

FINAL PLAN - February 2024



Wooster

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the steering committee members, stakeholders, community members, staff, and officials who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan for the future of the City of Wooster.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Kyle Adams	Ashley Hershberger	John Rice
Chuck Armbruster	Barbara Knapic	Craig Sanders
Cody Austin	Roger Kobilarcsik	Chris Shamie
Cliff Bobbitt	Matthew Long	Shawn Starlin
Scott Boyes	Vince Marion	Gabe Tudor
Bob Breneman	Andrew Michel	Shannon Waller
Vikki Briggs	Jonathan Millea	Jennifer Warden
Maribeth Burns	Tim Monea	Samira Zimmerly
Curt Denning	Joel Montgomery	
Stewart Fitz Gibbon III	Gil Ning	

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	PLAN OVERVIEW	pg. 6
	About the Plan	
	Plan Inputs & Planning Process	
	Plan Framework Overview	
	How to Use the Plan	
	Who Will Use This Plan	
	Additional Plan Integration Methods	
02	EXISTING CONDITIONS	pg. 14
	Community Analysis	
	Existing Zoning & Land Use	
	Key Takeaways	
03	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	pg. 30
	Issues & Opportunities	
	Community Survey	
	Stakeholder Interviews	
	Public Open House Summaries	
04	PLAN FRAMEWORK	pg. 46
	Overview	
	Plan Elements	
	Future Land Use	
	Housing & Economy	
	Mobility & Connectivity	
	Parks & Recreation	
	Community Identity	
05	FOCUS AREAS	pg. 110
	Arts District	
	East Liberty District	
	Hospital District	
	Geyers Chapel Road District	
	Smithville Western Road District	
06	IMPLEMENTATION	pg. 168
	Plan Recommendations	



FINAL PLAN - February 2024



01

**PROJECT
PURPOSE**

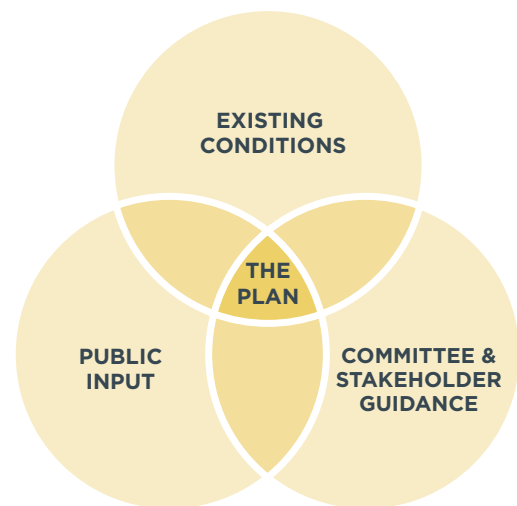
PLAN OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2023, the City of Wooster partnered with OHM Advisors to create a new comprehensive plan that will guide the city in land use, zoning, housing, transportation and economic development over the next 10 years. Wooster's existing comprehensive plan was adopted in 2014, and the city recognized the need to revisit goals and update recommendations based on changing conditions. Unique to Wooster, the plan takes a closer look at many factors that were shaping the city, market, environment, transportation system, and other community factors at the time of this updated plan's creation. It also includes specific priority development areas within the city which show the greatest potential for development or redevelopment, and could serve as a catalyst for other community initiatives.

The planning process included extensive research to understand current conditions and develop a vision rooted in community feedback. The process also included abundant public input ensuring the plan recommendations are based on the values and aspirations of the community. It was created with guidance from city staff, the Steering Committee, and city residents and business owners. The Steering Committee included broad representation from the community, including elected and appointed officials, local stakeholders from the public and private realms, and general community representatives.

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan is a vital community blueprint. It sets the direction for where and how the city should grow over the next ten years. Within this broader goal there are a number of community wide objectives the plan achieves. These include economic, land use, infrastructure, housing, and other broad community objectives.



The Plan was created by integrating three key inputs. This included existing conditions, public input, and committee and stakeholder guidance.

The following are some specific objectives the Plan helps achieve:

- Establish a uniform vision for Wooster through future land use designations
- Identify opportunities for new catalyst projects that will generate new city revenue while enhancing the character and brand of the community
- Support future development through creative redevelopment strategies and incentives
- Create a plan that has broad public and private sector support
- Support future funding initiatives (e.g. state and federal grant programs)

PLAN INPUTS

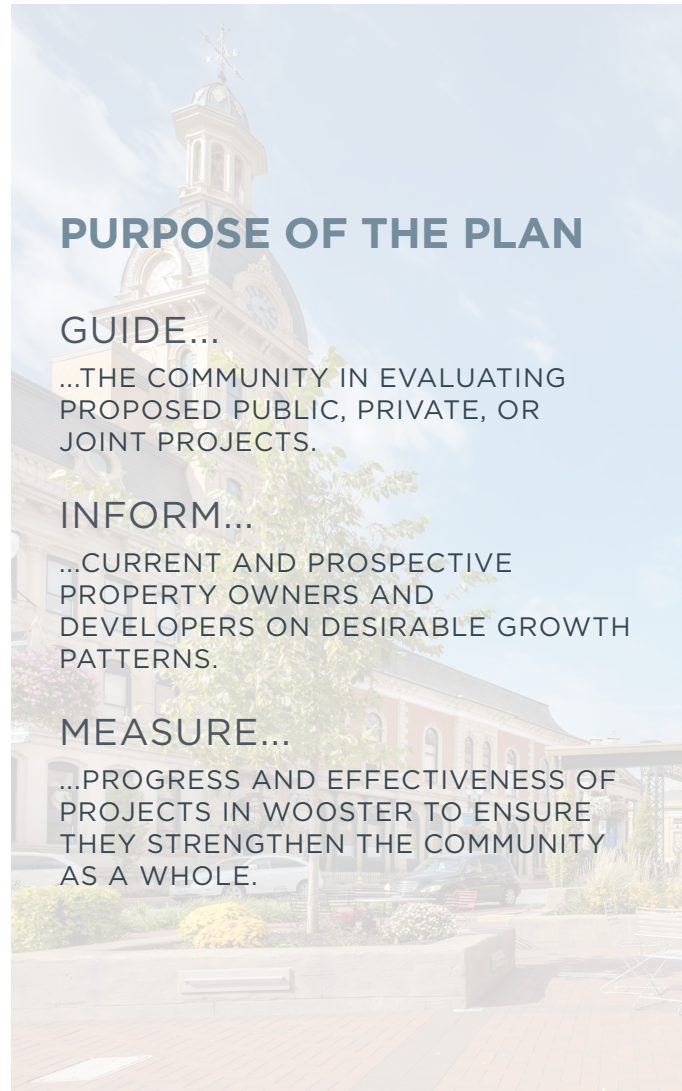
The Comprehensive Plan is a holistic and informed blueprint for future growth and development. Many layers of input from quantitative and qualitative analyses were considered, and extensive community involvement was conducted to create a technical and community informed vision. The following describes these inputs and how they informed the plan.

Existing Conditions

Community existing conditions such as current land use, demographics, parks and open space, mobility, development character, community vision, and infrastructure were analyzed along with current market trends. With an understanding of these, the planning team and the Wooster Steering Committee worked to create the plan.

Public Engagement

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated public input sessions to gain insight into community values and aspirations for how and where the city should grow. These sessions revealed important insights on the issues and opportunities within the community, and preference for a desired growth strategy.



PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

GUIDE...

...THE COMMUNITY IN EVALUATING PROPOSED PUBLIC, PRIVATE, OR JOINT PROJECTS.

INFORM...

...CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE PROPERTY OWNERS AND DEVELOPERS ON DESIRABLE GROWTH PATTERNS.

MEASURE...

...PROGRESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS IN WOOSTER TO ENSURE THEY STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

Committee + Stakeholder Guidance

The planning team also facilitated discussions through steering committee and stakeholder meetings. Issues and opportunities made apparent during these discussions were used to validate findings from analyses and community engagement, and build focus and direction for the plan recommendations. These dedicated community members helped create the project framework and championed the plan on behalf of their community.

PLANNING PROCESS

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan process spanned approximately eleven months and included both technical research and public involvement. The result is an intuitive, informed, and proactive document.

The planning process was developed at the beginning of the project. This process helped guide project activities, many of which were carried out concurrently in order to maintain the overall project schedule.

Investigate

During this initial step in the planning process, the scope of services was defined for the planning team, consisting of contracted planning consultants and key members of city staff. Members of the Steering Committee were also identified and invited to participate during the process. The whole team met to establish the project's goal and identify the preliminary priority projects.

Inform

Throughout the summer of 2023, the consultant team collected and analyzed data about all aspects of the city and analyzed them alongside current market trends. This information provided an understanding of the current conditions in Wooster and informed the plan recommendations. Existing conditions and market analysis were reported to the Steering Committee for general feedback and verification.

Insight

Concurrently with the existing conditions assessment, public input was collected using a combination of Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, an online public engagement survey, and public open houses to gain insight into the concerns and needs of residents within the study area.

Invent

This step in the planning process involved developing recommendations for public and private improvements in the city. Future Land Use districts were identified, and concepts were created within various PDAs throughout Wooster.

There was also an iterative process allowing the Steering Committee and the general public an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft version of the plan. This was a key step in ensuring the plan is supported by the public and that its recommendations are successfully implemented in the future.

Implement

Once the plan components were completed, compilation of the plan document began. The final plan is a concise, coherent, and easily understandable document. It is meant to be read and used by any Wooster community member and its straightforward design should aid in the swift implementation of its recommendations.



PLAN FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The Plan integrates the inputs of an existing conditions analysis, public engagement, and committee and stakeholder guidance with guiding land use principles that represent the values and goals of the Wooster community. This integration informed the development of the entire Plan Framework (*see Chapter 4*) and reinforced Focus Area concepts (*see Chapter 5*), along with related Implementation recommendations for all (*see Chapter 6*). The complete Plan will serve to reinforce future development character and shape the city for years to come.

The Plan Framework chapter is broken into five Plan Elements including Future Land Use, Housing & Economy, Mobility & Connectivity, Parks & Recreation and Community Identity. The important Future Land Use element section illustrates how land should be developed or zoned in the future, and gives direction on how to update the city's zoning code to align with the community's land use vision.

A sixth Plan Element includes five Focus Areas, each of which was identified for its ability to advance the future land use plan and the development opportunities outlined in the Plan. Each site has development or redevelopment potential, as well as the opportunity to accommodate growth that will generate new income opportunities for the city. The Focus Area concepts provide site analysis and potential development solutions for various development-ready sites in the city. They also provide an area profile that outlines population increase, diversity in housing choices, as well as fiscal impacts such as tax revenue increases and infrastructure costs based on the development scenario. These concepts are intended to be used as a guide for the city and developers to usher Wooster into the future through proven design principles and forward-thinking development.

The final component of the plan comprises specific recommendations that should be implemented to advance the plan, because a plan without an implementation strategy is limited in its effectiveness. The full Implementation matrix can be viewed in Chapter 6.

PLAN ELEMENTS



Future Land Use



Housing & Economy



Mobility & Connectivity



Parks & Recreation



Community Identity



Focus Areas

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan is a living document which should be reviewed annually and updated periodically. The city will oversee the plan implementation and coordinate the efforts of the parties identified as being responsible for its implementation. As conditions change and various sections of the plan are implemented, the city might find additional projects and/or strategies with which to achieve its desired goals and objectives.

A comprehensive plan is a community's "blueprint" for the future. It is the vision of what a community wants to become and a proposal for the steps needed to realize that vision. Specifically the plan achieves the following:

- Documents and illustrates what the community looks like today and what direction it wants to go in the future; it includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires.
- Translates the community's values into specific actions. It is a policy guide which not only addresses land use and infrastructure, but also includes important social, natural resource, and economic values of the community.
- Covers an approximate time frame of 10 years; it is assumed that shorter-term reviews will keep it current with the changing needs of the community.
- Integrates with other municipal documents and initiatives.

WHO WILL USE THIS PLAN?

The Plan is intended to be used by a variety of audiences. The following are select groups that may most frequently utilize the plan:

- Citizens - Residents, business owners, and developers use the plan to submit development proposals to the city.
- City Council - Elected officials use it to guide policy decisions regarding land use, zoning, and development proposals.
- Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other City Organizations and Boards - Citizens appointed by City Council can use the plan to provide policy recommendations to City Council.
- City and County - Use the plan to communicate with the public and development community on the priority initiatives for Wooster.

Used effectively, the plan will make the process of new development and growth Wooster easier and more efficient.

ADDITIONAL PLAN INTEGRATION METHODS

The following are some additional methods where potential projects from this plan can be implemented:

Annual Work Programs & Budgets

Individual city departments and administrators should be cognizant of the contents of the plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Plan recommendations should be considered when reviewing budgets to layer city improvements with the recommendations outlined herein. In this way, the city can use public funds to help attract and elevate private investment, in turn creating opportunities for more revenue generating developments.

Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning, major site plans, and conditional use permits, should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions by elected and appointed officials should reference relevant plan recommendations and guidelines. City plans and codes should also reflect and support the plan vision and recommendations.

Capital Improvements & The General Fund

The city's plan for capital improvements and use of the General Fund should be prepared consistent with the plan's policies and infrastructure recommendations. New improvements that are relevant to recipients of the General Fund as well as other tax funds such as street improvements should be considered as a means to implement the recommendations of this Plan.

Economic Development Incentives

Economic development incentives should be reviewed periodically to ensure consistency with the plan and current legislation. New state ordinances may develop that change the economic landscape for funding projects in Ohio. This plan should be leveraged to apply for funding which requires a set of guidelines or area plan.

Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the plan's goals and strategies in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision makers will be using the plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. The city should use this plan as a tool to clearly communicate to property owners and developers the overall vision for growth in Wooster.



For this historically agricultural community, a 2023 Wooster Comprehensive Plan land use principle is to maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the city's rich history through smart new development, preservation, and quality design.



FINAL PLAN - February 2024



02

EXISTING CONDITIONS

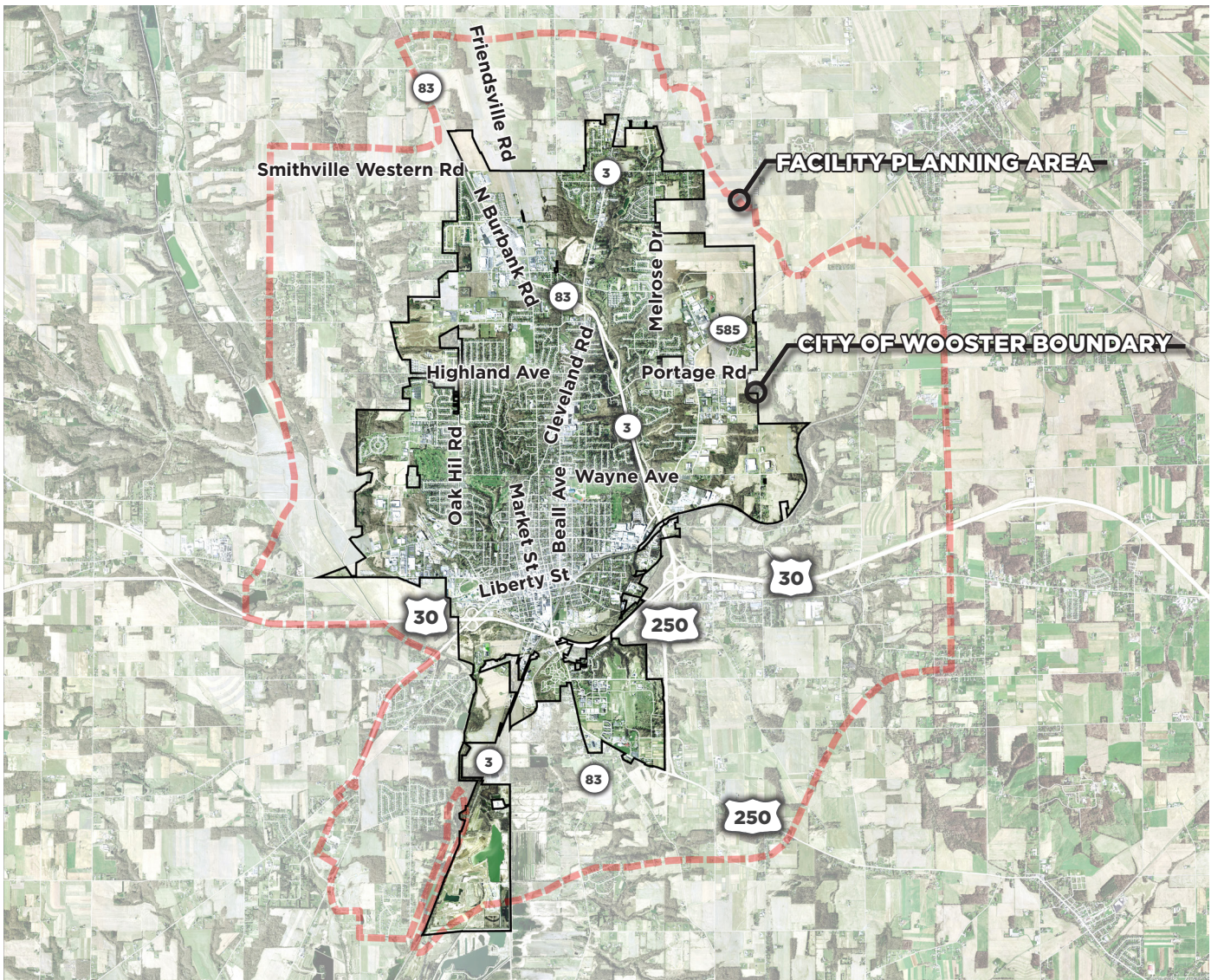
EXISTING CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

This section outlines the key data, metrics, and perspectives that are the foundation of the plan. This includes the data and analysis on existing conditions, information from key stakeholders, and key findings from the public engagement process. Collectively, these elements served as the inputs from which the plan's vision and recommendations were developed. Through this approach, the plan is both technically and intuitively informed.



One of the methods used to gather information was a site visit and walking tour. The image above was taken on the walking tour and shows Wooster's downtown Center Green Park. This project was part of the 2015 Downtown Strategic Plan led by OHM Advisors.



Study Area Map

The project study area follows the existing sewer and water service boundary. This boundary was selected as the study area because it represents where the city can grow through the extension of its services.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Study Area

The study area is determined by the City of Wooster water and sewer service boundary, called the "Facility Planning Area" in the above map. This boundary encompasses the City of Wooster and some parts of Wooster and Wayne Townships. The main vehicular routes in the area are U.S. Routes 30 and 250, which run from east to west, and Ohio State Routes 3 and 83, which intersect the study area from north to south. The northern part of the study area is surrounded by agricultural land, and the Wayne County Airport. The main streets in the city include Liberty Street, Market Street, Beall Avenue, Cleveland Road and Burbank Road. The southern part of the city is surrounded by The Ohio State University Agriculture Research Center.

Community Snapshot

Wooster has a storied past, and is a community with many attractive qualities and amenities. Both the Wayne County seat and the dairy capital of the state of Ohio, the community boasts an excellent school system, a vibrant downtown, two colleges, a world-class community-owned hospital, a portfolio of growing businesses serving the global economy, and a network of volunteers and organizations dedicated to helping individuals succeed. Named one of Ohio’s Best Hometowns in 2017, Wooster continues to be one of the state’s most innovative and exciting communities to live, work and visit.

Population

Wooster’s 2020 U.S. Census population was 27,232 (and 2022 Esri Business Analyst population was 27,480), having grown by almost 10% over the prior 20 years. Future growth scenarios project community growth of between 60 and 180 people per year through 2040.

Median Age

The median community age is 39.5, about the same as Wayne County and Ohio. Compared to the rest of the county, Wooster has a larger percentage of young adults age 20-25, as three colleges exist within the city limits. There is also a slightly greater percentage of older adult residents age 60 and over, which affects ongoing housing needs analyses and development.

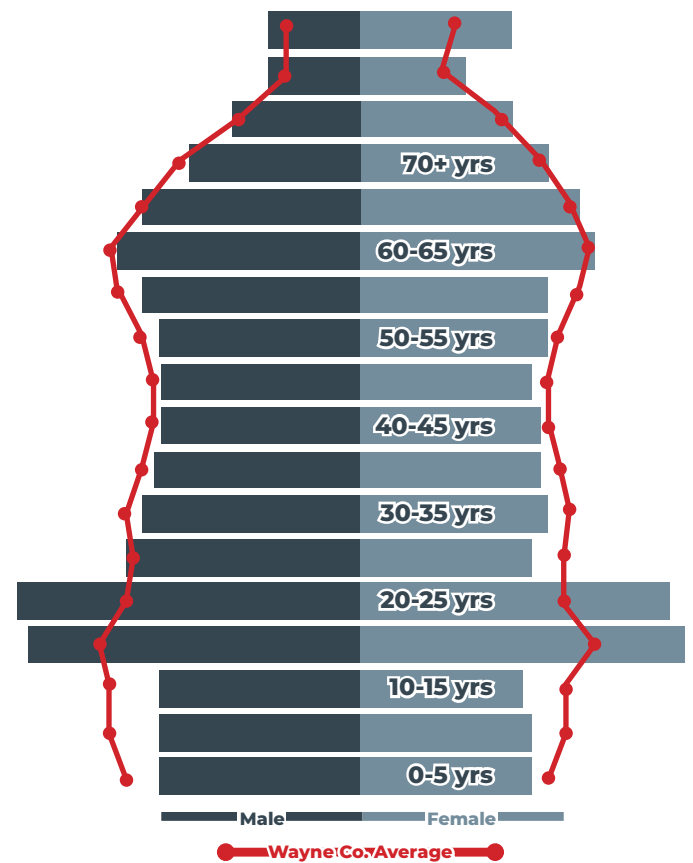
Households

According to Esri Business Analyst, in 2022 there were about 11,976 households in Wooster with an average size of two people. The top three household types in Wooster are professional couples without children, young professionals with families, and couples retired or planning for retirement. Other household types include young, well-educated professional families that traded up to newer housing in the suburbs, and newly retired individuals who can be characterized by their small household size, being fiscally conservative, mostly renters, and often living in multi-unit structures.

The 2022 median household income was \$52,485 and median home value, \$165,287. The Housing Affordability Index was 137: an index above 100 signifies that a family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home, assuming a 20 percent down payment.

Housing Stock

Wooster’s housing stock is mixed with newer single-family housing (about 1600 units built between 2000-2009 and less than 600 units built between 2010-2019) and aging multifamily. The city’s total housing units have a median built year of 1974.



Age Pyramid

HOUSEHOLD SIZE



(2.56 in Wayne County)
(2.42 in Ohio)

POPULATION CHANGE SINCE 2000



(+2.4% in Wayne County)
(+1.3% for Ohio)

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



\$52,485

(\$62,147 in Wayne County)
(\$57,725 in Ohio)

MEDIAN HOME VALUE



\$165,287

(\$216,200 in Wayne County)
(\$219,781 in Ohio)

MEDIAN CONTRACT RENT



\$622

(\$586 in Wayne County)
(\$1,024 in Ohio)

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDEX



137

(107 in Wayne County)
(179 in Ohio)

Source: 2022 Esri Business Analyst;
ACS Community Snapshot Data



Above: An example of newer attached single family housing in the community which can serve the demand for housing diversity.

Left: To interpret the Housing Affordability Index, a value of 100 means that a family with the median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. An index above 100 signifies that a family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home, assuming a 20 percent down payment. For example, a composite HAI of 120.0 means a family earning the median family income has 120% of the income necessary to qualify for a conventional loan covering 80 percent of a median-priced existing single-family home. An increase in the HAI, then, shows that this family is more able to afford the median priced home.

Note: The data shown to the left should be frequently reevaluated and reanalyzed to reflect the growth and change within in the community

EXISTING ZONING

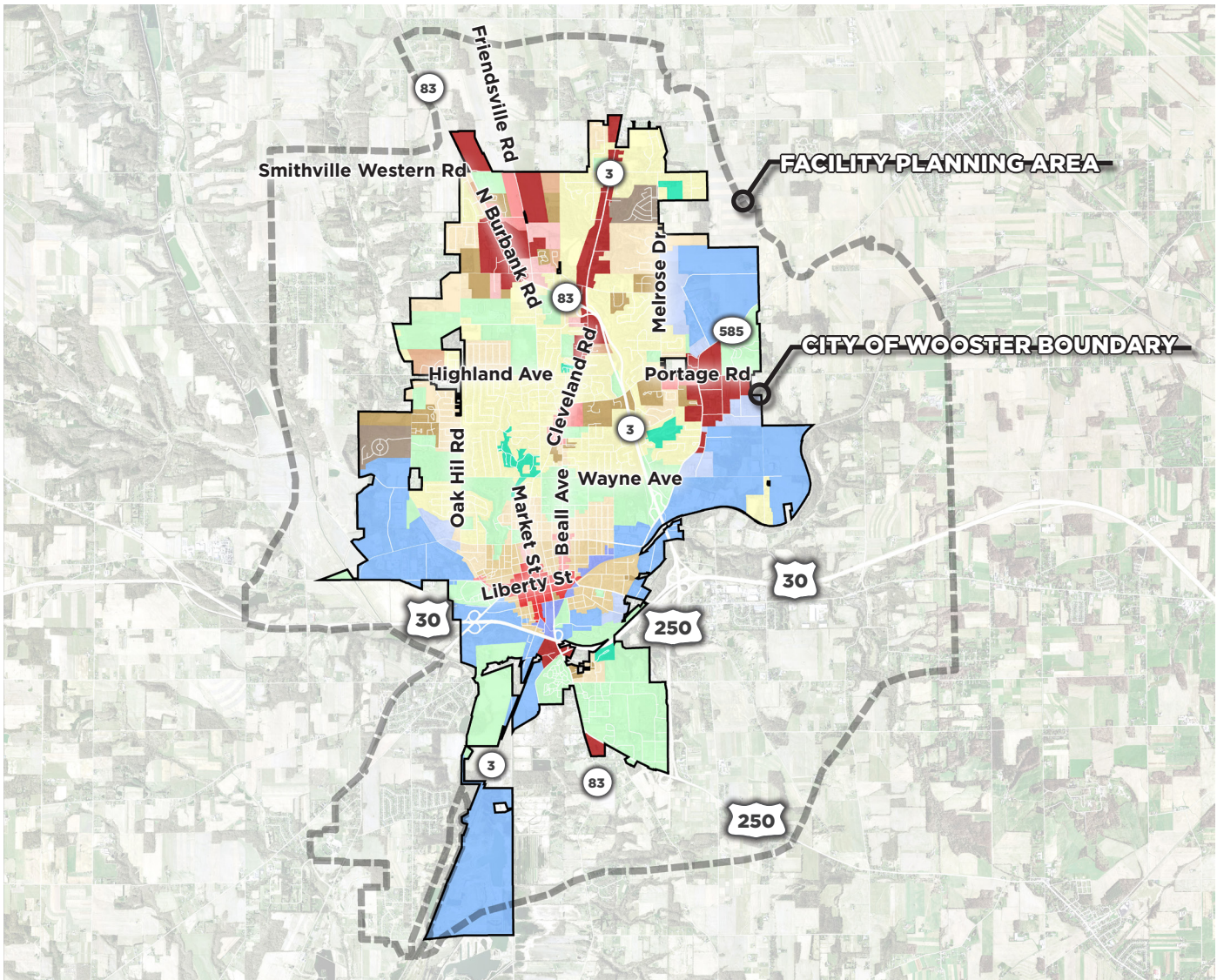
There are 15 different zoning classifications in the City of Wooster. Various residential zoning districts make up the largest portion, with commercial and industrial designations covering other major areas. Two special overlay districts are Planned Development (PD), and the Community Facilities District designation scattered throughout Wooster. Residential zones are further broken down into suburban single family, single family, attached, multifamily, two family, and traditional districts. Most residential neighborhoods are located north Liberty Street, with newer areas being developed north of Highland Avenue. Industrial zones are currently concentrated on both the east and west sides of the city boundary.

A strong understanding of these zoning designations is important to set a baseline for how land can be developed today. The zoning code designations, as outlined here, might not align with the future land use map presented later in the plan. By including the zoning here, the intention is to provide a reference point for how land may be rezoned in the future, according to the city's legal processes for amending the zoning code, to align with the future land use map. The existing zoning also represents a reasonably balanced land use tapestry that supports a diverse array of businesses, residential and other land use types.



















Market Street serves as a prime example of the benefits of implementing a central business zoning area.

Existing Zoning Map



ZONING KEY

	R1 - Suburban Single Family Residential		C1 - Neighborhood Commercial
	R2 - Single Family Residential		C2 - Community Commercial
	R3 - Attached Residential		C3 - Central Commercial
	R4 - Multifamily Residential		C4 - Central Business
	R5 - Two Family Residential		I1 - Office Limited Industrial
	RT - Traditional Residential		I2 - General Industrial
	AG- Agriculture		I3 - Urban Industrial
	CF- Community Facilities		PD- Planned Development

EXISTING LAND USE

Understanding current land uses in the study area provides a context that guides plan recommendations. Updating land use designations and identifying areas within the boundary that have higher and better uses results from analyzing existing conditions and building on the variety of land uses that exist.

Primarily, agricultural and residential uses dominate the study area. Residential uses are mostly located north of Route 30 throughout the city with a few newer multifamily residential developments just south of Route 30 near downtown, while agricultural uses are located in the more rural portions of the study area.

Commercial and industrial uses are located in the northern portion of the city as well as in large parcels around the perimeter of the city boundary running from the west side to south to northeast, with smaller such areas scattered throughout the study area. The study area enjoys ample park land and recreation uses. Vacant and undeveloped land currently exists around in the downtown areas and near newer commercial developments in the northern part of the city.

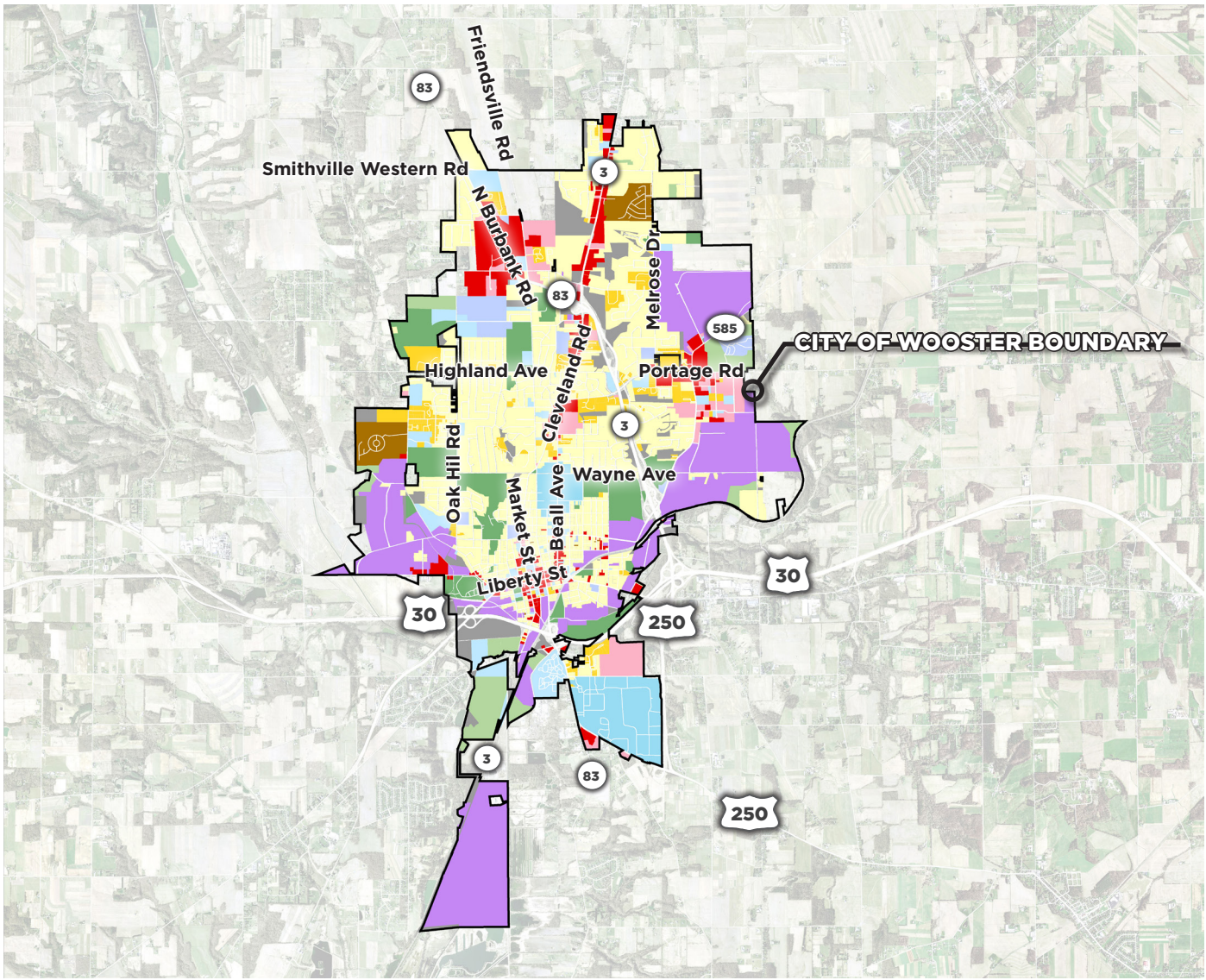


Underutilized areas like the commercial district on Beall Avenue and Cleveland Road are prime areas for potential growth and redevelopment.














Undeveloped land on the north end of the study boundary, such as on Geyers Chapel Road, may have the potential for improved uses.

Existing Land Use Map



EXISTING LAND USE KEY

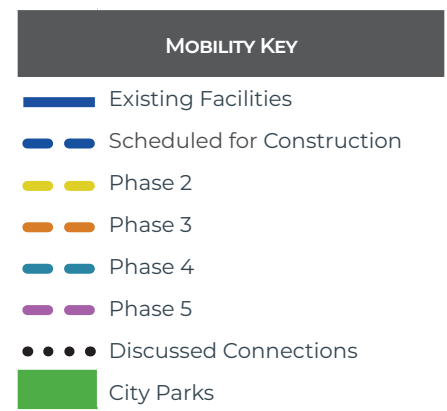
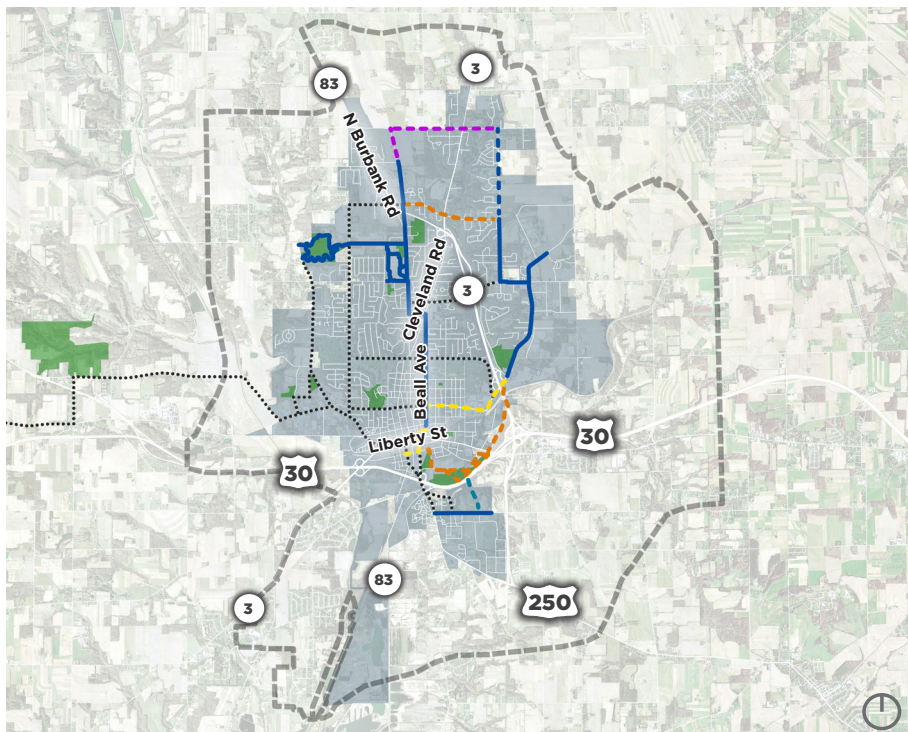
	Single Family Residential		Educational
	Multifamily Residential		Public/Quasi-Public
	Manufactured Residential		Agriculture
	Industrial		Recreation
	Commercial		Vacant/Underdeveloped
	Office		

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

A traditional street grid forms the older Wooster neighborhoods in the downtown portion of the city, while a more suburban pattern forms moving outward in all directions from downtown and then into rural agricultural, the heart of the Wooster community. U.S. Route 30 runs east/west through Wooster on the city's south side. It is joined from the northwest and southeast by U.S. Route 250 and SR 3 / SR 83, a major north-south highway leading from Cincinnati to Cleveland by way of Columbus, which cuts through the city's east side. Because of these connections, there is convenient access to Wooster from surrounding communities and vice versa.

The 2014 Wooster Comprehensive Plan set goals for a better-connected and more complete non-motorized transportation network throughout the city, and both the 2015 Downtown Wooster Master Plan and 2015 Bike Path Plan extended those goals for enhancement of whole community connectivity and better walkability for residents. The existing sidewalk network in the downtown has been strengthened by streetscape enhancements which improved walkability.

Mobility Map



Portions of the city's bicycle path network have been completed (but are not yet fully interconnected), including from Oak Hill Park through the university area and to the edge of downtown, and portions of the 585 Corridor. Melrose Dr. is also scheduled to complete a portion of its path going north to E. Smithville Western Rd. The city is well connected for vehicular and pedestrian uses, but still desires enhanced bicycle infrastructure.

In terms of public transit, Wooster does not have its own fixed-route system, but it does contract with Community Action of Wayne/Medina counties to manage fixed route service powered by SHARE Mobility inside the city. The system provides free access to transportation program members and low-cost transportation to the general public. This service does not extend outside the city, but the public can access Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) for some in-county travel since its recent expansion to serve Wayne County. As such, the public has indicated a desire for enhanced regional transit connections.

By strengthening local connections in the non-motorized system, improving the city's transit operations, and expanding regional transit options, the city can continue to enhance the overall quality of life for its residents.

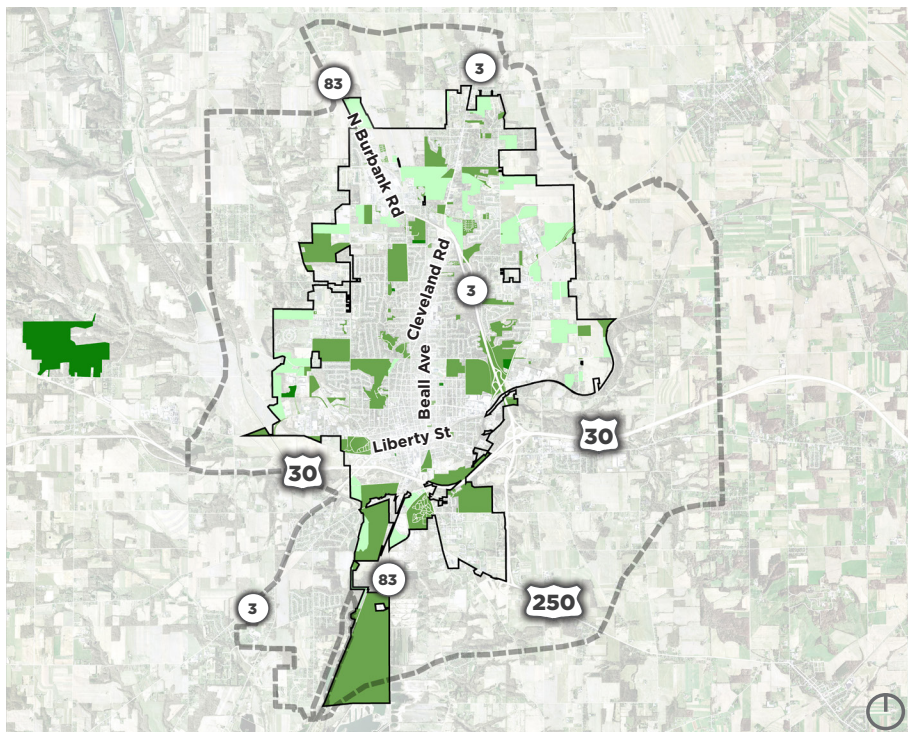
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The city has a robust existing network of green and open space, which has numerous benefits for any community. Green space also has significant benefits for the environment because plants filter the air, lower the local temperature, and prevent flooding from water runoff. The combination of environmental and health benefits offered by green space can lead to more sustainable, beautiful, and vibrant spaces.

There are large amounts of open space in Wooster both inside and outside the city boundary in this significantly agricultural community. Currently, there are 16 city parks totaling over 700 acres (323 acres without Wooster Memorial Park). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) manages a comprehensive source of parks and recreation trends for recreation agencies. The National Median Standard is 1,941 residents per park; Wooster beats the national standard at 1,702 residents per park.

In terms of accessibility to green space, the goal is to have every resident be able to access and reasonably walk to it within ten minutes. Although the majority of the city is within a 5-10 minute walk to an existing park, some north and northwest areas lack parks and park access within walking distance and there is an opportunity to for the city to create greater access. More green and open space access within the city increases both quality of life for residents and area attractiveness for visitors.

Parks and Open Space Map



Christmas Run Park's Kiwanis Playground is an all-inclusive space built in April 2016.



OPEN SPACE KEY	
	Agriculture Land
	Parks & Conservation
	City Admin Parks

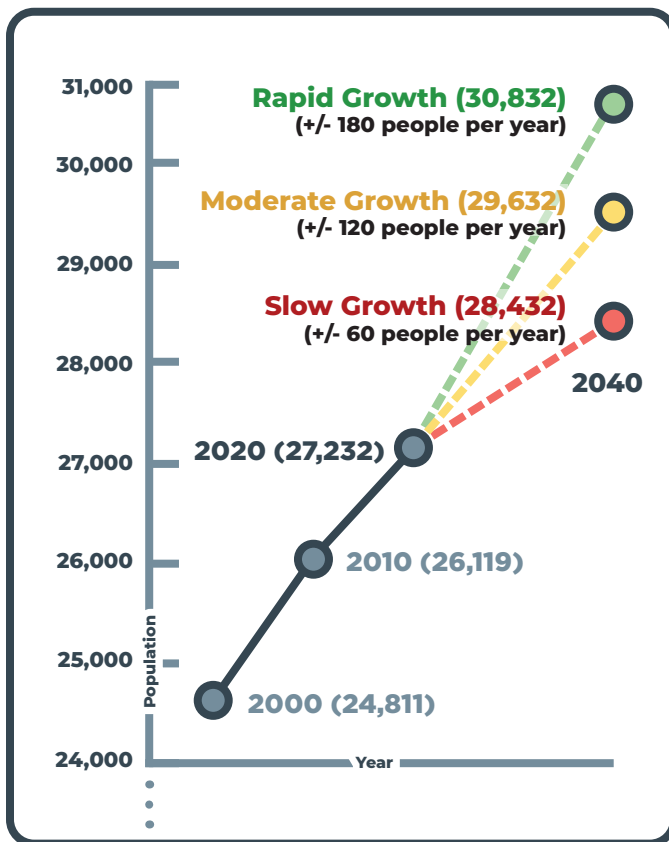
POPULATION GROWTH & DEVELOPABLE LAND

Understanding the future of development and land use in Wooster also means understanding past, present, and future growth trends and projections. Understanding potential population and growth scenarios and potential areas for growth help answer the questions of where and how the city can grow.

POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS

Population growth in Wooster since the early 2000s has been fairly consistent. Although the Wayne County population has not been as quick to grow as some other counties in Ohio, it has experienced a steady 2.4% growth in the last 20 years, which outpaces that of Ohio in general.

Population Growth Scenarios



The Wooster population has increased by an average of approximately 120 people annually over the last few decades, with a 130-person ten-year annual average from 2000-2010, and a 111-person ten-year average starting in 2010. These growth numbers, accompanied with strong economic growth, reinforce Wooster as one of the strongest economic micropolitan regions in the country (#7 for 2023 according to urban economic analyst group POLICOM).

This steady growth is an indicator of more consistent growth to come, and this plan addresses how land consumption, density, and future growth strategies align with the needs and desires of the community.

FUTURE GROWTH

Shown in the bottom left portion of the page are growth projections based on various scenarios. The rapid, moderate, and slow growth scenarios are based on the average annual number of new residents in Wooster. Moderate growth continues the trend of roughly 120 residents per year, while the rapid and slow growth scenarios vary slightly higher and lower, respectively.

Slow Growth

This growth scenario predicts 1,200 new residents over the course of 20 years, from 2020 to 2040. In this scenario and given that the average people per household (PPH) in Wooster is 2.21, the housing demand would be for roughly 543 additional units to be constructed by 2040 to accommodate only those new residents.

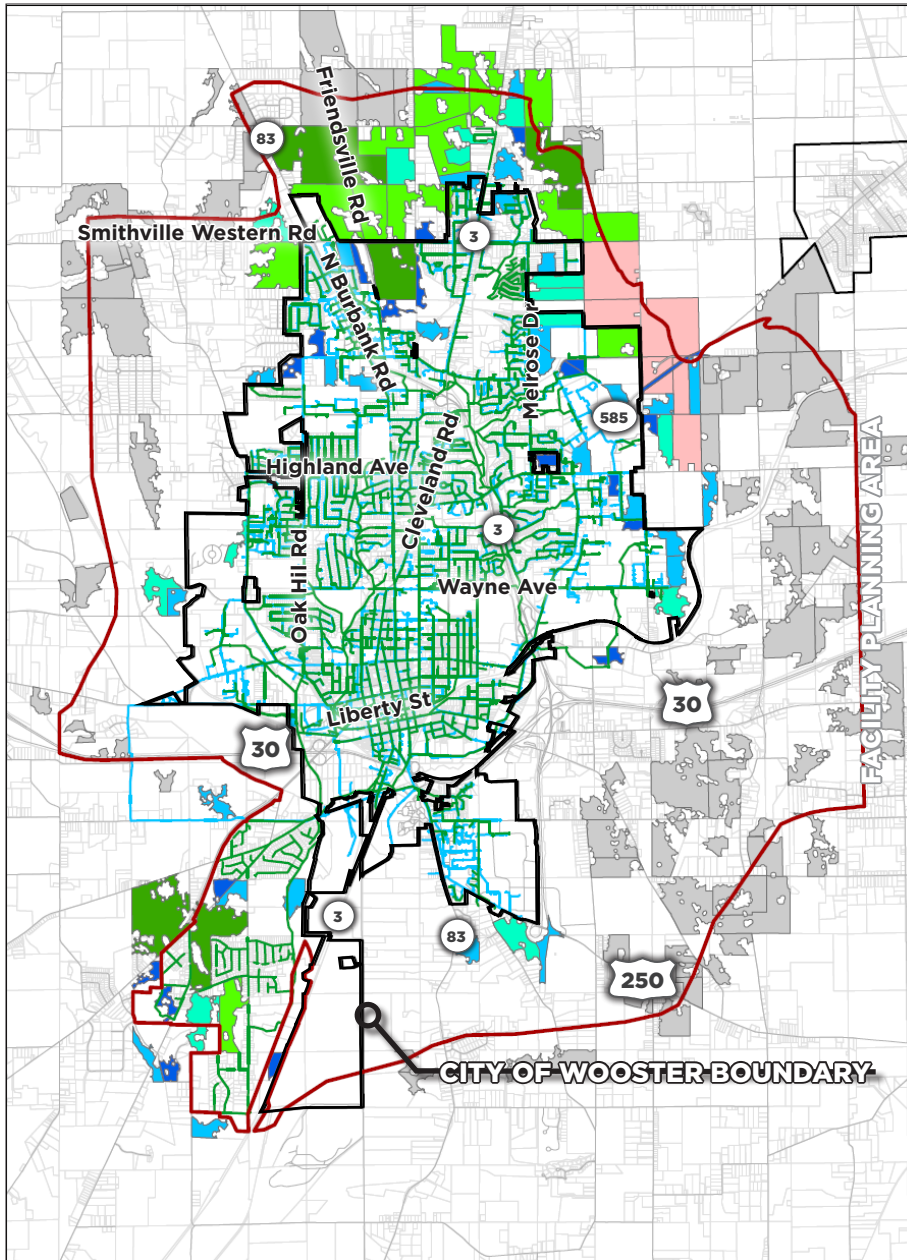
Moderate Growth

This growth scenario predicts 2,400 new residents over the course of 20 years, from 2020 to 2040. In this moderate growth scenario, the housing demand would be for roughly 1,086 additional units to be constructed by 2040 to accommodate only those new residents.

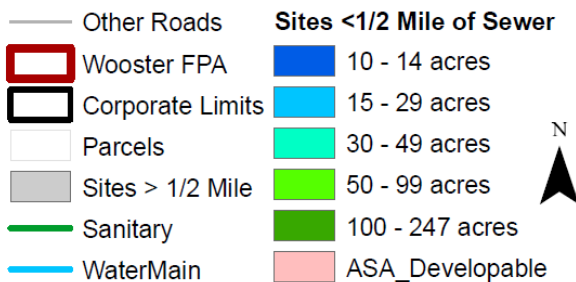
Rapid Growth

This growth scenario predicts 3,600 new residents over the course of 20 years, from 2020 to 2040. In this rapid growth scenario, the housing demand would be for roughly 1,629 additional units to be constructed by 2040 to accommodate only those new residents.

Developable Opportunities Map



Note: This does not mean that a site is readily sewerable, or capable of being served with water. Certain sites may require substantial improvements such as water towers or lift stations, which may be impractical for smaller sites.



DEVELOPABLE OPPORTUNITIES

The map to the left shows the evolution of developable land and which of these areas are true opportunities. The areas highlighted in the map depict parcels that are at least 10 acres in size, have appropriate slopes for development, are not on restricted lands (State, Parks, ASA), don't have flood concerns, and have a 100-foot proximity buffer to built structures. This map now takes into account the proximity of the developable parcels to sewer. The parcels that are not within a 1/2 mile radius to existing sewer have turned gray. The remainder of the parcels, in varying degree of scale, are considered development opportunities.

Understanding the development opportunities alongside the potential growth scenarios helps shed light on where and how Wooster can grow. Sizable developable land is essentially unavailable today within city boundaries, and there is limited opportunity within the Wooster Facility Planning Area (FPA) to accommodate financially viable and large scale (50+ acres) projects. The challenges going forward will include vetting which parcels to target for growth, understanding the demand for various unit types and degrees of affordability, and being context-sensitive to the area's agricultural roots.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Through a robust analysis of existing conditions and growth trends, the planning team identified these key findings to help inform the identification of future land use districts and focus area concepts:

- Wooster has been growing by approximately 120 residents per year over the last two decades and is anticipated to grow from 27,000 to 29,400 by 2040.
- In 2022, there were about 11,976 households in Wooster with an average size of two people. The top three household types are professional couples without children, young professionals with families, and couples retired or planning for retirement.
- EDSP data: There is currently a housing deficit of 2,117 units for Wooster's 21,139 employees.
- If the city continues to grow at the current growth rate and adds an additional 2,400 residents at approximately 8 units/acre, that growth would require approximately 136 acres of developable land.
- There were approximately 110 acres of developable multifamily zoned land when this plan process began, and approximately 418 acres of developable land (within and outside city limits) on parcels over 50 u/a.
- Wooster's fixed-route public transit system is managed by Community Action of Wayne/Medina counties and powered by SHARE Mobility inside the city. The service does not extend outside the city.
- Wooster has 16 city parks totaling over 700 acres and surpasses the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) median standard for park space per resident, at 1,702 residents per park. The majority of the city is within a 5-10 minute walk to an existing park, but there are some north and northwest areas lacking park and park access within walking distance.







FINAL PLAN - February 2024



03

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The public engagement process for the 2023 Wooster Comprehensive Plan began with the first Steering Committee meeting on February 28, 2023 and ran through the close of the second Open House event on November 6, 2023.

City staff and the consultant team used a variety of outreach methods to effectively communicate opportunities for the public to engage in the process. The city posted notice of the online community survey open for five weeks on its website and social media pages, published the link to the survey in its online city newsletter the week of April 10, and mailed survey information to each resident as part of May 2023 utility bills. It also provided survey information boards at stakeholder small group meetings and the first Open House events. In total, over 2,000 people participated in public engagement efforts, generating thousands of ideas for how to shape the future of Wooster. This document outlines the public engagement process as well as key takeaways garnered from the ideas and aspirations of the community.

18**Steering
Committee
Members**

engaged throughout 6 total meetings in this process.

60+**Stakeholder Group
Participants**

across 7 focus groups and stakeholder meetings.

1836**Survey
Responses**

via online survey, which was conducted over the course of 5 weeks.

50+**Open House 1
Participants**

between 2 in-person sessions held midday and in the evening.

40+**Open House 2
Participants**

between 1 in-person session prior to an evening city council meeting and 1 virtual session.



*Participation during the midday public open house at the Wooster Community Center.
Source: Mike Schenk, Daily Mail*



Participation during a Steering Committee meeting.

ISSUES + OPPORTUNITIES

Through multiple engagement events, the community was asked what they believe are the biggest issues and opportunities facing the city. These questions were posed to the steering committee, at the focus groups, survey, and community meetings. The following are the key takeaways/themes from the many responses received to these two important questions.

*“What do you believe are the **most critical issues or significant challenges** for the future of Wooster?”*

There is a **lack of housing stock** across all demographics and an important question of where it would go.

The perception that **restaurant dining is currently the only entertainment** available in the downtown area most of the year.

There is a **lack of affordable housing for low-income residents**, and current affordable housing is in disrepair.

Public **transportation options are not sufficient** and do not reach outside the city.

There are problems with **vagrancy, homelessness and mental health issues** which do not currently have adequate solutions.

There is **limited land zoned to support new development** and expansion.

There is not enough **willing and/or skilled workforce**.

There is an important **concern about creating strategic future growth** that shows regard for Wooster’s **farmland and agricultural** roots.

There is a vulnerable population affected by **poverty and food insecurity**.

There is a need for **more public gathering space** and for parks and recreation facilities which can **accommodate expanded programming**.

*“What do you believe are the **greatest opportunities** for the future of Wooster?”*

Rezoning to **accommodate mixed-use infill** and housing development.

Promotion of relationships between the City and higher education to retain talent after graduation.

Promotion of the land bank to **create infill opportunities in blighted areas.**

Local partnerships for **more transit options and creating a regional transportation partnership** with other counties.

Use of the CRA and TIF **incentives to encourage redevelopment** in underdeveloped areas.

The capacity of or opportunity to **rebuild the Community Center.**

The creation of a central **gathering space downtown** with adequate parking.

Intra-agency cooperation to **address problems of poverty, homelessness and mental health.**

Connection of **priority corridors of downtown, College of Wooster, and Hospital District** - and creation of a downtown **Arts District.**

City-county relationships that help with goals for strategic growth.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The consultant team drafted a 28-question community survey which was reviewed by city staff and published online on April 10, 2023 for input from local residents. Open through May 18, the survey was advertised to the public via the city’s website and social media account and a flyer with a QR code link to the survey included in May utility bills citywide.

The following page shows a snapshot of key questions and results from the community survey.

The in-depth results with public comment can be accessed by scanning the QR code below from any mobile device.

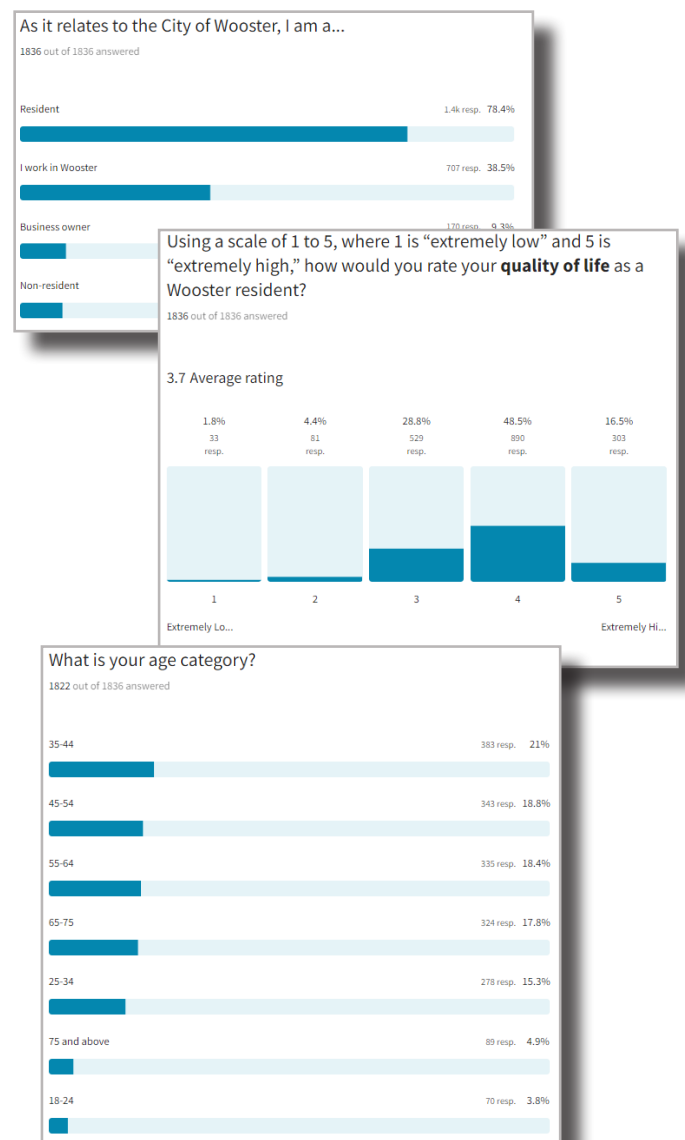
1,836

respondents



Access and review the full and detailed COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit <https://rb.gy/f2s25> to view!



Examples of the detailed feedback available through the QR code or the link.

Which would you focus on most to improve Wooster's quality of life?

Top 5 responses below:



Neighborhood Revitalization



Additional Housing



Improving Roads



Public Transit



More Parks

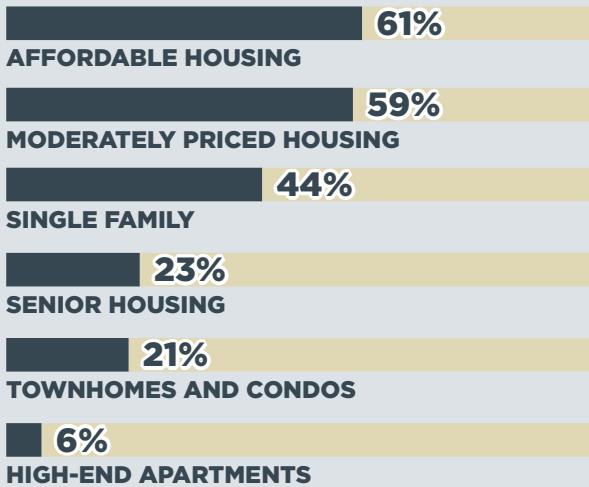
Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all supportive" and 5 means "very supportive," Wooster needs to provide **a mix of housing types** to attract people at various life stages



Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "very unaffordable" and 5 means "very affordable", do you feel that the **housing options in Wooster are affordable** to you?



Which **types of housing** do you believe Wooster needs more of?



Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree,"

Wooster needs to create an **updated community center** that could include *meeting rooms, gymnasiums, indoor/outdoor walking and other facilities, etc.*



Given the relationship between city services, income-generating development and tax levels, **which scenario do you most prefer?**

67% prefer... **..lower taxes, but stable services paid for by new growth and development.**

25% prefer... **..limited development, and stable services funded by some tax increase.**

8% prefer... **..limited development and lower taxes, even if it means cutbacks in services.**



Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree," Wooster needs to **continue to invest in downtown.**

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The consultant team met with seven groups of stakeholders in May 2023. These groups focused on housing, business, arts, medical, and education. Participants were asked about issues and opportunities in the community, and general dialogue ensued about the future of Wooster. The following is a summary of these meetings.

“As we continue to grow and expand, we should strive to do so strategically, with preservation in mind, paying homage to our agricultural roots.”

- Wooster Stakeholder

Wooster Housing Coalition

- To help answer the housing needs in our community, utilize the Land Bank and start the infill development in blight area.
- Preserve farmland and agriculture when planning for future development
- Create attainable housing
- Create more accessible city and county-wide transportation, especially for workforce between housing and job opportunities
- Build multifamily housing on unused land

Arts Focus Group

- Revisit RT zoning downtown to accommodate different types of housing, including housing for visiting artists
- Establish an arts culture that becomes part of the community
- Create financing incentives for area housing in the arts district
- Create more green spaces and areas for outdoor performances
- Open streets for easy walkways between arts organizations

Business Focus Group #1

- Work for balanced growth—keep workforce and families in Wooster
- Continue to reinvent and revitalize downtown
- Capitalize on correct workforce training and development
- Create new workforce housing
- Focus on safety and security issues downtown including addressing homelessness and drugs

Education Focus Group

- Create affordable, multi-unit housing
- Create and foster college-community connections
- Build workforce development programs
- Continue streetscaping to create a more pedestrian-friendly community
- Create summer parks and recreation programs for children

Business Focus Group #2

- Create more amenities and businesses downtown with parking to support it
- Improve technology infrastructure
- Engage local businesses and people who are ready to help fix the housing issue
- Support the homeless and under-housed with mental health and other support services
- Grow the relationship between the city and county to help create collaborative solutions

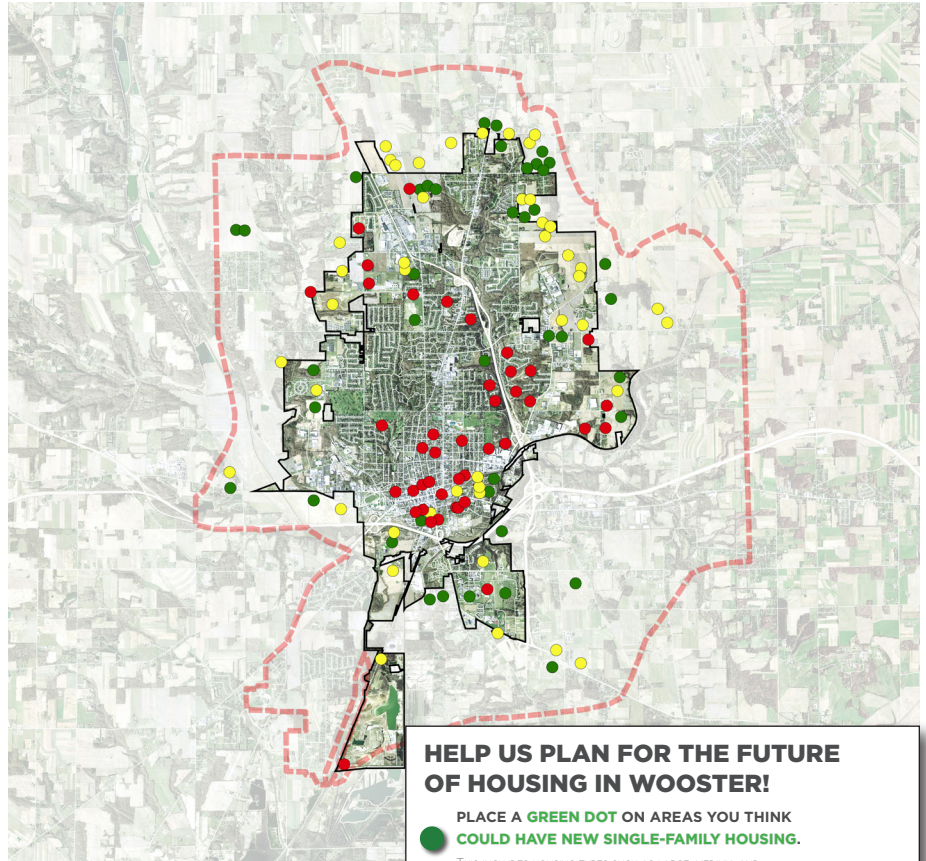
Healthcare Focus Group

- Create a free shuttle from the college to downtown
- Address safety issues in neighborhoods south of downtown
- Improve Beall Ave corridor including beautification nodes
- Provide more adult sports programming and court space
- Better maintain the current park system

OPEN HOUSE 1: SUMMARY

The consultant team held a day of local open houses on Thursday, May 11. This included a two-hour lunch session at the Wooster Community Center and a two-hour evening session at local restaurant, Spoon. The consultant team recorded public comments and spoke to community members about the planning process and purpose. Participants were engaged in a series of activities designed to solicit specific feedback that would help inform the development of the Plan. The following are the results of these activities.

Note: Issues and opportunities activities, and general comments and ideas were included and summarized as part of the issues and opportunities outlined on the previous pages.



Development Areas Exercise

- Respondents overwhelmingly cited the need for new infill development in existing neighborhoods, especially in and around downtown.
- Participants also felt that new single family housing should generally be built adjacent to the city boundary.
- The public concentrated yellow dots just inside city limits, which designated the need for new multi-family housing.
- Limited support for housing expansion south of US-30
- This exercise supports the public's general feeling that growth respect the area's agricultural roots.

HELP US PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF HOUSING IN WOOSTER!

PLACE A **GREEN DOT** ON AREAS YOU THINK **COULD HAVE NEW SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING.**

THIS INCLUDES HOUSING TYPES SUCH AS LARGE, MEDIUM, AND SMALL LOT SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOUSING.

PLACE A **YELLOW DOT** ON AREAS YOU THINK **COULD HAVE NEW MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING.**

THIS INCLUDES HOUSING TYPES SUCH AS TOWNHOMES, MULTI-UNIT BUILDINGS, APARTMENTS, ETC.

PLACE A **RED DOT** ON AREAS YOU THINK **COULD HAVE NEW INFILL IN EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.**

THIS INCLUDES HOUSING TYPES SUCH AS DUPLEXES, TRIPLEXES, QUADPLEXES, TOWNHOMES, APARTMENTS, MIXED-USE, ETC.

Housing Types Board

- The top two noted housing type needs were single-family entry-level and starter homes and multifamily housing.
- Generally, the preferred housing types in this exercise are more dense in nature and their development can be accomplished via infill.
- The top choices also support a general need for more affordable choices in the rental market, and ownership for a variety of the community demographic.



Park Activities Board

The top four types of amenities and activities respondents would like to see more of in City parks were:

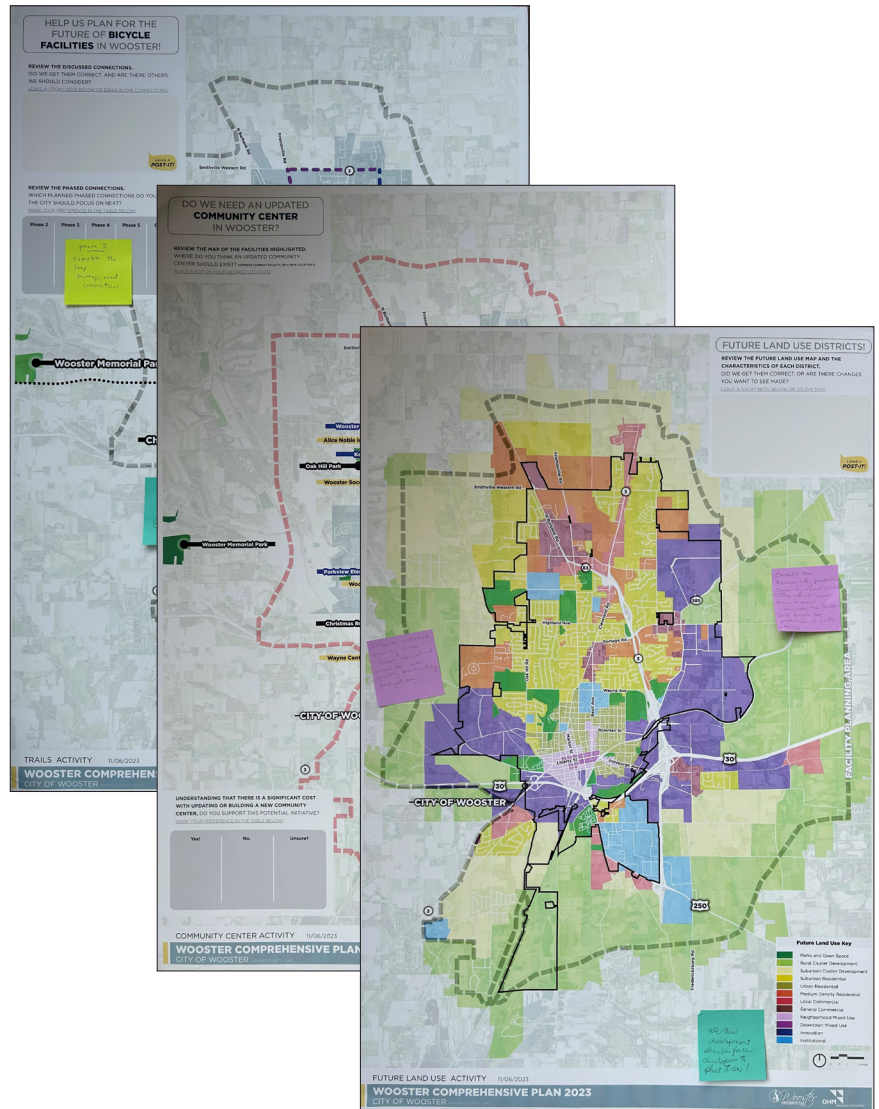
- Educational programming
- Amphitheater/stage for outdoor events and performances
- After school and summer programs for youth
- Citywide events
- Multiuse trails



OPEN HOUSE 2: SUMMARY

The consultant team conducted a second public open house on Monday, November 6, which included a presentation unveiling the proposed plan recommendations and an invitation to offer feedback on visual public engagement boards. The consultant team recorded public comments and spoke to community members about the proposed plan recommendations, especially as related to the designated Focus Areas. Participants were invited on the visual presentation boards to review the Future Land Use Character Descriptions, Focus Areas, and Implementation Plan, as well as the following three maps, and provide feedback:

- Future Land Use Districts
- Updated Community Center
- Future of Bicycle Facilities in Wooster

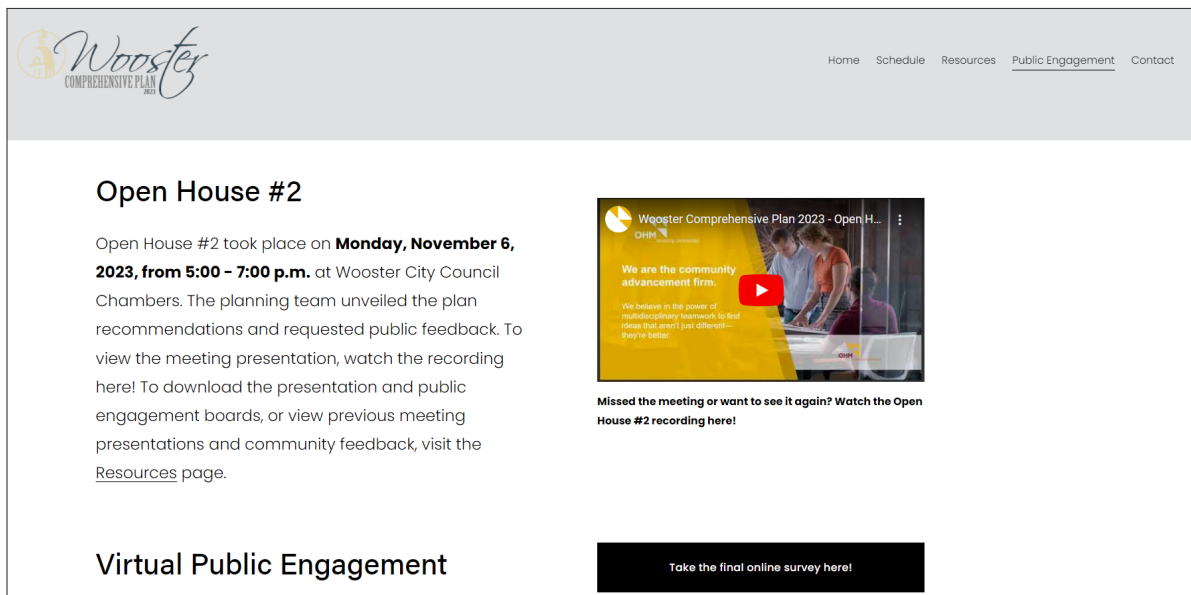


Participants reviewed recommendations and left comments and notes for consideration during the document creation process.

The second open house was followed by publication of the recorded open house presentation to the public comprehensive plan planning website, along with the launch of a second online public engagement survey which focused on proposed plan recommendations for the five Focus Areas.

Feedback from participants on the open house visual presentation boards was generally favorable regarding the proposed recommendations for the Focus Areas, which included conceptual renderings that will require future planning and development to go from vision to reality. Respondents made few written comments across all boards, most of which involved concern with protection of rural and open spaces as well as existing wetlands.

Online survey feedback from 15 respondents was also generally favorable regarding the conceptual renderings and proposed recommendations for the Focus Areas. Respondents noted that the top three future land uses the city should focus most on promoting in the next 5-10 years were Neighborhood Mixed Use, Urban Residential, and Medium Density Residential. There was general excitement around the idea of creating a downtown Wooster Arts District, with residents noting pedestrian use and safety considerations as important to this effort. As with the open house participant feedback, there was general concern about future development in all of the Focus Areas and comments indicating a desire to preserve open space and in some places require developers to follow minimum density requirements in residential housing development. The in-depth survey results with public comment are available for review as a document attached in the Plan Appendix.



The screenshot shows the website header with the Wooster logo and navigation links: Home, Schedule, Resources, Public Engagement, and Contact. The main content area features a section titled "Open House #2" with the following text: "Open House #2 took place on **Monday, November 6, 2023, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.** at Wooster City Council Chambers. The planning team unveiled the plan recommendations and requested public feedback. To view the meeting presentation, watch the recording here! To download the presentation and public engagement boards, or view previous meeting presentations and community feedback, visit the [Resources](#) page." Below this text is a video player thumbnail for the Open House #2 recording. A black button below the video says "Take the final online survey here!".

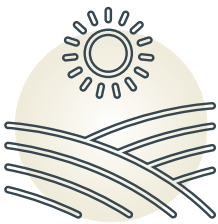
Virtual participants were asked to watch the meeting recording and help answer similar questions to those that attended in person.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

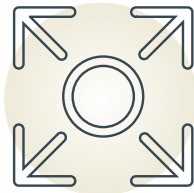
This page summarizes the key takeaways and themes from thousands of ideas generated from the community input. These themes and takeaways together with the existing conditions and trends research informed the development of the plan framework.



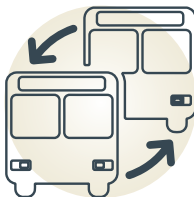
Respondents noted that there is a lack of **adequate and diverse housing types for all demographics.**



Residents would like to see balanced growth retaining the **agricultural identity rooted deeply in the community.**



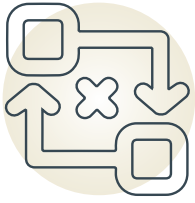
Respondents desire strategic growth over the long term, balancing **smart growth and new development with preservation.**



Respondents would like to see development of more **intracity and intercity transit options.**



Residents desire additional **shopping and entertainment options in the downtown area** with **adequate public parking** to support them.

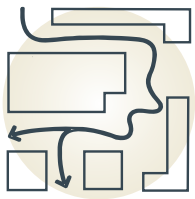


Respondents want to think about the ways the community can **work together to be self-sustaining when considering business growth and development**

(i.e., local agriculture to local food security and goods production).



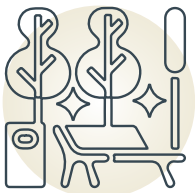
Working in **partnership with the county and higher education institutions** within Wooster.



Continuing to **develop community connectivity** and walkability.



Developing local workforce and creating housing and transit options to support it.



Residents would like **more space for parks and recreation** which can accommodate expanded programming.



Residents desire more **public gathering spaces**, especially in Downtown Wooster.



FINAL PLAN - February 2024



04 PLAN FRAMEWORK

PLAN FRAMEWORK

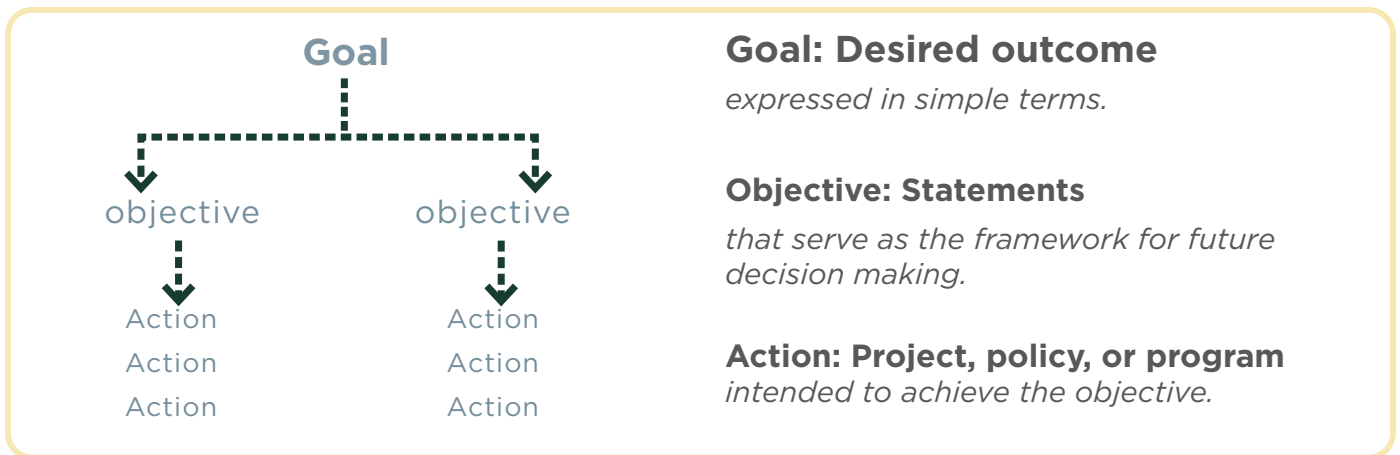
OVERVIEW

This chapter contains the plan vision and recommendations for the primary community elements (sections). These elements include **Future Land Use, Housing & Economy, Mobility & Connectivity, Parks & Recreation, Community Identity**, and, **Focus Areas** outlined in the next chapter. Plan Elements were derived from the existing conditions analysis, and community feedback gathered through the public engagement process, and with guidance from the Steering Committee.

Each section contains an overall **Goal** which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. These goals serve as the foundation for the recommendations that are found in each section. Each section contains:

- Overview
- Insights & Analysis
- Key Findings
- Plan Recommendations by section (*Chapter 6 contains composite Plan Recommendations*)

A comprehensive list of recommendations can be found in Chapter 6 (Implementation) which should be used on a regular basis to drive and monitor the implementation of the plan.



Each section herein has a goal statement, with corresponding objectives and actions developed by the Steering Committee.

PLAN ELEMENTS



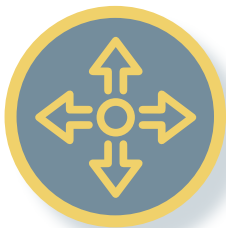
Future Land Use

The Land Use section set a framework to guide the land use pattern and character of future growth in Wooster. The recommendations in this section work to ensure growth is financially and environmentally sustainable and aligns with the aspirations of the community and the community's character.



Housing & Economy

Housing and economic development are important elements that shape the community. The content in this section takes in consideration the important role of housing in the community, and how it connects to and supports the growth of the economy.



Mobility & Connectivity

These networks not only provide access to residents and visitors to and within a community but are a significant portion of the public realm within Wooster. Providing options for all modes of transportation is key to enhancing mobility and creating a well-connected community.



Parks & Recreation

Parks and recreation are important community elements. These service can improve mental and physical health, create places for the community to gather, and are important amenities that help attract and grow new investment in the community. Within this section are targeted recommendations to enhance the parks and recreation networks.



Community Identity

The identity of Wooster is very unique. The character is shaped by the rural and cultural heritage of the region, the people, a vibrant downtown, distinct neighborhoods, and quality public spaces. This section addresses these elements and outlines strategies to maintain and enhance the unique identity of Wooster.



Focus Areas

Focus Areas are areas within the community that have the greatest opportunity for growth and development, and those areas that if transformed would have a positive impact on the overall health of Wooster. This section/chapter outlines specific focus areas, and includes detailed recommendations for how to guide investment and change in these areas in the future.

FUTURE LAND USE

OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use plan is a the foundational element in this plan that is meant to guide development in and around the city. There is a significant amount of land that could potentially be developed to accommodate growth in the coming decades, as well as neighborhood centers that could be redeveloped and re-imagined. This chapter is meant to guide the pattern and character of future growth in Wooster, so that growth is financially and environmentally sustainable and aligns with the aspirations of the community. The plan was developed from the community engagement insights in Chapter 3, the technical analysis performed by the project team, and market trends. These inputs shaped a set of land use principles that inform the development of the future land use map.

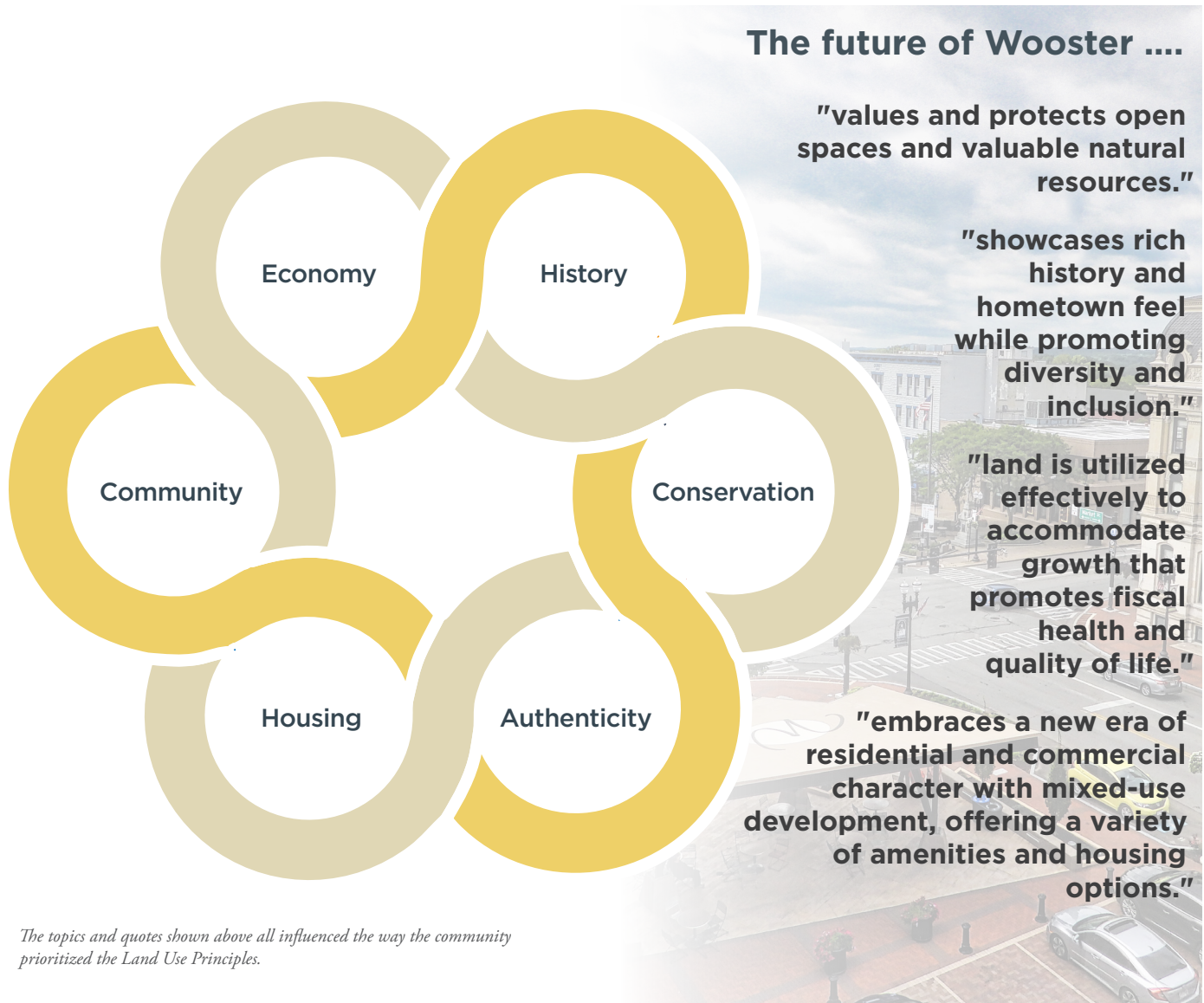


Right: An illustration of how the framework was shaped by public input and technical analysis to create land use principles informed the development of the plan.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

The vision for how land should be used in the future is outlined within this chapter and anchored in a set of Land Use Principles and typologies, as well as illustrated in the Future Land Use map. Collectively, the principles and map are the two elements that should guide and inform future growth and development.

The principles and map were built on the vast community engagement process, which resulted in thousands of ideas for how the City should grow in the future. They reflect key considerations related to housing, economic development, mobility, character, community gathering spaces, among many other elements of the City. Most importantly, they contain and reflect the traditions of Wooster. The community was clear that the traditions of the community should be considered and preserved, while thoughtfully moving the community forward. This means preserving the past while planning for the future. This is the future of Wooster.



The future of Wooster ...

- Economy**: "values and protects open spaces and valuable natural resources."
- History**: "showcases rich history and hometown feel while promoting diversity and inclusion."
- Conservation**: "land is utilized effectively to accommodate growth that promotes fiscal health and quality of life."
- Authenticity**: "embraces a new era of residential and commercial character with mixed-use development, offering a variety of amenities and housing options."
- Housing**: (No quote provided)
- Community**: (No quote provided)

The topics and quotes shown above all influenced the way the community prioritized the Land Use Principles.

LAND USE PRINCIPLES

The following are land use principles that should guide and inform future development in Wooster. These principles were built out of the key themes that emerged from extensive community input, technical research, and best practices in planning. The principles were the basis in creating the Future Land Use map contained in the Plan.

In simple terms these principles are statements of intent that describe the desire for how land should be used and developed in the future. They are intended to be a guide and should be considered as decisions are made regarding future programs, policies, or development in the future, which should be in alignment and support these principles.

FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY SHOULD:



Provide a Variety of Housing Options

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options to maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



Create Community Spaces

Provide opportunities for social gathering and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, riverfront, shopping, restaurants, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



Keep a Small Town Feel & History

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



Encourage Economic & Cultural Diversity

Support and grow the diversity of the community through a variety of living and cultural amenities.



Foster Creative Redevelopment

Allow for creative mixed-use, high quality development that creates economic and living options for a variety of residents.



Be a Connected Community

Connect the community through a network of trails, pathways, and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



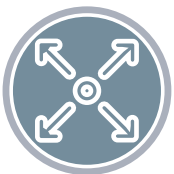
Encourage Economic Growth

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



Preserve Open Spaces

Protect open spaces and valuable natural resources through the addition of new park spaces, and new development that follows conservation development principles, collectively creating a greenway network within and surrounding the community.



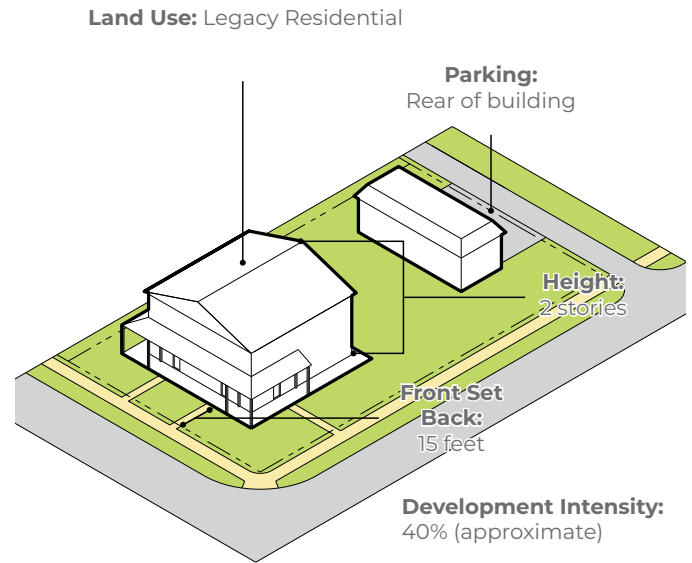
Promote Regional Proximity

Boast Wooster's regional proximity as a unique location and micropolitan area that is accessible to greater Ohio.

FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS

The Future Land Use Map illustrates how land should be used in the future. As development occurs, future zoning and policy decisions should align with the map and the districts therein. Each district is a unique land use typology and has a prescribed set of characteristics. The table next to the map describes each land use type and the associated development standards.

It is important to note that as part of this Plan, these standards are only intended to be general in nature. As future zoning changes, these recommendations should be referenced. When reviewing this chapter, consider that the current zoning designations in the city may not align with the future land use map presented here. The intention is to provide a reference point for how land could be rezoned. It is important to note that to rezone any property, potential applicants would follow the city's legal process to amend the zoning code, which includes, but is not limited to, an application, multiple hearings, and formal approval procedures.

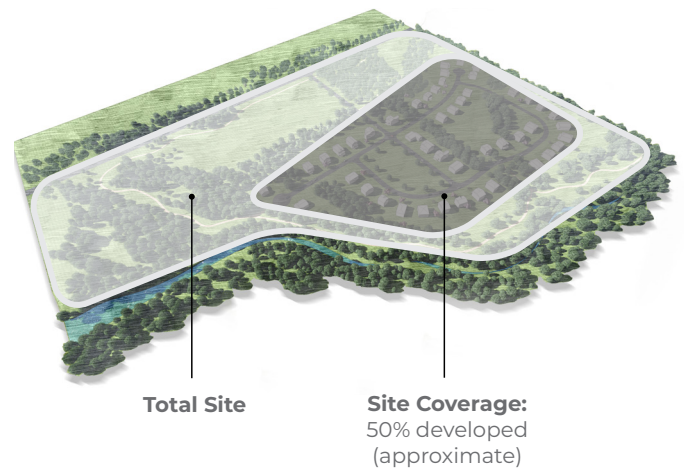


LAND USE TYPES

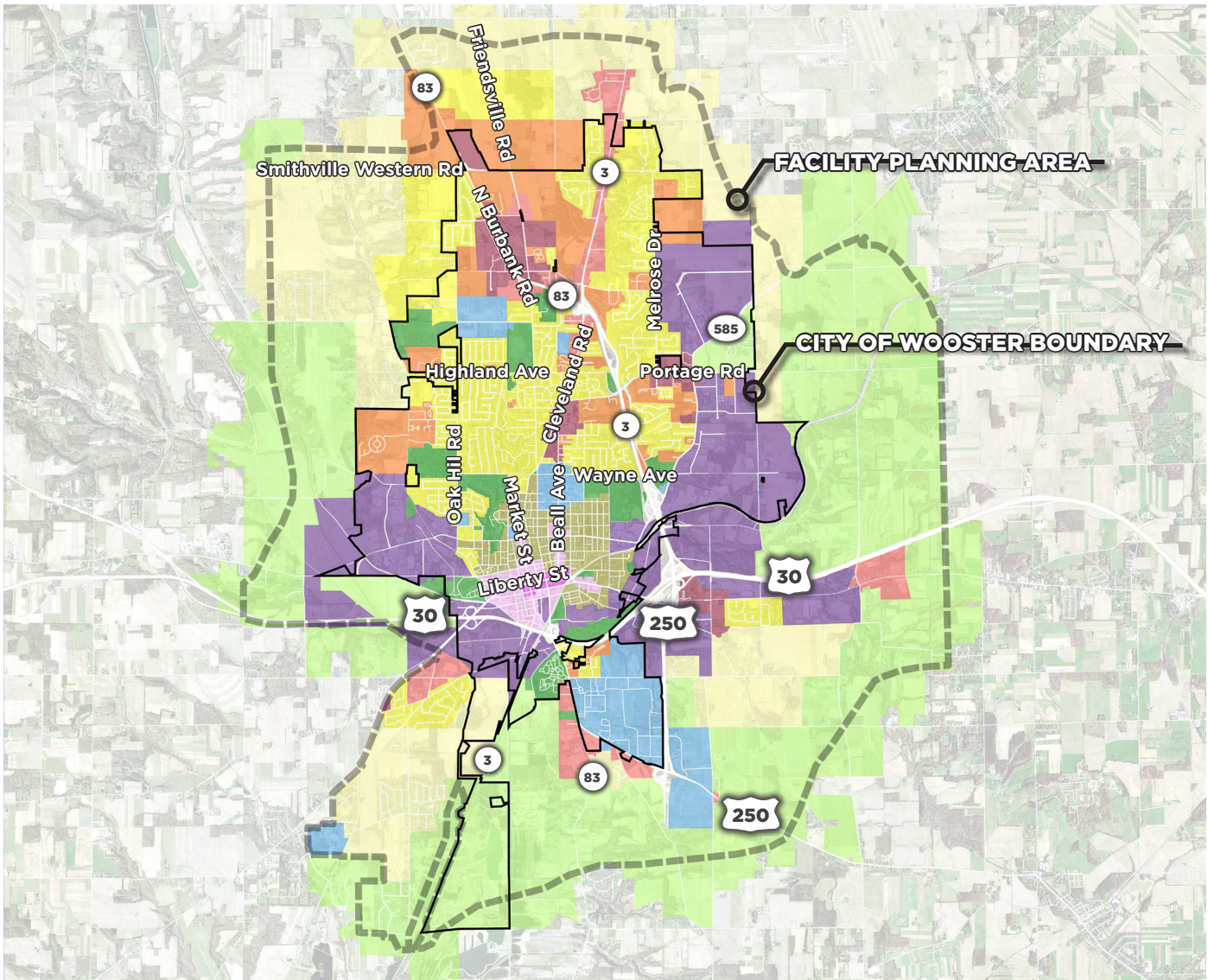
The Land Use Types table summarizes the desired future character and form for each type of land use. **These descriptions are intended to be a general guide for how development may occur in the future, not a rigid set of standards.**














Definitions

- **Land Use** - Describes the variety of ways (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.) people make use of the land.
- **Height** - Describes the general height of a building in number of stories.
- **Front Setback** - The minimum distance between the front edge of a site and the building on the site.
- **Parking** - General requirements related to parking standards including location and screening.
- **Development Intensity** - The approximate concentration or compactness of buildings on a site.
- **Recommended Uses** - The proposed development type for a site.



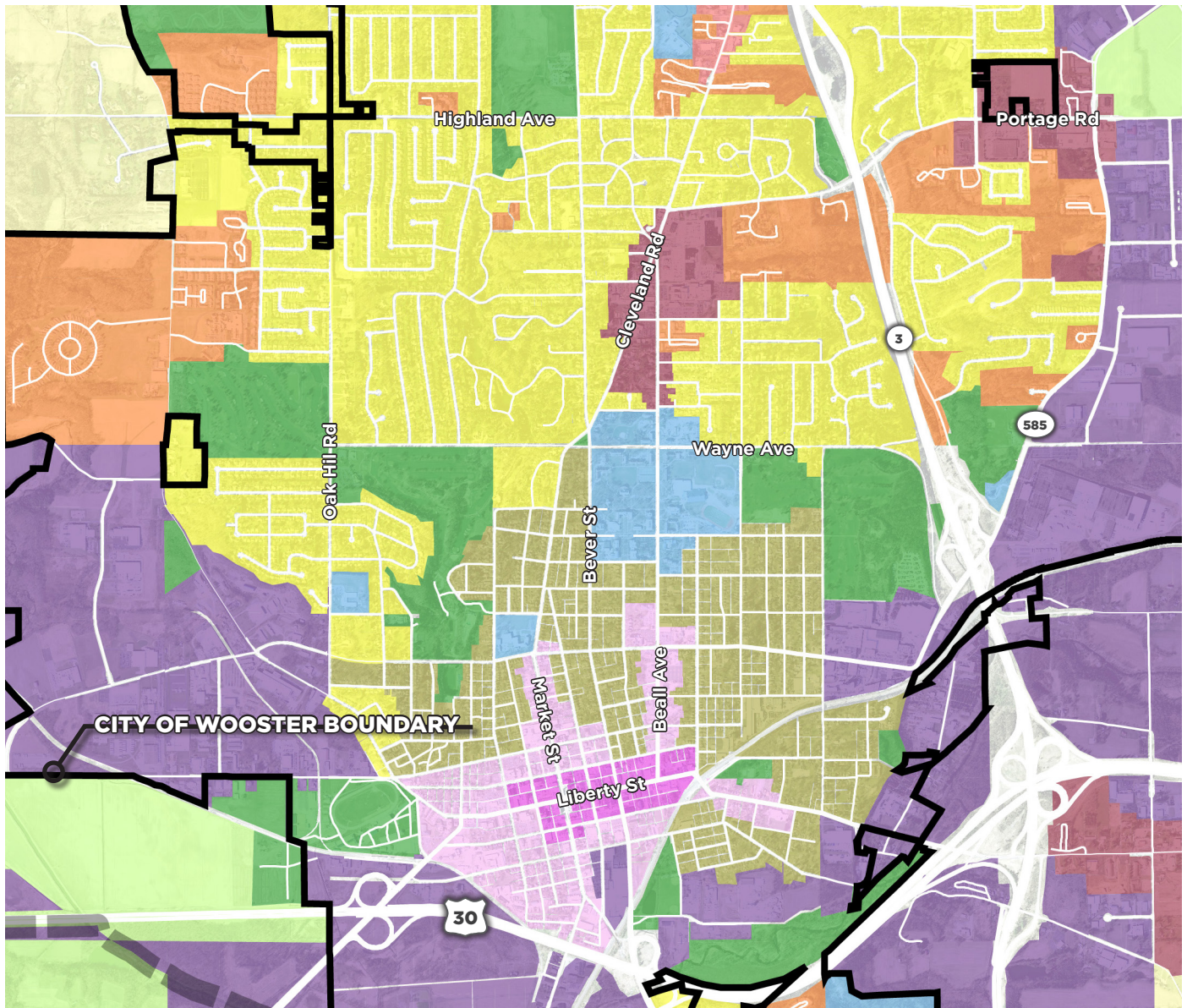
Future Land Use Map



FUTURE LAND USE KEY			
	Rural Cluster		Suburban Residential
	Suburban Cluster		Local Commercial
	Parks & Open Spaces		Residential Mixed Use
	Facility Planning Area		Innovation
			General Commercial
			Urban Residential
			Medium Density Residential
			Institutional
			Downtown Mixed Use

The Future Land Use Map is intended to be used as a blueprint for future growth and development. While prescriptive, it is also flexible in nature.

Future Land Use Map - Urba Area Detail Map



FUTURE LAND USE KEY			
	Rural Cluster		Suburban Residential
	Suburban Cluster		Local Commercial
	Parks & Open Spaces		Innovation
	Urban Residential		Residential Mixed Use
	Medium Density Residential		Downtown Mixed Use
			Institutional

The Future Land Use Map is intended to be used as a blueprint for future growth and development. While prescriptive, it is also flexible in nature.

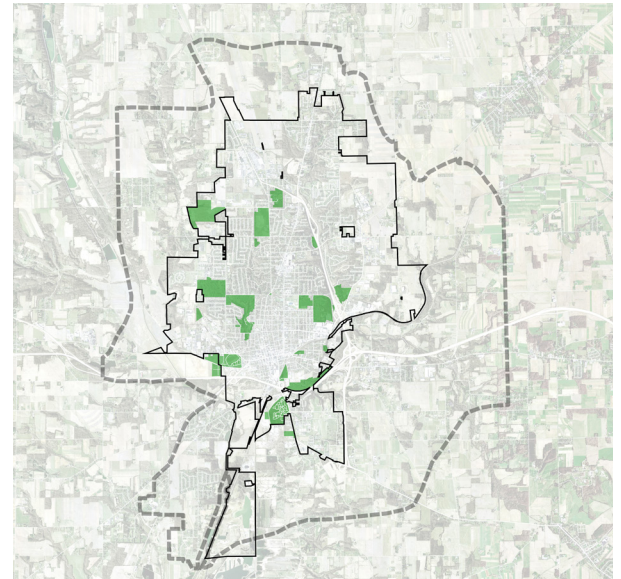
LAND USE	HEIGHT	FRONT SETBACK	PARKING	RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY	RECOMMENDED USES
Parks & Open Space	--	--	--	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Services Parks & Recreation Natural Areas
Rural Cluster	1-2 stories	30-100 ft	Front facing garages	Conservation of 50-75% of site or overall development, approx. 1 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Single Family
Suburban Cluster	1-2 stories	25-100 ft	Front, rear, or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate	Conservation of 25-50% of site or overall development, and up to 2 - 4 du/ac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Single Family Attached Single Family
Suburban Residential	1-3 stories	25-30 ft	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate	Building coverage 30-50% up to 6 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Single Family Attached Single Family
Urban Residential	1-3 stories	10-30 ft	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate	Building coverage 30-50% up to 10 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Single Family Attached Single Family Multifamily
Medium Density Residential	2-5 stories	0-100 ft.	Rear or side facing garages, screen from street/neighborhood uses	Building coverage 40-60% up to 25 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Single Family Attached Single Family Multifamily
Local Commercial	1-3 stories	0-30 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses	Individual buildings less than 10,000-15,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail Light Industrial Office
General Commercial	1-3 stories	0-100 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development intensity 10,000 - 30,000 sf/acre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail Healthcare Office
Residential Mixed Use	1-3 stories	0-25 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses (multifamily/commercial only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building coverage 30-50% Development intensity 10,000 - 30,000 sf/acre or 10-20 u/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attached Single Family Multifamily Mixed Use w/ Retail Mixed Use w/ Office
Downtown Mixed Use	1-5 stories	0-25 ft	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses (multifamily/commercial only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building coverage 30-70% Development intensity 10,000 - 30,000 sf/acre or 10-30 u/a, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multifamily Mixed Use w/ Retail Mixed Use w/ Office
Innovation	1-2 stories	25-200 ft	Screen from street/neighborhood uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15,000 - 25,000 sf/acre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Logistics R+D Office
Institutional	--	--	--	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Institutions

PUBLIC PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Description

These areas are intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses. Buildings and land owned by the government, libraries, City emergency and service departments, privately and publicly owned schools and universities, as well as private and public parks and open spaces share this development character. Such facilities should be well designed and integrated into their surroundings. Pedestrian access is key on these sites and must be ADA accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided to ensure pedestrian safety.

When considering the development of large expanses of greenfield land, it is important to recognize the value of open space and recreational areas and land remaining in its natural state. Residential neighborhoods and mixed-use developments often gain an even greater value when located in proximity to parks and open space. Park facilities should include a range of active and passive uses or activities, and be designed to reduce maintenance expenses. The existing park network should be expanded into new areas of development.



Development Character

Height	--
Front Setback	--
Parking	--
Recommended Development Intensity	--
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Services • Parks & Recreation • Natural Areas



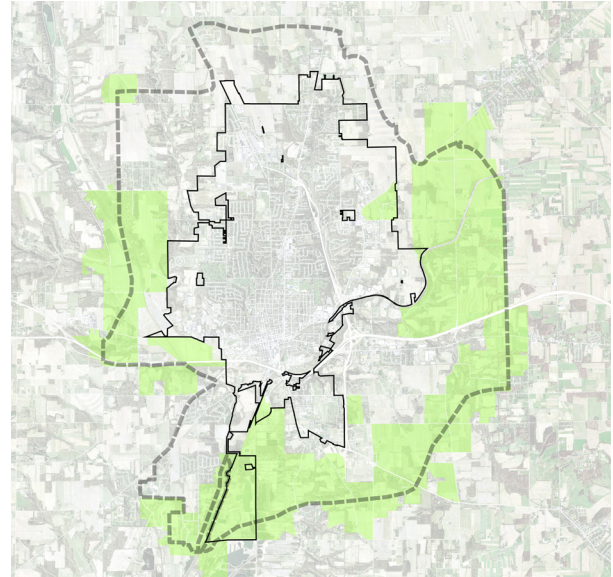
A variety of park spaces within a city create amenities for residents and improve the local environment.

RURAL CLUSTER (CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT)

Description

Rural Cluster Development allows for single-family homes that are clustered within a larger site to reduce land consumption and preserve rural and natural features.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be single family residential and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is communal and left undisturbed or developed as a public use.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be approximately one dwelling unit per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved in some areas. Density bonuses may be considered for development that exceeds 75% open space dedication.
- **OPEN SPACE** should consist of 50-70% of the site and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Recreational paths can be included within open space. Landscaping consisting of native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats are encouraged.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should be of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees and green stormwater infrastructure.



Development Character

Height	1-2 stories
Front Setback	30-100 ft.
Parking	Front facing garages
Recommended Development Intensity	Conservation of 50-75% of site or overall development, and up to
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached Single Family



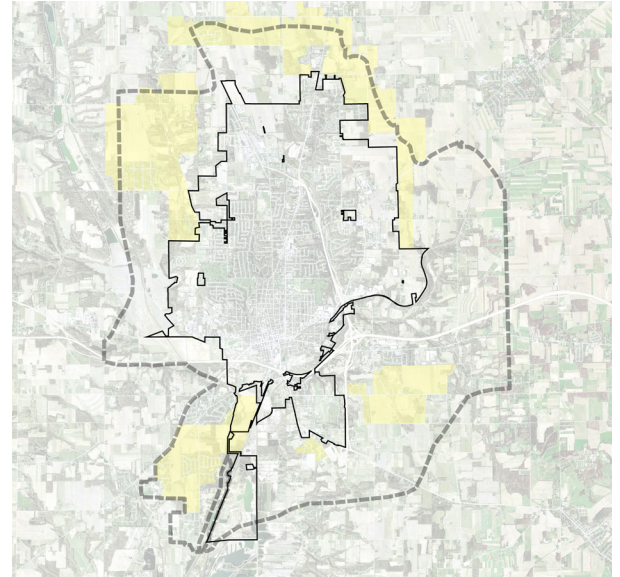
Distinct architecture and natural materials create attractive neighborhoods within the landscape.

SUBURBAN CLUSTER

Description

Suburban Cluster Development is characterized by a clustering of single-family homes with slightly less quantity of conservation/open space areas.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be single family residential and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site, with the remaining land being communal and left undisturbed.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be approximately two to four dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed four units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **OPEN SPACE** should make up at least 25% of the overall development and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible. Open spaces should be landscaped with native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-2 stories
Front Setback	25-100 ft
Parking	Front, rear, or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate
Recommended Development Intensity	Conservation of 25-50% of site or overall development, 2 - 4 du/ac
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attached Single Family • Detached Single Family



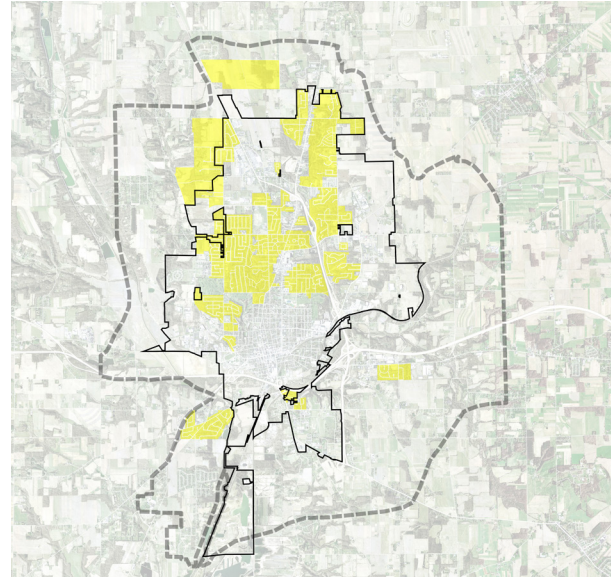
Clustered homes preserve large areas of open and natural space, accessible by all residents.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Description

Suburban Residential is characterized by maintaining the existing fabric and character of established Wooster residential neighborhoods, with new development reflecting a similar character.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be single family residential and community facilities that reflect the current suburban characteristics of established Wooster communities.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be six dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed ten units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be integrated into the site and primarily include preservation areas where land has been restored to its natural state and sensitive features are protected. Open spaces should be landscaped with native plants that require little care and support a variety of habitats.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	25-30 ft.
Parking	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate
Recommended Development Intensity	Building coverage 30-50% up to 6 units/acre
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family



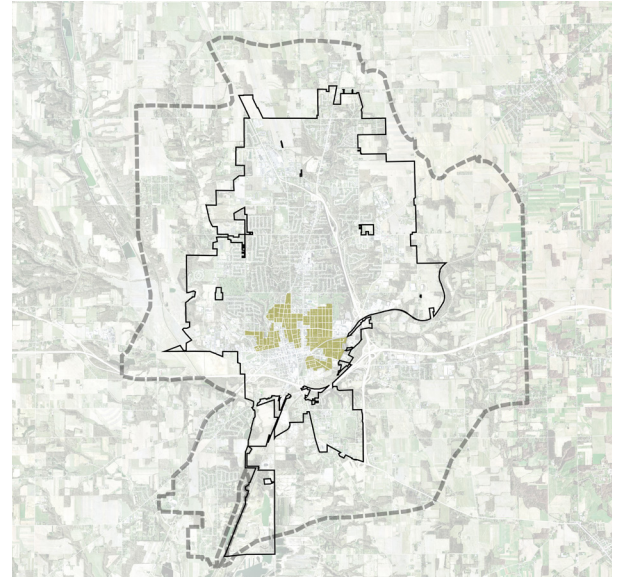
Older neighborhoods that have been developed over time create legacy districts.

URBAN RESIDENTIAL

Description

Urban Residential is characterized by single and multi-family housing options in established districts and neighborhoods.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be single-family and multi-family residential character that supports the proximity to commercial and institutional uses nearby.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be up to ten dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed fifteen units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be integrated into site and primarily include areas for gathering for residents within the development. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	10-30 ft.
Parking	Rear or side facing garages. Alley access where appropriate
Recommended Development Intensity	Building coverage 30-50% up to 10 units/acre
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family • Multifamily



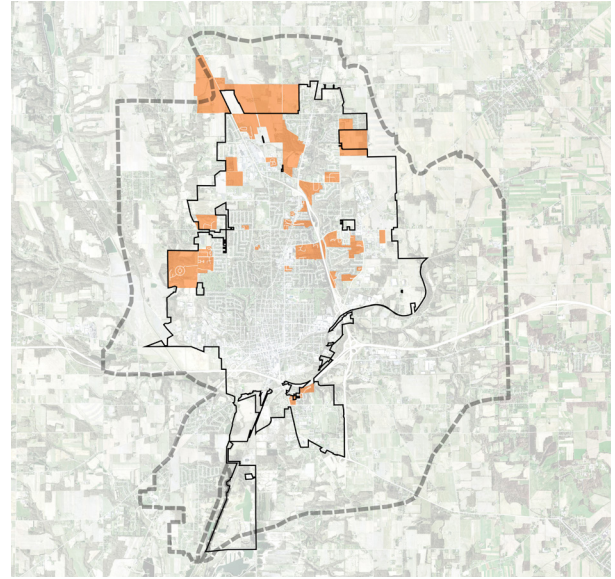
A range of single family homes, townhomes, patio homes, and flats provide housing options within the same neighborhood.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Description

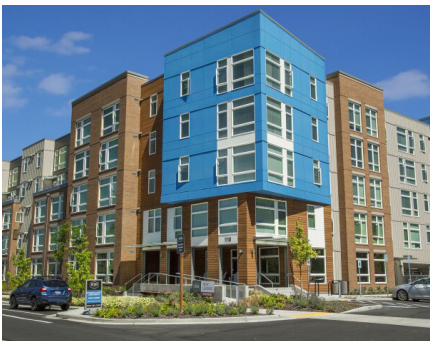
Medium Density Residential is characterized by communities with a range of dense single and multi-family housing options with on-site, shared amenities.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be single family, multi family residential, and community facilities that offer various amenities to residents such as a community center, recreational paths, and natural areas.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be up to 25 dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed thirty units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be integrated into site and primarily include areas for gathering for residents within the development. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Development Character

Height	2-5 stories
Front Setback	0-100 ft.
Parking	Rear or side facing garages, screen from street/neighborhood uses
Recommended Development Intensity	Building coverage 40-60% up to 25 units/acre
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached Single Family • Attached Single Family • Multi-family



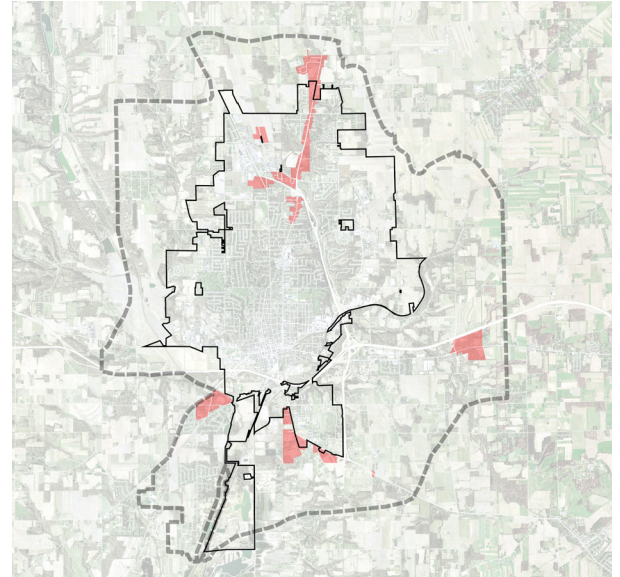
A range of dense single and multi-family housing options can provide on-site, shared amenities.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL

Description

Local Commercial is characterized by small-scale retail, light industrial, neighborhood services, and office uses that complement and support nearby residential uses.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should have a distinct presence from the street and be highly attractive. Buildings should face the street with windows looking onto the street.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area should be high scale, with individual buildings being no greater than 10,000-15,000 square feet and allow for mix uses, integrated vertically and horizontally.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be used to define and add character to a development. Ornamental landscaping within the setback, within parking lots, and along buildings is encouraged.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should incorporate “complete street” principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	0-30 ft.
Parking	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses
Recommended Development Intensity	Individual buildings less than 10,000-15,000 sf/acre
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Light Industrial • Office



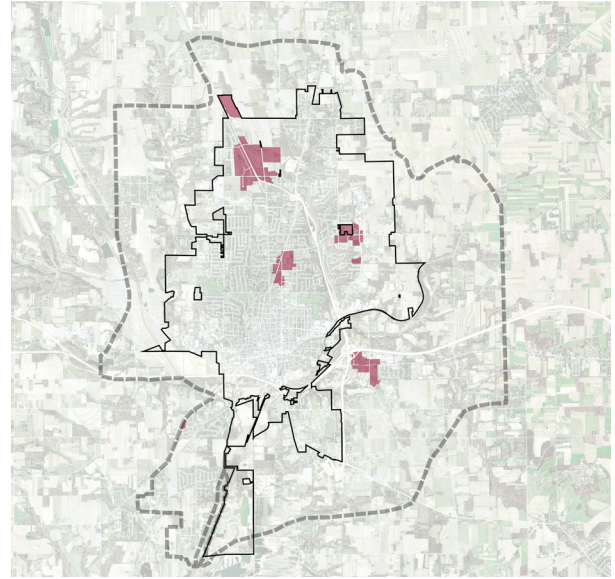
Small-scale retail, neighborhood services, and office uses can complement and support nearby residential uses.

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

Description

General Commercial is intended for medium to large-scale commercial uses that serve the regional community. This may include big box retail, healthcare, entertainment, restaurants, large office uses as well as multi-family residential.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be a mixture of uses that blends complementary uses including retail, office, and residential in urban or semi-urban development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green space provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this can range from 10,000 to 30,000 square feet per acre and residential intensity up to 25 dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through the provision of community spaces and amenities.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should incorporate “complete street” principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	10-100 ft
Parking	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighboring uses
Recommended Development Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building coverage 30-50% • Development intensity 10,000 - 30,000 sf/acre
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Office • Public • Semi Public



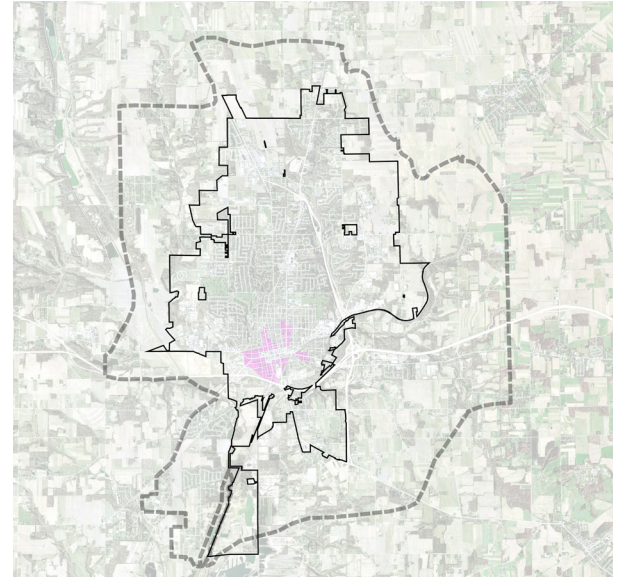
A mix of commercial, residential, and public spaces create dynamic centers for people to live, work, and play.

RESIDENTIAL/NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE

Description

Residential Mixed Use - also referred to as Neighborhood Mixed Use is characterized by a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses, with high public and private realm features that promote walkability and social interaction. These uses support the surrounding neighborhoods with goods and services.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be mixed use development that blends complementary uses including retail and office, but prioritizes residential uses in urban or semi-urban mixed-use development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development, and create a live-work-play environment. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green space provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area may range from 10 to 20 units per acre for residential and 10,000 to 20,000 square feet per acre for non-residential uses.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas with a focus on public art.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should incorporate “complete street” principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	0-25 ft.
Parking	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses (multifamily/commercial only)
Recommended Development Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building coverage 50-60% • Development intensity 10,000 - 20,000 sf/acre or 10-20 u/a
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attached Single Family • Multifamily • Mixed Use w/ Retail • Mixed Use w/ Office



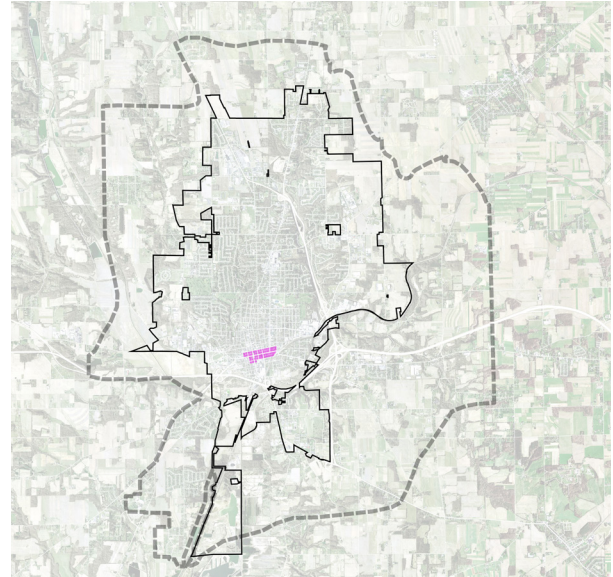
A mix of commercial, residential, and public spaces create dynamic centers for people to live, work, and play.

DOWNTOWN MIXED USE

Description

Downtown Mixed Use is characterized by a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses, with high public and private realm features that promote walkability and social interaction. These uses support the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the community as a whole, being the primary urban center of the city.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be mixed use development that blends complementary uses including retail and office, but prioritizes residential uses in an urban mixed-use development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development, and create a live-work-play environment. Public amenities such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and green space provide both residents and visitors areas to relax and socialize.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area may range from 10 to 30 units per acre for residential and 10,000 to 30,000 square feet per acre for non-residential uses.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should incorporate “complete street” principles so it is safe and efficient for all modes of travel. Streetscape elements should be cohesive and enhance the public realm. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways.



Development Character

Height	2-5 stories
Front Setback	0-25 ft
Parking	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses (multifamily/commercial only)
Recommended Development Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building coverage 50-75% • Development intensity 10,000 - 30,000 sf/acre or 10-30 u/a,
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multifamily • Mixed Use w/ Retail • Mixed Use w/ Office



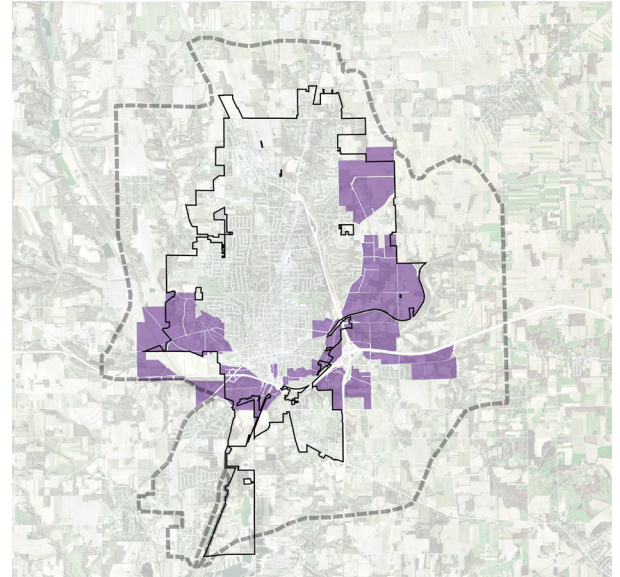
Historic downtown charm contributes to a small town feel.

INNOVATION

Description

Innovation is characterized by large-scale industrial, research, and office users that demand proximity to local, regional, and national transportation networks and that create and require synergy between adjoining uses and businesses.

- **DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER** should be a variety of industrial, research & development, laboratory, design, and technology uses. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers. High interconnectivity through public plazas, green spaces, and pathways within and around the site should create a campus of cross-collaboration. Parks, public amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle access should be included.
- **DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY** in this area may range from 15,000 to 25,000 square feet per acre and allow for large format users.
- **OPEN SPACE** should be incorporated into site design as appropriate.
- **CONNECTIVITY** should allow safe travel for cars, trucks, and freight with consideration for roundabouts where appropriate. Branding signage may also be considered in this area.



Development Character

Height	1-3 stories
Front Setback	25-200 ft
Parking	Rear or side of building, screen from street/neighborhood uses
Recommended Development Intensity	• 15,000 - 25,000 sf/acre
Recommended Uses	• Industrial • Logistics • R+D • Office



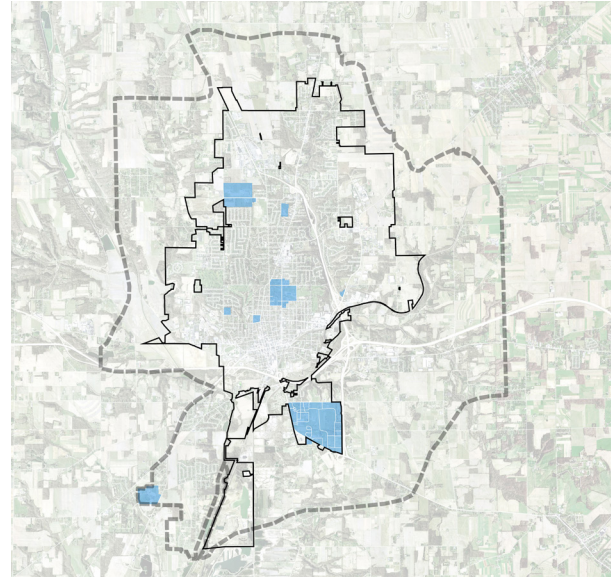
Large industrial buildings incorporate well-landscaped and architecturally distinct entrances to improve building aesthetics.

INSTITUTIONAL

Description

These areas are intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses. Buildings and land owned by the government, libraries, City emergency and service departments, religious uses, privately owned schools and universities, and the public school system share this development character. Such facilities should be well designed and integrated into their surroundings.

Pedestrian access is key on these sites and must be ADA accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided to ensure pedestrian safety. In larger institutional settings such as a university campus, parking that serves a greater area may be located at a further distance to preserve the pedestrian experience within the site. Attractive landscaping, streetscape elements, and signage should be used to integrate larger sites into the existing street network.



Development Character

Height	--
Front Setback	--
Parking	--
Recommended Development Intensity	--
Recommended Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation • Public • Semi Public



A variety of institutional places within a city offers services for residents and improves quality of life.

KEY FINDINGS - FUTURE LAND USE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Wooster's 2020 U.S. Census population was 27,232, having grown by almost 10% over the prior 20 years.
- Future growth scenarios project community growth of 60-180 people per year through 2040.
- Wooster has 15 different zoning classifications: residential districts make up the largest portion, with commercial and industrial designations covering other major areas.
- Two special overlay districts include the Planned Development (PD) and the Community Facilities District designations.
- The existing zoning represents a reasonably balanced land use tapestry that supports a diverse array of businesses, residential and other land use types.
- Agricultural and residential uses dominate the area. Residential uses are mostly located north of Route 30 throughout the city, while agricultural uses are located in the more rural portions of the study area.
- Commercial and industrial uses are located in the city's northern portion and in large parcels around the perimeter of the city boundary running from the west side to south to northeast.
- The area enjoys ample park land and recreation uses. Vacant and undeveloped land currently exists around in the downtown areas and near newer commercial developments in the northern part of the city.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Residents would like to see balanced growth retaining the agricultural identity rooted deeply in the community
- Respondents desire strategic growth over the long term, balancing smart growth and new development with preservation.
- Residents would like more space for parks and recreation which can accommodate expanded programming
- Residents desire more public gathering spaces, especially in downtown Wooster.

This page was intentionally left blank.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Goal** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The goal statements are further below and again in Chapter 6 (Implementation) by accompanying **Objectives** and **Actions** designed to help drive implementation. Woven into it all is a consideration of the overarching future **Land Use Principles**, designed to guide and inform future development in Wooster.

Land Use			
<i>Goal Statement: A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and downtown are preserved and enhanced, while carefully planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.</i>			
Land Use Objective 1 – Allow for a range of housing choices through land use planning tools and policies			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action LU 1.1	Create incentives that encourage moderately priced housing options in and around Downtown.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.2	Support the development of smaller housing options for those looking to downsize or for entry level housing options (i.e. less than approx. 1,000 sf).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.3	Promote new residential housing on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.4	Continue to use a variety of tools to attract and support new residential development with a focus on workforce and attainable housing (Habitat, CRA programs, landbanks, etc.).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank
Land Use Objective 2 – Support infill development in and around Focus Areas			
Action LU 2.1	Promote the creation / development of an Arts District (Downtown).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne Center for the Arts, Main Street Wooster
Action LU 2.2	Continue to grow the East Liberty District (Downtown).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.3	Strategically grow the Cleveland Road Corridor/Geyers Chapel Road.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.4	Strategically grow the North Burbank Road Corridor/Smithville Western Road.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.5	Strategically infill in and around the Hospital District.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wooster Community Hospital

Land Use Objective 3 – Continue to grow smart and consider the rural landscape and preservation and creation of open spaces			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action LU 3.1	Extend the city boundary when annexation supports the Future Land Use plan and helps to accomplish other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan or city policies.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 3.2	Promote new residential development in undeveloped areas that helps to address the shortage of residential units in the community and is clustered to protect open spaces and the rural character.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank
Action LU 3.3	Ensure new annexations can be served by city utilities, infrastructure, and essential city services.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County; Private Landowners
Action LU 3.4	Coordinate with local land trust (i.e. Kilbuck) and Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District, Wayne County Agricultural Success team, among others, to conserve agricultural and open spaces in-line with the Future Land Use map.	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County and listed orgs
Action LU 3.5	Extend FPA in order to encourage denser development with sewer prescriptions which disincentivize large lots with a focus on conforming parcel boundaries.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Land Use Objective 4 – Maintain relatively low taxes and high-quality services through balanced growth			
Action LU 4.1	Consider the use of impact fees to offset the cost of new development and its associated community impact (i.e. parks or open space impact fee for projects that don't meet open space criteria).	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 4.2	Consider using Tax Increment Financing and other economic incentives as a tool to plan and pay for infrastructure and public improvements.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 4.3	Promote public private partnerships as a tool to support future tax generating growth opportunities.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

HOUSING & ECONOMY

OVERVIEW

A central theme of the planning process was the need for more housing in Wooster as the fastest growing micropolitan in Ohio, and a companion need for housing incentives and workforce development initiatives that all work together to grow the local economy. Residential land uses constitute the majority of zoned land within Wooster. Additionally, homes within these areas are primarily single-family detached homes of suburban development character.

Looking to the future, Wooster needs to expand the housing stock to provide a greater variety of housing to meet the needs of a changing community. Currently, there is a strong need for affordable housing to meet the demand of multiple economic demographics, and projected population trends indicate there may be additional need for age-friendly homes with smaller footprints for transitional housing. There is also a current need for workforce housing in a time of shortage, as shown by the city's 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) developed with consultant, BusinessFlare. As new housing is developed, it will be important to ensure its character complements the community's strong agricultural small-town character.

Understanding and planning for economic activity within the city will support the needs of residents and create financial revenue for the city. Currently, there are segments of land being used for retail, office, and industrial purposes, but there is a desire to create more of those types of uses throughout the city—specifically, retail spaces downtown

for more shopping and entertainment options, and office, industrial, and innovation uses that generate income tax for the city.

It is important to consider some residents currently leave Wooster to find goods and services, and employment opportunities. Looking to the future, the city may consider expanding opportunities and incentives for commercial and industrial businesses to create easier access to amenities, and job opportunities for residents. This should be accomplished in a way which recognizes future trends in retail and supports Wooster's small-town character.



Example of the missing middle housing stock that is needed to support the demand for workforce housing in Wooster (Source: Adobe Stock)

INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on Housing & Economy were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions and current market trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the Implementation recommendations in Chapter 6.

PUBLIC INPUT

Questions and concerns about Wooster’s housing were considered throughout the planning process. At the public meetings and in online survey feedback, residents repeatedly expressed the concern that there is a lack of adequate and diverse housing types for all demographics in Wooster, especially that of affordable housing. When survey respondents were asked what the city should focus on most to improve the quality of life in Wooster, “Additional Housing” was the second most important issue.

When presented with a multitude of potential housing stock typologies, open house participants indicated that the top two housing type needs were single family entry level and starter homes as well as multifamily housing. Generally, these preferred housing types are denser in nature and their development can be accomplished via infill, which was echoed by stakeholder groups’ input. The Wooster Housing Coalition stakeholder group, when indicating the need for more housing in the city, suggested utilizing the Land Bank and starting infill development in blight areas to begin to accomplish this goal.

With regard to affordable housing, survey respondents, stakeholder groups and open house participants all cited a need for housing to help address homelessness in Wooster. In answer to the survey question soliciting opinions on the most significant challenge facing the city, respondents ranked “Poverty and Homelessness” the number one challenge facing Wooster, and “Housing Options and Opportunities,” the second. All six stakeholder groups interviewed cited the need for affordable, multifamily housing options in the city.

Questions and concerns about Wooster’s economy were also considered throughout the planning process. In addition to the public’s desire for the city to pursue strategic growth over the long term, balancing smart

Single Family - Large



Single Family - Entry-level/Starter Home



Duplex/Tri-plex



Public input results from the housing visioning survey

Townhomes



Flats/Studios/Lofts



Multi-family



Public input results from the housing visioning survey

growth and preservation, nearly 90% of 1,825 survey respondents indicated a desire for the city to use incentives to attract new revenue-generating industries and tax-producing development. In terms of retail tax-producing businesses, 33% of respondents believe Wooster needs more personal shopping services, and 29.5% of the same believes more grocery and home goods services are needed in the city. And, given the relationship between city services, income-generating development, and tax levels, 67% of 1836 survey question respondents indicated that they prefer lower taxes, but stable services paid for by new growth and development.

Concurrently with the planning process for this Plan, the city partnered with consultant, Business Flare, on the *2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan* which provides recommendations and strategies for economic development that focus on quality-of-life measures and organic business growth. That document was developed with regional collaboration and partnerships in mind while providing the city with strategies to better leverage the tools it already possesses.

An important theme in the report is that talent now drives economic development, and cities must be a place where talent wants to be and can be to remain competitive in the marketplace. In addition, public survey responses averaged a 3.7 importance level on the question whether the city should increase the number, variety, and quality of employment opportunities, and a 3.8 importance level on the question whether the city should make it a high priority to develop workforce housing to support the local economy. Output from the stakeholder groups indicated a desire for workforce training opportunities for residents to help fill jobs currently vacant within the city, and keep workforce and families in Wooster.

2023 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Business Retention & Attraction

Become the "go to" problem solver for industry leaders and the local business community.

Market Position & Branding

Establish Wooster's place brand to showcase its competitive advantage(s) and assets.

Workforce Development & Attraction

Ensure that the City of Wooster is a place that can attract talent and provide the necessary workforce to sustain continued economic growth.

Entrepreneurship

Become a center for entrepreneurship, innovation, and creative industries.

Asset Management

Use land acquisition, disposition and existing publicly owned lands to target specific business sectors and development types and facilitate economic development activities within target redevelopment areas.

Regulation & Efficiency

Encourage targeted development and redevelopment in key areas of the city.

Business Attraction

Proactively target specific industries and sectors compatible with the local economy and engage in business attraction activities.

What is Strategic Economic Development?

Different from the pre-COVID nature of Economic Development (ED) as mostly transactional, where cities attracted companies based largely on where they provided the best economic incentives for them to locate, Strategic ED focuses on broader strategies that can build long-term economic resilience by focusing on issues that also include education, workforce development, quality of life and infrastructure.

The major shift from the pandemic was the rise in influence that talent and workforce have on ED and business decisions. No longer are talented workers boxed into employer wants. Workers decide where they want to live and what quality of life they desire, and then decide where to locate. Businesses are adapting by seeking out remote workers and automation, and by relocating to places workers want to be or already live. Business leaders have higher expectations of government and place beyond basic infrastructure and essential services. ED efforts must stay current and responsive to these trends, and focus not only on incentives and site readiness, but on placemaking and third places; on entrepreneurship and creators; on understanding real estate, migration, and remote work trends; on supporting foundational industries as much as trying to grow new ones; and on outcome-oriented, customer service-based ED grounded in responsiveness, balance, and credibility.

"THESE ARE THE ELEMENTS THAT MATTER MOST AS THE CITY CODIFIES ITS FUTURE VISION THROUGH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE AND EMBARKS ON THE NEXT PHASE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH"

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MAKES A **BIG** DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTS!



Expanded tax base lowers taxes for residents.



Better jobs provide opportunity for upward mobility of residents



Employee payroll flows through the economy supporting local businesses and jobs.



Entrepreneurs create new business to serve employees or support growth in industry sectors.



Community services, public spaces, arts and entertainment and education are enhanced.



Wages increase and skilled labor and talent are attracted, generating more tax revenue.

HOUSING CONDITION

The condition of housing in a community has important implications on its livability, quality of life, and fiscal health. The following section provides an analysis of the existing housing stock within the community in relation to future market demands and resident needs. Understanding the current state of housing in Wooster ensures the Plan may be responsive to present community housing needs while preparing for appropriate land use and planning decisions in the future.

Older Housing Stock

There are 11,787 housing units in Wooster, all of which is relatively older with a median build year of 1974. Home construction by decades dropped considerably in Wooster after the recession of 2009 to the lowest level in its history. Older housing stock can present challenges as some may be in poorer condition, requires more maintenance, higher cost to maintain and heat and cool, and may be less likely to offer the amenities that modern buyers are seeking. Lower levels of new construction since 2009 combined with population growth in the city of nearly 3,000 residents since 2000 has resulted in another challenge as well: according to the 2023 EDSP, there was a housing deficit of 2,117 housing units for Wooster's 21,139 employees at the time of the report's publication.



An example of Wooster's older housing stock

Predominantly Single-Family Homes

Wooster's housing stock is predominantly single-family detached homes (66%), which is less than both the entire Wooster micropolitan area (77%) and Ohio (74%), likely because construction of new homes fell significantly after 2009 and has not recovered to previous levels. The city has a lower percentage of multi-unit buildings, resulting in a lack of housing diversity now, which will continue to be exacerbated in the future if present challenges are not overcome. Growth within the region is expected to come from mostly families without children, including retirees.

According to the 2023 EDSP, when there is investment in new, quality housing in cities like Wooster, it is usually geared toward families with higher incomes and those with children. Places within those neighborhoods can therefore lack the kind of housing that supports changes in life cycle, such as downsizing for older adults and housing for single homeowners or renters, a situation sometimes referred to as "missing middle" housing. Although single-family housing will continue to be an important asset to families in the Wooster, diversifying housing options may help the city better accommodate population growth in the future



An example of Wooster's predominately single-family homes stock

WORKFORCE & INDUSTRY

Also according to the 2023 EDSP, Wooster is a mass importer of labor to the whole of Wayne County, with 39% of all Wayne County jobs located in Wooster. Only 24% of Wooster’s labor force works outside the city. The city averages 1,663 jobs per square mile which attract more than double the local labor force, so a significant number of these positions remain unfilled. This has resulted in the city and residents’ stated need for workforce development initiatives to create more qualified talent for open positions from within the city.

The largest industries in terms of employment in the city are:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare and Social Services
- Retail Trade

While the manufacturing sector has a large footprint within the city, the diversity of the county’s industry sectors is most evident in Wooster with concentrations of large knowledge-based and professional industries—likely because there are three colleges/universities within the city. The largest clusters of these industries county wide located in Wooster include the following sectors:

- Information
- Management
- Finance and Insurance
- Professional, Scientific and Technology

These clusters provide a solid foundation for Wooster to attract new residents and talent, research and development, and support entrepreneurial businesses.

However, in addition to the need for creation of workforce development initiatives within the city to train local talent for open positions within the city, there is a companion significant need to develop more and diverse housing typologies in order to attract workforce and talent from outside Wooster.



REGIONAL & NATIONAL MARKET TRENDS

As Wooster's population continues to grow and the city develops, there are national and regional trends that will inevitably affect the demographics of the population and the types of communities where people prefer to live. By incorporating these expected trends into planning efforts, the city can sustain or increase its competitiveness in the housing and commercial market and prepare for the correct amount of city services, including schools, senior services, utilities, and parks, among others.

Millennials, Baby Boomers & Beyond

Millennials, born 1980-1999, and Baby Boomers, born 1945-1964, make up the largest share of the nation's population at 53%. As a result, the trends for each of these generation groups have a large impact on the development and housing markets. Baby Boomers value housing that is close to entertainment, retail, and medical services, while Millennials look for locations that are diverse and offer plentiful entertainment and employment opportunities. Both generations tend to prefer housing that is lower maintenance and will sacrifice large living spaces for better access to amenities.

In short, Millennials and Boomers are looking to relocate to more walkable communities. Generally, this entails the ability to walk to basic grocery and pharmacy needs, various restaurants and entertainment, ample jobs, and recreation opportunities. Walkable neighborhoods are not only popular, but also stable. During the 2009-10 national recession, homes in walkable communities resisted the damaging effects of the housing market collapse and largely retained their property values. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, people living in walkable communities realized significant benefits during quarantines, being able to rely on neighbors and local stores for help when needed. With the percentage of Baby Boomers and Millennials shaping the market it is imperative to plan for their needs at the local level and as part of community development plans and strategies.

Those in the Generation Z cohort closely share the values of Millennials. Proximity and access to amenities and entertainment, along with the desire for lower maintenance housing options, indicate that what is true for Millennials will likely also be true for Gen Z'ers. Though much is still unknown about the economic nuances this new generation will bring to the market, the Gen Z cohort will likely mirror the Millennials closely in opinions that affect planning for cities and towns across the globe.

Place First

Current national trends indicate a swing in how individuals choose where to live. A growing number of Millennials and Gen Z'ers choose where they want to live first and then resolve the logistics of finding employment and housing in their desired location. Younger generations seek destinations that offer a superior quality of life and ample amenities.

This quality of life, or satisfaction with one's health, community, employment, and environment, should be considered as part of the development and function of downtown spaces. These generations prefer in-town areas that feature diversity and walkability near jobs and entertainment. This is drastically different from past generations who first sought jobs and then moved to the job location.

The result of this change is more competition for jobs and housing in areas that have a high quality of life with a diverse array of amenities. A subsequent decrease in the desire to live in suburban areas with limited amenities has resulted for some within the Baby Boomer, Millennial, and Gen Z cohorts.

Buying vs. Renting

While owning a home may be desired by some, current trends indicate that many individuals are more inclined to rent instead. Buying can offer a greater return on investment over time but carries a significant amount of financial risk as well as long-term maintenance. Renting often does not carry the financial risk or maintenance of owning property. Longevity is also an important factor in determining whether to buy or rent. While owning typically involves a long-term commitment from the buyer, renting can offer short- or long-term living solutions and allows tenants the flexibility to move when desired or needed.

Household Structure

As household population and structure evolve over time, subsequent changes in housing needs become apparent. The average family size in the United States in 2020 was 2.60 individuals per household (U.S. Census). This number has steadily decreased from 3.33 in 1960 due to the Baby Boomer population living longer and Millennials having smaller families than past generations—and the Gen Z cohort is likely to continue this trajectory.

Many Baby Boomers no longer have dependents living with them, many Millennials are delaying marriage and have not yet established families, and Gen Z'ers are now becoming adults and continuing the trend that Millennials pioneered with smaller and more diverse housing choices. This decrease in family size subsequently decreases the desire for large single-family homes, prevalent in suburbs where an abundance of land is available. There is a need now for a variety of housing sizes and types to accommodate the new trends in household structure. Downtowns provide ideal locations to achieve the necessary amount of this nontraditional housing stock.



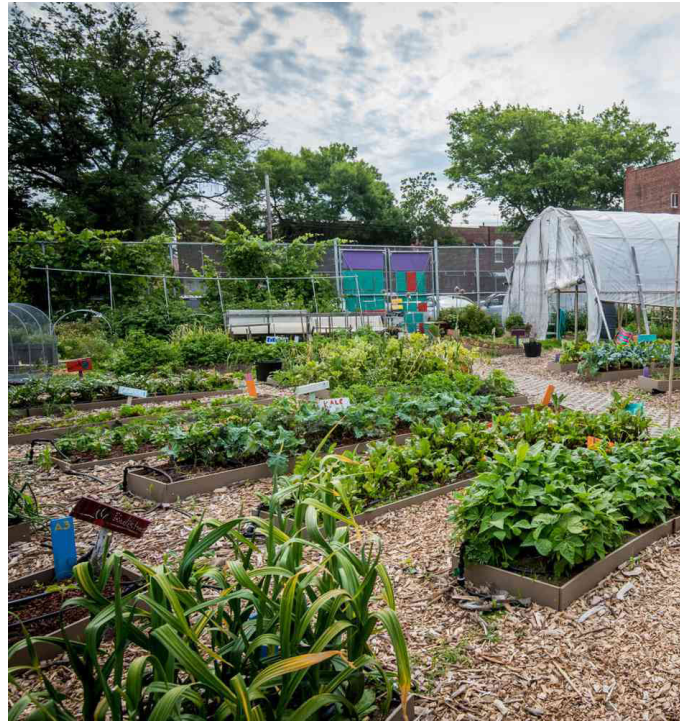
Current housing trends indicate more people are inclined to rent than buy.



A variety of housing sizes and types can accommodate new trends in household structures.

Health & Sustainability

Healthy and sustainable initiatives can enhance the overall quality of life in a community, attract talented individuals, and encourage high-quality development. Investments in park space, trails, and other community amenities promote a healthy lifestyle for residents and draw regional visitors. Downtowns can increase sustainability by incorporating these initiatives as well as supporting the long-term financial health of their businesses and increasing residential density. Compact, walkable environments like downtown Wooster have the greatest potential for sustainability.



Investments in park space, farmers markets, and urban growing sites can aid in a community's healthy lifestyle and sustainability initiatives.

Walkability & Connectivity

An emphasis on a complete transportation system allows people to easily travel by foot, bicycle, or car. Factors that influence walkability include pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, wayfinding, and signage. Communities easily navigated on foot are desired as more Millennials want to live near employment and entertainment options, and the ease and convenience of walkable and well-connected communities is preferred. Focusing on the pedestrian experience and finding creative ways to utilize funding and partnerships is what has been helping downtowns across the country revitalize.

A community's downtown provides an excellent opportunity for an increase in non-motorized transportation. Not only does the dense urban framework promote walkability, but also offers an ideal location for a trailhead on a regional bike trail system. Bicycle connectivity is influenced by bike lanes, multi-use paths, and bicycle storage facilities like bike racks.



Multi-use path systems promote various avenues of pedestrian connectivity and encourages non-motorized transportation.

Streetscape Design

The success of a downtown core depends on the vibrancy of its streets. Streets that are safe and pleasant for pedestrians will continue to make downtown Wooster a more attractive place to live, work, and visit. Even residents who drive downtown still walk from their car to local shops and businesses. Streets that encourage patrons to linger and enjoy themselves are important to the success of any downtown area.

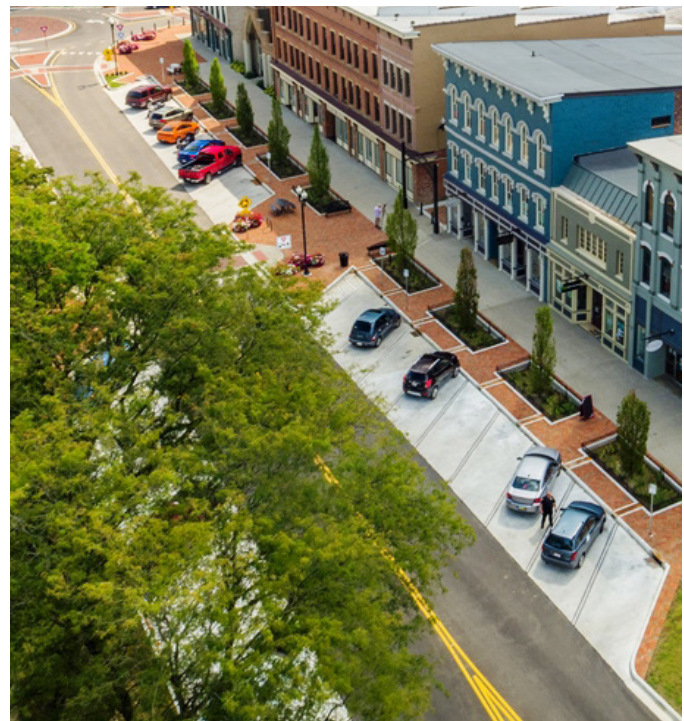
Streetscape design and improvements can be achieved through a range of strategies. A prevalence of street trees in urban environments is important as they provide shade and a buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic. Some communities in recent years have resisted the addition of trees to their downtowns due to the cost and time involved in their maintenance and the ever-present possibility of disease and storm damage. However, there are few other additions a city can make to its urban environment that equal the positive effects of trees, whether by increased walkability, stormwater mitigation, improved street character, or reduced flooding events.

The wider sidewalks proposed in many streetscape designs inherently lead to narrower traffic lanes. This is a popular trend among cities as narrower travel lanes reduce traffic speeds, increasing the safety for all road users. Other physical improvements—such as sidewalk bump-outs that reduce the distance pedestrians have to cross the street or raised crosswalks that make pedestrians more visible to vehicles—can make downtown streets safer, and thus, more attractive to pedestrians.

Finally, streetscape design that incorporates green infrastructure can help advance downtown environmental strategies. In addition to being visually appealing, green infrastructure such as rain gardens or bioswales can redirect stormwater away from a city’s sewer system and reduce the strain on existing infrastructure. Continuing to invest in Wooster’s streetscape designs can have myriad positive effects on the downtown area.



A successful streetscape design with the urban environment will see the implementation of street trees and green infrastructure.



Physical improvements to streetscapes, such as bumpouts, wider side walks, and adjacent parking provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

RETAIL TRENDS

Consumer Preferences

While community members expressed a desire for more retail and entertainment options, the need to balance development with conservation and preservation of Wooster’s rural character was paramount in public engagement. In line with this, community members desired neighborhood focused retail and not big-box stores or large regional shopping centers.

This sentiment generally aligns with national trends in retail. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis shows spending on travel, recreation, and eating out has steadily increased over the last decade while spending on household goods, clothing, and other goods has steadily dropped. Similarly, according to research by Eventbrite, nearly 80% of Millennials say they would choose to spend money on an experience or event as opposed to an item or good. Regionally and nationally, retail stores manage to stay competitive within this experience-based market by locating in experiential or destination locations. Some of these retailers now offer services beyond traditional shopping, including cooking or fitness classes, community gathering spaces, restaurants, and service amenities.

Experience-Based Places in Wooster

Wooster can help create these experience-based environments through the creation of signature places and gateways. These areas, as identified in the “Community Identity” section below, may act as destinations for those within the community for gathering, work, shopping, and entertainment. These places can help the city surpass traditional big-box retail environments and create a dynamic center where residents can access the shopping and entertainment they desire. This is primarily served by downtown Wooster which is an experience-based commercial district. Other experience-based commercial activity is served by special events such as markets and festivals that attract residents to shop, and also in some cases support local businesses.



An existing community identifier that has seen high attendance and community support is the Wooster Farmers Market.



Downtown Wooster is the premier local example of an experience based commercial district.

KEY FINDINGS - HOUSING & ECONOMY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- There are 11,787 units of housing stock in Wooster with a median build year of 1974.
- EDSP data: There is currently a housing deficit of 2,117 units for Wooster’s 21,139 employees.
- Wooster’s housing stock is predominantly single-family detached homes (66%).
- A lack of affordable housing has resulted in homelessness in the city’s lower socioeconomic demographic.
- EDSP data: Wooster is a mass importer of labor to the whole of Wayne County, with 39% of all county jobs located in Wooster. Only 24% of Wooster’s labor force works outside the city. The city averages 1,663 jobs per square mile which attract more than double the local labor force.
- Wooster's largest employment industries are Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Services, and Retail Trade. There are also concentrations of knowledge-based and professional industries.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Residents and stakeholders repeatedly noted a lack of adequate and diverse housing types for all demographics in Wooster—especially affordable housing.
- Open house participants noted the top two housing type needs as single family entry level and starter homes, and multifamily housing.
- Stakeholder groups suggested starting infill development in blight areas to create more housing.
- Nearly 90% of 1825 survey question respondents want the city to use incentives to attract new revenue-generating industries and tax-producing development. Given the relationship between city services, income-generating housing, development, and tax levels, 67% of 1836 respondents prefer lower taxes, but stable services paid for by new growth and development.
- Public survey responses averaged a 3.7/5 importance level on the question whether the city should increase employment opportunities, and a 3.8/5 importance level on workforce housing development to support the local economy.
- Stakeholder group feedback indicated a desire for workforce training opportunities to help fill vacant jobs and keep workforce and families in Wooster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Goal** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The goal statements are further below and again in Chapter 6 (Implementation) by accompanying **Objectives** and **Actions** designed to help drive implementation. Woven into it all is a consideration of the overarching future **Land Use Principles**, designed to guide and inform future development in Wooster.

HOUSING & ECONOMY			
Goal Statement: <i>A community with a range of housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community and a healthy economy.</i>			
Housing & Economy Objective 1 – Continue to study housing in Wooster			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action HS 1.1	Maintain up to date statistics on the demand for housing in the community and the housing typologies offered.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 1.2	Work with local organizations to create educational materials to articulate the housing needs in the city.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 1.3	Maintain existing and forge new partnerships to address housing needs throughout the community, such as via the city’s participation in the Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC) 2023 Housing Assessment Project, which will work to utilize data and analysis to showcase Wayne County communities’ housing supply and demand and identify gaps as it develops a long-term strategy for County growth.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC; Wayne County
Housing & Economy Objective 2 – Consider housing incentives that support the creation of attainable and workforce housing			
Action HS 2.1	Build creative incentives to attract housing (abatements, TIFs, density bonuses).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 2.2	Create zoning changes that allow for and attract targeted dense infill (i.e. Arts District).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 2.3	Work with the land bank to help create more affordable and workforce housing.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank
Action HS 2.4	Plan for and extend/upgrade utilities to facilitate new development and infill.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning

Housing & Economy Objective 3 — Support workforce development initiatives to grow the local economy			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action HS 3.1	Engage and invest in the community’s network of economic development organizations and offices to support programming to match workforce development resources with employers.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC
Action HS 3.2	Evaluate opportunities to enhance quality of life factors that attract and retain talent, including benchmarking for housing opportunities and creation of additional Parks and Recreation programming for young adult/ professional, adult, and mature adult.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Parks & Recreation
Action HS 3.3	Partner with other governments, institutions, and economic-development-oriented nonprofits to study opportunities to support and grow ecosystem for entrepreneurs.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC; Wayne County; Wooster Chamber of Commerce
Action HS 3.4	Brand and market the community consistently across city departments to retain and attract a changing workforce and also visitors (i.e. traditional onsite workers, remote, freelance, start-up.).	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC; Wooster Chamber of Commerce

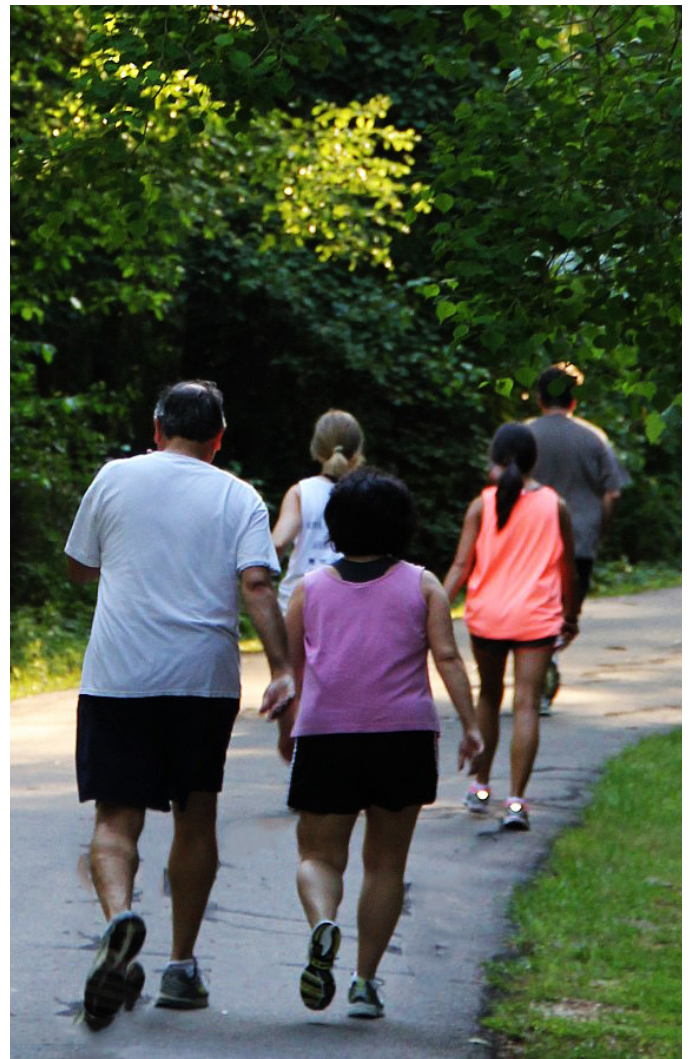
PARKS & RECREATION

OVERVIEW

Access to parks and open spaces can improve people’s mental and physical health, create spaces for the community to gather, and continue to make Wooster a desirable place to live, work and visit. Organizations such as Smart Growth America have conducted research which has shown that parks and open space have a positive effect by increasing property values and revenue for local businesses. Currently, Wooster residents and visitors have access to several parks and open spaces that include recreational fields, trails, playgrounds, and three municipal pools, among other amenities. However, there is opportunity to expand and improve the park system by updating existing spaces and programming options, increasing connectivity through greenways and trails, and updating the existing or building a new community center.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on Parks & Recreation were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions and current trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the Implementation recommendations in Chapter 6.



Increasing connectivity through greenways and trails can improve people’s mental and physical health.

PUBLIC INPUT

In both the online community engagement and public meetings, there was a preference in the community for more space for parks and recreation to accommodate expanded programming, with 34% of online survey respondents listing “Parks and Recreation” as the second most important service Wooster needs more of, behind first ranking “Arts and Entertainment.” In terms of types of expanded programming, the top five desired types were:

- Educational programming
- Amphitheater or stage for outdoor events and performances
- After school and summer programs for youth;
- Citywide events
- Multiuse trails

Almost 30% of survey respondents indicated that the city needs to improve walking and biking connections between existing parks, and in fact: updates on current trail connections in process since last comp plan and the bike plan? When posed the question whether Wooster needs to create an updated community center that could include meeting rooms, gymnasiums, indoor/outdoor walking and other facilities and more, 32% of survey respondents rated the idea important for the community’s future.



Public input on parks and recreation highlighted the desire to expand outdoor educational programming and summer youth programs.

COMMUNITY CENTER: WHAT'S NEXT?

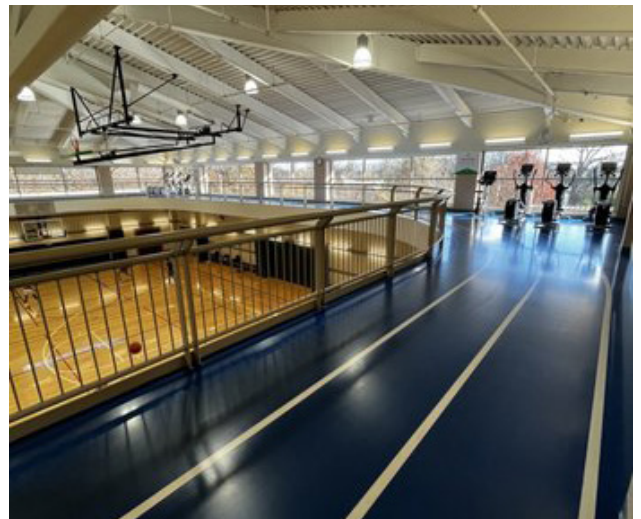
During the planning process, the future of the community center has been discussed extensively. The current community center located on the corner of Bever St and Henry St is utilized by the community for various recreational needs, from senior and youth programming to gym access for members. The center serves a purpose and is needed in the community.

However, the planning process has revealed that there is a desire to look ahead into the future of the facility. During the community engagement portion of the process, a public survey was conducted, and over 1800 residents responded with an average score of 3.3 out of 5, agreeing that "Wooster needs to create an updated community center" with a variety of amenities. The amenities that residents felt most strongly about included after-school and educational programming, space for community events, and additional space for children of all ages to participate in play and athletics.

The map on the following spread shows many of the public/ semi-public facilities for recreation within the City of Wooster. From the existing community center to facilities at local schools, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and rehabilitation centers, the city has no shortage of resources. Going forward, the challenge is to continue studying the feasibility of the future of the community center. Feedback and questions heard in this process that should be considered throughout the future feasibility analysis are:

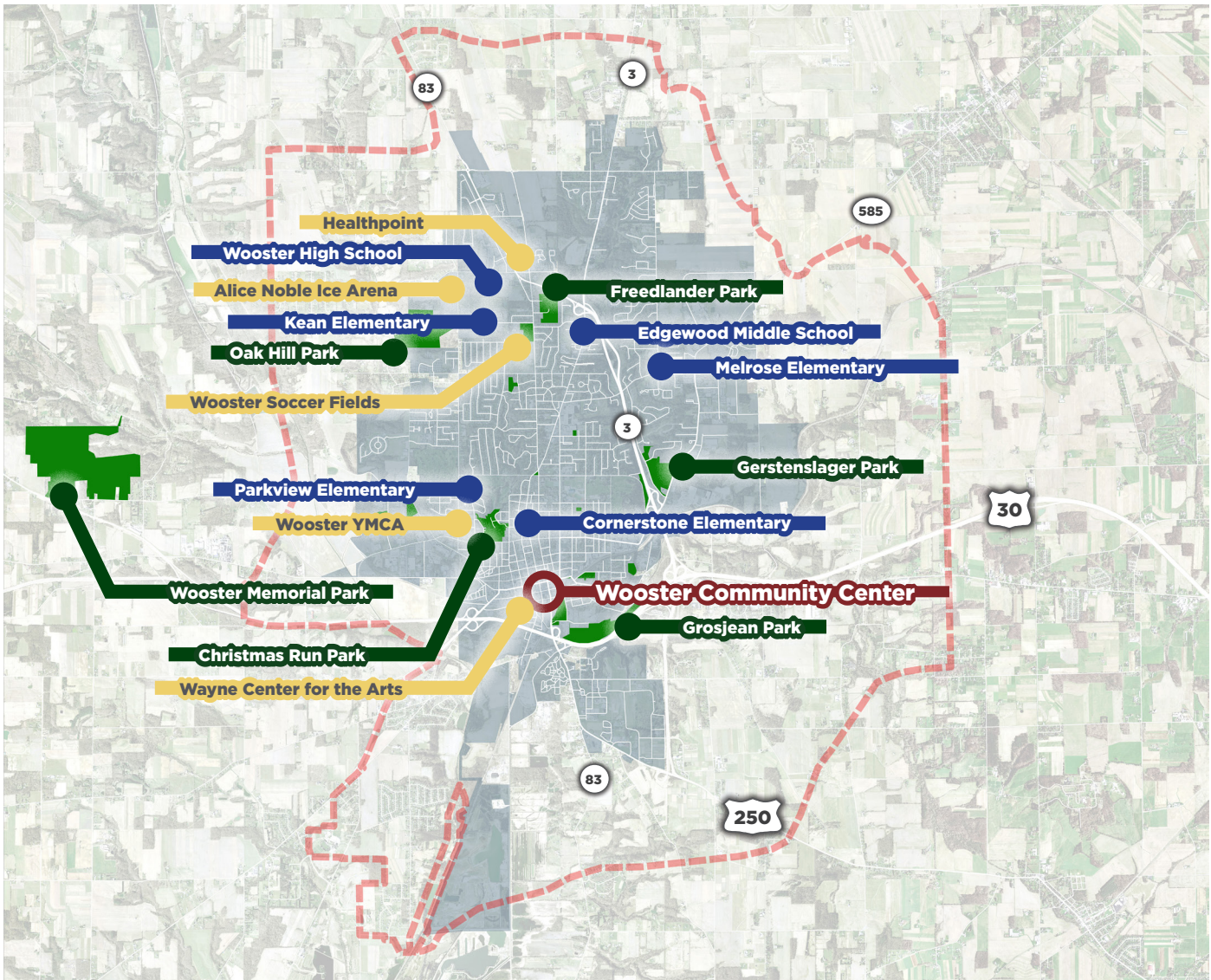
- If the facility remains in the same area, it will likely have to be rebuilt with a larger footprint offering more amenities.
- If the facility is moved, it should be located next to already existing facilities to create a hub for recreation.
- Residents are sensitive to the complexity of potentially acquiring new land and building a new facility but are in support of the city undertaking the challenge if desired.

The creation of an updated or new community center will be a key project for the community to explore over the next 5-10 years. Residents are encouraged to continue participating in future discussions centered around the future of this vital community facility,



Development Examples

Community-wide Recreation Opportunities



Local Recreation Facilities Key

- Wooster Community Center
- City Parks
- City Schools
- Other Local Recreation Destinations

KEY FINDINGS - PARKS & RECREATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Wooster has 16 city parks totaling over 700 acres and surpasses the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) median standard for park space per resident, at 1,702 residents per park.
- The majority of the city is within a 5-10 minute walk to an existing park, but there are some north and northwest neighborhoods lacking park space and park access within walking distance. As new development occurs in this area, including parks and open space as an amenity and design element is highly encouraged to benefit the new residents and community as a whole.
- The existing community center lacks sufficient indoor programming and gathering space.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- The public desires more space for parks and recreation to accommodate expanded programming, with 34% of on-line survey respondents listing parks and recreation as the second most important service Wooster needs more of.
- The top five desired types of expanded programming include educational programming, amphitheater or stage for outdoor events and performances, after school and summer programs for youth, citywide events, and multi-use trails.
- Almost 30% of survey respondents indicated that the city needs to improve walking and biking connections between existing parks.
- 32% of survey respondents rated the idea of an updated community center as important for the city's future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Goal** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The goal statements are further below and again in Chapter 6 (Implementation) by accompanying **Objectives** and **Actions** designed to help drive implementation. Woven into it all is a consideration of the overarching future **Land Use Principles**, designed to guide and inform future development in Wooster.

PARKS & RECREATION

Goal Statement: *Safe and accessible parks and recreation services for all people with broad programming options and optimized facilities and spaces, supported by public and private partnerships.*

Parks and Recreation Objective 1 – Maintain and enhance the existing park network and programs

Action Items	Time Frame	Project Partners
Action PR 1.1 Clearly communicate and collaborate between city departments, elected officials, relevant county departments and the community to maintain high-quality parks and recreation offerings and experiences.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Wayne County
Action PR 1.2 Continue to partner and collaborate with the private sector and service clubs to enhance and maintain existing park space.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 1.3 Continue to partner and collaborate with the Wayne County Fair Board to continue to enhance the image and character of the area (i.e. additional gateway enhancements at Vanover and Liberty).	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Wayne County Fair Board
Action PR 1.4 Partner and collaborate with local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Wooster, Wayne Center for the Arts, and others to promote and expand local events with a focus on the Arts and East Liberty District Focus Areas.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation, Wooster Chamber of Commerce, Wayne Center for the Arts, Main Street Wooster
Action PR 1.5 Continue to plan for and expand program offerings for all ages and abilities.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 1.6 Continue to create new park and open spaces in the northeast areas of the city and focus on connectivity to these areas.	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 1.7 Promote the dedication of passive open space as part of future development with the goal of creating a greenway network around and through the city.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 1.8 Develop pickleball facilities to support the community’s interest and the emerging recreational trend.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation Objective 2 — Preserve and expand park and open space areas			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action PR 2.1	Continue to protect the riparian areas along the Little Apple Creek and integrate public access when and where feasible.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.2	Continue to support the development of Wooster Memorial Park and necessary public parking.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.3	Continue action to work with Trout Unlimited to create or attract events that promote and celebrate Wooster’s natural resources.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.4	Continue to create new open spaces areas by implementing conservation development policies and keeping current with best practices.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.5	As new development occurs and open spaces are created, work to connect open spaces to create greenways within and around the city to support good environmental stewardship, and non-motorized infrastructure.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.6	Continue to consider the development of park space around the Melrose Drive water tower as a public or public/private project with non-motorized connectivity to the greater community.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.7	For the immediate term, complete the existing Wooster Loop system and its key connections and on-street, signed, and marked pathways, while continuing to pursue long-term dedicated trail opportunities.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Parks and Recreation Objective 3 — Explore the feasibility of creating a community center			
Action PR 3.1	Conduct a feasibility study for the potential development of a new community center, collaborating and partnering with other entities while exploring potential future locations.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 3.2	Evaluate funding options for the development of a community center that consider community input and support.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 3.3	Explore public private partnership for the creation of a community center.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Private Landowners

Parks and Recreation Objective 4 – Maintain and update aquatic facilities and programming

Action Items	Time Frame	Project Partners
Action PR 4.1 Examine current and future aquatic space and programming at Freedlander Pool (e.g. inclusion or relocation of existing aquatic features and amenities).	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 4.2 Reconstruct Christmas Run pool to improve existing conditions, land use, efficiency, and safety.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation Objective 5 – Continue to be a leader in environmental stewardship

Action PR 5.1 Promote sound environmental practices through sustainable zoning and engineering standards.	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 5.2 Continue to support and promote green building standards as part of both public and private developments.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 5.3 Finalize plan for creation of city-wide Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERVIEW

Mobility within a city plays a major role in a person's experience as a resident and visitor. Mobility networks not only provide access but are a significant portion of the public realm within a city. Providing options for all modes of transportation, including automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and ensuring safe, reliable conditions, is key to enhancing mobility and creating a well-connected community. This chapter reviews the city's current mobility network and defines the overall goal for both the character and function of future networks.

As Wooster accommodates population growth and new development, strengthening connectivity and leveraging infrastructure investments will be critical. High-quality streetscape design, improved pedestrian connectivity and safety, and trail connectivity are important investments in a mobility network that balances function and character. Along with the recommendations being continuously implemented from the City of Wooster 2015 Bike Path Plan, the recommendations in this section support the future land use framework and provide strategies to continue to refine and expand the city's bikeway network, long-term transit service, and pedestrian infrastructure over the next 10 to 20 years and beyond.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis were gathered for the mobility section during the public engagement process and through an analysis of existing conditions and trends. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the implementation recommendations in Chapter 6.

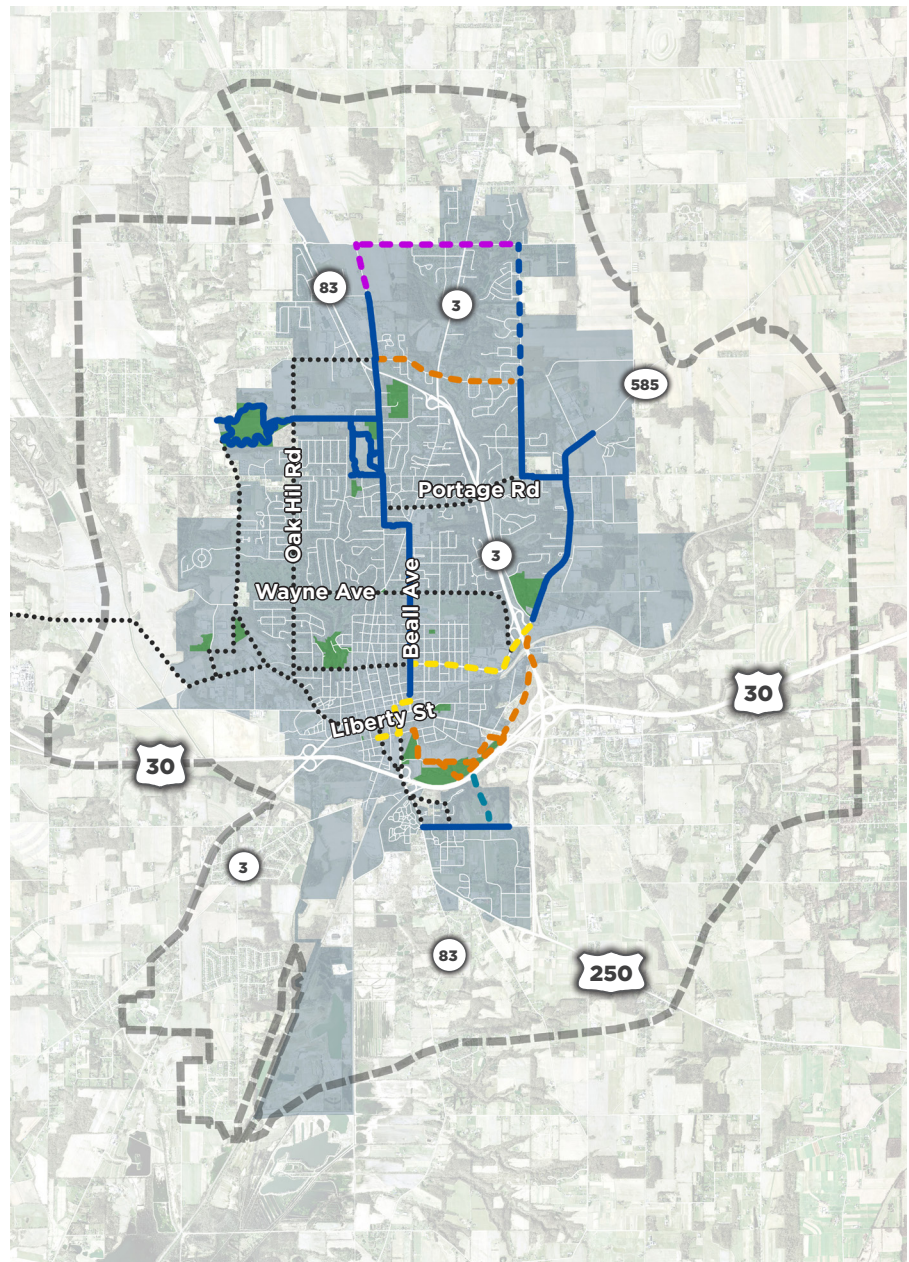
PUBLIC INPUT

Maintaining and improving mobility within the city was expressed as a concern by residents throughout the public engagement process. When survey respondents were asked what the city should most focus on to improve the quality of life in Wooster, "Improving Roads" and "Public Transit" were the fourth most important issues, respectively. Open house attendees cited the need to improve traffic configuration and signage as the city continues to grow and develop, and most indicated they felt positive about newer configurations such as the traffic roundabouts, although some did have concerns about pedestrian safety there. Stakeholder group feedback indicated a need for more accessible city and county-wide transportation options, especially for workforce between housing and job opportunities. And the public engagement process also revealed residents in general desire greater community connectivity and walkability throughout the city.



NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

A well-connected and accessible transportation network also includes facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Within the city, most neighborhoods have sidewalks while many older neighborhoods and non-residential streets do not have sidewalks. In some neighborhoods, where traffic is low, sidewalks may not be needed or desired to preserve the character of the neighborhood. However, pedestrians may need to access commercial, institutional, and recreational facilities located along major roadways. Installing sidewalks or multi-use paths in strategic locations will increase access for those who need it.

The map on the right shows the current, future, and potential routes for non-motorized transportation. The initiative to improve this network began in 2015 with the Wooster Bike Path plan, and the city has been implementing the recommended changes since then. So far, 12.27 miles of multi-use paths have been built, with plans to construct 1.21 miles more in the near future. The map outlines future phases for consideration, but as almost 10 years have passed since the recommendations were made, the community may have different opinions now.



Bicycle Facilities Key

-  Existing Facilities
-  Scheduled for Construction
-  Phase 2
-  Phase 3
-  Phase 4
-  Phase 5
-  Discussed Connections
-  City Parks

To further develop the network, it may be necessary to reassess the planned phases and organize them according to the future vision of the plan. Additionally, there are many connections that are not currently included in the plan but may be worth evaluating for future planning efforts. The non-motorized transportation network is a valuable asset that makes Wooster a great place to live, and the city and residents take pride in maintaining and expanding it. The creation of an updated plan for future paths is a significant project that the community will work on over the next 3-5 years. Residents are encouraged to participate in future discussions regarding the network's future.

TRANSIT

In terms of public transit, Wooster does not have its own fixed-route system, but it does contract with Community Action of Wayne/Medina counties to manage fixed route service powered by SHARE Mobility inside the city. The system provides free access to transportation program members and low-cost transportation to the general public. This service does not extend outside the city, but the public can access Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) for some in-county travel since its recent expansion to serve Wayne County. As such, the public has indicated a desire for enhanced regional transit connections.

These are important resources, especially for those who are unable to drive or own an automobile. However, as the city’s population grows, additional transit options may need to be considered to meet the needs of residents, which is in line with community feedback desiring expanded options for the current transit system.

For residents within Wooster who commute for work, creating convenient and efficient transit opportunities from Wooster to the Akron, Columbus, and other work centers could improve quality of life for residents and reduce congestion on roadways.



SHARE Mobility managed by the Community Action of Wayne & Medina county provides a fixed transit route service inside the city.

ROADWAYS

Wooster has done a great job over the years maintaining and planning for the street network which serves residents and businesses. This section highlights two elements that should be considered as part of future planning and development of the motorized transportation network in Wooster. This includes planning for complete streets, and the careful integration of roundabouts as a means to optimize intersections.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets are defined as roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a safe and efficient manner. A transportation network comprised of Complete Streets can be easily navigated by travelers of all ages and abilities and across all mobility modes including motorists, trucks, transit, rail, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Application of Complete Streets is dependent on the context of the community including the community’s needs and function of the roadway. Therefore, appropriate design standards and engineering requirements must be balanced to meet users’ needs within the context of the street. For example, a Complete Street in a rural area may not include sidewalks and curbs, but could feature a multi-use path on one side of the street to provide a meaningful transportation option in that setting. This means all “Complete Streets” will not look the same.

Features of Complete Streets may include:

- Sidewalks and bike lanes
- Frequent and safe crossing opportunities with accessible pedestrian signals
- Curb extensions and median islands
- Narrower travel lanes and roundabouts
- Accessible public transportation stops



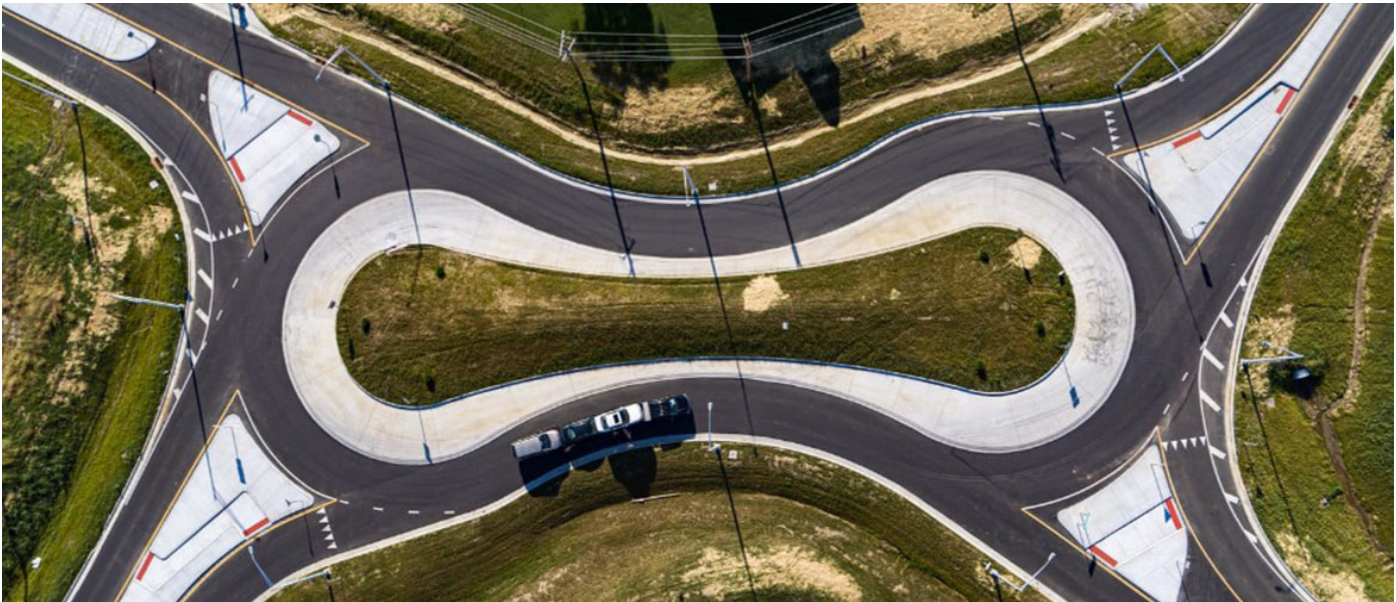
A "Complete Street" could see the addition of curb extensions, bricked crosswalks, signage and improved sidewalk conditions.

Roundabouts

Intersections typically require stop signs or traffic signals when traffic counts warrant. However, modern, low-speed roundabouts can reduce crashes, accommodate more traffic than traffic signals, cost less, and require less pavement than signalized intersections. Pedestrian crosswalks are located behind the “pause” line for automotive traffic. Although not all intersections are candidates, the roundabout is a viable traffic management tool.

Roundabouts offer many benefits including:

- **Safety:** Reduction of crashes and fatalities due to slower speeds and no left turns.
- **Improved traffic flow:** Congestion is alleviated through continuous traffic flow.
- **Complex intersection solution:** Roundabouts are ideal for 5-legged, sharp intersections, and other unusual intersections.
- **Less conflict:** Roundabouts offer fewer points of conflict, where crashes may occur.
- **Easy maintenance:** Given the lack of traffic signals, roundabouts may be easier to maintain and more energy efficient than signaled intersections.



Roundabout Character Image: Ohio's First Peanut Roundabout, SR 61 & Wilson Road

KEY FINDINGS - MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Because of its proximity to important highway connections, there is convenient access to Wooster from surrounding communities and vice versa.
- Previous community plans set goals for a better-connected and more complete non-motorized transportation network as well as whole community connectivity and better walkability for residents throughout the city.
- The existing sidewalk network in the downtown has been strengthened by recent streetscape enhancements which improved walkability.
- Portions of the city's bicycle path network have been completed but are not yet fully interconnected. The city is well connected for vehicular and pedestrian uses, with more improvements planned for bicycle infrastructure.
- Wooster's fixed-route public transit system is managed by Community Action of Wayne/ Medina counties and powered by SHARE Mobility inside the city. The service does not extend outside the city.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Residents expressed concern about maintaining and improving mobility within the city throughout the public engagement process.
- Survey respondents noted that "Improving Roads" and "Public Transit" were the third and fourth most important issues, respectively, when asked what the city should most focus on to improve residents' quality of life.
- Stakeholder group feedback indicated a need for more accessible city and countywide transportation options, especially for workforce between housing and job opportunities.
- Residents in general desire greater community connectivity and walkability throughout Wooster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Goal** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The goal statements are further below and again in Chapter 6 (Implementation) by accompanying **Objectives** and **Actions** designed to help drive implementation. Woven into it all is a consideration of the overarching future **Land Use Principles**, designed to guide and inform future development in Wooster.

MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal Statement: *A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.*

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 1 — Continue to plan for and complete non-motorized transportation infrastructure

Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action MOB 1.1	Implement the City of Wooster Bike Master Plan.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action MOB 1.2	Connect Downtown, the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), the College of Wooster, and the Wayne County Fairgrounds with multi-use trails and bicycle lanes.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation, CFAES, College of Wooster, Wayne County Fairgrounds
Action MOB 1.3	Continue to participate in ODOT’s Safe Routes to School program. Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Implementation Project included in the city’s Capital Improvement Plan.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; ODOT

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 2 — Continue to support and plan for community transit

Action MOB 2.1	Collaborate with Community Action Wayne / Medina, SARTA, and other relevant organizations to maintain and expand transit services in the community and the region.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina; SARTA
Action MOB 2.2	Create design standards in the downtown area to accommodate various public transportation and rideshare companies.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina
Action MOB 2.3	Examine and evaluate alternative transportation options such as rentable bicycles, scooters and other vehicles.	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 3 – Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network			
Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action MOB 3.1	Continue to study and implement safe and efficient roadway and traffic control design standards.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.2	Continue to consider the implementation of roundabouts instead of traffic lights as part of future intersection improvements.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.3	Improve signage and wayfinding at intersections to clearly communicate and facilitate traffic flow (i.e. 4-way and 2-way stop signage).	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.4	Continue to explore opportunities to expand parking in and around the downtown, with a focus on the proposed Arts District and East Liberty District Focus Areas.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning

This page was intentionally left blank.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

OVERVIEW

A city's identity expresses the overall impression, culture, and feel of a community. It reflects its values and encompasses almost every aspect of a city. How well-maintained is the city? Does it offer places to publicly gather? Do its streets and neighborhoods reflect investment? A city's identity serves as a promise to residents and visitors to deliver the long-term vision for the community as defined throughout this Plan.

The identity of a city is more than a logo or banner: it leverages the best qualities of a place to tell a compelling story to targeted audiences and consistently delivers on its brand promises. This identity can be cultivated through both branding and marketing and through the physical realm including signage, streetscape design, or public spaces. The following chapter includes insights and analysis on Wooster's current identity and supports recommendations for supporting that image through branding and physical improvements. These deliberate and targeted actions can help unite Wooster in a common vision for its future while securing a self-defined perception and sense of place.

INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

Insights and analysis on community identity were gathered through the public engagement process and an assessment of existing conditions, trends, and best practices. The key findings from this analysis directly informed the implementation recommendations in Chapter 6.



Wooster has existing community identity assets that highlight its history and core values, such as branded streetlight signage in the downtown core.

PUBLIC INPUT

The online survey indicated residents are highly satisfied with living in Wooster. When respondents were asked to rate their overall quality of life in the city, the average of 1836 responses was 3.7 on a 1-5 scale, where 5 indicated “extremely high.” Respondents affirmed the community’s identity as a historically agricultural community with small-town character, with 38% of 1425 responses ranking “Community Character” fourth as the reason they choose to remain living in Wooster, behind proximity to family and work, and general location, respectively. Stakeholder group input indicated that as the city continues to grow and expand, it should strive to do so strategically, with preservation in mind, paying homage to its agricultural roots.

Related to this identity, public engagement indicated a desire to create more parks and greenspaces, and places of community gathering, especially in downtown Wooster. Greater than half of 1828 survey respondents indicated they see an important need for more parks and

greenspaces in the city, and greater than three quarters of 1830 respondents indicated they see an important need for an outdoor performing arts venue for concerts and community events. Using a scale of 1-5 (with 5 meaning “strongly agree”) for the survey question whether Wooster should continue to invest in downtown, the average of all respondents was 3.9—indicating the community’s strong desire and support for more of the enhancements recently implemented in downtown.



Public input highlighted the important need for more community centered spaces such as the Center Green Plaza. This plaza can serve as a precedent for future community spaces that enhance the city's physical and social realms.

SIGNATURE PLACES

Signature places, such as parks, public plazas, or mixed-use developments, can be used to define and project a city’s identity. As key examples to the character and long-term vision of a community, signature places help establish a sense of place for residents and visitors. In Wooster, signature places may serve to unite the community through shared gathering spaces and enhance its ability to attract commercial activity and future investment.

Downtown Wooster

Wooster’s downtown has always been a signature place, and at least two previous comprehensive plans have focused on preserving and enhancing the area to create a robust identity for it. Since the completion of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and 2015 Downtown Master Plan, the downtown has seen new streetscape enhancements, new mixed-use development, and increased public parking lots. It has also seen the design and completion of the Wooster Green Center Plaza, which won the 2019 Heritage Ohio Best Downtown Placemaking Award for small community efforts to enhance a downtown’s streetscape.

Wooster’s downtown will always be an important historic, signature place in the community, and its assets should be preserved and maintained for future generations. This may include creating incentives for historic preservation, overlay design guidelines, or public improvement projects within the area—such as the creation of a downtown Arts District (see Chapter 5: Focus Areas and Chapter 6: Implementation). However, there may be opportunity to create additional signature places within the city that the entire community identifies with.



Historic preservation can increase property values, spur private investment, and tell the story of a community’s identity. The Olde Jaol Brewing Company, originally the Wayne County’s Old Jailhouse, is an example.



Signature places like Wooster Green Center Plaza may host community events, support commercial uses, or offer green and open space.

PHYSICAL REALM

While some recommendations of this Plan are targeted to specific signature places in Wooster, the following physical realm elements should be applied not only in signature places, but citywide.

Streetscape

Wooster's streets make-up a significant portion of the city's public realm. Therefore, their quality, upkeep, and appearance impact the perception of the city as a whole and the viability of the businesses and residences that inhabit a particular street. There are many elements that can be incorporated into an attractive and functional streetscape. This includes physical aspects like materials, landscaping, signage, street "furniture" (benches, trash receptacles, etc.), sidewalks, and stormwater infrastructure, as well as intangible elements such as safety, comfort, and sustainability—all of which were implemented in the downtown area since the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and 2015 Downtown Master Plan.

Currently, Wooster's streetscapes vary widely. In downtown, new street trees and improved sidewalks, along with consistent lighting and banners and other recent improvement elements, create a more walkable, aesthetically pleasing environment and connection to local businesses and entertainment options. But other major commercial corridors do not have as many intentional streetscape elements. Wooster's more scenic or rural roadways have a unique and natural beauty. As development occurs, it will be important to maintain the function and natural beauty of these roadways.

Signage

Signage can influence the visual aesthetics of a community and can also have an impact on wayfinding and the success of local businesses. Signs that are too large, have overwhelming or unattractive color or materials, or do not reflect the surrounding context, may detract from the public realm. For businesses, signage can direct customers, reinforce a company's brand, improve customer experience, and communicate information. According to the Sign Research Foundation, 34% of North American shoppers

associate sign quality with store and product quality. Therefore, signs should support strong design while also being easily readable for all passersby (automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.). Wooster has taken an important step in enhancing signage via its branding efforts since the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and 2015 Downtown Master Plan, implemented throughout the downtown and other areas through important gateway and wayfinding elements.

As Wooster continues to grow, properly regulating and locating signage so it positively supports the aesthetics and wayfinding of the community will be especially important along major commercial corridors, and in areas of the city noted by a few residents during open house sessions as having confusing signage. Common elements that greatly impact signage aesthetics include location, scale, materials, color, lighting, and signage type such as whether a sign is mounded or sits on pole.

Throughout the City, signage in Wooster should continue to:

- Reflect the desired image of Wooster
- Attract future residents, visitors, and businesses to Wooster
- Guide visitors to destinations within Wooster, and
- Show when visitors have arrived at a final destination

Gateways

Primary gateways are the entryways into a city and act as a first impression, signifying to travelers that they have arrived at a destination. Currently, Wooster does have existing gateway signage located in the city center and throughout other community facilities such as parks and trailheads, which have been implemented since the 2014 and 2015 plans. As noted in those, and herein in Chapter 5, there are opportunities to enhance secondary gateways within the city, including in the East Liberty District, Hospital District, and future greenway connections and park spaces. Creating a recognizable and cohesive branding at all gateways can help establish a sense of place and reinforce the community's vision for the future.

KEY FINDINGS - COMMUNITY IDENTITY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- The City of Wooster is both the seat of Wayne County and the dairy capital of the state of Ohio, with a significant agricultural history.
- Wooster boasts an excellent school system, a vibrant downtown, two colleges, a world-class community-owned hospital, a portfolio of growing businesses serving the global economy, and a network of volunteers and organizations dedicated to helping individuals succeed.
- Named one of Ohio's Best Hometowns in 2017, Wooster continues to be one of the state's most innovative and exciting communities to live, work and visit.
- Because of its proximity to important highway connections, there is convenient access to Wooster from surrounding communities and vice versa.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- The online survey indicated residents are highly satisfied with living in Wooster, with an average rating of 3.7/5 for overall quality of life in the city.
- Respondents affirmed the community's identity as a historically agricultural community with small-town character, with 38% of 1425 responses ranking "Community Character" fourth as the reason they choose to remain living in Wooster.
- Stakeholder group input indicated that as the city continues to grow and expand, it should strive to do so strategically, with preservation in mind, paying homage to its agricultural roots.
- Greater than half of 1828 survey respondents noted an important need for more parks and greenspaces in the city, and greater than three quarters of 1830 respondents noted an important need for an outdoor performing arts venue for concerts and community events.
- The online survey indicated residents have a strong desire for continued investment in Wooster's downtown, with an average rating of 3.9/5 in level of importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each Plan Element is an overall **Goal** statement which is a statement of intent that describes the desired outcome in simple terms. The goal statements are further below and again in Chapter 6 (Implementation) by accompanying **Objectives** and **Actions** designed to help drive implementation. Woven into it all is a consideration of the overarching future **Land Use Principles**, designed to guide and inform future development in Wooster.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Goal Statement: *A city that embraces and connects people to small town values, open spaces, and respect for agricultural history as it strives to pursue smart, sustainable development for the future.*

Community Identity Objective 1 — Retain and promote a rural and agricultural history and character, and small-town character

Action Items		Time Frame	Project Partners
Action CI 1.1	Continue to evaluate and adopt policies that align with the future land use plan and help promote a rural small-town character.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 1.2	Continue to improve gateways into the city.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 1.3	Work with the private sector on future development projects to build places that reflect a small-town rural character.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 1.4	Work with local land trust to help identify and dedicate open spaces as part of new development when applicable.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank

Community Identity Objective 2 — Promote activities that build social capital and character

Action CI 2.1	Continue to work with Main Street Wooster to grow the downtown and special events in and around the downtown.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Main Street Wooster; Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC); Wayne Center for the Arts; Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Action CI 2.2	Support local community efforts and organizations by providing services to create safe and successful events.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 2.3	Support and initiate activities that help brand the city, seasons, holidays and the local community (i.e. holiday banners, lights, etc.).	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Main Street Wooster; Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC); Wayne Center for the Arts; Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Action CI 2.4	Include OSU, College of Wooster and WCSD educational and unifying activities and opportunities.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; OSU; College of Wooster



FINAL PLAN - February 2024



05

**FOCUS
AREAS**

FOCUS AREAS

OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines recommendations for the five (5) Focus Areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan. These are areas of focus that have the greatest potential to accommodate future growth and development, facilitate infill and revitalization of existing districts, or be a catalyst for change through future development. They were identified based on their physical characteristics to facilitate future growth, their location, community input, and because they support broader plan goals and objectives.

The defined Focus Areas include the Arts District, East Liberty District, the Hospital District, Smithville Western Road District, and Geyers Chapel Road District. Within this chapter, the development potential and community impact is outlined for each area.



It is important to remember these are only suggested concepts of how the Focus Areas could be redeveloped. The following statements further define the purpose and intent of the Focus Areas.

- » The examples in this chapter are only concepts
- » The examples are NOT proposed developments
- » They highlight new planning principles in Wooster, which are, at their core, about smart, sustainable growth
- » Like the future land use map, they are intended to guide and inform future land use decisions
- » The concepts set a proactive path forward as it relates to the development of these high priority areas
- » These examples are NOT about zoning, but about creating social and financial value when these areas are ready to transform

The development concepts for each Focus Area help to further define the development intent and opportunity.



ARTS DISTRICT

The Arts District is an existing neighborhood within downtown Wooster. This mixed-use area is comprised of public services, older residential pockets, arts/events-focused organizations, and new commercial uses. The current configuration presents an opportunity to diversify and intensify the neighborhood yielding more economic and cultural value.



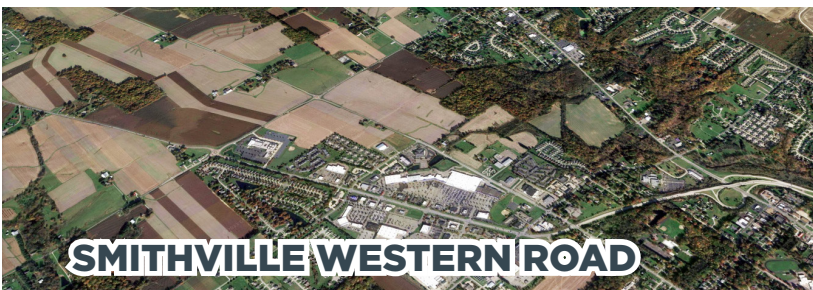
EAST LIBERTY

Also within downtown Wooster, the East Liberty District is a neighborhood that has seen recent economic growth. By rethinking some of the areas within the district, the city can continue to help define this district as a mixed-use gateway to downtown for decades to come.



HOSPITAL DISTRICT

The Hospital District is a mixed-use corridor with vital community assets such as the Wooster Community Hospital and Cleveland Clinic. Supporting the area with new medical office, commercial, and residential development can help to continue to make the corridor a self-sustaining neighborhood with important regional services.



SMITHVILLE WESTERN ROAD

The Smithville Western Road District is adjacent to one of Wooster's most frequented commercial corridors. Expanding development to include various housing types, neighborhood-level commercial uses, and preserved open space can offer a new type of place for residents and visitors alike.



GEYERS CHAPEL ROAD

Like many areas outside of Wooster city limits, the Geysers Chapel Road District is primarily agricultural and large-lot, rural, single family housing. If and when growth occurs here, maintaining development rights while promoting clustered development to preserve natural space should be a primary focus.

ARTS DISTRICT

OVERVIEW

The Arts District, located west of downtown, is a popular downtown destination and neighborhood that spans from Market Street and Spruce Street in the east, US-30 in the south, Grant Street in the west, and Liberty Street in the north. This neighborhood is home to several local and regional services, including the Wayne County Public Library, Wayne County Health Department, and the Wayne Center for the Arts. Commercial users such as Local Roots Market & Café also provide essential services to residents and visitors alike.

With Market Street providing a direct connection to US-30 and Liberty Street serving as a major thoroughfare, the neighborhood has a high degree of connectivity to downtown Wooster and the surrounding region. The low-density residential areas in this district are aging and are adjacent to some light industrial uses to the west, which presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment. Most of the residential area is comprised of single family homes, with some vacant lots lining the streets. Given the competitive nature of the current housing market, other neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Wooster have been redeveloping to accommodate higher-density housing and a variety of unit types for renters and potential owners.



Arts District - Existing



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Wooster Arts District, like many other cultural districts, is facing challenges such as aging housing stock, vacant properties, and a lack of green and pedestrian spaces. However, the growing community of Wooster presents a unique opportunity for this neighborhood to redefine itself while still maintaining its character and feel.

By offering various types of new housing, the residential blocks within the Arts District can be re-imagined and transformed. In particular, the residential blocks located from West Henry Street south towards US-30 have the potential to accommodate infill. On the other hand, the rest of the district already has existing land uses that function well but could still be improved with public realm enhancements such as improved streetscapes and other pedestrian scale improvements. A successful redevelopment strategy could greatly increase the overall quality of life for the surrounding neighborhood.



Wayne County Public Library



Wayne Center for the Arts



Walnut St. looking towards W. South St.



Public Space at Wayne Center for the Arts

VISION

The goal of reimagining the Arts District is to utilize the available land more efficiently by redeveloping some of the older housing stock in the area, and upgrading parts of the public realm to enhance the commercial and cultural vibrancy of downtown Wooster. New buildings could consist of some commercial establishments, retail spaces, and restaurants on the ground floor, with residential apartments/lofts on the upper levels.

The housing options may include duplexes, triplexes, and four-unit structures that blend in with the character of the existing single family homes, as well as apartments and flats that are more densely populated. The height of the buildings would not be more than four stories and would not dominate the residential properties nearby. The streetscape would be improved gradually and would still feature parallel parking and a broad sidewalk that provides access to the buildings and parking that is accessed from the alley, as it is currently. The open space behind the mixed-use buildings would also be considered for outdoor dining, small events, and green space for residents. If net density is achieved, open space could also be created by dedicating the remaining side for public use.

The vision of the Arts District also includes a complete overhaul of the neighborhood's branding and community image. This would involve creating new street lighting, signs, murals, art installations, artistic seating, and new gathering spots to enhance the pedestrian experience for both residents and visitors. Other placemaking elements include painting sidewalks, intersections, and crossings and using street parking spaces for seating, gathering, and planting. It is also advised to work closely with the Wayne Center for the Arts, Lyric Theatre, and other local organizations to better understand the desires of the artistic community in the area.

By creating a strategy that combines public and private initiatives, the overall feel of the Arts District can significantly improve. The new blocks would blend in with the existing neighborhood's character, making it easy to transition from a traditional single-family neighborhood to a multi-family and mixed-use cultural district. The increased density would provide a steady stream of consumers for mixed-use developments, which will offer goods, services, housing options, and cultural amenities to the existing neighborhood and downtown.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES WITH A FOCUS ON THE ARTS

Provide opportunities for public art, social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Support and grow the diversity of the community through a variety of living and cultural amenities opportunities.



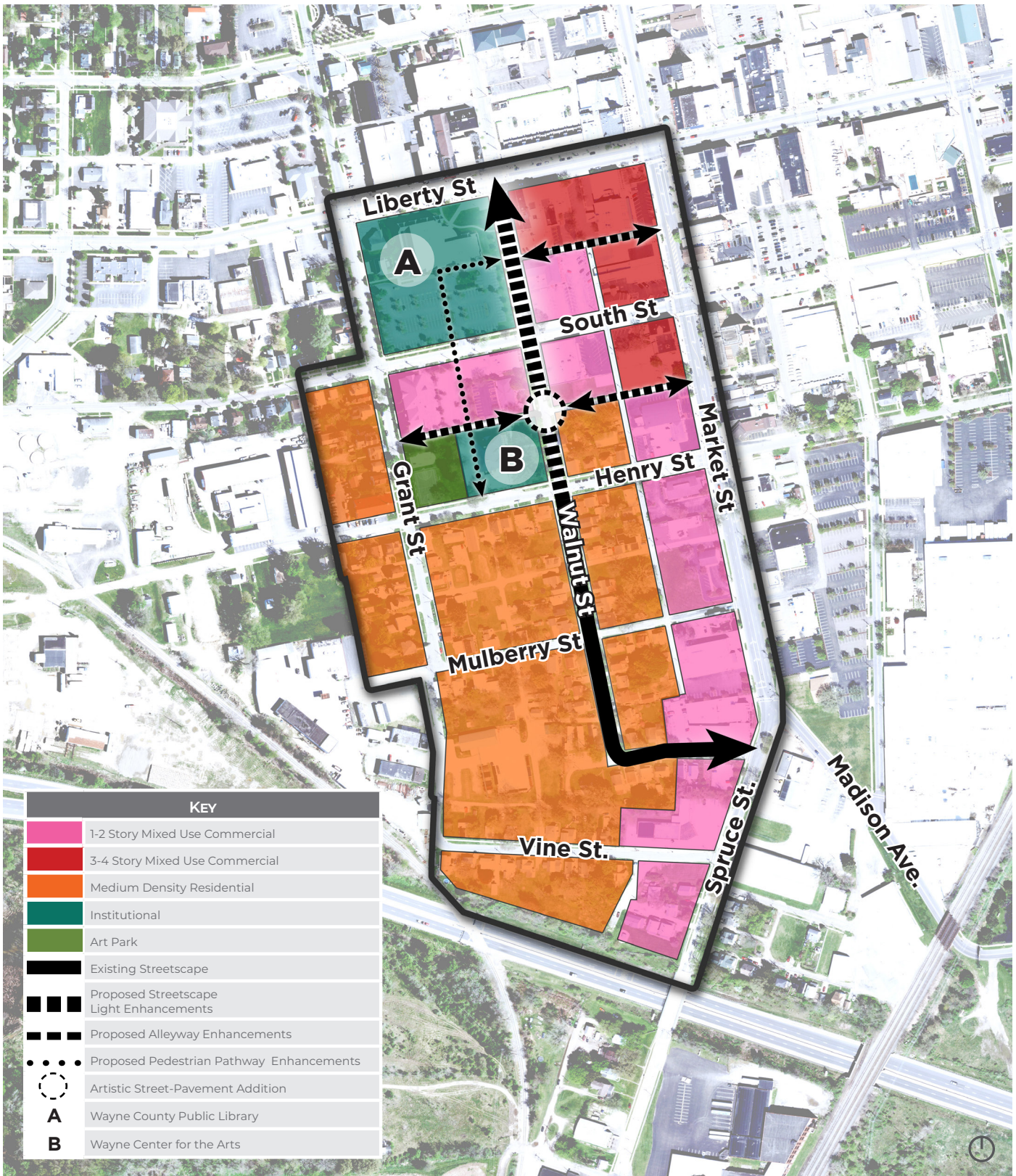
PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



The Arts District Future Land Use & Connectivity Plan

ARTS DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

As the Arts District undergoes redevelopment and transformation, it is important to encourage various types of development that align with the plan vision. Improving green spaces, enhancing pedestrian connections, and adding local commercial tenants remains a focus. Additionally, it is important to understand how the residential area of the neighborhood can evolve.

The following sections illustrate ways to achieve different types of development in the residential blocks of the neighborhood. From denser building types that blend in seamlessly with single-family homes to flats and apartments, there are several building types that can add density to the district while also maintaining the character and feel of the neighborhood.

Housing types that fit seamlessly into a residential neighborhood include duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes. These types of structures resemble typical two-story single-family homes but offer higher density. Such structures can be developed on a lot-by-lot basis and don't require a consolidation of multiple lots to add additional units and housing options. Other housing options that are denser in nature and integrate seamlessly into the neighborhood could be three-story flats, live-work units, and townhomes.

The goal of this section is not to identify which lots could and should be developed, but rather to provide a guide that demonstrates the various types of development that are possible at a range of scales and intensities.



Development Character Examples

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION?

This section of the plan serves as a guide for the city, developers, and residents to understand the potential redevelopment of the Arts District. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how different types of residential development can be completed in a general neighborhood block. A redevelopment strategy serves as the "blueprint" for a neighborhood's future. It outlines the community's vision for what they want to become, the appropriate structures, and provides examples of how to realize that vision. Specifically, this section achieves the following objectives:

- Showcases the need for a mix of housing types in the neighborhood
- Addresses how strategic land acquisition can create opportunities
- Outlines loose design guidelines for the structure's design and orientation
- Provides inspiration and examples to potential developers and interested sellers.

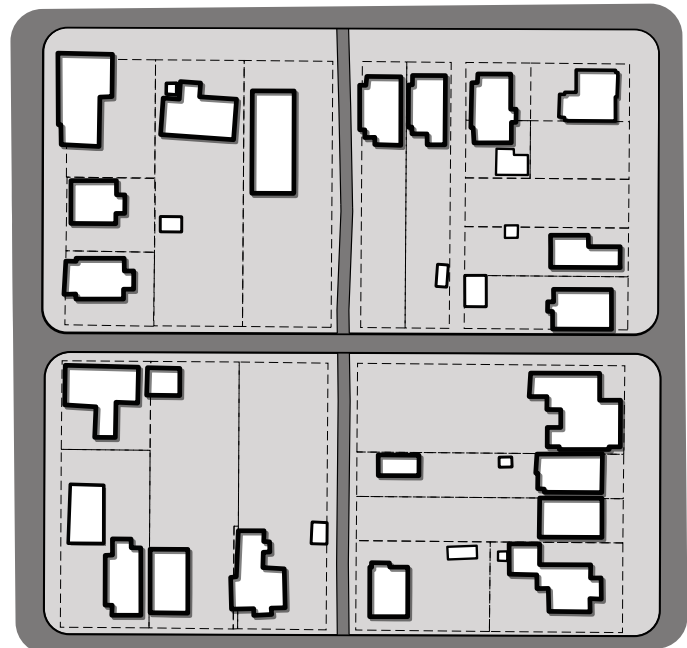


This image depicts how a multi-unit structure can fit in seamlessly within a single-family neighborhood to promote density and housing choice.

SAMPLE BLOCK

The sample block located to the right is an example of a typical residential block in the neighborhood. The blocks all generally share similar layout characteristics such as shallow setbacks, alley-loaded driveways and garages, one to three stories in height, and primarily single-family units with the occasional duplex.

The following page outlines two different strategies and how incremental (small-scale redevelopment, lot-by-lot) and intense (large-scale redevelopment, consolidation of many lots) can impact the footprint of a typical neighborhood block.

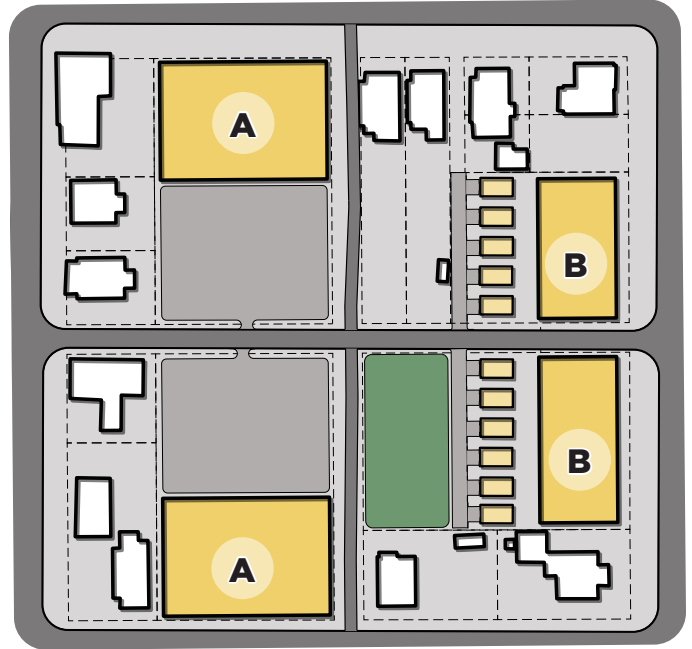


Sample Block Configuration Example

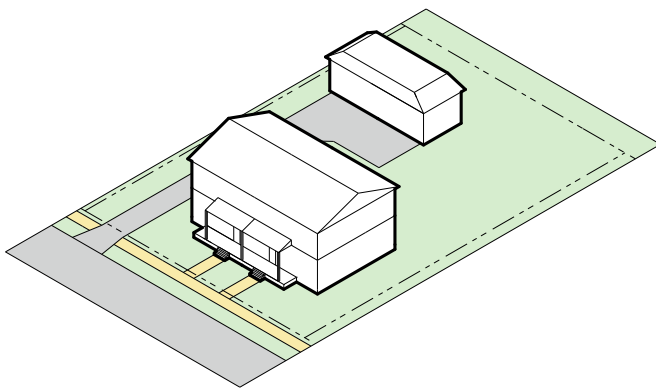
INCREMENTAL INFILL

This portion of the plan showcases the incremental infill example, which is development in a lot-by-approach that can have many positive effects. Development can happen strategically, adding new, denser housing and unit types to an area which are in high demand in a challenging housing market. Adding more dense structures to a neighborhood incrementally also allows the neighborhood to grow, while still maintaining the neighborhood's look and feel. In addition, incremental infill ensures that changes happen at a less impactful pace for both property owners and area residents. Housing types like duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and townhomes can be built on a smaller and more incremental basis.

The diagram to the right depicts how these building types can integrate with an existing block. The letters correspond to types below.



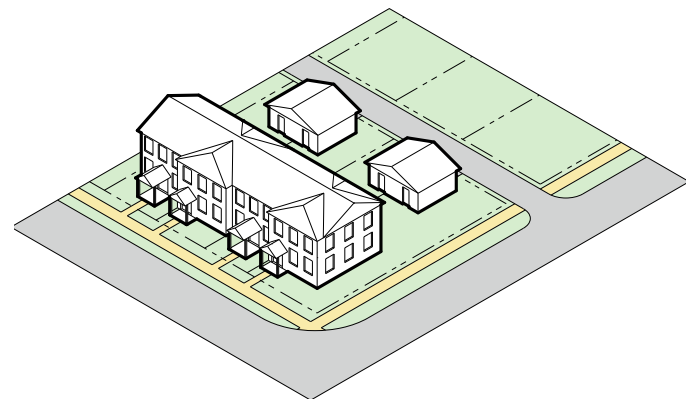
Incremental Infill Example



A.

Four-Plex Building

A structure with a shared stairwell and stacked units. Garage access is typically from a rear alley or shared parking area. A small side or rear yard is provided for each unit as private open space.



B.

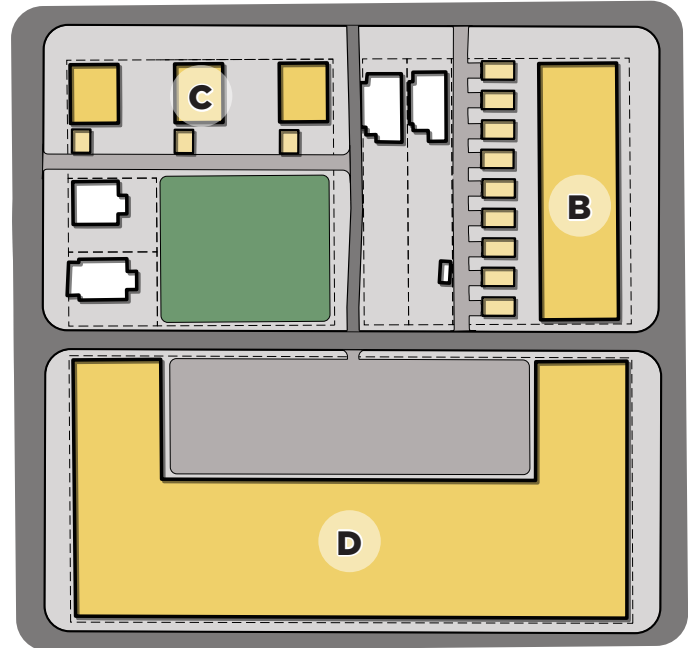
Townhomes

A structure with common walls on either side and no units below or above. Garage access is typically from a rear alley or shared parking area. A small side or rear yard is provided for each unit as private open space.

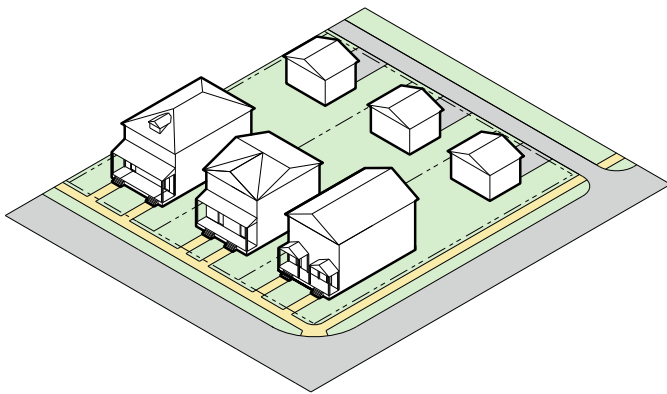
INTENSE INFILL

This part of the plan presents an example of intense infill, which demonstrates how combining multiple properties in residential blocks can enable larger-scale development with more units. Adding various building and unit types to a low-density neighborhood can significantly increase its density. However, by appropriately adjusting the height, orientation, and setbacks of these higher-density structures, they can blend in with the surrounding residential blocks. These structures can provide a mix of housing types in a competitive housing market, allowing residents to move up or down into different units that are rarely built in neighborhoods near downtown. The intense infill option requires consolidating lots, but it offers significant benefits to residents who want to live close to downtown. Housing types such as quadplexes, townhomes, multiunit apartments, and flats can be built on a more intense basis to achieve this redevelopment example.

The diagram on the right illustrates how these building types can be integrated into an existing block. The letters correspond to the types mentioned below.



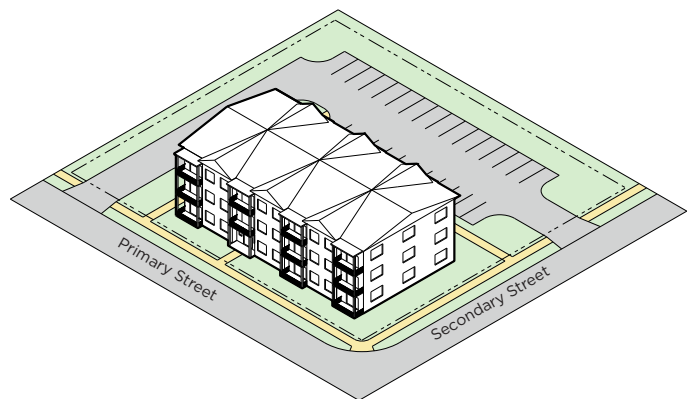
Intense Infill Example



C.

Duplex Building

A detached structure with two units that is massed as a single structure. Setbacks can range from small to large and units are typically side-by-side, but may be stacked.



D.

Multi-Unit Building

A building with multiple residential units that front on an interior corridor and have their main access from the primary street. Units can be next to each other (side-by-side units), or stacked on top of each other (top and bottom units).

ARTS DISTRICT STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS

OVERVIEW

One of the priority projects that spans the neighborhood is an enhanced streetscape for South Walnut St. These "lite" improvements would be made to the public right of way and could include upgrades to safety elements, sidewalks and paths, landscaping and shade, and brand elements, as well as pedestrian features to improve safety and comfort. These features can and should be artistic and tactical in nature to promote the arts and culture within and surrounding the district.

Guiding Principles

- Improve safety conditions for pedestrians
- Create a new condition to attract and grow future private development
- Enhance the image and brand in the neighborhood
- Promote the arts and culture with local organizations and partners

PROJECT ELEMENTS

The proposed streetscape improvements for South Walnut St. include a schematic concept outlining various placemaking elements to enhance the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors. These elements include new street lighting, signage, artistic block crossings, murals, art installations, artistic seating, and new gathering spaces.

It is important to note that these improvements can be implemented through a phased approach and need not be carried out all at once. Additionally, this project can be coordinated with other planned capital improvements by the city, and can also align with state funding sources.

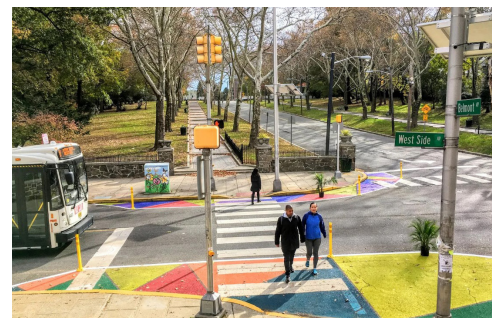
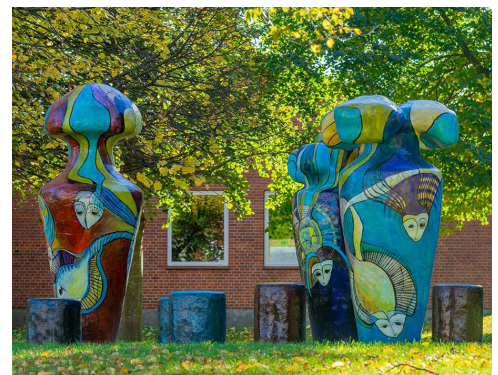
IMPLEMENTATION

Responsible Parties:

- Wayne Center for the Arts
- City of Wooster
- Lyric Theatre
- Wayne County Public Library

Time-frame:

- 2-5 yrs.



Character Images



S. Walnut St. - Existing Condition



S. Walnut St. - Proposed Concept



Focus Area - Downtown Arts District

Goal Statement: *Promote the creation / development of an Arts District (Downtown).*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES WITH A FOCUS ON THE ARTS

Provide opportunities for public art, social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Support and grow the diversity of the community through a variety of living and cultural amenities opportunities.



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Create an Arts District overlay or zoning district to achieve the development principles/vision.

Facilitate an Arts District group or community partners for feedback and programming including Main Street Wooster, Wayne Center for the Arts, Wayne County Library, Lyric Theater, etc.

Create a signature public space for arts, entertainment and gathering.

Enhance connections to the downtown core through the development of new pedestrian/pedestrian-only alleyways/promenades.

Facilitate removal of blight through code enforcement.

Use Wayne County Land Bank for the acquisition of fallow or underutilized property.

Identify and assemble larger parcels for infill development.

Work with the County and other entities to reuse or redevelop surplus County and other institutional properties to support the attraction of arts and creative industries.

Add elements to the existing streetscape on Walnut Street to enhance the image and brand of the district, as well as safety.

this page is intentionally left blank

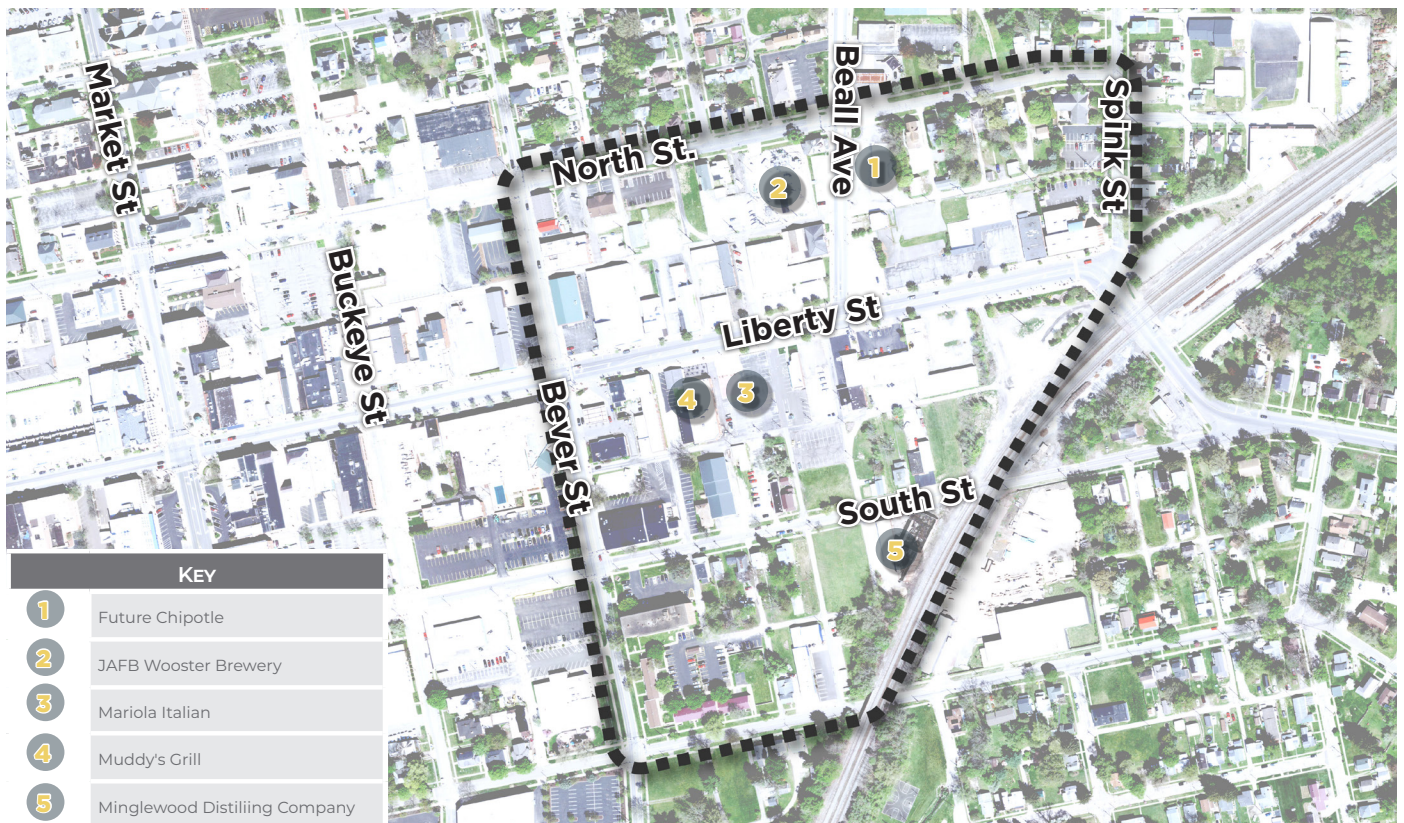
EAST LIBERTY

OVERVIEW

The East Liberty District is a popular retail and dining neighborhood located east of downtown Wooster. It spans from Spink Street to the east, Henry Street to the south, Bever Street to the west, and North Street to the north. This neighborhood is home to several popular local establishments, including JAFB Brewery, Minglewood Distilling Company, Muddy’s, and the recently completed Mariola’s. Commercial users such as Napa Auto Parts and the recently completed Commercial & Savings Bank also provide essential services to the greater Wooster community.

Liberty Street is the primary east-west connection through downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, and it acts as a vital spine for the local business community. Although this primarily commercial corridor is starting to experience investment and redevelopment along Liberty Street, other streets also contain underutilized parcels that could be prime candidates for redevelopment. In these areas, dated light-industrial uses, aging homes and commercial strips, and vacant lots provide ample space for redevelopment and a new vision for the area.

The desire is to add a mixture of uses, a variety of commercial and residential building types, and promote more pedestrian-friendly connectivity. This makes this district an important area in the continued revitalization of greater downtown Wooster.



East Liberty District - Existing



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The East Liberty District, like many other commercial areas, is facing challenges including aging strip centers, vacant properties, and a limited variety of commercial and housing spaces. However, the recent redevelopment of properties in this district presents a unique opportunity for the neighborhood to redefine itself while still preserving its character and atmosphere.

By promoting a mix of uses, the commercial blocks within the East Liberty District can be transformed. In particular, Liberty Street is set to see new development, with the recent construction of the Mariola Italian space and the Commercial & Savings Bank. While adjacent downtown neighborhoods have seen more residential development, this district has mainly seen commercial development first, with a desire to expand residential housing options not only in the East Liberty District but also in other urban areas surrounding downtown. A successful redevelopment strategy could significantly diversify commercial and housing options, and would continue to make downtown Wooster one of the most economically viable micropolitan cities in the country.

Expanding on the recent redevelopment energy by adding flats, apartments, and new gathering spaces would make this district an extension of downtown and, due to the size of the redevelopment areas, offer new types of development in the urban center of Wooster.



New commercial development in district - Commercial Savings Bank



Minglewood Distilling Company



Beaver St. & Liberty St. intersection



South St. looking west

VISION

The East Liberty District has been identified as an area that could benefit from further investment to make better use of the land currently occupied by aging infrastructure. The aim is to modernize parts of the public realm, expand commercial development, and increase residential density in downtown Wooster. This could involve building mixed-use and commercial properties along Liberty Street, with large-scale residential developments south of Liberty Street. In addition, redesigning some street alignments and adding a public gathering space could help transform the area from an auto-centric corridor to a vibrant 24/7 neighborhood.

The community has expressed a desire to expand the mixture of uses along Liberty Street and up Beall Avenue north of Liberty Street. The district is already experiencing new construction and is set to expand further. As commercial and retail continue to grow, the vision for this district is to combine these uses with residential options, such as mixed-use developments. Liberty Street, west of Market Street, has seen this type of development, and the goal is to add more residential options for those who want to live close to the city center.

Other areas in the district, namely south of Liberty Street, comprise a mixture of aging infrastructure and vacant parcels. While some structures are still viable

today, establishing a redevelopment plan can help bring this portion of the neighborhood up to speed with the momentum of Liberty Street. The community has expressed a desire to expand housing options in urban neighborhoods surrounding downtown. The proposed housing for this area would be dense in nature, appropriate in scale to surrounding structures, and pedestrian-friendly, including flats, townhomes, and walk-up apartments.

The vision for the East Liberty District also includes adding green space and changing roadways to enhance the pedestrian experience. To make way for additional development and new green space, Beall Avenue would need to be reoriented to intersect Liberty Street and South Street perpendicularly. This would create new areas for mixed-use development along Liberty Street and open up space for a community gathering area along South Street. The extension of Beall to the south of Liberty Street is intended to be primarily geared toward pedestrians and act as a gateway between the commercial and residential portions of the district.

By fostering an environment for growth, the East Liberty District can become an important community hub. Redeveloping aging structures and uses, and adding new connections and community spaces, can make this district a desirable destination for both current and potential residents. The following pages show a development concept that articulates this outlined vision.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL AND HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



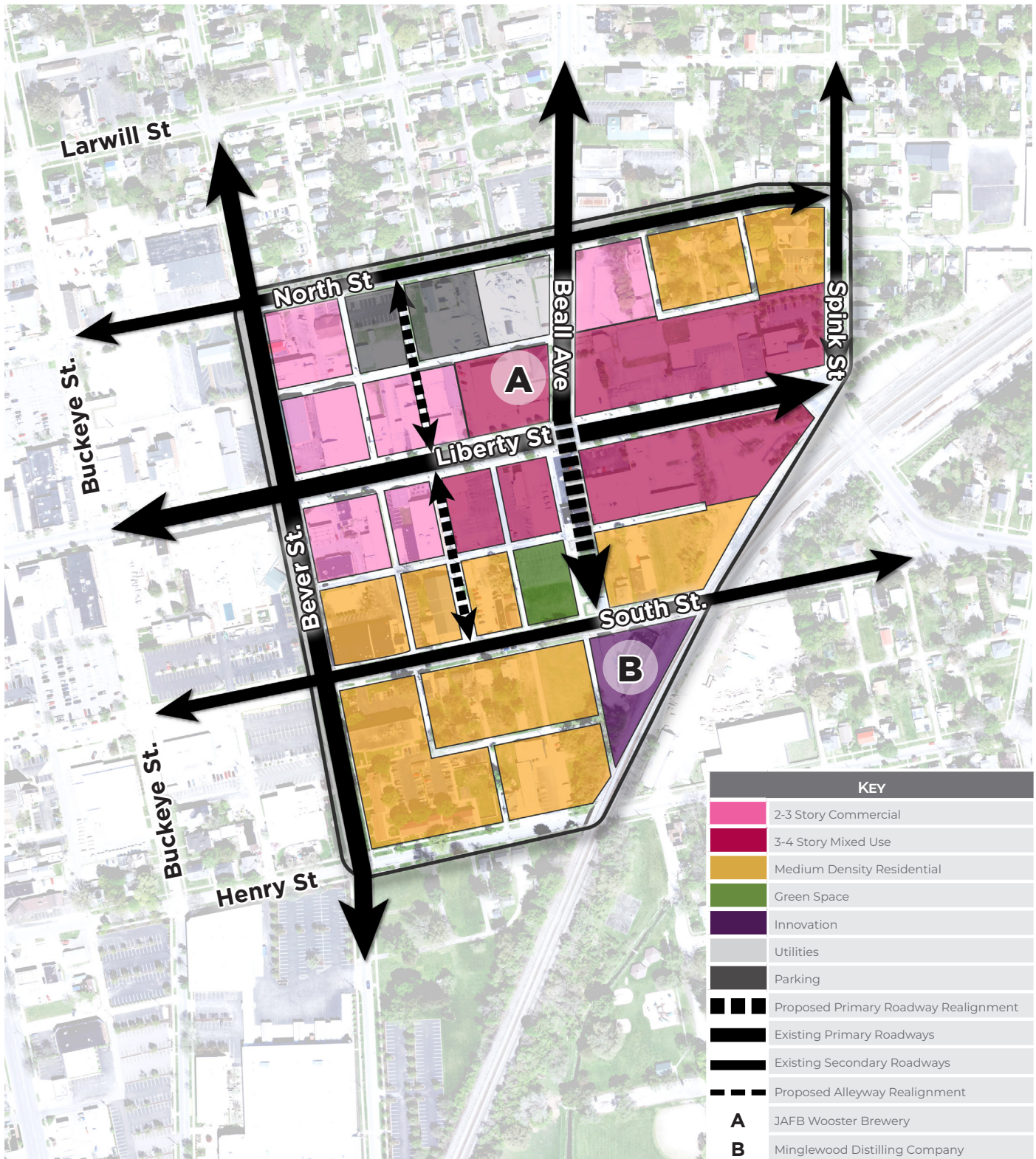
BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



KEY	
	2-3 Story Commercial
	3-4 Story Mixed Use
	Medium Density Residential
	Green Space
	Innovation
	Utilities
	Parking
	Proposed Primary Roadway Realignment
	Existing Primary Roadways
	Existing Secondary Roadways
	Proposed Alleyway Realignment
A	JAFB Wooster Brewery
B	Minglewood Distilling Company

East Liberty - Future Land Use & Connectivity



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

As the East Liberty District continues to redefine itself and grow as an extension of downtown, there will be a variety of positive community impacts as a result. These potential impacts are:

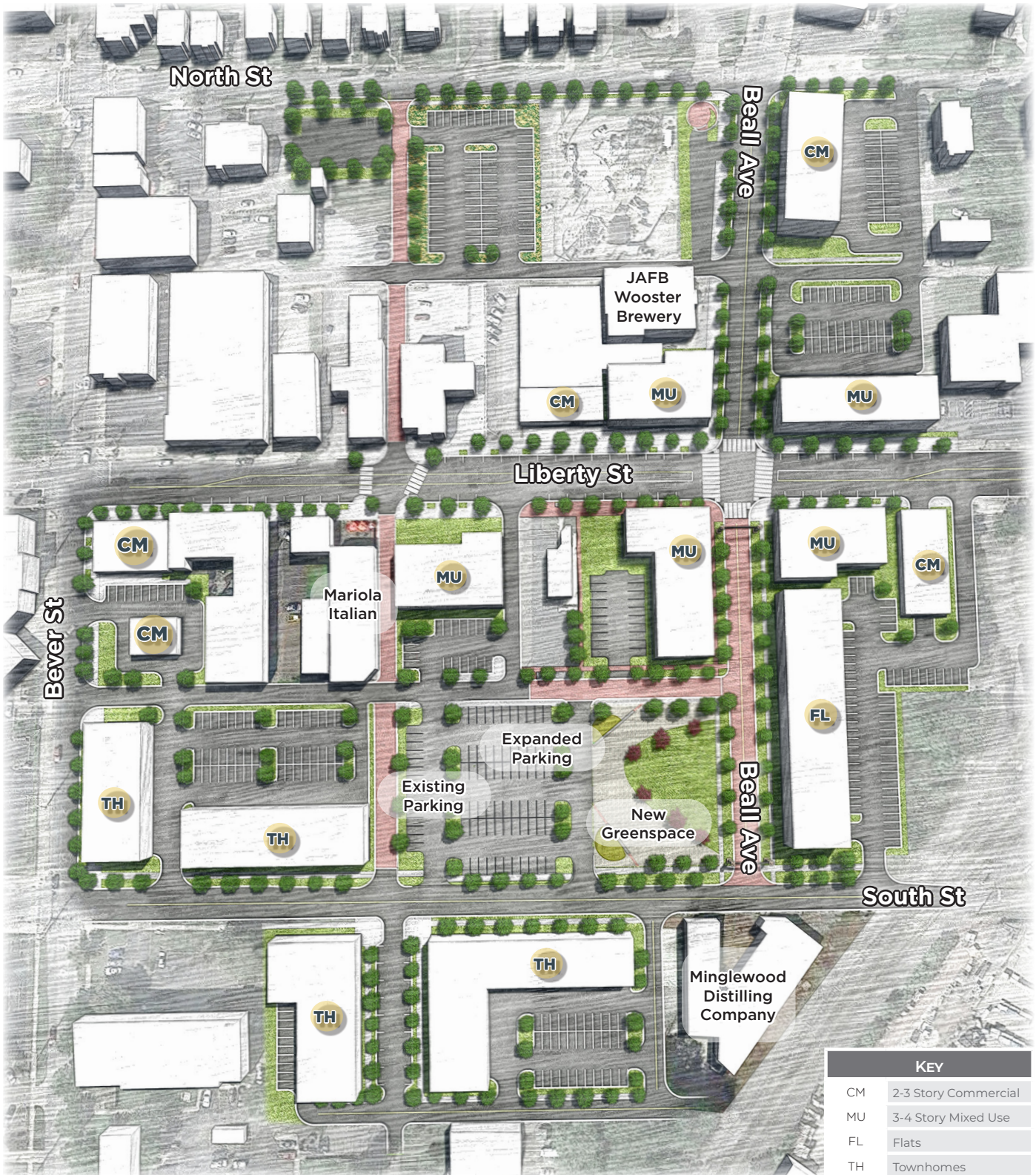
- » Expanding the commercial corridor with new and updated structures to support a variety of uses.
- » Creating additional density and housing options in and around downtown Wooster
- » Improving connectivity by extending and realigning Beall Avenue
- » Adding a signature gathering and open space for residents and visitors
- » Transforming the pedestrian experience through streetscape improvements
- » Providing additional parking for the district as well as the greater downtown area

The following pages illustrate the proposed development concept. It is important to remember that these are only suggested concepts of how the Focus Area could be redeveloped, and they are intended to guide and inform future land use decisions when these areas are ready to transform.



Development Character Examples





East Liberty - Development Concept





East Liberty District - Proposed, looking north up Beall Ave.



East Liberty District - Proposed, looking north behind Mariola Italian



East Liberty District - Proposed, looking northeast at the Beall Ave. extension



Focus Area - East Liberty District

Goal Statement: *Continue to grow the East Liberty District (Downtown).*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL & HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Establish a signature public space to facilitate community gathering and programming through a new public park project or public/private partnership.

Enhance pedestrian connections on existing roadways and alleys.

Continue to examine and plan for the extension of Beall Avenue at Liberty and through the district.

Create district branding elements such as gateway features, banners, etc.

Strategically acquire parcels to help facilitate the overall development district framework.

Facilitate redevelopment of the former TCI site.

Evaluate re-alignment of Beall Ave & Liberty intersection.

Explore opportunities to acquire and/or facilitate development of adjacent parcels.

Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, or other means.

Continue to monitor and plan for parking and related education in and around downtown .

this page is intentionally left blank

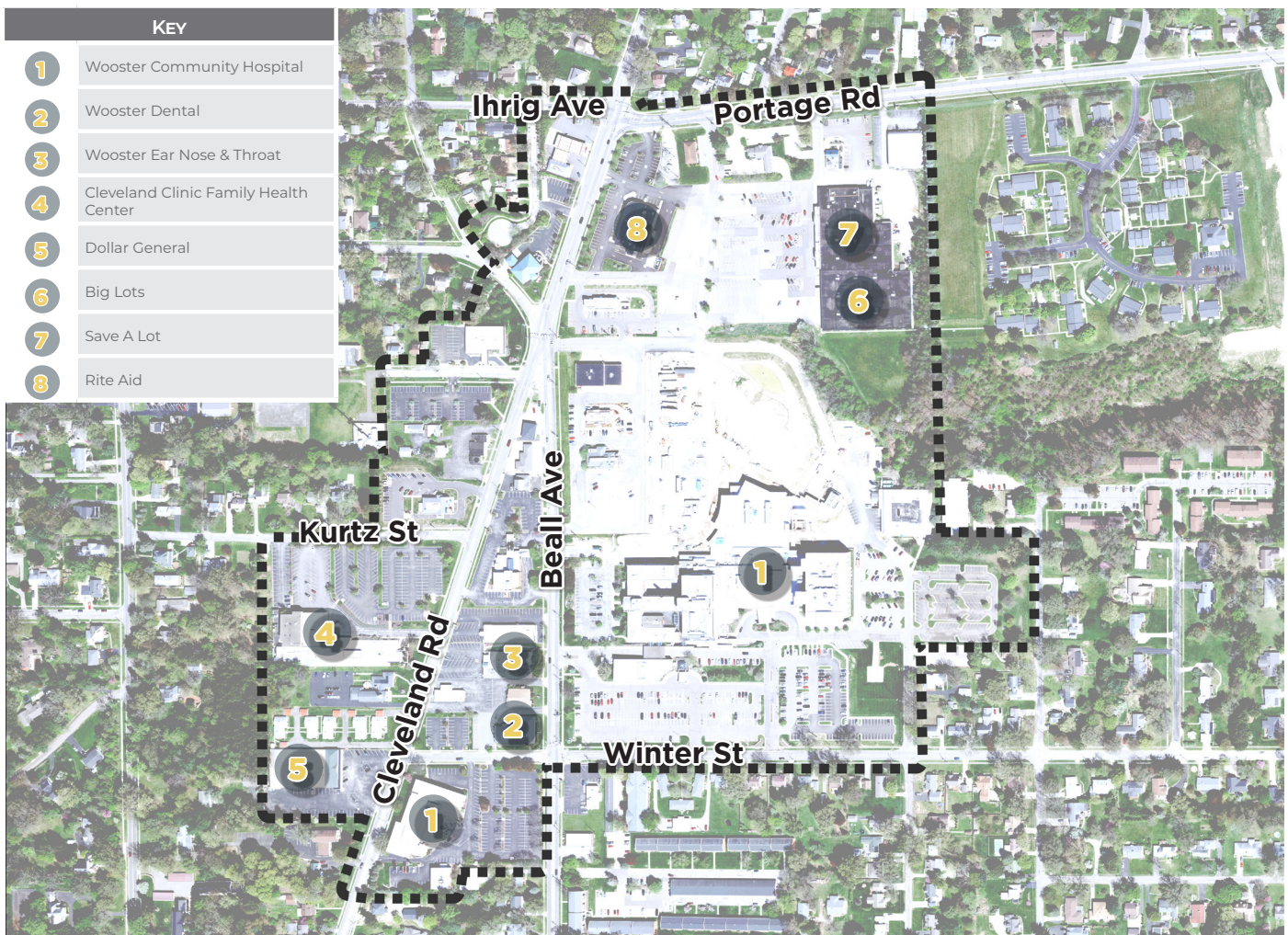
HOSPITAL DISTRICT

OVERVIEW

The Hospital District is a regional destination for healthcare and big box retail services located in the geographic center of the city limits. This focus area spans from Portage Road to the north, the Wooster Community Hospital to the east, Winter Street to the south, and Cleveland Road to the west. This area is home to many healthcare services and offices such as the Wooster Community Hospital, a local Family Health Center

branch of the Cleveland Clinic, and other local specialists. Also located in this district are uses that range from small fast-food outparcels to larger big box users like Big Lots and Save A Lot.

Lack of diverse uses, traffic and congestion, and absence of a neighborhood brand and gateway are why this district should be a focus for redevelopment and investment. Supporting this vital community area through a new vision can establish the district as an even more significant regional destination.



Hospital District - Existing



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Hospital District has experienced both growth and challenges in recent years. With the expansion of the medical sector and the development of retail and big box stores, there is an opportunity to update the district's vision.

As commercial centers transform into mixed-use centers, the Hospital District can follow suit. Redevelopment of some retail and office spaces along Portage Rd, Cleveland Rd and Beall Ave may be justified to meet the growing demand for additional residential and mixed-use spaces in the area. Providing housing options for the workforce in the district is a goal of the planning process.

As development occurs, it's important to understand and plan for traffic patterns through the district and on the hospital and retail sites. Solutions such as roundabouts and improved streetscapes can not only improve motorized connections but also benefit pedestrian mobility through the site.

The focus area presents a challenge of balancing a mix of uses and connectivity improvements with the established medical nature of the district. It is crucial to supplement and support this vital regional center for the future success of the area. To move this district towards the future, it is essential to update and reimagine commercial uses, add a variety of residential unit types, evolve traffic patterns throughout the district and continue to support the medical industry.



New commercial development in district - Caribou Coffee



Intersection at Cleveland & Beall, looking south east from Blair Blvd



Hospital District - Wooster Community Hospital



Hospital District - Cleveland Clinic Health Center

VISION

The Hospital District is a stable economic center in Wooster, but it has been identified as a focus area that could benefit from a new vision to attract new investment. The vision for this district is to strengthen the existing uses that support the region through a mixture of uses. This would involve creating a mixed-use district while continuing to expand the medical and healthcare footprint in the area. Additionally, new development would prompt addressing traffic solutions in the area, especially on public roads, but also through the interior of existing commercial sites.

Beginning in the northern part of the focus area, at the intersection of Portage and Cleveland, former commercial out parcels will be developed with context-sensitive residential structures such as townhomes or duplexes. This would help this part of the site blend seamlessly with the residential area on the northern part of Portage Rd. A mixed-use district, roughly 2-3 stories in height, would anchor the intersection of Portage and Cleveland. Retail and healthcare uses would remain on the pedestrian levels, while residential or office uses would take up the additional upper floors. More dense multi-family residential structures would be located behind the mixed-use development along Portage and Cleveland. From townhomes to flats and apartments, supporting the district with increased density and making this area a 24/7 neighborhood was mentioned as a priority throughout this process.

Moving south towards the rest of the site, the primary organizing element is reimagining the intersection of Cleveland, Beall, Blair, School, and the one-way exit of the interior hospital road. A traffic and engineering study would have to be conducted for specifics, but implementing a peanut roundabout could not only be a traffic solution but also help organize future development. Streetscape improvements along with this realignment of the intersection would allow for buildings to front the street and create a walkable main street environment more appropriately. Additionally, reorganizing the development in this area to front Beall with mixed-use and medical office structures would help create another pedestrian-friendly area in the district. The last infrastructure recommendation in this area is creating a roundabout at the intersection of Winter and Beall to help direct traffic more easily to the future addition at the Wooster Community Hospital, which includes a new emergency room turnaround and entrance. The hospital should be consulted throughout the design process and work with the city to continue to share the vision and future plans as the primary anchor in this district.

By working with the existing tenants to advance the vision, the Hospital District can evolve into a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use district that continues to serve the regional community with healthcare while providing residential and retail options for local residents.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



FOSTER CREATIVE REDEVELOPMENT

Allow for creative mixed-use, high quality development that creates economic and living options for a variety of residents.



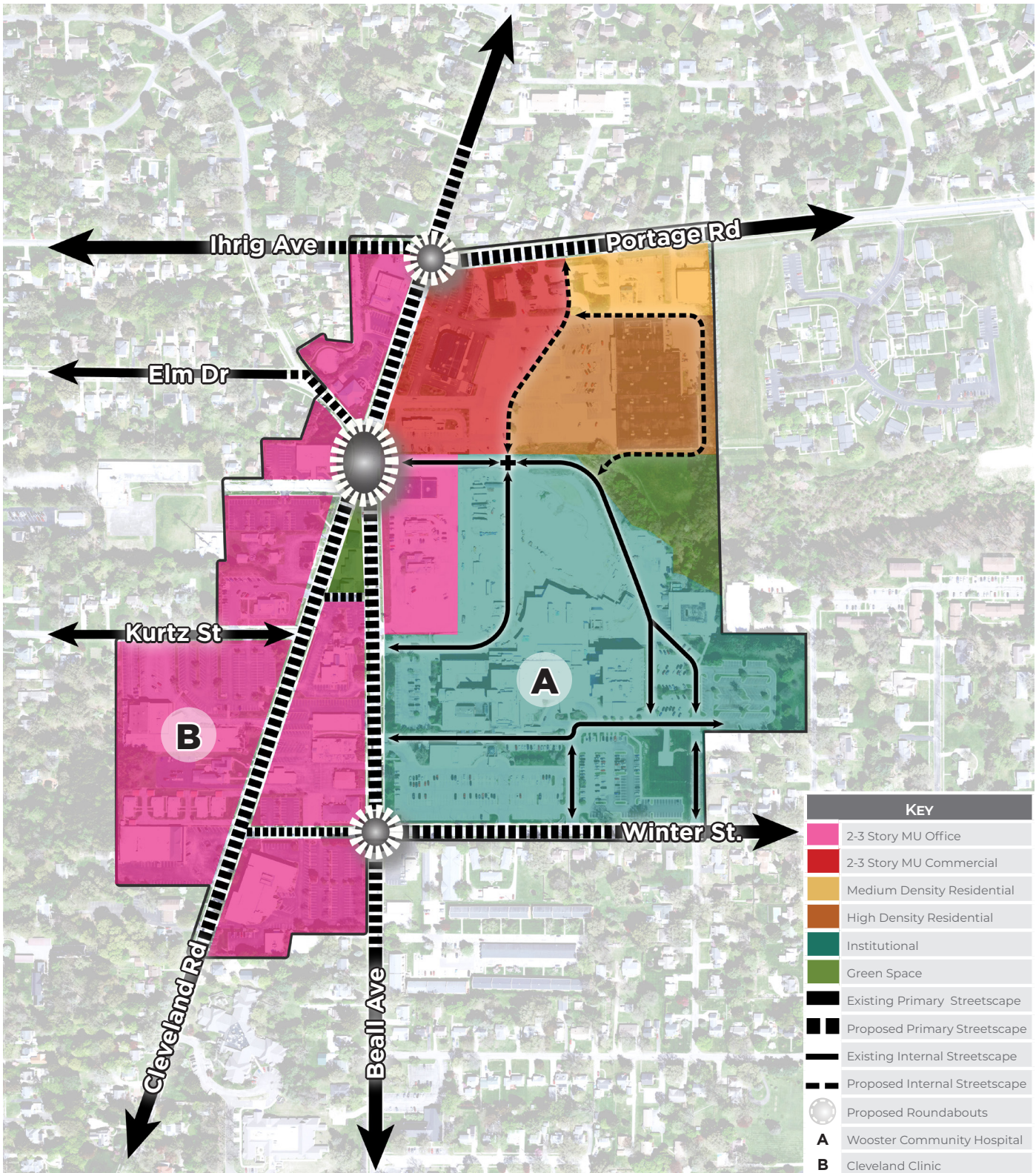
PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



Hospital District - Future Land Use & Connectivity



DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

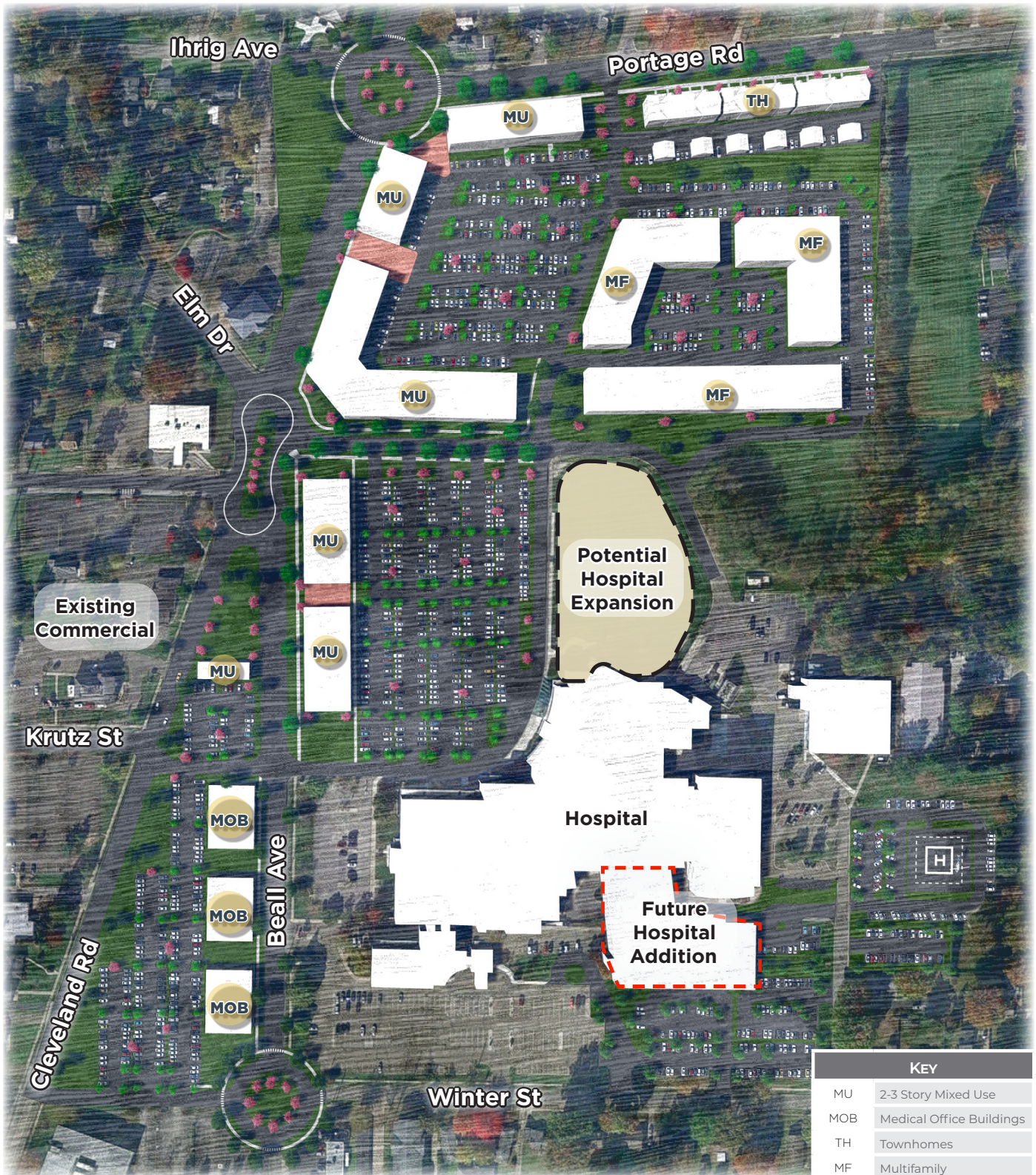
As the Hospital District continues to redefine itself and becomes an economically vibrant and increasingly functional district that leverages an important community asset, there will be a variety of positive community impacts. They include:

- » Creating additional density and housing options in and around the area, with opportunity to add mixed uses at the same site
- » Expanding the medical commercial corridor with new medical office buildings with services supporting the central hospital
- » Improving connectivity with the addition of a "peanut" roundabout at the intersection of Cleveland, Beall, Blair, School, and the one-way exit of the interior hospital road
- » Improving connectivity with the addition of a new connector road interior to the commercial site, and a traffic roundabout at the intersection of Beall + Winter and Portage + Cleveland
- » Providing a walkable pedestrian experience through streetscape improvements

The following pages illustrate the proposed development concept. It is important to remember that these are only suggested concepts of how the Focus Area could be redeveloped, and they are intended to guide and inform future land use decisions when these areas are ready to transform.



Development Character Examples



KEY	
MU	2-3 Story Mixed Use
MOB	Medical Office Buildings
TH	Townhomes
MF	Multifamily

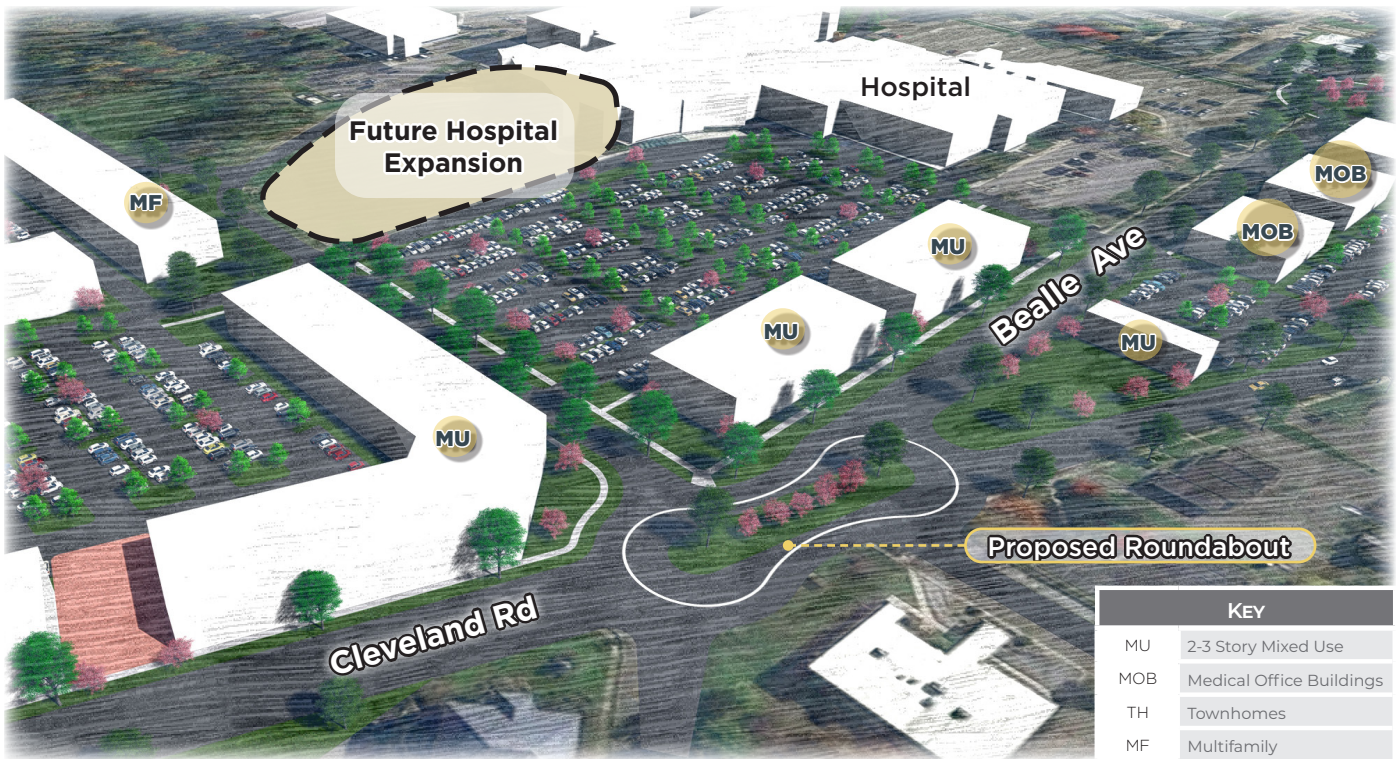
Hospital District - Proposed Plan



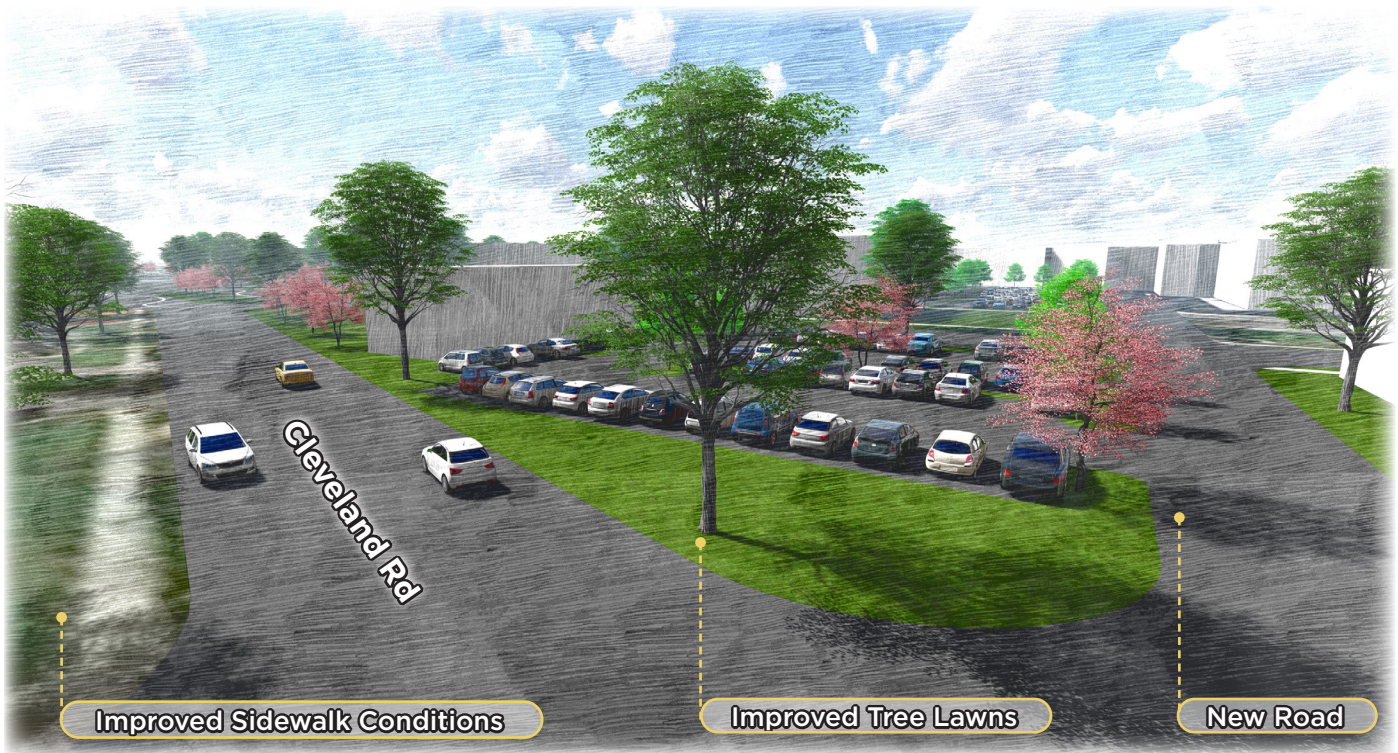


Hospital District - Proposed perspective looking north up Beall Ave.





Hospital District - Proposed Perspective looking south east towards Wooster Memorial Hospital



Hospital District - Proposed perspective looking north east up Cleveland Rd.



Focus Area - The Hospital District

Goal Statement: *Strategically infill in and around the Hospital District.*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



FOSTER CREATIVE REDEVELOPMENT

Allow for creative mixed-use, high quality development that creates economic and living options for a variety of residents.



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improves the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Work with the hospital to enhance and brand the streetscape and intersections near the hospital campus and improve pedestrian safety.
Consider creating a TIF for the area to help support future investment and public improvements.
Create an overlay district to encourage internal connections between the hospital and adjacent commercial.
Evaluate and modify lot coverage requirements to encourage pedestrian scale commercial development and shared parking.
Encourage property improvements through code enforcement and property improvement incentives.
Encourage development of supplemental businesses such as strategic retail, dining and financial businesses.

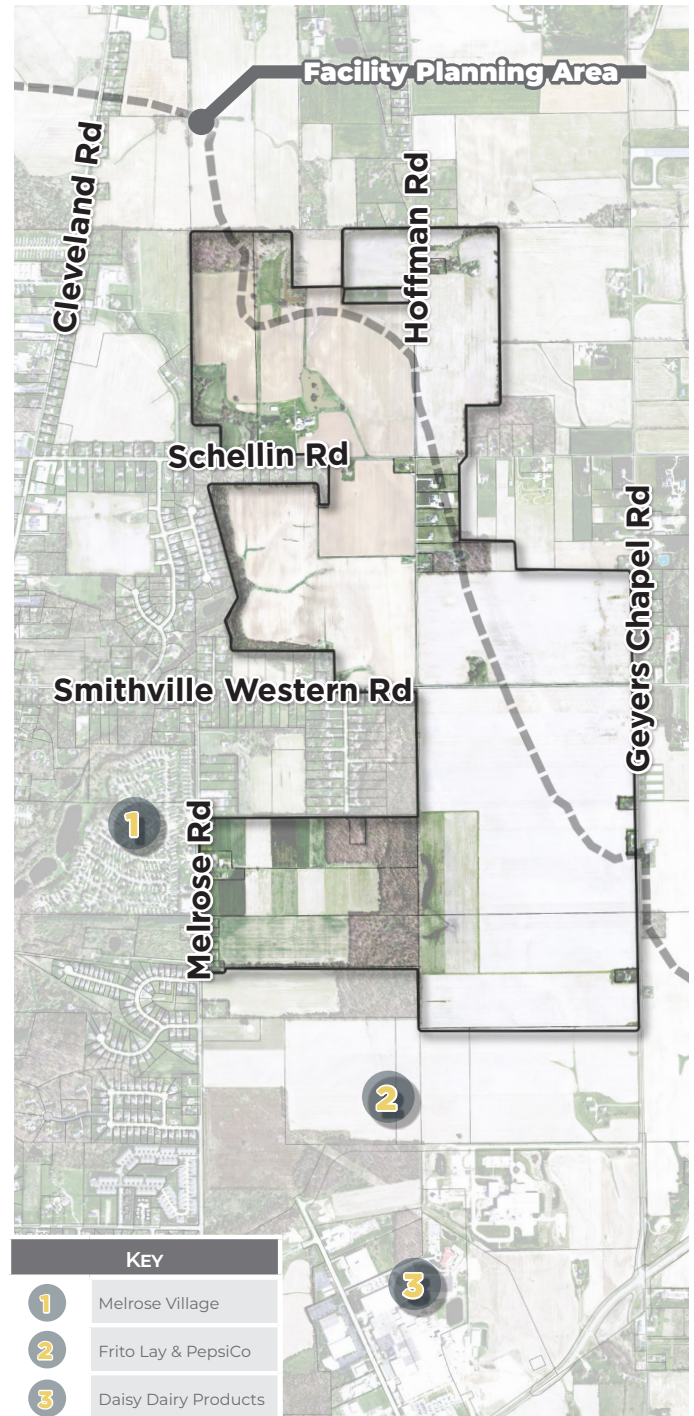
this page is intentionally left blank

GEYERS CHAPEL ROAD

OVERVIEW

The Geysers Chapel Road District is a rural area located to the northeast of the city limits. The area is mainly used for agriculture and has low-density single-family homes. It is considered as a development opportunity zone that surrounds Wooster city. The boundaries of this area are Geysers Chapel Road to the east, the Frito-Lay plant to the south, Melrose Road to the west, and the Wayne County Airport to the north.

This area is currently at a pivotal moment as development is being explored. The aim is to annex more land into the city and expand housing options for current and future residents. However, it is necessary that the development is sensitive to the rural character of the area. The focus should be on clustering development to preserve portions of these areas for natural and open space. It is also important to note that this focus area conforms to parcel lines that intersect the FPA boundary. A future objective outlined in the previous chapter states a desire to extend the FPA in order to encourage denser development with sewer prescriptions which disincentivize large lots with a focus on conforming parcel boundaries. This approach will help to maintain the rural charm of the area while also accommodating the growth in housing needs.



Geysers Chapel District- Existing



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The rural areas situated to the east of Wooster, including the Geyers Chapel Road District, have recently experienced growth and development pressures. These areas not only face pressure to utilize the land for income-generating purposes like offices and industries but also for residential purposes. The development opportunities in this area are justified due to their proximity to the existing city utilities and favorable development conditions like limited topography and very few flood pressures. Being within the Wooster Facility Planning Area also makes this area desirable for development as many rural portions of the region like this, fall without that boundary and are not yet forecasted to be eligible for utility expansion.



Suburban Residential Character

The district has suitable areas that may accommodate additional innovation, suburban, and cluster development uses. However, the challenge ahead is to work with property owners to understand the importance and impacts of future development. While the city is looking to expand residential development, it also wants to maintain natural and open spaces. An essential opportunity in this district is to integrate open spaces, such as greenways, naturalized areas, and parks, as part of future development. Understanding the right balance between development and conservation to provide the community with additional housing while preserving green spaces is why future land use designations are a significant part of this plan.



Adjacent Innovation Uses - Wooster Brush Co.



Geyers Chapel District - Geyers Chapel Rd



Geyers Chapel District - Schellin Rd

VISION

The Geyers Chapel Road District is a rural area situated within the Wooster Facility Planning Area, just outside the city limits. Like many other areas within the region, this district faces unique challenges due to the competing desires of expanding development and preserving its rustic and natural character. However, by making use of appropriate land use strategies and retaining the development rights of landowners, this district can meet the needs of a growing population while preserving open spaces.

The northern portion of the study area, located north of Schellin Road, is designated as suburban cluster development. These parcels are adjacent to more suburban housing and rural areas, and already used for low-density residential purposes. The vision for this land use is to cluster future development in a way that preserves natural and open spaces for public use.

Moving further south down Hoffman Road, the plan is to extend this road south of Smithville Western Road to tee into a new road that runs east-to-west starting close to the intersection of Melrose Drive and Firethorn Lane. These new roads would promote connectivity between the development opportunity areas and be a catalyst for future growth. The development type in this area would primarily mirror adjacent uses such as suburban development patterns along Melrose Drive. The demand for additional single-family units at various price points is increasing and the desire for choice is high.

Aside from open space and residential development, the district could also support innovation uses. Parcels located near PepsiCo/Frito Lay are identified as areas for these types of uses to expand. Appropriate uses include office, manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, and other light industrial type uses.

Promoting sensible and context-sensitive growth in areas like these in the greater region will continue to add housing choices and income-generating uses to Wooster.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL AND HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



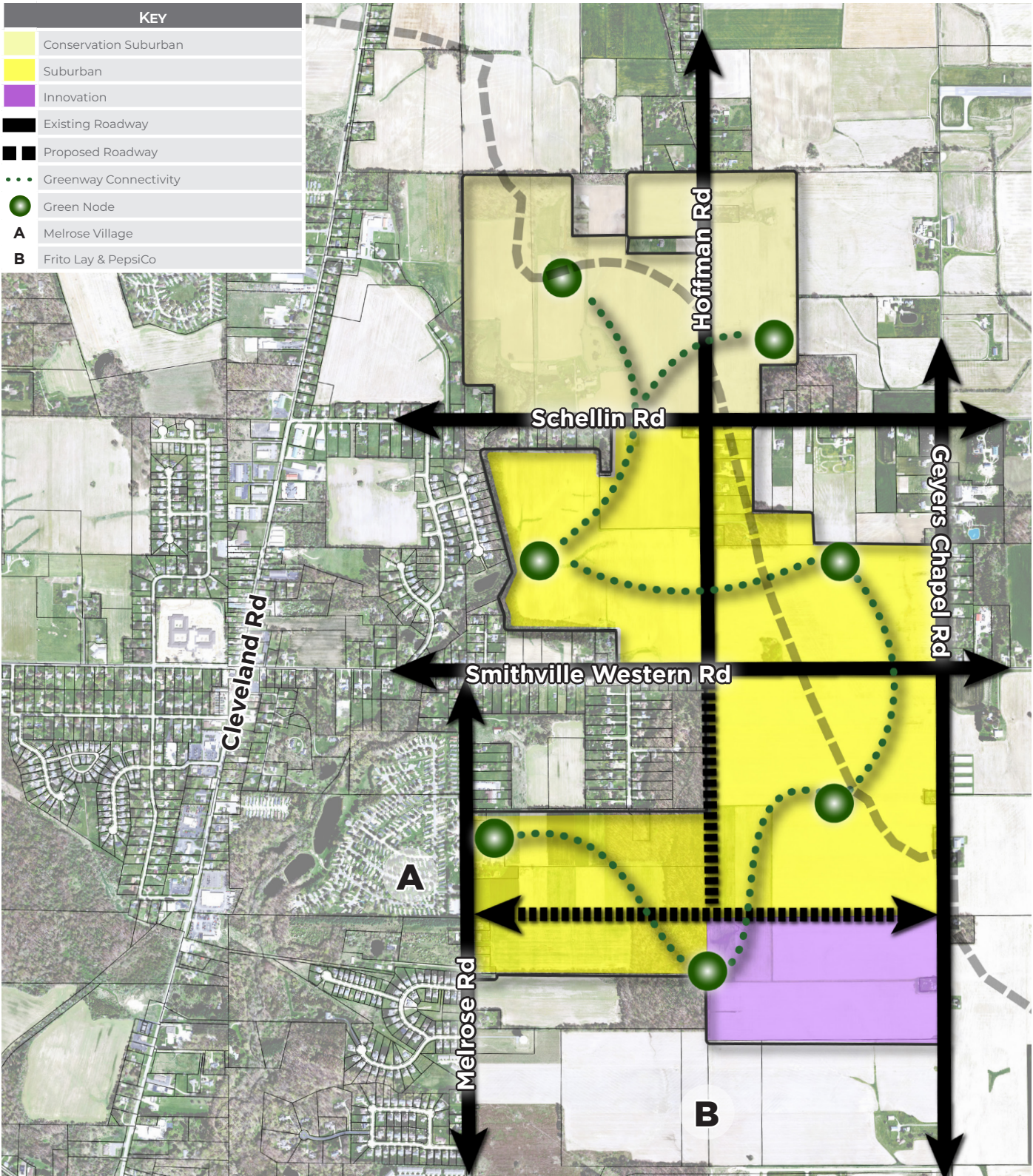
BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



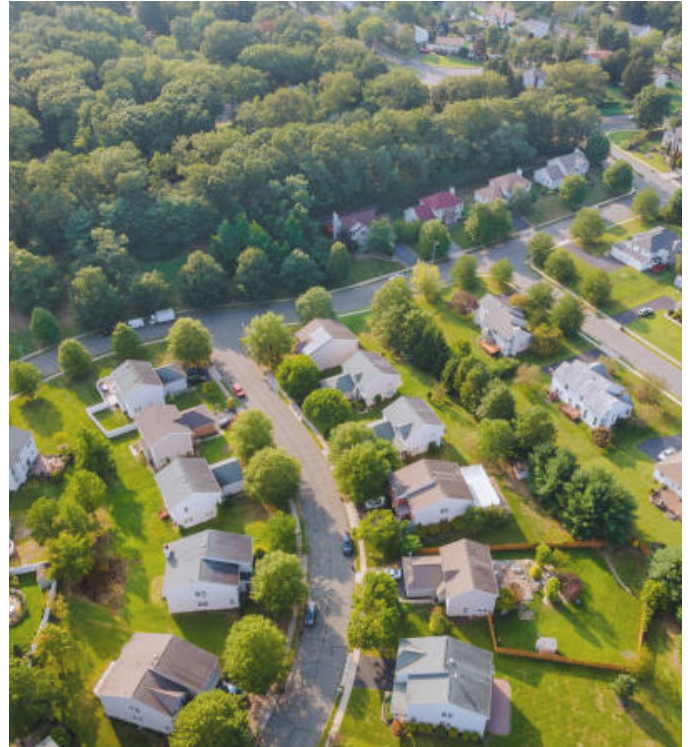
Gevers Chapel District - Future Land Use & Connectivity



SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

Typical suburban development largely consists of single-family homes on medium-sized lots developed to reflect the existing fabric and character of the neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods. Development intensity in this area should be six dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed ten units per acre, unless density bonuses allow. Connectivity should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.

This type of development can be achieved through Conventional Suburban Development (see next page), but while it is not required in this development type, promoting non-motorized connections and integrating green spaces into the development should be encouraged.



Conventional Suburban Development example

CONSERVATION SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

Conservation development entails strategic "clustering" within a large site with the intention of reducing land consumption and preserving natural and open space features. The simple distinction between conservation in suburban vs. rural areas is the existing amount of open space area to be preserved. The development character should be single family and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site with the remaining land being left communal and/or undisturbed.

Development intensity in this area should be two dwelling units per acre, and open space should make up at least 25% of the site. Recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths if possible, and open spaces should be landscaped with native plants. Connectivity should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.



Conservation Suburban Development example

CONVENTIONAL SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

This development type typically spreads units across the area of a site with no designated open space for the development. The pattern typically includes medium-to-large lots with limited community amenities.



SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - SINGLE FAMILY

This development type entails clustering units on smaller lots to preserve open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into the community's system. Single Family lots are smaller and more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.



SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - MULTI-FAMILY

This development type can also entail clustering multifamily units on smaller parcels to preserve even more open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into community's system. Various unit types, such as multi-family, can be more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.



SUBURBAN CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT - MIXED UNIT

This development type can also entail clustering various unit types on smaller parcels to preserve even more open space and promote community-wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into community's system. This development type would increase the density and intensity of development, but would still preserve more open space than conventional suburban development.



GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY & GREEN NODES

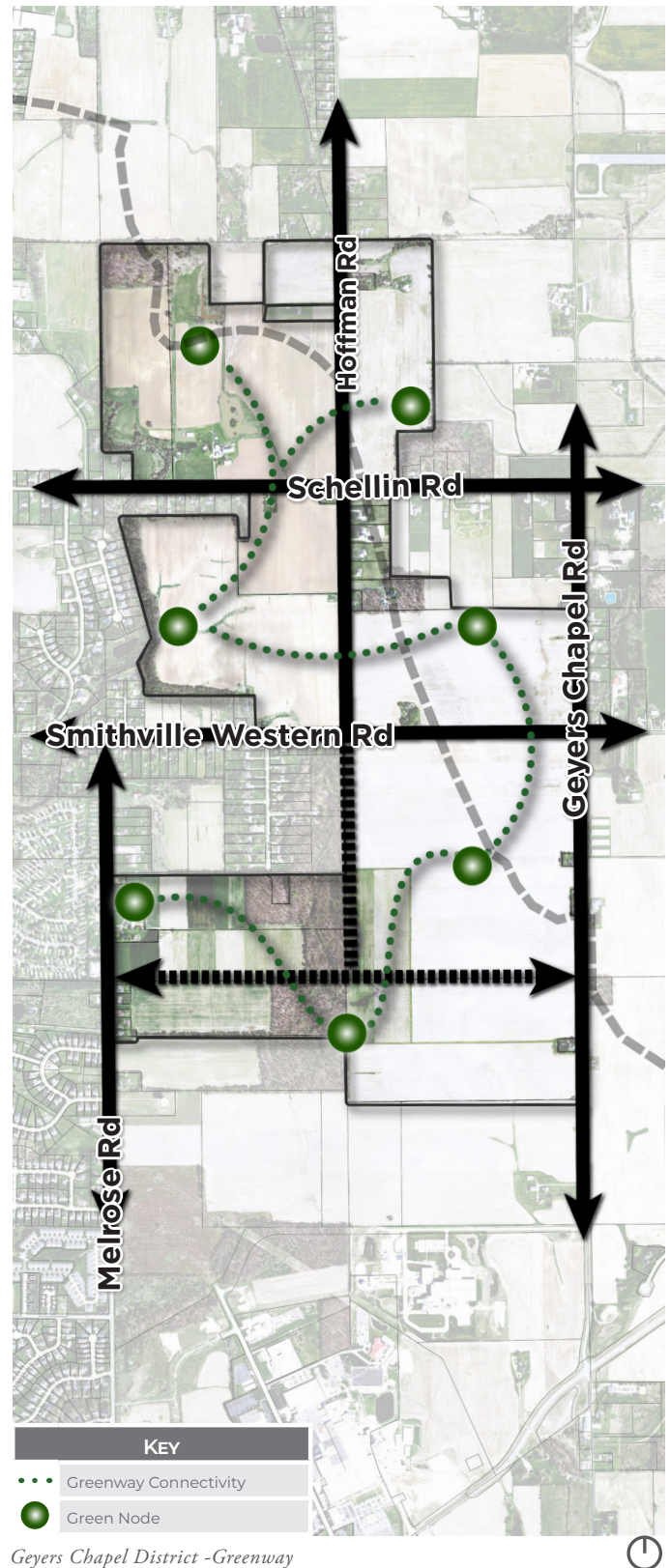
A green network is a system of interconnected green spaces within a city that promotes movement between places and connects people with nature. The benefits of having a green network include a healthier lifestyle for residents, increased tourism rates, and economic development. The positive effects of a well-established green network, such as Northeast Ohio's famous "Emerald Necklace," have been seen in many cities.

Having a green network in a city also helps protect agricultural areas that are important to the community's character. The network also provides opportunities to create new natural areas and recreational corridors. The non-motorized network consists of sidewalks, bike paths, multi-purpose trails, and on-road shared paths and lanes, among other features.

An established greenway system connects people and nature between places. It promotes the movement of both people and nature and elevates the overall quality of life in the area. The greenway network in the study area was built around protecting and connecting open spaces, woodlands, and linking the area as a whole. Future development should integrate the identified greenway network to provide natural open space and community connections as an essential natural amenity.

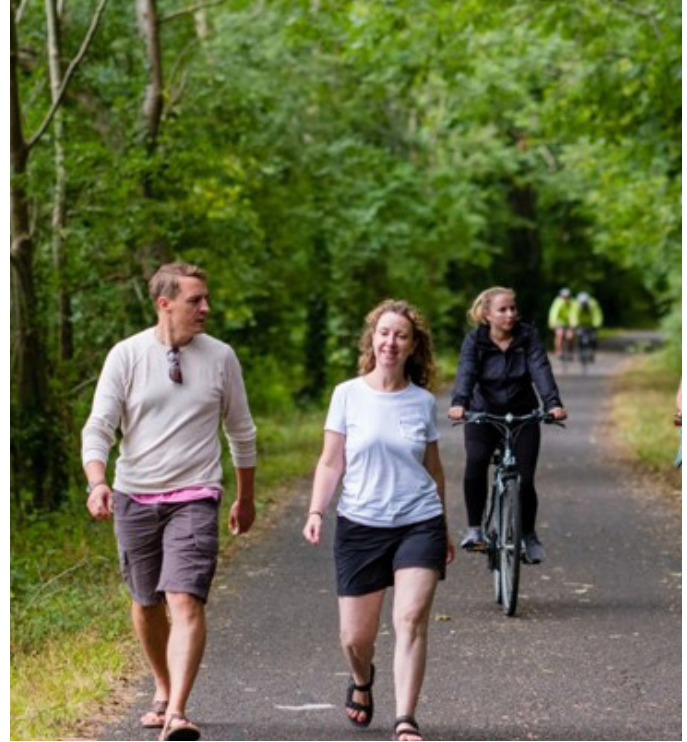
The green spaces are open and safe for everyone to use. People can walk, bike, socialize, or simply enjoy the fresh air. The green network allows for the expansion of different land uses while protecting the valued agricultural land in the city. Instead of turning farmland into entirely new development, the spaces are left open for everyone to enjoy and learn more about the land.

Implementing a green network would improve the economy, environment, and quality of life of the community. It is an excellent way to connect people with nature and create a healthier, more sustainable city.





Greenway Signage Example



Multipurpose Path Example



Neighborhood Park Example

Focus Area - Geyers Chapel Road

Goal Statement: *Strategically grow the Geyers Chapel Road area as an interconnected residential conservation district.*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL & HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Integrate existing greenspaces into future development and consider how these areas can connect and grow a larger greenspace network.

Encourage development of supplemental businesses such as strategic retail, dining and financial businesses.

Suggest examples of appropriate community spaces and locations.

this page is intentionally left blank

SMITHVILLE WESTERN ROAD

OVERVIEW

The Smithville Western Road District has recently been annexed into the City of Wooster and is an underdeveloped portion of the land. It is bordered by Smithville Western Road to the north, Cleveland Rd to the east, East Milltown Road to the south, and Friendsville Road to the west. Presently, this area is primarily farm and forested land with limited residential or commercial development.

The underdeveloped focus area is adjacent to a suburban corridor that has seen significant growth in the last decade. This growth includes big-box commercial and healthcare uses, and suburban single-family and multi-family residential uses. Therefore, there is a pressing need to

provide the right mixture of uses that can further expand the community options for housing, along with context-appropriate retail. It is also vital to develop the forested area sensibly, preserving a significant portion of it for community use.

The key to the success of the focus area and Wooster as a whole is residential growth with a variety of options. Therefore, it is essential to focus on creating a mix of residential options to cater to different needs. This will help ensure that there is something for everyone and, in turn, boost the success of the focus area and Wooster as a whole.



Smithville Western District - Existing



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The largest development opportunity within Wooster city limits today is this focus area. There is mounting pressure to develop this area for a mixture of uses, and the next step in the evolution of this focus area is to develop a clear vision for a path forward. Unlike some other districts in this chapter, this district is primarily undeveloped, presenting a unique opportunity from an ownership and consolidation perspective. Fewer property owners may result in a more clear path to development and implementation. However, despite most of the land being underdeveloped, being sensitive to a variety of adjacent uses on all four sides of this area is vital to the success of the district. A mixture of harmonizing uses is the goal for a successful vision and implementation strategy, as rural residential, forested land, medium-density residential, and commercial uses border this focus area.

The lack of an east-west connection in this area makes a case for connectivity improvements in the district. However, this opportunity for connection also presents a unique challenge, as developing a portion of the forested land for residential uses and infrastructure is likely. A connection from Cleveland Road to Burbank Road through this district could open an opportunity to not only make a connection but also provide residents access to potential new parks and green spaces. The challenge for this focus area is to provide a variety of housing types while supporting the retail and park amenities in the area.



New commercial uses - Meijer



Adjacent commercial development - hospitality



Smithville Western Rd. looking south



Friendsville Rd looking west

VISION

The Smithville Western Road District is a part of newly annexed land adjacent to one of Wooster’s fastest-growing commercial centers, the North Burbank Corridor. In recent years, this area has seen an increase in residential and big-box commercial growth, making it an ideal spot for development.

The northern part of the study area offers a range of housing options, including medium-density residential units close to North Burbank Road. This type of housing will cater to young professionals as well as an aging population looking for step-up or step-down housing. To keep the higher density closer to the commercial corridor, more suburban residential development is planned to occur towards the east along Smithville Western Road. This type of development will be similar to the neighborhoods nearby in the northeast part of the focus area. Another similar development is envisioned along Cleveland Road, which is characterized by suburban residential areas.

The interior of the focus area, at the intersection of Friendsville Road and Riffle Road, is recommended for a mix of uses. With Riffle Road extending over to

Cleveland Road, this area presents an opportunity to create a neighborhood center that includes 2-3 story mixed-use buildings with a commercial and healthcare component. This development will also promote the need for 1-2 story local commercial development to serve the new neighborhood. Moving away from this proposed retail center, there will be a range of medium-density neighborhoods that will vary from duplex building types to multi-family apartments. This diverse range of unit types will cater to the city's need for different housing options.

Utilizing the forested land in this area to benefit the community is a primary component of the vision. The plan is to limit development to protect the natural resource and connect pockets of new neighborhood green spaces to a new community-wide amenity. Future development should integrate the identified greenway network to provide natural open space and community connections as an essential natural amenity.

The vision for this focus area aims to make an already vital corridor in the community even more diverse in terms of development type, housing options, and green space amenities.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



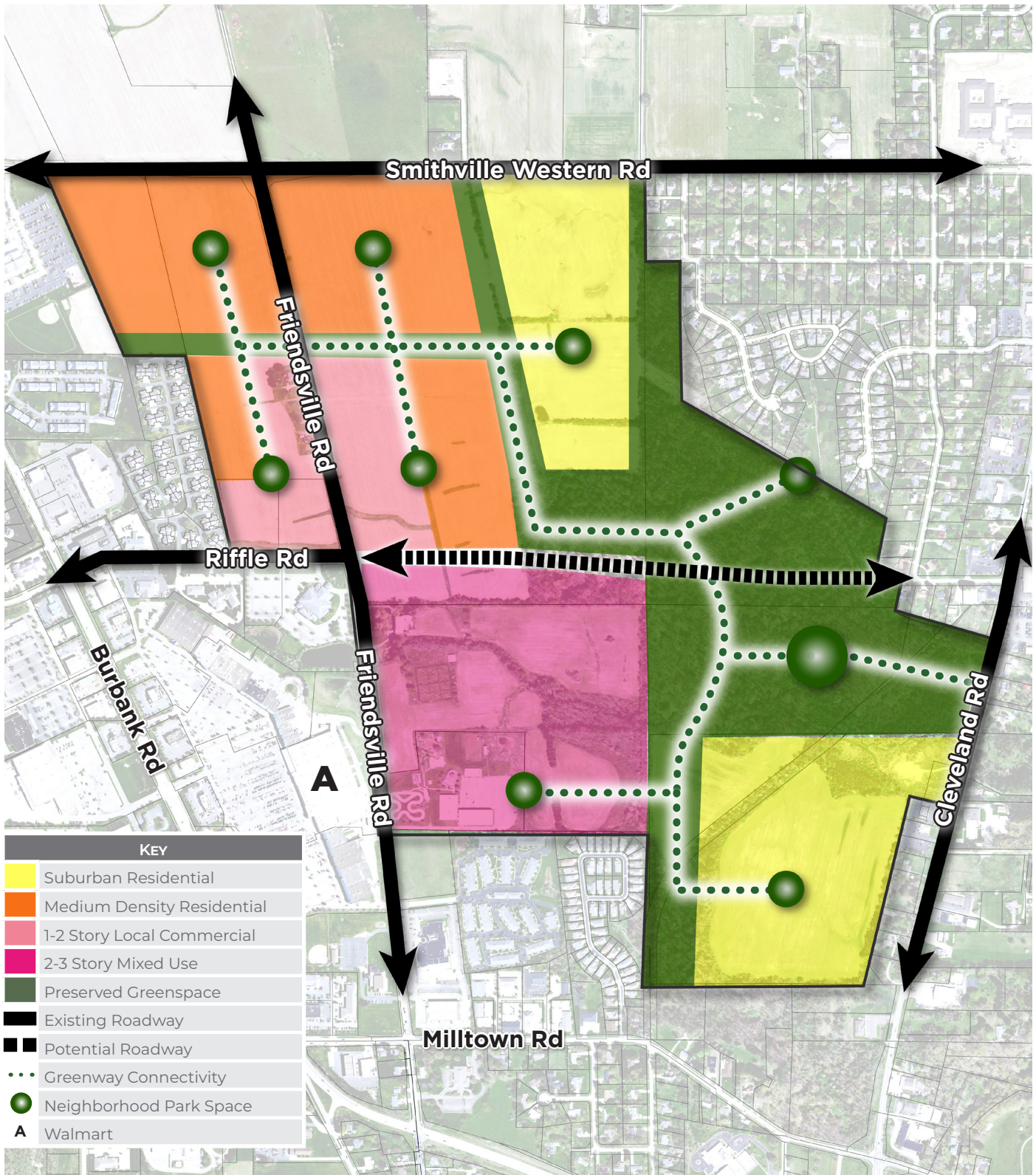
ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community’s fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



Smithville Western - Future Land Use & Connectivity



SMITHVILLE WESTERN - MEDIUM DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

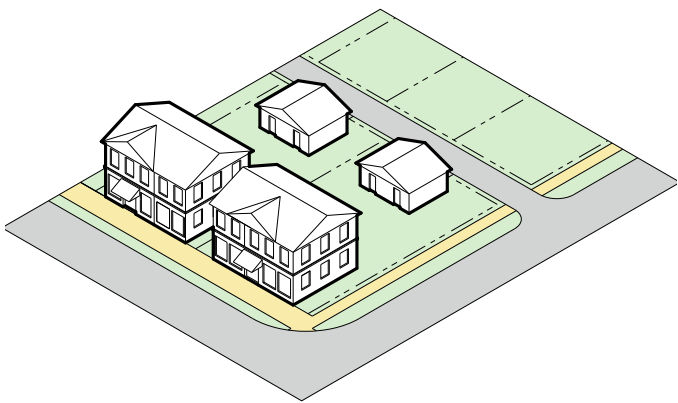
Medium Density Residential is characterized by communities with a range of dense single and multifamily housing options with on-site, shared amenities such as a community center, recreational paths, and natural areas. Development in this area should be up to 25 dwelling units per acre. Higher net densities may be achieved through open space dedication, as long as the overall density does not exceed thirty units per acre, unless density bonuses allow.

Open space should make up at least 25% of the site, and recreational paths should be included within open space and make connections to existing paths whenever possible. Connectivity should be that of a neighborhood character, with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include trees, lighting, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.

Unit types highlighted on the following pages should be considered for residential development in the focus area.

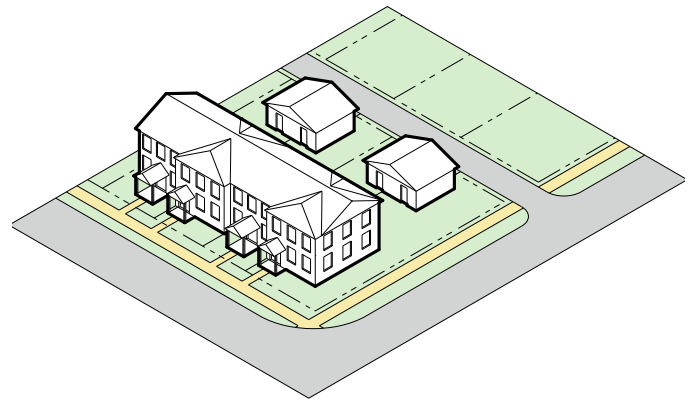


Development Character Examples



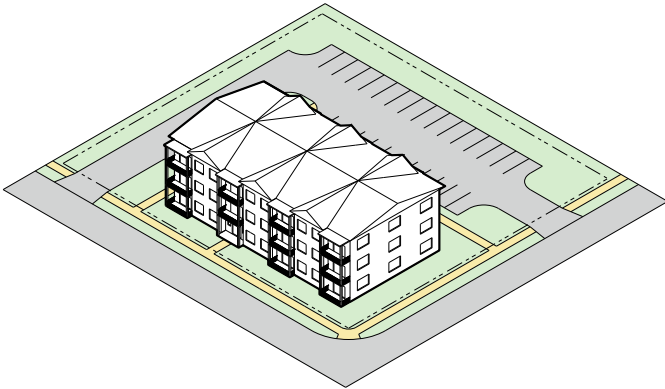
Live-Work

An attached building type which provides flexible space at the street level for a collaborative workspace, small scale retail or office, with a complete living unit above. The combination of these uses and building form lend well to serving as a transition between commercial or mixed-use areas and residential neighborhoods.



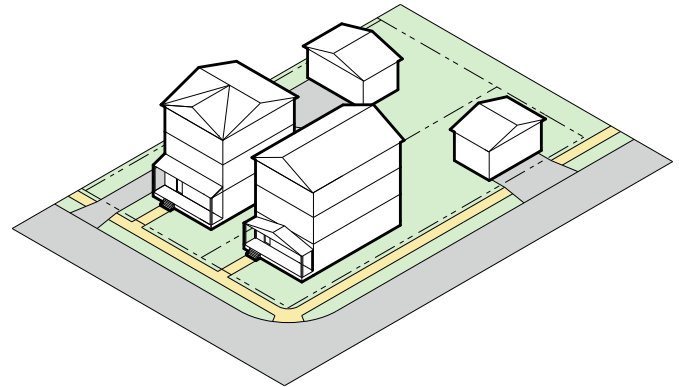
Townhomes

A structure with common walls on either side and no units below or above. Garage access is typically from a rear alley or shared parking area. A small side or rear yard is provided for each unit as private open space.



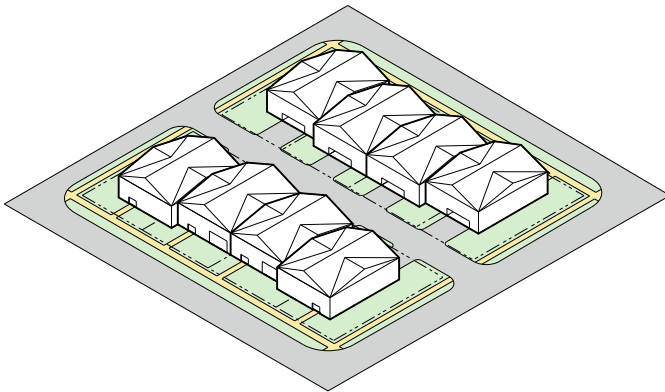
Apartments

A building with multiple residential units that front on an interior corridor and have their main access from the primary street. Units can be next to each other (side-by-side units), or stacked on top of each other (top and bottom units).



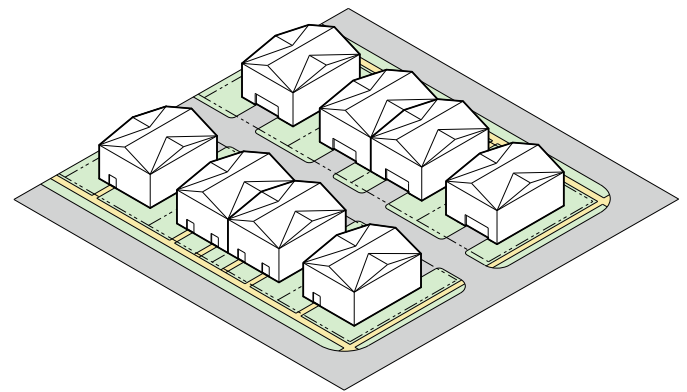
Triplex

A detached structure with three units that is massed as a single structure. Setbacks can range from small to large and units are typically side-by-side, but may be stacked.



Patio Homes

A grouping of structures with common walls on either side and no units below or above. Garage access is typically from a rear alley or shared parking area.



Cluster Homes

A grouping of multi-unit attached structures and multi-unit detached structures with common walls on either side and no units below or above. Garage access is typically from a rear alley or shared parking area.

SMITHVILLE WESTERN - COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The commercial component of this focus area is characterized by community service retail, healthcare, and service options for adjacent residential communities. Development Character should be mixed use development that blends complementary uses including retail, office, and residential in urban or semi-urban development styles. These uses can be integrated vertically in the same building, or horizontally in the same development,

Open Space should be highly connected and create small places for people to gather, including green lawns and natural areas. Connectivity should be narrow and incorporate “complete streets” that promote all modes of travel.

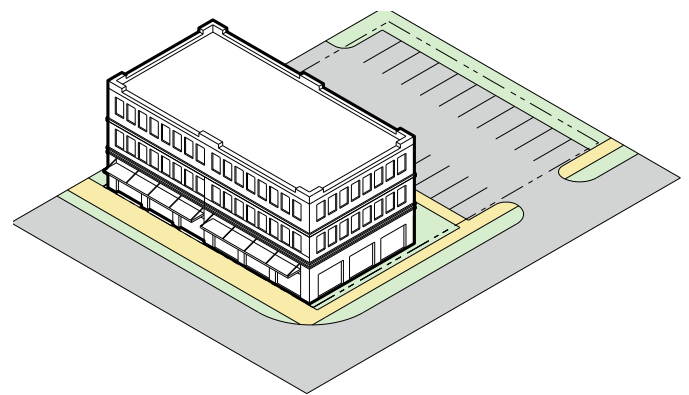
Unit types highlighted on the following pages should be considered for commercial development in the focus area.



Development Character Examples

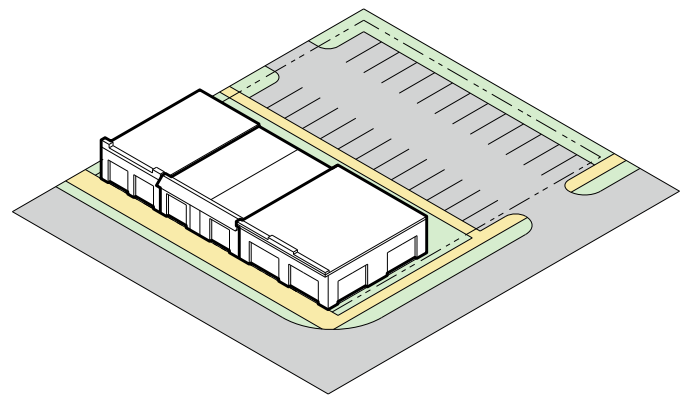
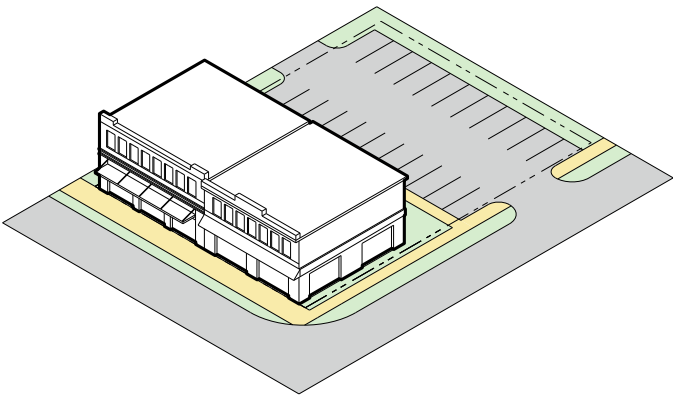


Development Character Examples



Medium Mixed-Use

Attached or detached structures from two to four stories which can include single or mixed uses and open store fronts. Parking is located in the rear/side of the building accessed from a rear alley when possible.



Medium Flex

Consists of attached or detached structures ranging from two to three stories. Structures can include single or mixed uses. Parking is located in the rear or side of the building and typically accessed from a rear alley when possible.

Small Flex

Consists of attached or detached structures ranging from one to two stories. Structures can include single or mixed uses. Parking is located in the rear or side of the building and typically accessed from a rear alley when possible.

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY & GREEN NODES

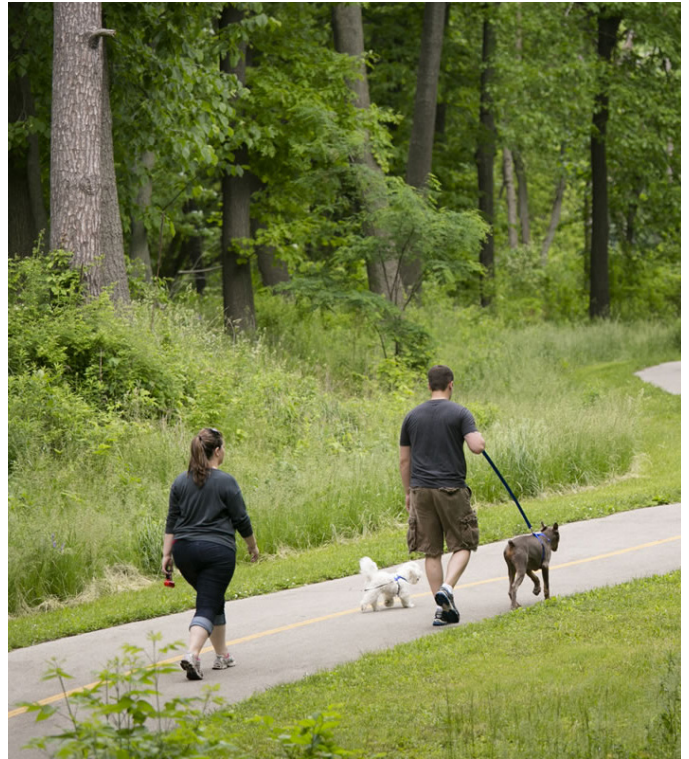
A green network is a system of interconnected green spaces within a city that promotes movement between places and connects people with nature. The benefits of having a green network include a healthier lifestyle for residents, increased tourism rates, and economic development. The positive effects of a well-established green network, such as Northeast Ohio's famous "Emerald Necklace," have been seen in many cities.

Having a green network in a city also helps protect agricultural areas that are important to the community's character. The network also provides opportunities to create new natural areas and recreational corridors. The non-motorized network consists of sidewalks, bike paths, multi-purpose trails, and on-road shared paths and lanes, among other features.

An established greenway system connects people and nature between places. It promotes the movement of both people and nature and elevates the overall quality of life in the area. The greenway network in the study area was built around protecting and connecting open spaces, woodlands, and linking the area as a whole. Future development should integrate the identified greenway network to provide natural open space and community connections as an essential natural amenity.

The green spaces are open and safe for everyone to use. People can walk, bike, socialize, or simply enjoy the fresh air. The green network allows for the expansion of different land uses while protecting the valued agricultural land in the city. Instead of turning farmland into entirely new development, the spaces are left open for everyone to enjoy and learn more about the land.

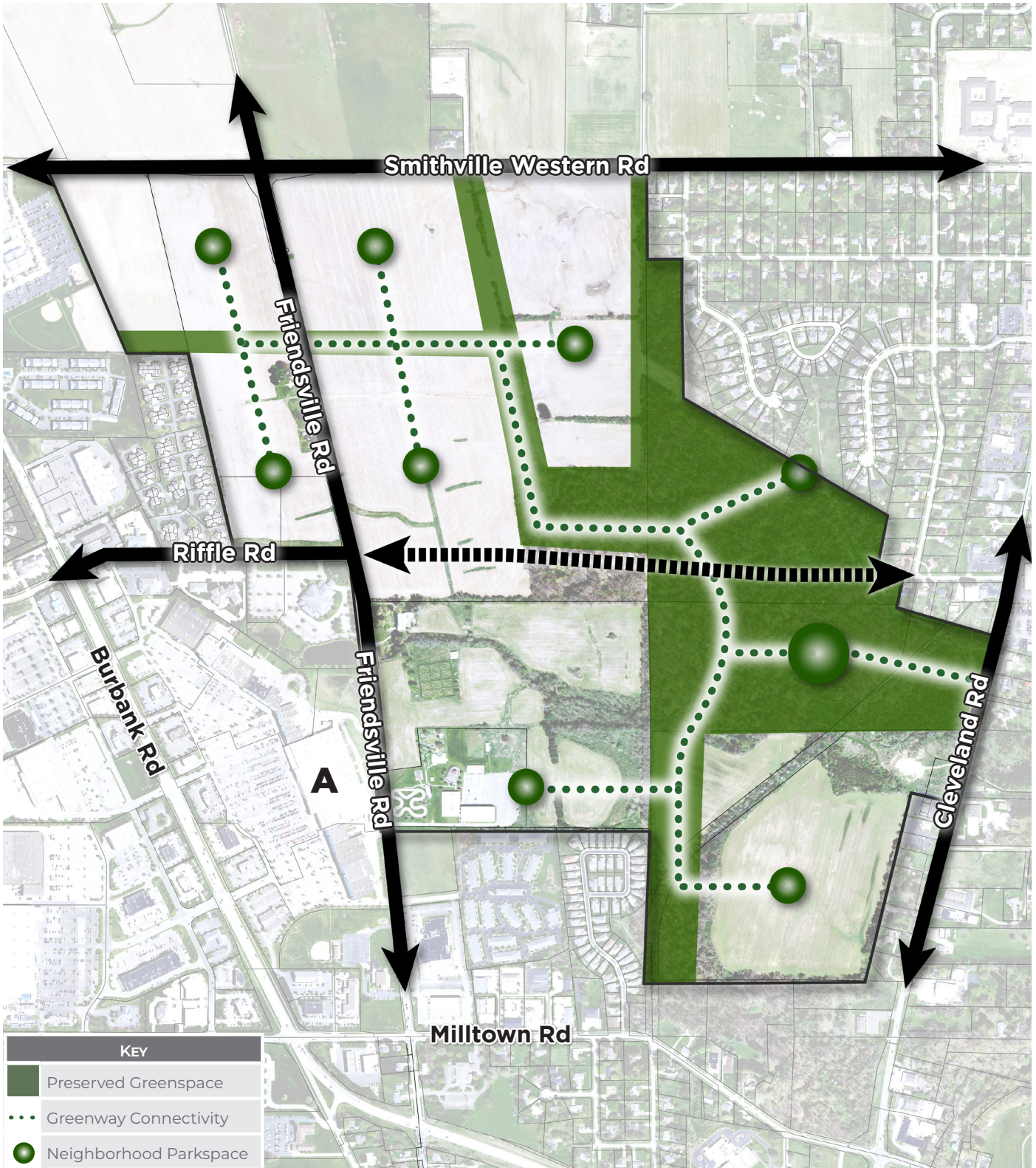
Implementing a green network would improve the economy, environment, and quality of life of the community. It is an excellent way to connect people with nature and create a healthier, more sustainable city.



Multipurpose Path Example



Neighborhood Park Example



Smithville Western - Greenway Connectivity Plan



Focus Area - Smithville Western Rd.

Goal Statement: *Strategically grow the Smithville Western Road Corridor as a hub of commerce and living.*



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).

Action Items

Grow the northern gateway of city and integrate community sign and brand elements and best practices.

Rezone and plan for new residential growth annexed into the city to provide new housing options and protect open spaces.

Integrate open spaces and woodlands into future development and consider how these areas can connect and grow a larger greenspace network.

this page is intentionally left blank



FINAL PLAN - February 2024



06

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

Bringing the Plan to fruition will require a concerted effort from City and County staff, local organizations, stakeholders, engaged citizens, and others over the course of the next ten years. To assist and guide the process, an implementation matrix was created (exact time frames and project partners may change over time). The matrix should be reviewed regularly, and as funding, roles, and passions change within the local landscape, they should be updated within the matrix to support the implementation of the objectives and actions.

The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to lay out the steps and time frame associated with the specific objectives for each plan chapter in order to advance the vision. This plan is intended to be used as a road map to help make informed decisions as they relate to plan chapters. The plan chapters and individual goals and objectives are broken down by action item, potential time frame and project partners.

TIME FRAMES

The projects were assigned a time frame based on a number of factors including level of priority, complexity of the project, funding, and local passion for specific projects that was noted during the planning process.

Short Term - 1 to 3 years

Mid Term - 4 to 7 years

Long Term - 7+ years

Ongoing Projects

POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS

This list, which updates and changes as projects are completed, contains potential partners that may be involved in various objectives and actions from this plan.

The partners include, but are not limited to:

- **Wooster Leadership**
- **City Planning & Zoning**
- **City Engineer**
- **Parks and Recreation**
- **Fire Department**
- **Code Enforcement**
- **Main Street Wooster**
- **Wooster Chamber of Commerce**
- **The College of Wooster**
- **Ohio Agricultural Research & Development Center**
- **Wooster Community Hospital**
- **Wayne County**
- **Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC)**
- **Wayne Center for the Arts**
- **Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau**
- **Wayne County Land Bank**
- **Private Landowners**

Land Use

Goal Statement: *A prosperous and balanced community that ensures small-town character, green areas, and downtown are preserved and enhanced, while carefully planning for the growth and development of a mix of housing options, existing and emerging economic centers, and neighborhoods.*

Land Use Objective 1 – Allow for a range of housing choices through land use planning tools and policies

Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action LU 1.1 Create incentives that encourage moderately priced housing options in and around Downtown.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.2 Support the development of smaller housing options for those looking to downsize or for entry level housing options (i.e. less than approx. 1,000 sf).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.3 Promote new residential housing on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 1.4 Continue to use a variety of tools to attract and support new residential development with a focus on workforce and attainable housing (Habitat, CRA programs, landbanks, etc.).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank

Land Use Objective 2 – Support infill development in and around Focus Areas

Action LU 2.1 Promote the creation / development of an Arts District (Downtown).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne Center for the Arts, Main Street Wooster
Action LU 2.2 Continue to grow the East Liberty District (Downtown).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.3 Strategically grow the Cleveland Road Corridor/Geyers Chapel Road.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.4 Strategically grow the North Burbank Road Corridor/ Smithville Western Road.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 2.5 Strategically infill in and around the Hospital District.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wooster Community Hospital

Land Use Objective 3 – Continue to grow smart and consider the rural landscape and preservation and creation of open spaces		
Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action LU 3.1 Extend the city boundary when annexation supports the Future Land Use plan and helps to accomplish other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan or city policies.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 3.2 Promote new residential development in undeveloped areas that helps to address the shortage of residential units in the community and is clustered to protect open spaces and the rural character.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank
Action LU 3.3 Ensure new annexations can be served by city utilities, infrastructure, and essential city services.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County; Private Landowners
Action LU 3.4 Coordinate with local land trust (i.e. Kilbuck) and Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District, Wayne County Agricultural Success team, among others, to conserve agricultural and open spaces in-line with the Future Land Use map.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County and listed orgs
Action LU 3.5 Extend FPA in order to encourage denser development with sewer prescriptions which disincentivize large lots with a focus on conforming parcel boundaries.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Land Use Objective 4 – Maintain relatively low taxes and high-quality services through balanced growth		
Action LU 4.1 Consider the use of impact fees to offset the cost of new development and its associated community impact (i.e. parks or open space impact fee for projects that don't meet open space criteria).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 4.2 Consider using Tax Increment Financing and other economic incentives as a tool to plan and pay for infrastructure and public improvements.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action LU 4.3 Promote public private partnerships as a tool to support future tax generating growth opportunities.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

Focus Area - Downtown Arts District

Goal Statement: *Promote the creation / development of an Arts District (Downtown).*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES WITH A FOCUS ON THE ARTS

Provide opportunities for public art, social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Support and grow the diversity of the community through a variety of living and cultural amenities opportunities.



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Create an Arts District overlay or zoning district to achieve the development principles/vision.

Facilitate an Arts District group or community partners for feedback and programming including Main Street Wooster, Wayne Center for the Arts, Wayne County Library, Lyric Theater, etc.

Create a signature public space for arts, entertainment and gathering.

Enhance connections to the downtown core through the development of new pedestrian/pedestrian-only alleyways/ promenades.

Facilitate removal of blight through code enforcement.

Use Wayne County Land Bank for the acquisition of fallow or underutilized property.

Identify and assemble larger parcels for infill development.

Work with the County and other entities to reuse or redevelop surplus county and other institutional properties to support the attraction of arts and creative industries.

Add elements to the existing streetscape on Walnut Street to enhance the image and brand of the district, as well as safety.

Focus Area - East Liberty District

Goal Statement: *Continue to grow the East Liberty District (Downtown).*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL & HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Establish a signature public space to facilitate community gathering and programming through a new public park project or public/private partnership.
Enhance pedestrian connections on existing roadways and alleys.
Continue to examine and plan for the extension of Beall Avenue at Liberty and through the district.
Create district branding elements such as gateway features, banners, etc.
Strategically acquire parcels to help facilitate the overall development district framework.
Facilitate redevelopment of the former TCI site.
Evaluate re-alignment of Beall Ave & Liberty intersection.
Explore opportunities to acquire and/or facilitate development of adjacent parcels.
Explore funding through federal grants, TIF, or other means.
Continue to monitor and plan for parking and related education in and around downtown .

Focus Area - The Hospital District

Goal Statement: *Strategically infill in and around the Hospital District.*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



FOSTER CREATIVE REDEVELOPMENT

Allow for creative mixed-use, high quality development that creates economic and living options for a variety of residents.



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improves the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Work with the hospital to enhance and brand the streetscape and intersections near the hospital campus and improve pedestrian safety.

Consider creating a TIF for the area to help support future investment and public improvements.

Create an overlay district to encourage internal connections between the hospital and adjacent commercial.

Evaluate and modify lot coverage requirements to encourage pedestrian scale commercial development and shared parking.

Encourage property improvements through code enforcement and property improvement incentives.

Encourage development of supplemental businesses such as strategic retail, dining and financial businesses.

Focus Area - Smithville Western Road

Goal Statement: *Strategically grow the Smithville Western Road Corridor as a hub of commerce and living.*



PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Plan for and promote a variety of housing options that maintain and grow opportunities for residents at all stages of life.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Grow the northern gateway of city and integrate community sign and brand elements and best practices.

Rezone and plan for new residential growth annexed into the city to provide new housing options and protect open spaces.

Integrate open spaces and woodlands into future development and consider how these areas can connect and grow a larger greenspace network.

Focus Area - Geyers Chapel Road

Goal Statement: *Strategically grow the Geyers Chapel Road area as an interconnected residential conservation district.*



CREATE COMMUNITY SPACES

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and community building in a variety of community spaces (parks, dining and entertainment, historic assets, connectivity, etc.).



KEEP A SMALL TOWN FEEL & HISTORY

Maintain and promote a small town feel and celebrate the City's rich history through new development, preservation, and quality design.



BE A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connect the district through a network of pathways and places that promote social gathering, safe mobility, and healthy lifestyles.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offer creative ways to encourage economic growth and development that improve the community's fiscal health and quality of life, while respecting other land use principles.

Action Items

Integrate existing greenspaces into future development and consider how these areas can connect and grow a larger greenspace network.

Encourage development of supplemental businesses such as strategic retail, dining and financial businesses.

Suggest examples of appropriate community spaces and locations.

HOUSING & ECONOMY

Goal Statement: *A community with a range of housing options for all income levels and age ranges which builds community and a healthy economy.*

Housing & Economy Objective 1 – Continue to study housing in Wooster

Action Items		Time frame	Project Partners
Action HS 1.1	Maintain up to date statistics on the demand for housing in the community and the housing typologies offered.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 1.2	Work with local organizations to create educational materials to articulate the housing needs in the city.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 1.3	Maintain existing and forge new partnerships to address housing needs throughout the community, such as via the city’s participation in the Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC) 2023 Housing Assessment Project, which will work to utilize data and analysis to showcase Wayne County communities’ housing supply and demand and identify gaps as it develops a long-term strategy for County growth.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning, WEDC; Wayne County

Housing & Economy Objective 2 – Consider housing incentives that support the creation of attainable and workforce housing

Action HS 2.1	Build creative incentives to attract housing (abatements, TIFs, density bonuses).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 2.2	Create zoning changes that allow for and attract targeted dense infill (i.e. Arts District).	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action HS 2.3	Work with the land bank to help create more affordable and workforce housing.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank
Action HS 2.4	Plan for and extend/upgrade utilities to facilitate new development and infill.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning

Housing & Economy Objective 3 — Support workforce development initiatives to grow the local economy		
Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action HS 3.1 Engage and invest in the community’s network of economic development organizations and offices to support programming to match workforce development resources with employers.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC
Action HS 3.2 Evaluate opportunities to enhance quality of life factors that attract and retain talent, including benchmarking for housing opportunities and creation of additional Parks and Recreation programming for young adult/professional, adult, and mature adult.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Parks & Recreation
Action HS 3.3 Partner with other governments, institutions, and economic-development-oriented nonprofits to study opportunities to support and grow ecosystem for entrepreneurs.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC; Wayne County; Wooster Chamber of Commerce
Action HS 3.4 Brand and market the community consistently across city departments to retain and attract a changing workforce and also visitors (i.e. traditional onsite workers, remote, freelance, start-up.).	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; WEDC; Wooster Chamber of Commerce

PARKS & RECREATION

Goal Statement: Safe and accessible parks and recreation services for all people with broad programming options and optimized facilities and spaces, supported by public and private partnerships.

Parks and Recreation Objective 1 – Maintain and enhance the existing park network and programs

Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
<p>Action PR 1.1 Clearly communicate and collaborate between city departments, elected officials, relevant county departments and the community to maintain high-quality parks and recreation offerings and experiences.</p>	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Wayne County
<p>Action PR 1.2 Continue to partner and collaborate with the private sector and service clubs to enhance and maintain existing park space.</p>	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
<p>Action PR 1.3 Continue to partner and collaborate with the Wayne County Fair Board to continue to enhance the image and character of the area (i.e. additional gateway enhancements at Vanover and Liberty).</p>	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Wayne County Fair Board
<p>Action PR 1.4 Partner and collaborate with local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Wooster, Wayne Center for the Arts, and others to promote and expand local events with a focus on the Arts and East Liberty District Focus Areas.</p>	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation, Wooster Chamber of Commerce, Wayne Center for the Arts, Main Street Wooster
<p>Action PR 1.5 Continue to plan for and expand program offerings for all ages and abilities.</p>	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
<p>Action PR 1.6 Continue to create new park and open spaces in the northeast areas of the city and focus on connectivity to these areas.</p>	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
<p>Action PR 1.7 Promote the dedication of passive open space as part of future development with the goal of creating a greenway network around and through the city.</p>	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
<p>Action PR 1.8 Develop pickleball facilities to support the community's interest and the emerging recreational trend.</p>	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation Objective 2 — Preserve and expand park and open space areas		
Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action PR 2.1 Continue to protect the riparian areas along the Little Apple Creek and integrate public access when and where feasible.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.2 Continue to support the development of Wooster Memorial Park and necessary public parking.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.3 Continue action to work with Trout Unlimited to create or attract events that promote and celebrate Wooster’s natural resources.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.4 Continue to create new open spaces areas by implementing conservation development policies and keeping current with best practices.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.5 As new development occurs and open spaces are created, work to connect open spaces to create greenways within and around the city to support good environmental stewardship, and non-motorized infrastructure.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.6 Continue to consider the development of park space around the Melrose Drive water tower as a public or public/private project with non-motorized connectivity to the greater community.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 2.7 For the immediate term, complete the existing Wooster Loop system and its key connections and on-street, signed, and marked pathways, while continuing to pursue long-term dedicated trail opportunities.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Parks and Recreation Objective 3 — Explore the feasibility of creating a community center		
Action PR 3.1 Conduct a feasibility study for the potential development of a new community center, collaborating and partnering with other entities while exploring potential future locations.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 3.2 Evaluate funding options for the development of a community center that consider community input and support.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 3.3 Explore public private partnership for the creation of a community center.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation; Private Landowners

Parks and Recreation Objective 4 – Maintain and update aquatic facilities and programming		
Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action PR 4.1 Examine current and future aquatic space and programming at Freedlander Pool (e.g. inclusion or relocation of existing aquatic features and amenities).	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 4.2 Reconstruct Christmas Run pool to improve existing conditions, land use, efficiency, and safety.	Short Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Parks and Recreation Objective 5 – Continue to be a leader in environmental stewardship		
Action PR 5.1 Promote sound environmental practices through sustainable zoning and engineering standards.	Long Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 5.2 Continue to support and promote green building standards as part of both public and private developments.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action PR 5.3 Finalize plan for creation of city-wide Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district.	Mid Term	• Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation

MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal Statement: *A safe, efficient, and balanced transportation network that includes a variety of mobility choices, connects land uses, enhances the environment, and improves quality of life for those who live and work in the community.*

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 1 – Continue to plan for and complete non-motorized transportation infrastructure

Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action MOB 1.1 Implement the City of Wooster Bike Master Plan.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation
Action MOB 1.2 Connect Downtown, the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), the College of Wooster, and the Wayne County Fairgrounds with multi-use trails and bicycle lanes.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Parks & Recreation, CFAES, College of Wooster, Wayne County Fairgrounds
Action MOB 1.3 Continue to participate in ODOT’s Safe Routes to School program. Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Implementation Project included in the city’s Capital Improvement Plan.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; ODOT

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 2 – Continue to support and plan for community transit

Action MOB 2.1 Collaborate with Community Action Wayne / Medina, SARTA, and other relevant organizations to maintain and expand transit services in the community and the region.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina; SARTA
Action MOB 2.2 Create design standards in the downtown area to accommodate various public transportation and rideshare companies.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina
Action MOB 2.3 Examine and evaluate alternative transportation options such as rentable bicycles, scooters and other vehicles.	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; Community Action Wayne / Medina

Mobility and Infrastructure Objective 3 – Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network		
Action Items	Time frame	Project Partners
Action MOB 3.1 Continue to study and implement safe and efficient roadway and traffic control design standards.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.2 Continue to consider the implementation of roundabouts instead of traffic lights as part of future intersection improvements.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.3 Improve signage and wayfinding at intersections to clearly communicate and facilitate traffic flow (i.e. 4-way and 2-way stop signage).	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action MOB 3.4 Continue to explore opportunities to expand parking in and around the downtown, with a focus on the proposed Arts District and East Liberty District Focus Areas.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Goal Statement: *A city that embraces and connects people to small town values, open spaces, and respect for agricultural history as it strives to pursue smart, sustainable development for the future.*

Community Identity Objective 1 — Retain and promote a rural and agricultural history and character, and small-town character

Action Items		Time frame	Project Partners
Action CI 1.1	Continue to evaluate and adopt policies that align with the future land use plan and help promote a rural small-town character.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Action CI 1.2	Continue to improve gateways into the city.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 1.3	Work with the private sector on future development projects to build places that reflect a small-town rural character.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 1.4	Work with local land trust to help identify and dedicate open spaces as part of new development when applicable.	Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; Wayne County Land Bank

Community Identity Objective 2 — Promote activities that build social capital and character

Action CI 2.1	Continue to work with Main Street Wooster to grow the downtown and special events in and around the downtown.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning, Main Street Wooster; Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC); Wayne Center for the Arts; Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Action CI 2.2	Support local community efforts and organizations by providing services to create safe and successful events.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning
Action CI 2.3	Support and initiate activities that help brand the city, seasons, holidays and the local community (i.e. holiday banners, lights, etc.).	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning, Main Street Wooster; Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC); Wayne Center for the Arts; Wayne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Action CI 2.4	Include OSU, College of Wooster and WCSO educational and unifying activities and opportunities.	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooster Leadership; City Planning & Zoning; OSU; College of Wooster

