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# **Introduction**

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This Chapter provides the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan, outlining why and how it was funded and developed.

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## Ike Planning Grant

Funding for this Plan comes from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This grant funding was allocated to the State of Illinois by Presidential Declaration in response to the flooding in 2008 – known as the “Ike” disaster. “Ike disaster” funds were provided to communities to recover from the 2008 floods, as well as plan for and reduce the damage from future floods.

Based on the Ike Planning Program requirements, the Plan must at a minimum directly address the project area’s disaster recovery needs. Specifically, the plan must:

- Analyze the impact of the floods of 2008 on the area, paying special attention to the areas and groups that were most adversely affected, and the kinds of unmet “needs” that were created by the storm either directly or indirectly (e.g. infrastructure, housing, economic development etc.).
- Put forth principles/policies designed to best serve the affected populations and address the identified needs created by the disaster.
- Outline strategies designed to mitigate or minimize future disaster damage.

Additionally, this Plan must promote the Sustainable Planning Principles listed below:

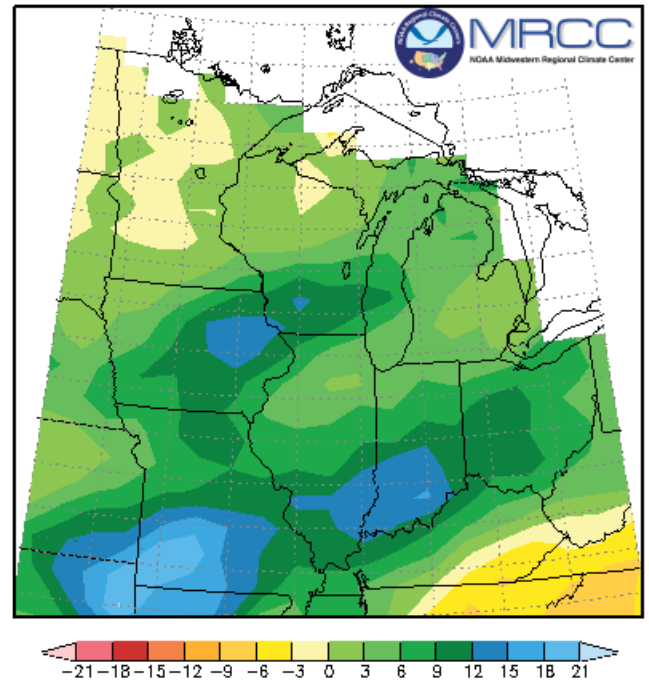
- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods

## Storms Affect on the County

Illinois was plagued by heavy rains in 2008, starting in January and continuing through June. These intense rains fell on saturated soils that ended up in area streams and rivers that were already near flood stage. The result was mass flooding near the Mississippi and Rock Rivers within the region, including in Whiteside County. This affected not only residences (primarily farmsteads), but also delayed planting and crop development.

Whiteside County is one of only a few counties in Illinois that does not have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place. This shortcoming was evident and experienced during the 2008 flood event. One of the primary goal of this Plan will be to predict and better prevent flooding, and thus, reduce the damage caused by future floods.

Total Precipitation Departure from Mean in Inches  
January 1, 2008 to June 26, 2008



<http://www.isws.illinois.edu/atmos/statecl/2008/Flood2008/flood.htm#Figure1>

### Why a Comprehensive Plan?

It is difficult to know what the future may bring for Whiteside County, or for any county. As residents and businesses come and go, and economic trends rise and fall, changes will occur. The purpose of this plan is to establish a shared vision for Whiteside County to guide future actions and decisions. This guidance provides predictability and consistency over time, which encourages investment. We plan so that we can act and react in a changing world with a confident understanding of our common values and goals.

### Plan Maintenance

This planning document is a “living” guide for growth and change in Whiteside County. The plan represents the County’s best effort to address current issues and anticipate future needs; however, it can and should be amended from time to time if conditions warrant reconsideration of policies in this plan. If decisions are being made that are not consistent with this plan, then the plan has lost its relevance and should be amended. The process of amending the comprehensive plan should not be onerous, but it should trigger a brief pause to consider again the long term vision for the community. This plan’s value is dependent upon frequent use and occasional updates.

### Illinois Comprehensive Planning

Comprehensive plans are defined in the Illinois Local Planning Technical Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768, Sec. 5). The common elements addressed in a comprehensive plan are:

1. Land Use
2. Natural Resources
3. Historic Preservation
4. Transportation
5. Economic Development
6. Housing
7. Utilities & Community Facilities
8. Urban Design / Community Character
9. Agricultural & Forestry
10. Intergovernmental Cooperation

All comprehensive plans include:

- A statement of authority to prepare and adopt the plan
- Background data and analysis – including area history, a description of existing social, economic and physical (natural and man-made) conditions and trends, and economic and demographic projections.
- Documentation of stakeholder’s interests and involvement – these include interests of residents, public officials, the business community, and developers.
- Vision statement (or statement of desired goals and objectives) – desired Village outlook, generally 20 years from now.
- Future plan map or maps – these maps depict various components, including land use, transportation, community facilities, and housing areas.
- Plan Implementation – framework or schedule that describes specific measures to carry out the plan, the time frame to execution, and potentially cost ranges.

## Plan Organization

The plan is divided into six chapters plus several important appendices, as described below:

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter 1 discusses the damage sustained by the 2008 disaster “Ike”, the role of this Plan, the planning process and area, and key community indicators.

### **Chapter 2: Public Input**

Chapter 2 describes the public participation methods and feedback.

### **Chapter 3: Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Chapter 3 includes a vision for the future of the Village, and goals, objectives and strategies for each element of the plan, including:

- » *Housing*
- » *Mobility & Transportation*
- » *Agriculture & Natural Resources*
- » *Community Facilities & Services*
- » *Community Character*
- » *Hazards*
- » *Collaboration & Partnerships*

### **Chapter 4: Land Use Plan**

Chapter 4 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies pertaining to land use decisions, describes current land use characteristics, defines future land use categories (and policies), and presents the future land use map.

### **Chapter 5: Economic Development Plan**

Chapter 5 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies pertaining to economic development decisions, **describes current land use characteristics, defines future land use categories (and policies), and presents the future land use map.**

### **Chapter 6: Implementation & Action Plan**

Chapter 6 describes the tools and procedures by which the plan will be implemented and provides a detailed timeline of action steps for successful implementation of the plan.

### **Appendix A: Community Indicators**

Appendix A is a compilation of data that describes the existing conditions, trends, and projections for Whiteside County. This data informs the planning process and should be updated from time to time to track progress and change in the County.

### **Appendix B: Public Input**

Appendix B is a compilation of complete results from the public input process.

### **Appendix C: Plan Area Maps**

## Planning Process

A transparent public participation process is the foundation to a successful plan. The involvement of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders is essential to the creation and implementation of the plan.

This Plan was discussed and developed through a series of working session meetings between July 2013 and June 2014 (*see side bar for the project milestones*). All meetings were public meetings and noticed as such. In addition, a letter was sent with the County's water bills expressly inviting residents to attend and participate in the public informational meetings.



## Project Milestones

Staff Kickoff Meeting  
*July 2013*

Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting  
*August 2013 (third Thursdays of the month)*

Major Stakeholders Interviews  
*September 2013*

Steering Committee Meeting  
*September 19, 2013 (third Thursdays of the month)*

Public Comprehensive Plan Kickoff Meetings  
*October 10 & 16, 2013*

Steering Committee Meeting  
*November 21, 2013 & December 19, 2013*

Public Informational Meeting  
*July 18, 2013*

Workshop Session - Land Use and Zoning  
*January XX, 2014*

Steering Committee Meeting  
*February 20, 2013 & March 20, 2014*

Public Draft Review Meeting  
*April XX, 2014*

Planning & Zoning Commission  
Recommendation  
*May XX, 2014*

County Board Adoption  
*June XX, 2014*

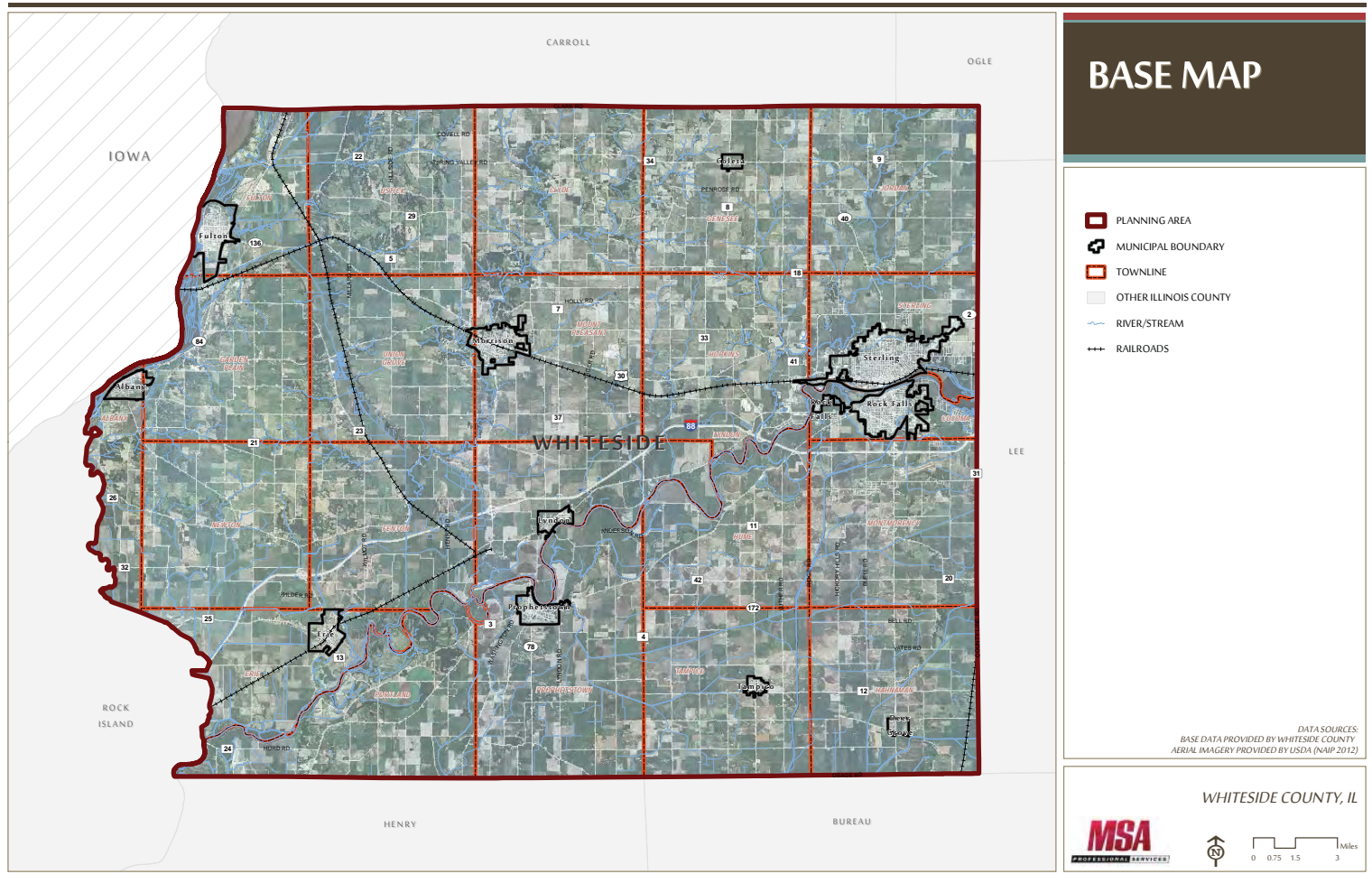
## Planning Area

The study area for this Plan includes all lands in which the County has both a short- and long-term interest in planning and development activity. As shown in *Figure 1.2 (below)*, the Planning Area includes all lands within the current county limits. The County is approximately 432,335.5 acres (67.55 square miles). The entire Planning Area is the same.

## Key Community Indicators

The subsequent pages analyzes the overarching population and demographic trends for Whiteside County. Examination of these trends provide a foundation for the planning process and implementation of the plan. See *Appendix A* for a full report on the Whiteside County's Community Indicators.

Figure 1.2: Planning Area Map

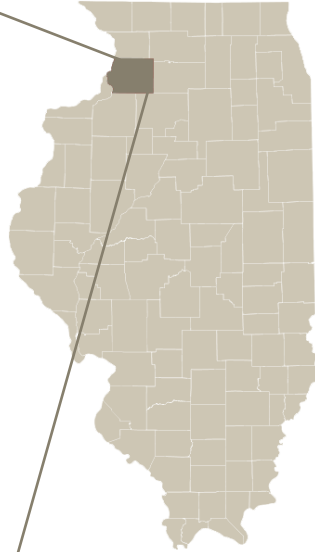




Population

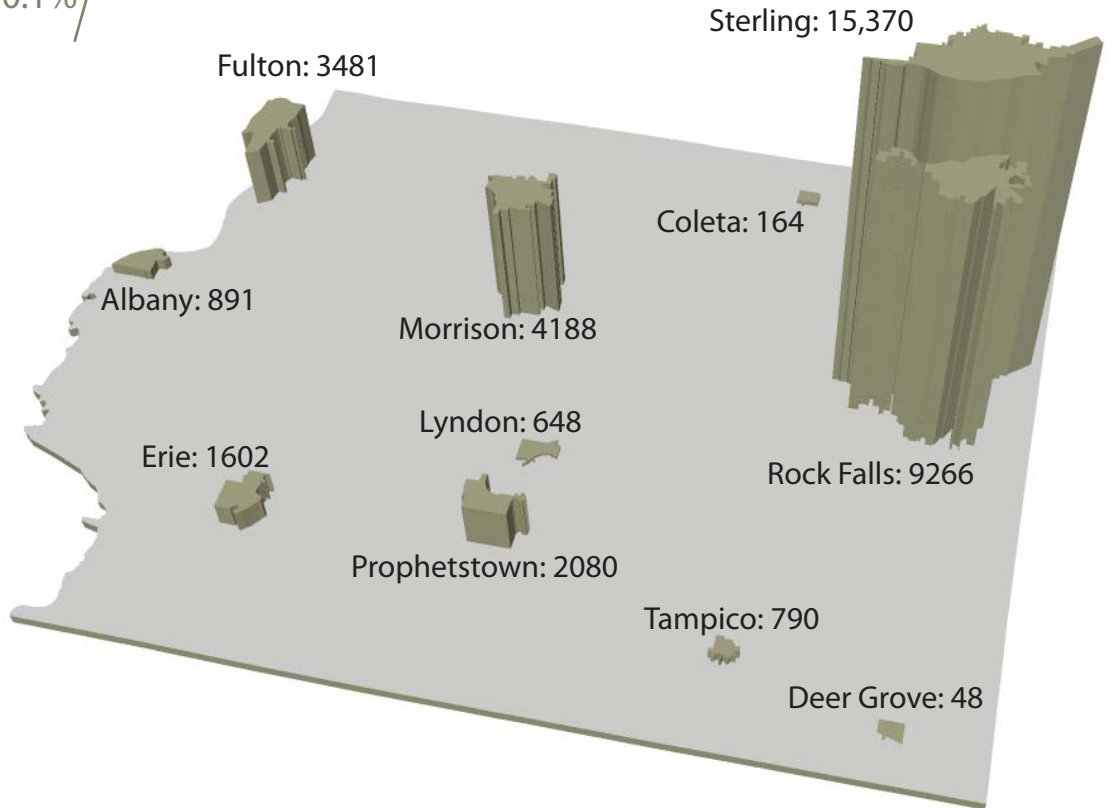
58,498 residents in 2010

Unincorporated Areas	33.2%
Sterling	26.3%
Rock Falls	15.8%
Morrison	7.2%
Fulton	6.0%
Prophetstown	3.6%
Erie	2.7%
Albany	1.5%
Tampico	1.4%
Lyndon	1.1%
Como	1.0%
Coleta	0.3%
Deer Grove	0.1%

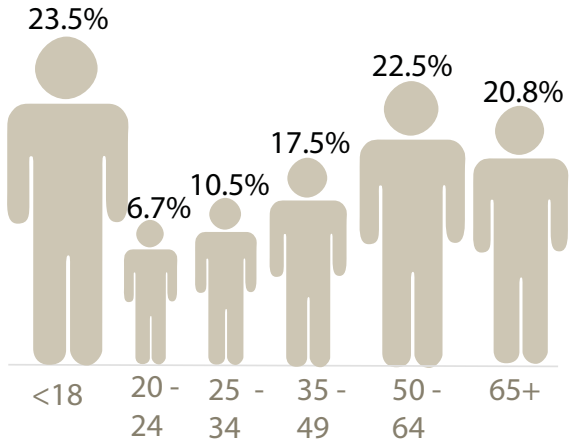


Population Breakdown By Municipality

There are eleven municipalities within Whiteside County, including six villages and five cities, with the majority of the County's population in the northeast quadrant. This area is home to the City of Rock Falls and the City of Sterling, which together makes up roughly 40% of the County's population. An additional one-third of the County's population is in the unincorporated areas with the remaining 25% in the other nine municipalities.

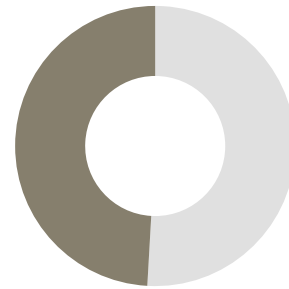






### Age

In 2010, the median age in the county was 41.8, which is higher than the State's median age of 36.6. Notably, the County has a significantly higher ratio of persons over the age of 50 as compared to the State (43.3%, compared to 31.2% statewide), especially the percent of persons over the age of 65.



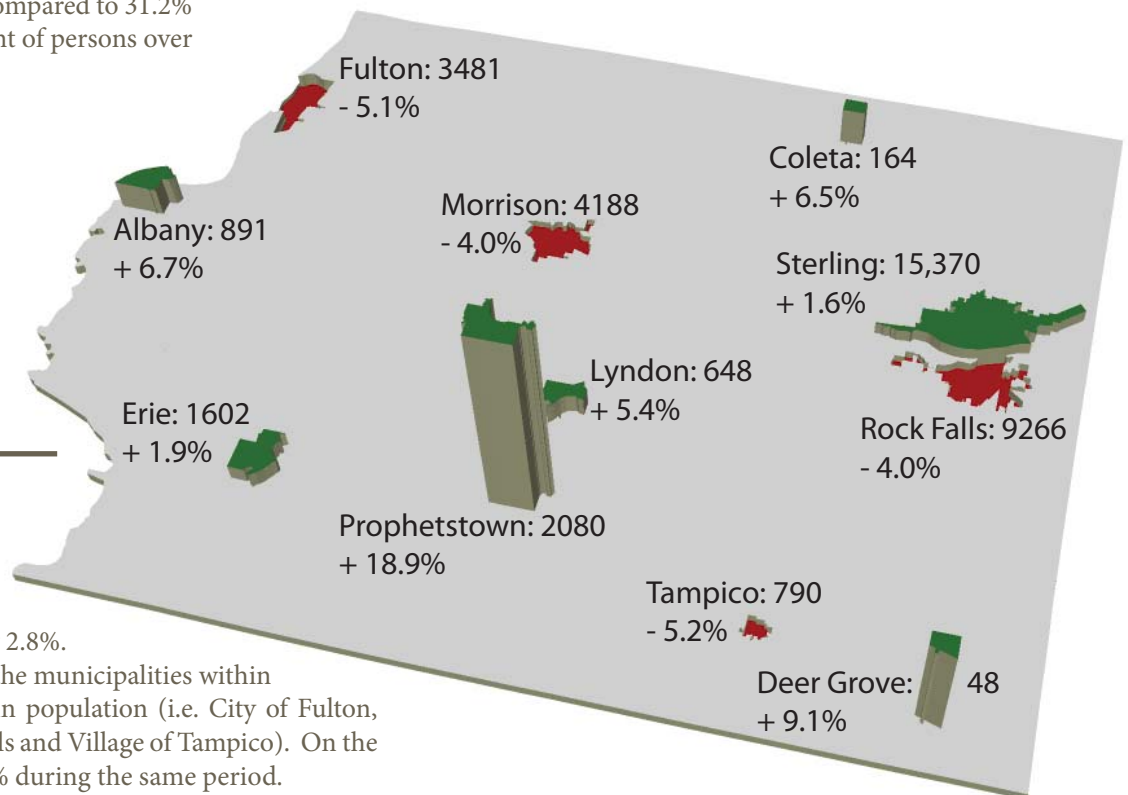
♀ 50.9%  
♂ 49.1%

### Gender

The breakdown between female and male residents in the County is in line with the State's percentages (i.e. 49.0% male and 51.0% female).

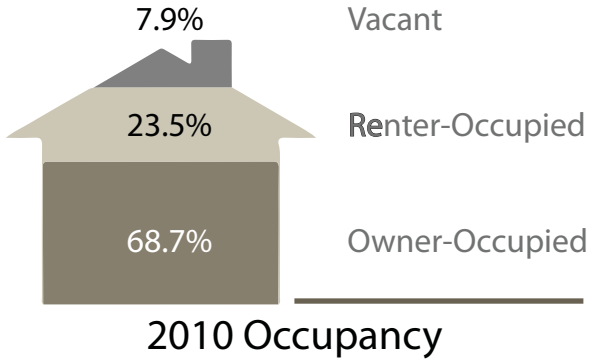
### 20-Year Population Change

From 1990 to 2010, Whiteside County's population decreased by 2.8%. During this same period, four of the municipalities within the County also saw a decrease in population (i.e. City of Fulton, City of Morrison, City of Rock Falls and Village of Tampico). On the other hand, the State grew by 3.3% during the same period.





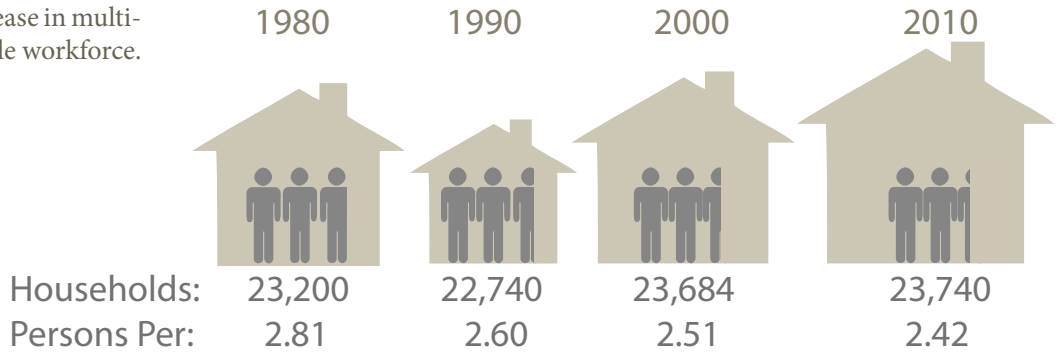
# Housing



The majority of County residents live in owner-occupied housing. However, owner occupancy percentages have been declining over the past three decades due in part to the increase in multi-family using units and a more mobile workforce.

## Avg. Median Value

The county's median home value increased 41% between 1990 and 2000 to \$75,700, which is significantly lower than the State's median value of \$130,800. Based on ACS data (rolling average from 2007-2011), the median value for home in the county is currently \$99,700, which suggests an increase of approximately 25% from the year 2000.



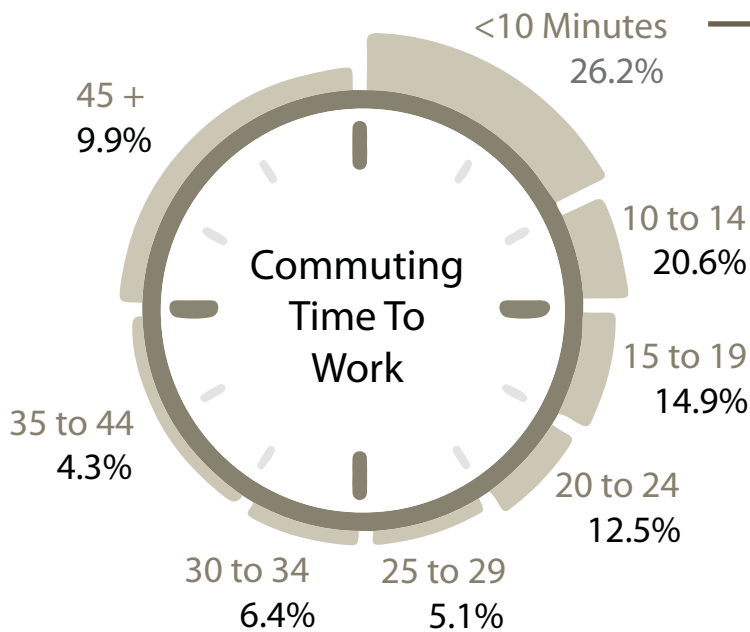
## Household Counts

From 1980-2010, Whiteside County showed a 2.3% increase in the number of households. This includes a drop in households in the 1980s and negligible growth (0.2%) in the 2000s. During the same period, the state as whole increased by 19.6%, including an increase of 5.3% over the last decade.

The county's "persons per household" count, also known as household size, dropped from 2.51 in 2000 to 2.42 in 2010, which is a reduction of 3.6%. During this same period, the state's "persons per household" declined by 1.5% to 2.59. This trend is consistent with national trends over the past several decades and can be attributed to smaller family sizes, increases in life expectancy, and increases in single parent households.

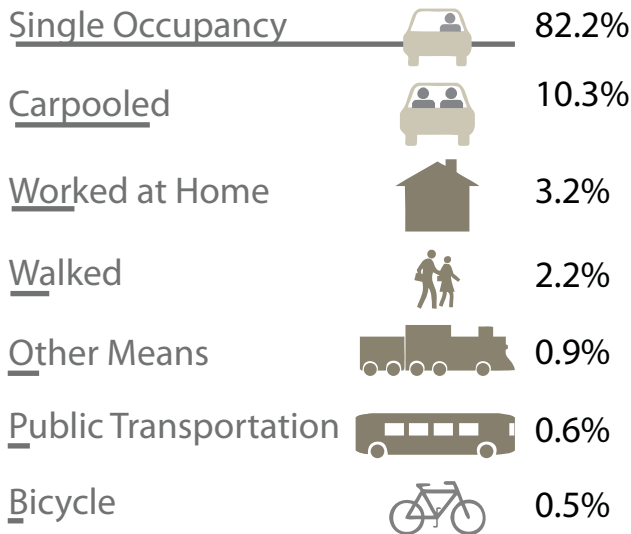


# Transportation



## Commuting Time to Work

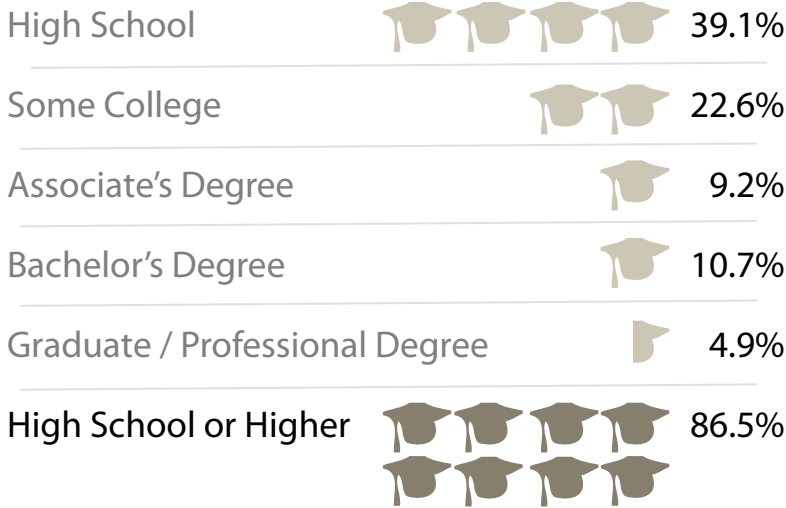
Approximately 46.8% of the County's commuters age 16 or older work within 14 minutes of their place of employment. On average, County workers commute is 15.7 minutes, which is less than the County (20.4 minutes) and State as a whole (21.5 minutes). The percentage of those who work out of State is at 4.4%.



## Commuting Method to Work

Commuting in Whiteside County is mostly done by car and primarily in a single occupant vehicle (82.2%). This number is slightly higher than the State as whole, which is at 73.4%. Those who carpooled to work was also higher than the State with 10.3%, as compared to 9.1% for the State. On the other hand, those who used public transit was substantially lower in the County as compared to the State as whole (0.6% to 8.8%, respectively). The remainder of the means of travel were quite similar between Whiteside County and the State as a whole.

# — \$ Economic Prosperity



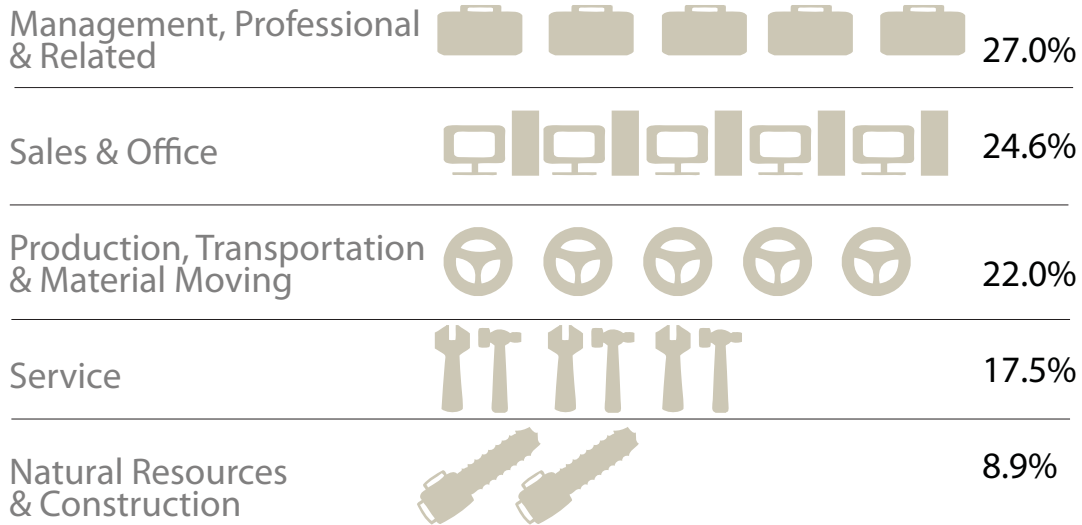
## Educational Attainment

Education attainment data can provide insight into the quality of the existing labor force, including the availability of skilled and professional workers and the need for training opportunities. In the year 2000, the percentage of County residents 25 years or older that had at least a high school diploma was similar to the state as whole (79% vs 81%), however bachelor's and graduate degrees were substantially less common here (10.7% vs 25.1%). More recent data from the American Community Survey (2007-2011), suggest more degrees in both the State and the County, but a similar gap between the County and the State (15.6% vs 30.7%). Associates degrees, on the other hand, were more common within the County than the State, in both data sets.

	Whiteside County	State of Illinois
Per Capita	\$24,370	\$29,376
Median Family	\$55,657	\$69,658
Median Household	\$46,444	\$56,576
<b>Below Poverty</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>

## Income Indicators

The typical correlation between education and income is reinforced here - incomes here are lower than the state averages. And the difference appears to be growing. Whereas the Whiteside County median household income (MHI) was 88% of the state MHI in 2000, the 2007-2011 ACS data show statewide income growth outpacing local incomes, such that the county MHI was just 82% of the state MHI. Despite these lower incomes, the County has less poverty than the State as a whole, reflecting the fact that people living below the federal poverty line tend to live in larger cities with more social services and transportation options.



### Occupations

Based on the American Community Survey (2007-2011), nearly 80% of workers in Whiteside County earn a private wage and salary. This compares to 73.3% statewide. The majority of residents are employed in “Management, Professional & Related”, “Sales & Office”, and “Production, Transportation and Material Moving” jobs. The largest industries in the county include Educational, Health & Social Services (21.8%), Manufacturing (19.8%), and Retail Trade (13.8%).