effectively managing youth and family poverty, as they are lower than county and state averages. However, poverty among residents 65 and older remains elevated.

Besides seniors, another demographic facing economic challenges are female-headed householders with children under 18 years. These insights display an opportunity to improve economic security for seniors, single-parent households, and low-wage families through investments in workforce development, affordable childcare, housing, and senior services.

TABLE 12: POVERTY RATE²⁷

PEOPLE BELOW POVERTY	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
TOTAL	9.4%	7.7%	9.2%
UNDER 18 YEARS	5.0%	7.4%	10.6%
65 YEARS AND OLDER	10.6%	9.9%	8.4%

TABLE 13: POVERTY RATE BY FAMILY TYPE²⁸

	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	BROWN COUNTY	MINNESOTA
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY	4.3%	4.7%	5.5%
FAMILIES WITH RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS	5.8%	6.6%	8.7%
FEMALE HOUSEHOLDER, NO HUSBAND PRESENT	13.9%	16.6%	19.5%
FEMALE HOUSEHOLDER, NO HUSBAND PRESENT WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS	14.7%	25.6%	26.2%

HEALTH

Population 65 and under without health insurance coverage: **5.4%**³⁰



DISABLED POPULATION

16.4%

Springfield

11.4%

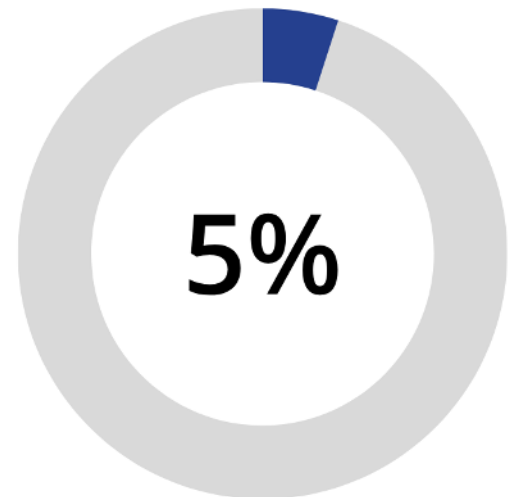
Brown County

11.8%

Minnesota

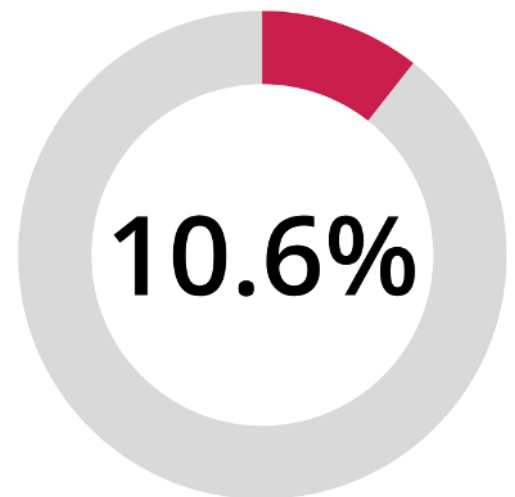
FIGURE 10: POVERTY BY AGE IN SPRINGFIELD²⁹

Children (Under 18)



■ Poverty ■ Non-Poverty

Seniors (65 and over)



■ Poverty ■ Non-Poverty

²⁷ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

²⁸ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

²⁹ 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles. Retrieved from: Cemsureporter.org

WORKFORCE

Census data reveals that Springfield’s resident workforce, those who live in Springfield but may work elsewhere, is relatively younger than the city’s overall workforce. As shown in Table 14, 25.1% of resident workers are aged 29 or younger, compared to 19.4% of all workers employed in Springfield. Most resident workers fall within the 30 to 54 age range (44.9%), indicating a strong base of established workers. In contrast, a higher share of workers employed in Springfield are age 55 or older (37.8%) than among resident workers (29.9%), suggesting that many older individuals commute into Springfield for work.

Earnings data (Table 15) further highlights differences between resident and non-resident workers. Nearly half (48.8%) of Springfield residents earn more than \$3,333 per month, while only 37.9% of those employed in Springfield (regardless of where they live) fall into this income bracket. On the other hand, a greater share of Springfield’s workforce earns \$1,250 or less per month (32.8%) compared to resident workers (27.2%). This suggests that while many higher earners live in Springfield and may commute elsewhere for work, a large number of lower-wage jobs in the city are filled by individuals commuting in.

Compared to Brown County, Springfield has a slightly lower share of high-income resident workers (48.8% vs. 51.9%) and a higher share of low-income workers employed in the city (32.8% vs. 22.3%).

Note: Resident workers are individuals who live in the area, regardless of where they work. All workers or workers refers to those who work in the area, regardless of where they live.

TABLE 14: WORKERS IN SPRINGFIELD BY AGE³¹

	RESIDENT WORKERS	ALL WORKERS
AGE 29 OR YOUNGER	25.1%	19.40%
AGE 30 TO 54	44.9%	42.80%
AGE 55 OR OLDER	29.9%	37.80%



As of 2020, Springfield had an employment rate of **56%**³³

TABLE 15: WORKERS IN SPRINGFIELD BY EARNINGS³²

WORKERS BY EARNINGS (2022)	SPRINGFIELD		BROWN COUNTY	
	RESIDENT WORKERS	WORKERS	RESIDENT WORKERS	WORKERS
\$1,250 PER MONTH OR LESS	27.2%	32.8%	25.3%	22.3%
\$1,251 TO \$3,333 PER MONTH	24.0%	29.4%	22.8%	48%
MORE THAN \$3,333 PER MONTH	48.8%	37.9%	51.9%	29.6%

Springfield’s economy is primarily supported by three key industries: **Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade**. Together, these sectors account for close to **50%** of the city’s industry makeup. As part of its economic development strategies, Springfield should continue to strengthen and support these core sectors, while proactively preparing for future shifts and investing in underrepresented industries such as professional services and finance. Diversifying the city’s local economy will enhance the local resilience and create new pathways for growth.

30 MN Compass 2025

31 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap. Area Profile Analysis

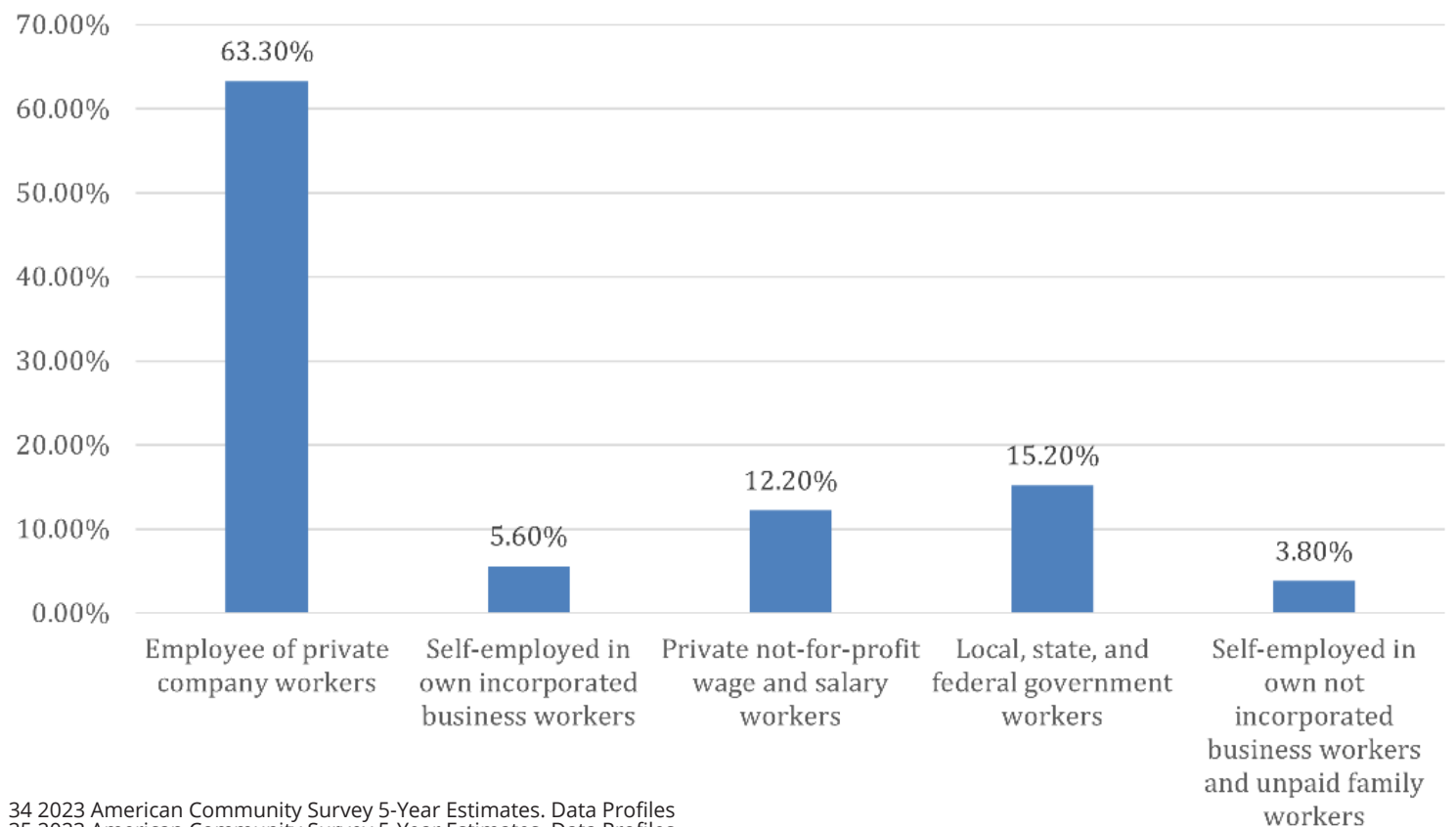
32 MN Compass 2025

33 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles

**TABLE 16: INDUSTRY FOR THE CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION IN SPRINGFIELD
2023 (16 YEARS AND OVER)³⁴**

INDUSTRY	PERCENTAGE
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING AND HUNTING	2.90%
MINING, QUARRYING, AND OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION	0.40%
UTILITIES	0.30%
CONSTRUCTION	6.40%
MANUFACTURING	14.70%
WHOLESALE TRADE	3.90%
RETAIL TRADE	10.00%
TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING	7.70%
INFORMATION	0.70%
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	3.80%
REAL ESTATE AND RENTAL AND LEASING	0.80%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES	3.20%
MANAGEMENT OF COMPANIES AND ENTERPRISES	1.20%
ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION	1.30%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	8.80%
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	16.60%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION	1.20%
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES	8.60%

FIGURE 11: TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT IN SPRINGFIELD³⁵



³⁴ 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles

³⁵ 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles

COMMUTING

In 2023, Springfield residents had an average commute time of 21.8 minutes³⁶, which is comparable to the state average of 22.7 minutes.

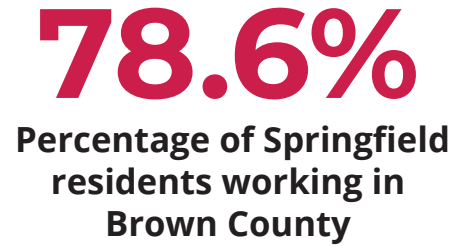


TABLE 17. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS³⁹

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK	
LESS THAN 10 MINUTES	48.5%
10 TO 14 MINUTES	3.9%
15 TO 19 MINUTES	10.0%
20 TO 24 MINUTES	5.9%
25 TO 29 MINUTES	1.1%
30 TO 34 MINUTES	3.8%
35 TO 39 MINUTES	2.8%
40 TO 44 MINUTES	3.9%
45 TO 59 MINUTES	3.6%
60 OR MORE MINUTES	9.2%

Nearly half of Springfield’s workforce commutes 10 minutes or less to their place of work, showcasing a strong local employment market. However, 9.2% of residents drive for 60 or more minutes to their place of work, highlighting the need to increase local job access, enhance regional transportation options, and remote work opportunities. As shown below, key employment destinations for local workers are New Ulm, Redwood Falls, and Sleepy Eye.

WHERE DO SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS WORK?

TABLE 18. SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS WITH IDENTIFIED EMPLOYER LOCATION⁴⁰

EMPLOYER LOCATION	% OF WORKERS
SPRINGFIELD, MN	31.20%
NEW ULM, MN	10.40%
REDWOOD FALLS, MN	4.50%
SLEEPY EYE, MN	4.30%
COMFREY, MN	3.50%
WINDOM, MN	2.60%
MANKATO, MN	2.00%
MARSHALL, MN	1.80%
LAMBERTON, MN	1.40%
ST. PAUL, MN	1.20%
ALL OTHER LOCATIONS	37.10%



36 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

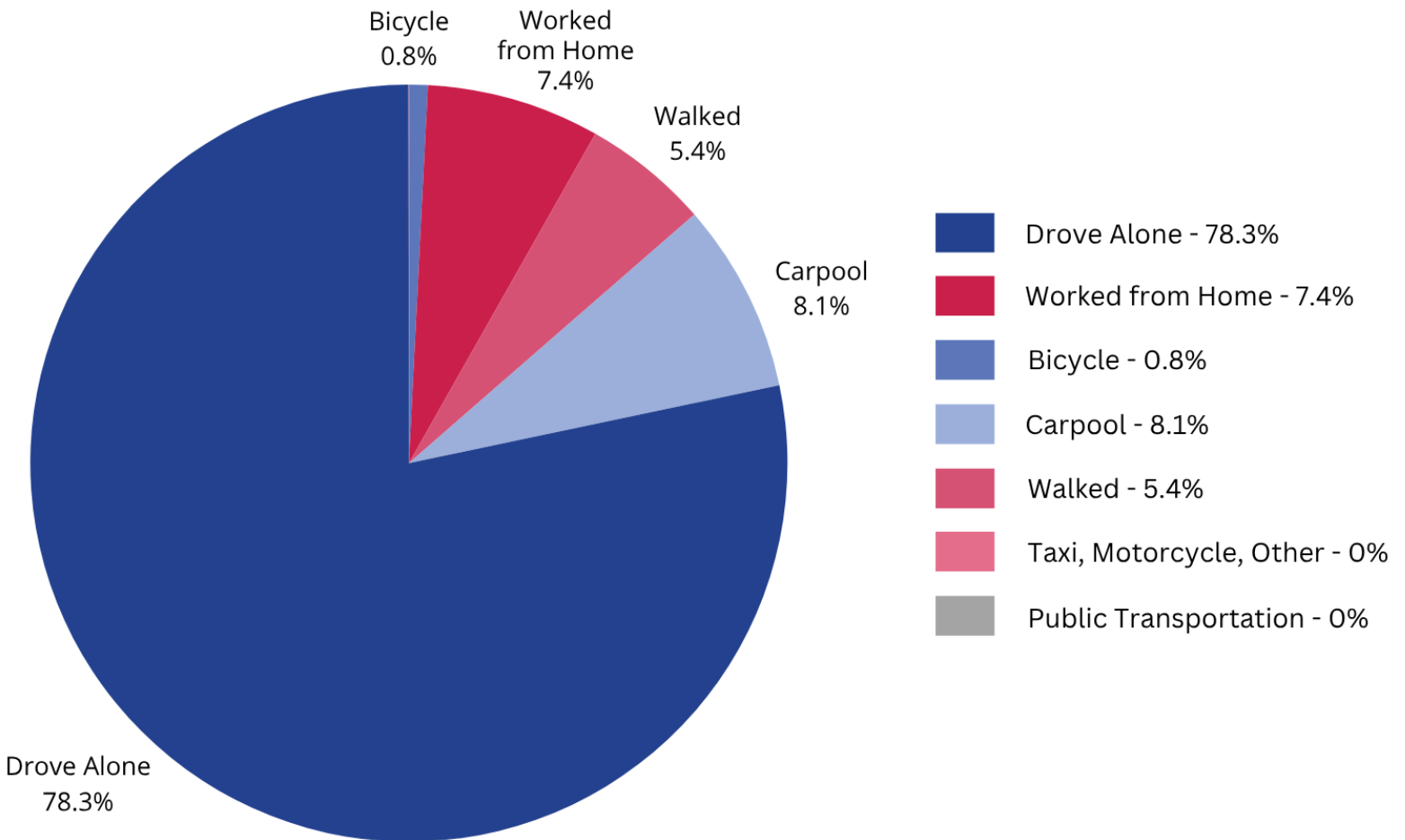
37 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles

38 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

39 Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C.

40 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

FIGURE 12: MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK (WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER)⁴¹



WHERE DO SPRINGFIELD WORKERS LIVE?

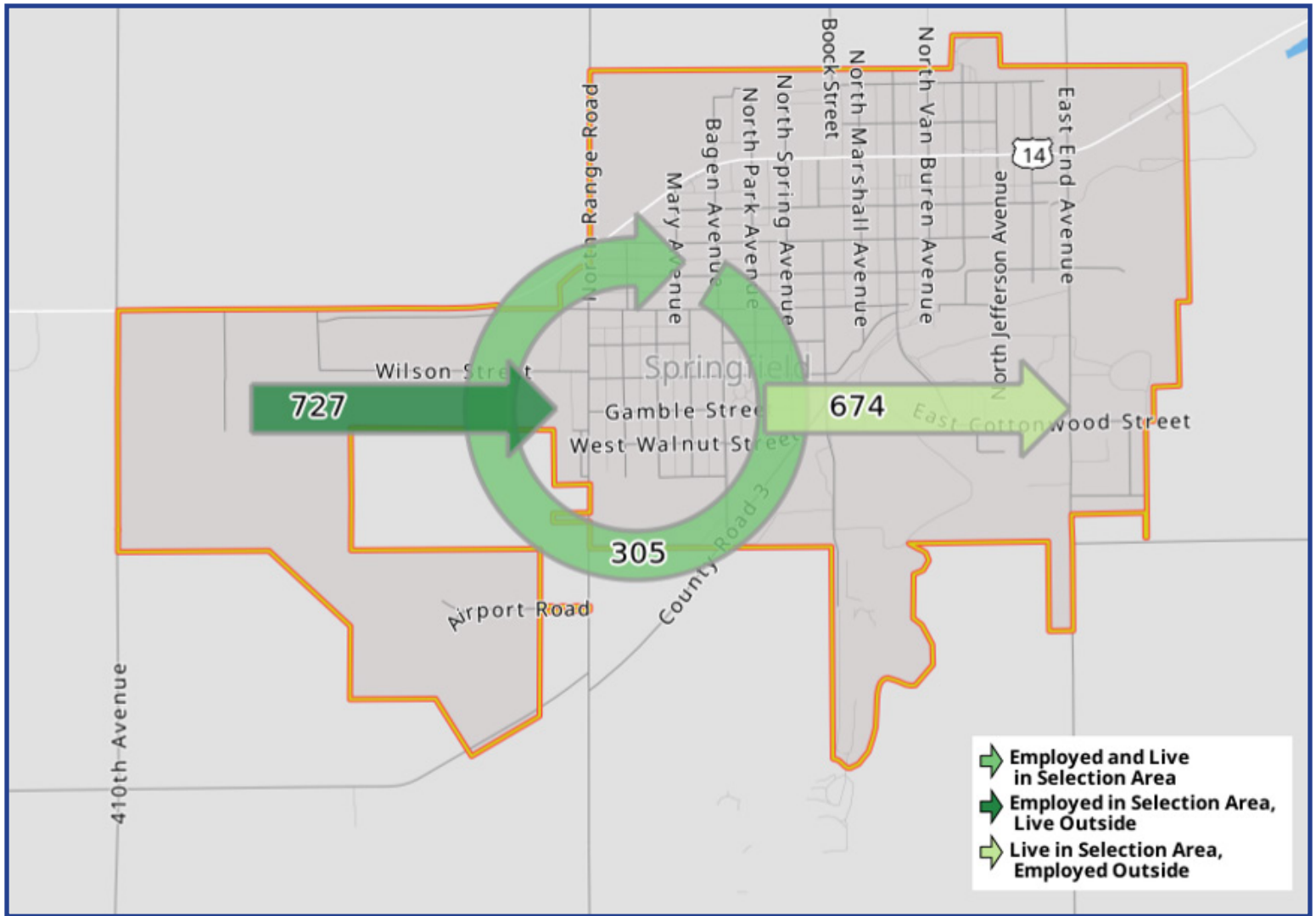
As Table 19 shows, approximately 30% of workers employed in Springfield also live in town. Census data reveals that a vast majority of Springfield’s workforce commutes from surrounding communities or more distant locations. This reinforces the city’s role as a regional employment hub in certain industries. To encourage these commuters to relocate to Springfield, the city could explore strategies focused on affordable housing, enhancing local amenities, and promoting quality of life benefits that make Springfield an attractive place to live and work.

TABLE 19. SPRINGFIELD WORKERS PLACE OF RESIDENCE⁴²

EMPLOYEE RESIDENCE	% OF WORKERS
SPRINGFIELD, MN	29.60%
COMFREY, MN	5.90%
NEW ULM, MN	4.50%
SLEEPY EYE, MN	3.30%
LAMBERTON, MN	2.40%
MORGAN, MN	2.20%
REDWOOD FALLS, MN	1.70%
OLIVIA, MN	1.50%
MOUNTAIN LAKE, MN	1.40%
SANBORN, MN	1.30%
ALL OTHER LOCATIONS	46.30%

41 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data Profiles
 42 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

FIGURE 13: INFLOW/OUTFLOW ANALYSIS⁴³



An inflow and outflow analysis examines the movement of workers in and out of a specific area. For Springfield, this analysis reveals that the city has a net inflow of workers, indicating that more people commute into the city for work than leave for jobs elsewhere. According to Figure 13, 727 individuals commute into Springfield for work, while 305 both live and work within the city, and 674 residents commute for work outside the city.⁴⁴

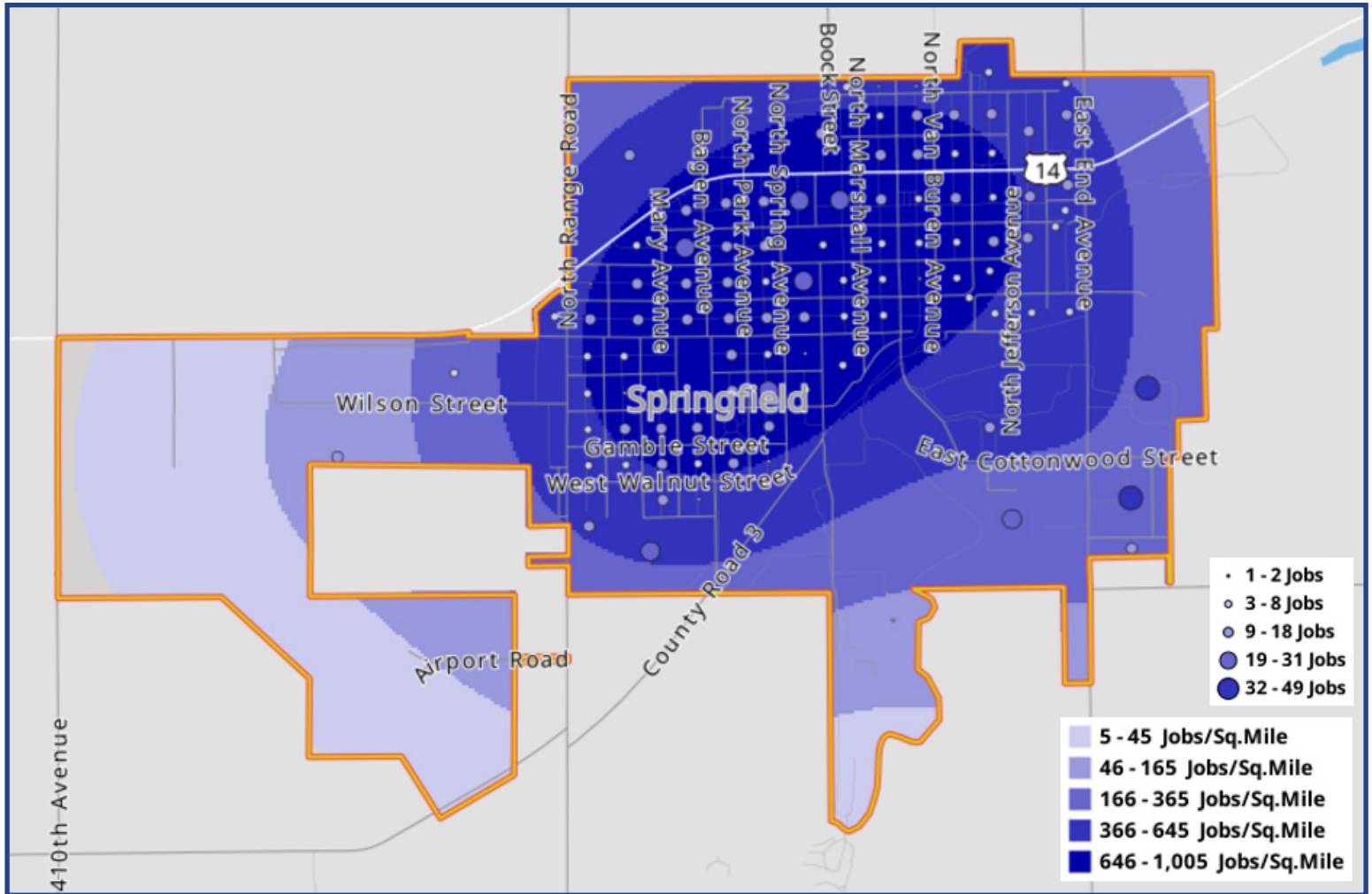
This inflow and outflow analysis reveals that Springfield has a unique strength as a regional employment hub that attracts a significant workforce from around the region. **It also presents a valuable long-term opportunity for the city to continue attracting commuters by investing in housing affordability, quality of life improvements, and workforce retention.** Attracting these commuters to become residents would grow the local residential tax base, increase consumer spending, and support long-term community vitality.

⁴³ U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

⁴⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

Figures 14 and 15 illustrate the distribution of jobs in Springfield by location and intensity, comparing residents who work locally (Figure 14) with all workers regardless of residency (Figure 15). Both profiles show that Springfield’s jobs are concentrated in its core downtown area. Figure 14 shows that local resident workers are more dispersed and spread out among small businesses and less centralized jobs. Nonresident workers, on the other hand, are primarily employed in the densest part of town.

FIGURE 14: WORK AREA PROFILE ANALYSIS OF RESIDENT WORKERS (2022)⁴⁵



45 Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD. Home Area Profile Analysis.

FIGURE 15: WORK AREA PROFILE ANALYSIS OF ALL WORKERS (2022)⁴⁶

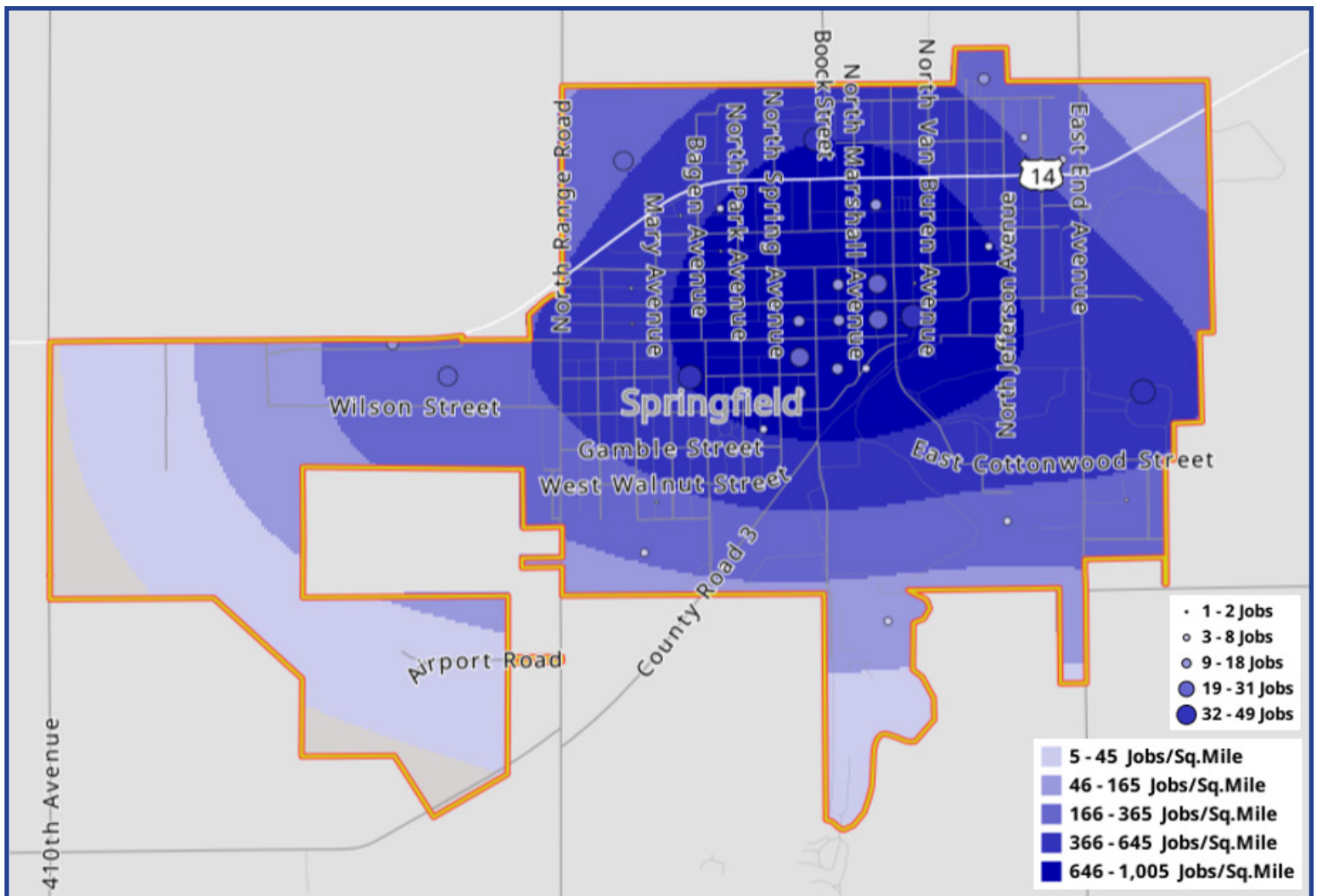


Table 20 shows that a significant share of employees in Springfield earning \$1,250 per month or less are women (60.20%), highlighting persistent gender disparities in access to higher-paying jobs. Nearly half of these low-wage jobs are held by workers 29 or younger (45.9%), and are also concentrated in the industries of Accommodation and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade.⁴⁷

Workers 55 or older, and workers 29 or younger, also appear to be underemployed or reliant on low-income or part-time employment. These trends demonstrate the need for expanding youth workforce development programming that intentionally creates pathways for high-wage employment through upskilling, particularly for young women and adults 55 and older. This data also reinforces the need to provide affordable and conveniently located housing options to accommodate the local workforce.

⁴⁶ Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD. Home Area Profile Analysis.

⁴⁷ Source: U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD. Home Area Profile Analysis

TABLE 20: GENDER & AGE BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENT WORKERS EARNING \$1,250/MONTH OR LESS⁴⁸

WORKERS SEX	EARNINGS \$1,250 PER MONTH OR LESS
FEMALE	60.20%
MALE	39.80%
WORKERS AGE	EARNINGS \$1,250 PER MONTH OR LESS
AGE 29 OR YOUNGER	45.9%
AGE 30 TO 54	24.1%
AGE 55 OR OLDER	30.1%

FIGURE 17: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENT WORKERS EARNING \$1,250/MONTH OR LESS⁴⁹

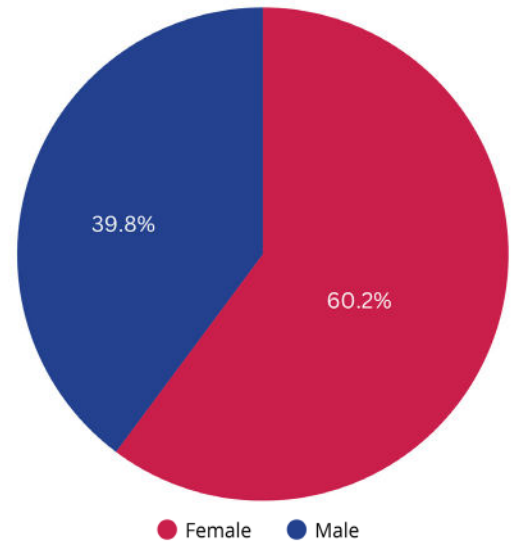
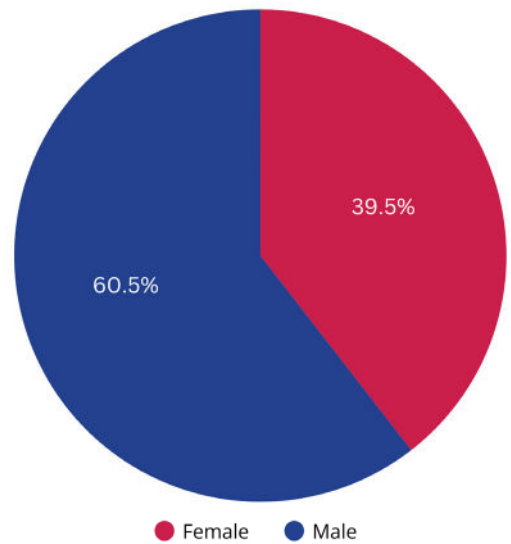


TABLE 21: GENDER & AGE BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENT WORKERS EARNING MORE THAN \$3,333/MONTH⁵⁰

WORKERS SEX	EARNING MORE THAN \$3,333/MONTH
FEMALE	39.5%
MALE	60.5%
WORKERS AGE	EARNING MORE THAN \$3,333/MONTH
AGE 29 OR YOUNGER	15.5%
AGE 30 TO 54	57.3%
AGE 55 OR OLDER	27.2%

FIGURE 18: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENT WORKERS EARNING MORE THAN \$3,333



As shown in Table 21, high-earning jobs in Springfield paying \$3,333 per month or more are predominantly held by men (60.5%), highlighting a significant gender wage gap in the local economy. This showcases persistent barriers for women to access full-time employment and leadership roles in growing industries. Among high earners, a large number are employed in Manufacturing (23.4%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (13.2%).

48 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

49 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

50 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap

Public involvement was an important part of developing this plan. Community engagement was widespread and included a variety of ways to gather input from the public. This included a community survey that was created with the assistance of Springfield city staff and the local Economic Development Authority (EDA). The survey gathered input about residents' experiences, challenges, and vision for the future of Springfield.

SURVEY RESPONSES KEY INSIGHTS

Total Responses

350

Of the responses...

294

Live in Springfield

192

Work in Springfield

155 (53%)

Live and Work in Springfield

36 (19%)

Work but don't live in Springfield

Overall Satisfaction

- Survey respondents rated Springfield as a decent place to live, with an average rating of **3.7 out of 5**.
- Community satisfaction was higher among respondents who both live and work in the city. Non-working residents reported lower levels of satisfaction, indicating a relationship between local employment and quality of life.
- Workers who commuted to town were more likely to recommend Springfield as a place to work

Top Factors for Working in Springfield for non-resident commuters

1. Job opportunities
2. Quality of schools
3. Proximity to family

Likelihood to Continue Living Here (Next 5 Years)

- **58.3%** of respondents are very likely to continue living here
- Residents with jobs in town are more likely to stay
- People with a positive experience in the community are about **58.7%** more likely to stay than those with a neutral or negative experience.

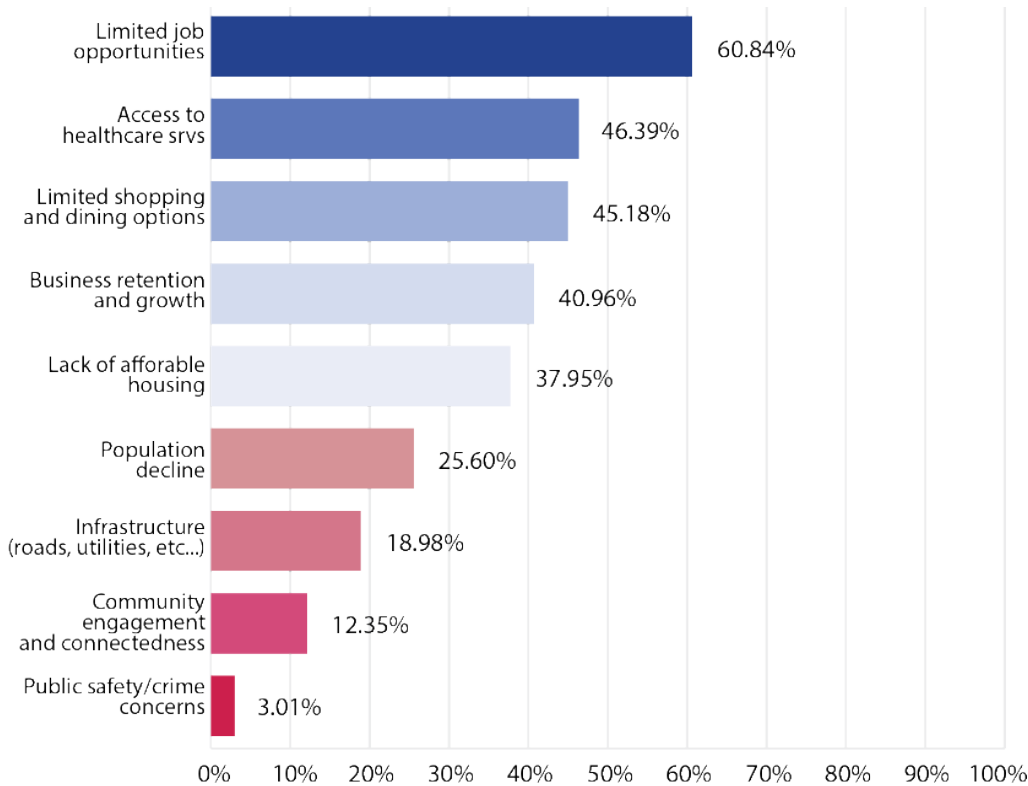
Top Factors for Living in Springfield

1. Proximity to family
2. Sense of community/small town feel
3. Quality of schools
4. Public safety/low crime
5. Location



SPRINGFIELD'S BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Q5 - What do you see as Springfield's biggest challenges? (select up to 3)



Which do you think should be addressed first?

1. Business development and job opportunities
2. Housing
3. Access to health care

RATING AMENITIES AND SERVICES

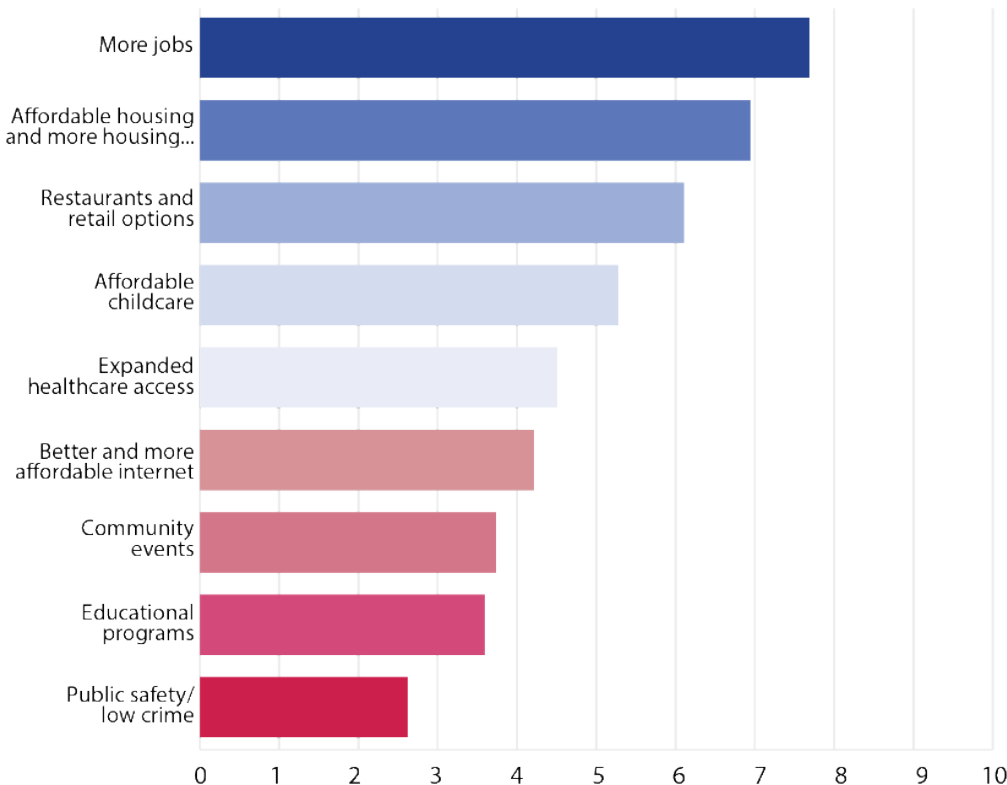
Highest Rated

1. Public Safety / Low Crime
2. K-12 Education
3. Community Connectedness

Lowest Rated

1. Housing Options and Cost
2. Job Opportunities
3. Healthcare Facilities

Q9 - What improvements would make Springfield a better place to live? (Please rank the following options from most important (1) to least important (9))



When asked about Springfield's economic future **over 50%** of respondents described it as uncertain, **close to 25%** described it as declining and, **close to 20%** as optimistic.

Community's suggestions that could improve Springfield's Economy

- Attracting new business and industry development
- Limiting tax increases and local spending
- Improving infrastructure and downtown revitalization
- Expanding housing options
- Increasing local retail and entertainment options
- Fostering community engagement and increasing quality of life

HOUSING

Overall, **87%** of respondents say their current housing situation meets their needs

Housing Affordability

- 63% - Somewhat affordable
- 16.23% - Not so affordable
- 13.31% - Very affordable
- 5% - Not affordable at all

Biggest Housing Challenges

- Limited housing options
- Limited housing for young families or first-time buyers
- Lack of newer or updated homes
- High cost of housing (rent/ mortgage)

Housing Insights

- 20% would move if the right option became available
- 23% know people who have left or chosen not to move here due to housing issues
- 12% consider leaving Springfield due to housing limitations
- 10% would be more likely to stay in Springfield if better housing options were available

Resident's vision for the future of Springfield?

"A town supporting its people, and its people supporting its town."

"A robust, diverse community fueled by happy people with jobs, fair wages, affordable housing, access to healthcare, a rich educational system, recreational opportunities and both progressive physical and vibrant organizational infrastructures."

"Maintain business and services in the community for birth through old age."





WORKFORCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

1) Increase the completion of non-degree credentials highly valued by local industries

- Partner with local schools and regional colleges to offer evening and weekend trainings, mini-certificates, and boot camps at the community center in manufacturing and health care.

2) Cultivate and leverage workforce development resources

- Assign staff time to identify and pursue state and federal workforce grants annually
- Identify and map key regional and local workforce development partners and meet quarterly with them

3) Increase local labor force participation and develop a youth pipeline

- Organize a “Careers in Springfield” Day at local schools to showcase high-demand occupations and connect students with local employers
- Host return to work workshops on resume building, networking, and soft skills
- Coordinate tours of key local employers and onsite visits
- Partner with surrounding local communities and the county to develop a paid summer internship program
- Provide programing materials in different languages and partner with community organizations serving diverse populations

4) Leverage local and regional entrepreneurship ecosystems

- Increase engagement and involvement from the local chamber and partner with and learn from other neighboring chambers of commerce
- Educate businesses and local entrepreneurs about available resources and state programs for small businesses
- Engage with business development organizations to explore the development of a satellite presence in Springfield

5) Entrepreneurship development

- Identify a local community space to host monthly office hours for aspiring entrepreneurs to access desk space, internet, and coaching from business development advisors
- Launch a “Why Do Business in Springfield” digital campaign to highlight the community’s advantages
- Develop a “How to Start a Business in Springfield” step-by-step guide on the city’s website



HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

1) Establish a local housing task force to oversee the implementation of Springfield's 2025 Housing Study Recommendations

2) Support housing affordability and supply

- Offer incentives for affordable housing development and rental through property tax abatements, direct financial subsidies, and targeted tax credits
- Seek state and federal funding to support affordable housing development
- Increase awareness of homeownership and housing grants and resources for local residents through USDA, Minnesota Housing, Southwest Housing Partnership

3) Increase housing accessibility across different populations

- Develop a first-time home buyer and down payment assistance program
- Conduct senior housing needs assessment through surveys and focus groups, and support senior-friendly housing development
- Collaborate with the Brown County EDA on workforce housing development projects and pursue state and federal grants to support them

4) Upgrade and prepare infrastructure

- Map existing infrastructure with age, condition, maintenance schedule, and identify areas for improvement
- Partner with broadband development organizations and regional and county experts to expand high-speed and affordable internet access across the city
- Review ordinance and zoning requirements to identify and remove unintended barriers to redevelopment efforts
- Promote the integration of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind into municipal, commercial, and residential facilities to diversify energy supply and reduce costs
- Conduct energy audits on all municipal buildings to understand energy use and identify efficiency opportunities and new technologies
- Work with local contractors to increase the adoption of Air Source Heat Pumps to reduce heating costs for residents and increase electricity sales opportunities for Springfield Public Utilities

5) Revitalize downtown Springfield

- Develop an annual "Buy local campaign" encouraging residents to support local businesses through promotions and activities
- Expand sidewalk networks and walking access to downtown
- Offer mini-grants and support for the redevelopment of downtown property facades
- Work with local entrepreneurs, developers, and investors and lead a workshop session focused on identifying uses for vacant building space
- Partner with regional artists, local schools, and libraries to fill in empty window display with rotating art, student projects or other displays



1) Attract new residents

- Establish a resident attraction committee composed of newer residents, young professionals, and civic leaders
- Develop a relocation or “Live in Springfield” campaign for commuters and remote workers in surrounding towns, highlighting Springfield’s affordability, safety, quality schools, and proximity to regional hubs
- Develop a city newsletter or create social media blasts to raise awareness of local events and community celebrations
- Build a community brand toolkit with talking points about Springfield that residents and employers can use in recruiting and outreach

2) Retain young adults and families

- Work with employers to create recruitment packages that include housing information, local amenities, school and daycare options, and testimonials from young families
- Launch a Springfield Civic Leadership series to mentor and welcome new residents into community leadership
- Develop a “Get Involved” tab on the city’s website listing local board and committee openings, volunteering opportunities, and other engagement opportunities
- Partner with local high schools to develop youth entrepreneurship programs

3) Strengthen culture and belonging

- Increase the number of family-friendly events offering kids’ activities and local food
- Provide new residents with a “Welcome to Springfield” packet with local maps, coupons, school and daycare information, and key city information
- Increase community engagement with the Fire and Police Department by hosting open houses for residents to meet department staff and facilities
- Intentionally recruit and encourage broad participation in local committees and boards

4) Promote and improve community health and wellness

- Explore the creation of a community garden on vacant land or school facilities

5) Expand services for families and seniors

- Capitalize on local libraries, parks, and schools for intergenerational programming, lifelong education, and career and personal development programs for all ages
- Host intergenerational events and programming at the community center, parks and libraries

A NOTE ON IMPLEMENTATION AND LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Springfield's Strategic Economic Development Plan is a dynamic and flexible blueprint that is not stagnant and can shift as Springfield's needs and opportunities change. To ensure long-term success:

Stay Flexible

- Economic conditions and community's priorities change over time

Set Achievable Milestones

- Break large objectives into quarterly and annual targets

Build Broader Support

- The success of successful economic development lies in partnership and support from different entities and stakeholders

Foster Community Engagement

- Regular feedback from community members will keep the plan relevant and maintain support for its goals

Track and Report Progress

- Record progress made on specific goals and celebrate progress publicly



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

You can support Springfield's Strategic Plan by volunteering through one of the many community organizations, or by participating in one of the following city boards, commissions, and programs:

Airport Commission

Joint Airport Zoning Board (JAZB)

Charter Commission

Community Facilities Board

CVB Board

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

Library

Planning Commission

Police Commission

Public Utilities Commission

Springfield Fire Dept

Rec Complex Board

City Council

If interested in other opportunities, please reach out to City Hall.

City of Springfield Survey

Shape Springfield's Future: Share Your Voice!

We want to hear from you! Help us make Springfield a more vibrant, livable, and thriving community. Your feedback will shape and inform a strategic economic development plan and housing study led by the Region Nine Development Commission.



Why Participate?

Your voice is crucial in shaping Springfield's future and helping address our community's challenges and opportunities for growth and improvement.

The survey takes just 10–15 minutes, and your responses will remain confidential.

Want to Get More Involved?

Join our upcoming small group discussions or community open house to share additional input! If interested, leave your contact information at the end of the survey.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and helping shape our community's future!

1a) Do you live in Springfield?

Yes No

1b) Do you work in Springfield?

Yes No

2) How would you rate your overall experience in Springfield?

If you are a resident, think of education, housing, community feel, safety, infrastructure, etc. If you work in Springfield, but don't reside here, think of your experience working or interacting with the community.

Poor Fair Average Good Excellent N/A

3a) How likely are you to recommend Springfield as a place to live or work?

Very Likely Somewhat Likely Somewhat Unlikely Very Unlikely Don't Know N/A

3b) How likely are you to continue living here for the next five years? (Non-resident workers select N/A.)

Very Likely Somewhat Likely Somewhat Unlikely Very Unlikely Don't Know N/A

4) What are the top factors that influenced your decision to live or work here? (Select up to 3)

Job opportunities Housing options Access to healthcare
 Location Quality of schools Sense of community/small-town feel
 Proximity to family Affordability Other (please specify below)

Survey continues on the next page.

5a) What do you see as Springfield's biggest challenges? (Select up to 3)

- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited job opportunities
- Population decline
- Public safety/crime concerns
- Access to healthcare services
- Infrastructure (roads, utilities, internet)
- Limited shopping and dining options
- Community engagement and connectedness
- Business retention and growth

5b) Which do you think should be addressed first?

6) Please rate the existing amenities in Springfield

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
K-12 Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare and eldercare cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community connectedness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet quality and cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail and dining options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Safety/low crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing options and cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) How would you describe Springfield's economic future?

- Optimistic
 - Uncertain
 - Declining
 - Other (please specify)
-

8) What local policies or initiatives do you think could improve Springfield's economy?

9) What improvements would make Springfield a better place to live?

Please rank the following options from most important (1) to least important (9).

- _____ More jobs
- _____ Restaurants and retail options
- _____ Affordable housing and more housing options
- _____ Better and more affordable internet
- _____ Affordable childcare
- _____ Community events
- _____ Educational programs
- _____ Public safety/low crime
- _____ Expanded healthcare access

10) What industries or businesses should Springfield focus on growing? (Select up to 3)

- Retail
 - Manufacturing
 - Healthcare
 - Other (please specify)
 - Agriculture
 - Technology
-

11) What should be Springfield's top priority for the next 5-10 years?

- Business growth
 - Workforce development
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Other (please specify)
-

12) What's your vision for the future of Springfield?

Housing feedback

Springfield is working on creating a housing study to better understand current and future housing needs. Your responses will help identify the types of housing needed, potential gaps in availability, and opportunities for improvement.

Thank you for helping us create a stronger, more sustainable housing future for Springfield!

1) Does your current housing situation meet your needs?

- Yes No

If not, please explain why below.

2) Are you considering moving to a different home in Springfield within the next five years?

- Yes, I am actively looking
- Yes, I would move if the right option became available
- No, I am not looking for housing
- Unsure

3) What type of housing is most needed? (Rank from most important (1) to least important(7))

- _____ Apartments
- _____ Single-family homes
- _____ Duplexes
- _____ Townhomes
- _____ Senior housing
- _____ Affordable housing options
- _____ Patio homes (low-maintenance single-story homes)

4) How affordable is housing in Springfield?

- Extremely affordable
- Very affordable
- Somewhat affordable
- Not so affordable
- Not at all affordable

Survey continues on the next page.

5) What are the biggest challenges when it comes to finding housing in Springfield? (Select up to two)

- Limited housing options
 - Limited housing for young families or first-time buyers
 - Cost of housing (rent/mortgage)
 - Availability of newer or updated homes
 - Lack of senior-friendly housing
 - Other (please specify)
-

6) How does housing availability impact your ability to stay or work in Springfield?

(Select all that apply)

- It does not impact me
- I would consider leaving Springfield due to housing limitations
- I know people who have left or chosen not to move here due to housing issues
- I would be more likely to stay in Springfield if better housing options were available

7) What factors would make you more likely to move within Springfield?

(Select up to two)

- More affordable housing options
 - More senior-friendly housing options
 - Availability of newer or updated homes
 - Safer neighborhoods
 - Other (please specify)
-

8) Do you have any other comments, concerns, or ideas regarding housing in Springfield?

About You

Your responses will help us better understand Springfield's demographics. All individual responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential.

1) What is your age range?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 or older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 | |

2) How many years have you lived in Springfield?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 years | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't reside in Springfield |

3) Do you rent or own your residence?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

4) What is your gender? _____

5) Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- White/Caucasian
- Multiple ethnicity/Other (please specify) _____

6) Stay connected!

Want updates or to join future discussions? Leave your contact info below. (Optional)

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone number: _____

