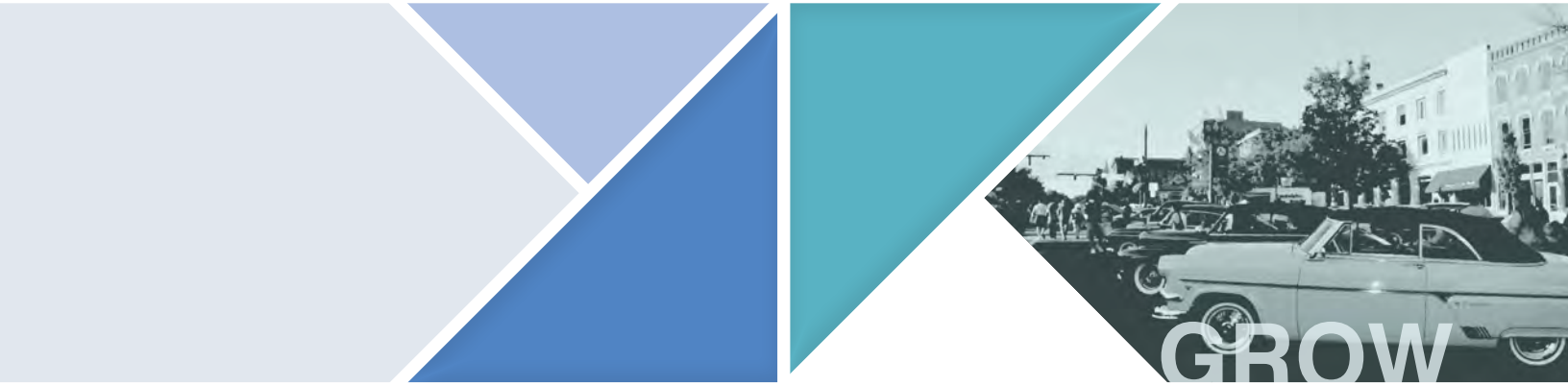




PRESERVE



GROW



IMAGINE

**WOOSTER  
ENVISIONED**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
2014

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the time of the previous Comprehensive Plan's adoption in 2002, the City of Wooster has undergone a number of changes, including new growth, changing demographic conditions, and experienced the impacts of one of the greatest recessions in the Country's history.

With this Plan, City leaders have an extensive resource that provides insight into the state of the City and

recommendations to guide efforts to make Wooster a more prosperous place to live, play, and work. The Plan includes five Plan principles that set the framework for future decision making within the community. These principles also set the framework and direction for the Plan's 21 objectives and 91 actions.

# summary of existing conditions

## Overview

In looking forward to the future of Wooster, it is important to first take stock of the current conditions in the community. Just as different components of the community are interrelated, so too are the different sections of the Plan. Taking a holistic view of the existing conditions in the City created a strong understanding of how different factors influence one another, allowing for a better integration of the Plan components and a better plan overall.

This analysis of existing conditions helps ensure that the recommendations made later in the Plan are applicable and will address the needs of the community. In conjunction with the public's input, the information summarized in this chapter influenced the planning process and served as a baseline by which the vision and Plan recommendations were developed.

The following are the existing condition key findings for each element of the Plan:

## Key Findings

### Land Use, Demographics, and Housing

- Currently, the City has a sufficient amount of developable land within the city limits to accommodate projected population growth.
- When considering the environmental constraints, a total of 1,042 acres within the City is actually developable as opposed to the 2,137 acre gross development capacity.
- The sanitary sewer service planning area includes approximately 3,000 acres of undeveloped land.
- Assuming the population growth rate remains steady at 5% per decade, the City will gain an additional 1,305 residents from 2010 to 2020, for a population of 27,424 by the year 2020.
- From 2000 to 2010, an additional 1,148 housing units were constructed, while an additional 455 units became vacant.
- The City of Wooster currently has enough residentially zoned land to satisfy housing demand into 2020.
- Assuming an employment growth of 1% per year, the City of Wooster currently has enough non-residentially zoned land to satisfy demand into 2020.

### Transportation

- Wooster has convenient access to surrounding communities and major thoroughfares within the State.
- Significant industrial and commercial growth has occurred within close proximity to the freeways and rail lines within Wooster.
- The City does not currently have a well-connected and complete non-motorized transportation network.
- Destinations that serve as centers of commerce, business, and entertainment are not adequately connected by a non-motorized transportation network.
- Multiple entry points into the City provide opportunities for enhanced gateway entrances to define the image and brand of Wooster.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

- Wooster's current park system, including those not owned by the City, contains 18 parks that occupy approximately 778 acres. The system also includes three indoor facilities consisting of a community center, an ice arena, and a recreational center.
- While the City is generally well served by community and regional parks, there is a deficit of approximately 24 acres of neighborhood parks and 11 acres of mini-parks when compared to national standards.
- Of the total park space in the City, approximately 34% are active and 66% are passive.
- Many of the residential areas in the west and northeast of the City are underserved by parkland. These areas are outside of ¼-mile and ½-mile walking distances of parkland.
- Approximately 1,300 acres of undevelopable land within Wooster could potentially be used as parks or natural protection areas.

### Utilities and Public Services

- A number of water system improvements are planned in order to provide a high level of service to meet current and future demands.
- The City has been actively working to create a dedicated (separated) storm sewer system and to reduce the overall impact on the system through the integration of 'green' stormwater management practices.
- The existing sanitary sewage treatment plant has enough capacity to meet the demands of planned population growth through 2020.
- Emergency services are centrally located near the Downtown, with planned expansion of new fire station locations to improve coverage and response times throughout the City.

# summary of public input

## Overview

The public was invited to participate in the development of the Plan through several avenues of public input including:

- Two Public Meetings
- Seven Steering Committee Meetings and Workshops
- Interactive internet engagement
- Telephonic Survey

While the existing conditions analysis provides insight into the physical and technical aspects of a community, input from the general public and stakeholders is necessary to create a plan that is intuitively informed by the values and aspirations of the community. The following section outlines some of the key findings garnered from the public input process.

## Key Findings

### Land Use, Demographics, Housing

- There is a desire for infill and redevelopment before outward expansion through new annexation.
- Enhancing the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is a priority.
- There is support for high-quality development that integrates green building and planning principles to conserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and promote environmental stewardship.
- There is a desire to focus on new high-quality multi-family and single-family residential development in and around the downtown.
- Preservation of older housing/historic housing in older 'first ring' traditional neighborhoods is important.
- There is a desire to attract and promote high-quality vibrant developments that will attract and serve a variety of age groups.

### PUBLIC INPUT- BY THE NUMBERS

#### Online Engagement (Mindmixer)

- 8 months of activity
- 6,421 Total page views
- 1,051 Unique visitors

#### Telephonic Survey

- 300 Interviews completed

#### Public Meetings

- 2 public meetings
- 80+ participants combined

#### Stakeholder Meetings

- 7 stakeholder meetings

#### Main Street Wooster

- 2 Board/Member Meetings



### Transportation

- There is a general desire to alleviate automobile traffic concerns Downtown.
- Citizens want to improve connections between various points throughout the City.
- Citizens support convenient and efficient free parking throughout the City.
- Bike trails that provide connections throughout the City and connect to regional systems are supported by Wooster residents.
- Residents support an assortment of public transportation options to serve a variety of age groups.

### Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

- Residents of Wooster are generally satisfied with the current parks, recreation, and open space network.
- Adding green space to downtown will be necessary to further promote the economic success and pedestrian friendliness of the area.

- Citizens were in support of connecting parks throughout the City through greenways.
- Enhancing park security and safety should be a priority to ensure a welcoming atmosphere for all age groups.

### Utilities and Public Services

- Residents are satisfied with the current delivery of water and place a high priority on the continued maintenance and expansion of the water system.
- Residents support the integration of new 'green' stormwater management methods.
- Proper sewer maintenance and management in older areas is supported by Wooster residents.
- Increased police presence is a priority among residents.
- Code enforcement should continue to be a priority with a focus in and around Downtown Wooster.

#### **AS A MEMBER OF THE WOOSTER COMMUNITY, MY VISION IS...**

*“More affordable multi-unit housing in the downtown area.”*

*“Develop spaces for more public activity.”*

*“Make Downtown a destination for people other than residents.”*

*“Enhance/improve what we have before growing outward.”*

*“Higher standards for rental properties.”*

# summary of current trends

## Overview

This section represents current trends relating to land use, demographics, housing, transportation, utilities, and public services in similarly sized communities throughout the country.

## Key Findings

### Land Use, Demographics, and Housing

- There is a growing trend of people wanting to move back into urban settings.
- Millennials and Baby Boomers are increasingly living in more compact and sustainable environments.
- Mixed-use development continues to be a growing trend.
- Public private partnerships are a growing trend that help achieve large and small economic development initiatives.
- Parking is one of the biggest land use challenges facing communities.

### Transportation

- Complete streets are designed to accommodate all users, including multiple modes of transportation, ages, and abilities.
- Roundabouts are an alternative type of roadway intersection that can decrease traffic congestion and increase safety.
- Recent transportation planning concepts, including complete streets, have introduced room for cyclists roadway design, including sharrows and dedicated bike lanes.
- The State of Ohio has been one of the leading states in developing regional non-motorized transportation recreation connections.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

- Communities are creating new park spaces that are dynamic and engaging, balancing recreation, interactive play, and passive spaces in a dynamic environment that serves a variety of age groups and abilities.
- There is a growing trend to create new urban like public spaces in suburban and exurban communities to serve as places of entertainment and gathering. These spaces are typically heavily programmed with a variety of community events and activities to engage the community and grow the local economy.
- Creating new open space and passive parks and preserves is a growing trend communities are implementing to establish new economical ways of growing local park systems.
- Many communities are creating partnerships with the private sector to create, enhance and maintain parks and public spaces.

### Utilities and Public Services

- Bioswales and rain gardens are becoming an increasingly accepted way to reduce the amount of stormwater entering the system.
- Methods of downspout disconnection are particularly beneficial in cities with combined sewer systems.
- Advancements in technology have led to smarter utility delivery and monitoring, creating more efficient utility systems.
- The wide adoption of mobile devices has made updating to a next-generation 911 system a priority for many communities.
- Sharing city services is a cost effective method of reducing repetitive services provided within a service region.

# priority development areas

Four Priority Development Areas were selected based on input from City staff, the Steering Committee, and the general public. These areas were identified as places that can act as catalysts for the enhancement of the district, neighborhood, or the community as a whole.

These areas were primarily selected based on public input and the results of an interactive mapping exercise described in the Public Input chapter (see Figure 2.1). The mapping exercises revealed areas in the community that should be protected, enhanced, or transformed. The Steering Committee balanced the output of the map based activity with a general assessment of what they thought had the best opportunities for development and redevelopment.

A combination of factors went into this decision, including the depth of the properties, the success of the current land use, and public response throughout the engagement process. The Downtown, Hospital Area, South Highway Gateway, and East Wooster were selected as the primary focus areas for future development.

## 1. Downtown

- Enhance connections between the downtown and other destinations, areas of commerce, and points of interest.
- Promote new opportunities for arts and entertainment through carefully planned public spaces.
- Enhance the gateway into Downtown along East Liberty Street.

## 2. Hospital District

- Create a master plan for the area in and around the Hospital with a focus on creating a strong mixed-use district with a foundation in medical care and services.
- Enhance the streetscape and pedestrian experience in and around the Hospital.
- Create a development incentive package for the redevelopment of Portage Road and Cleveland Avenue.

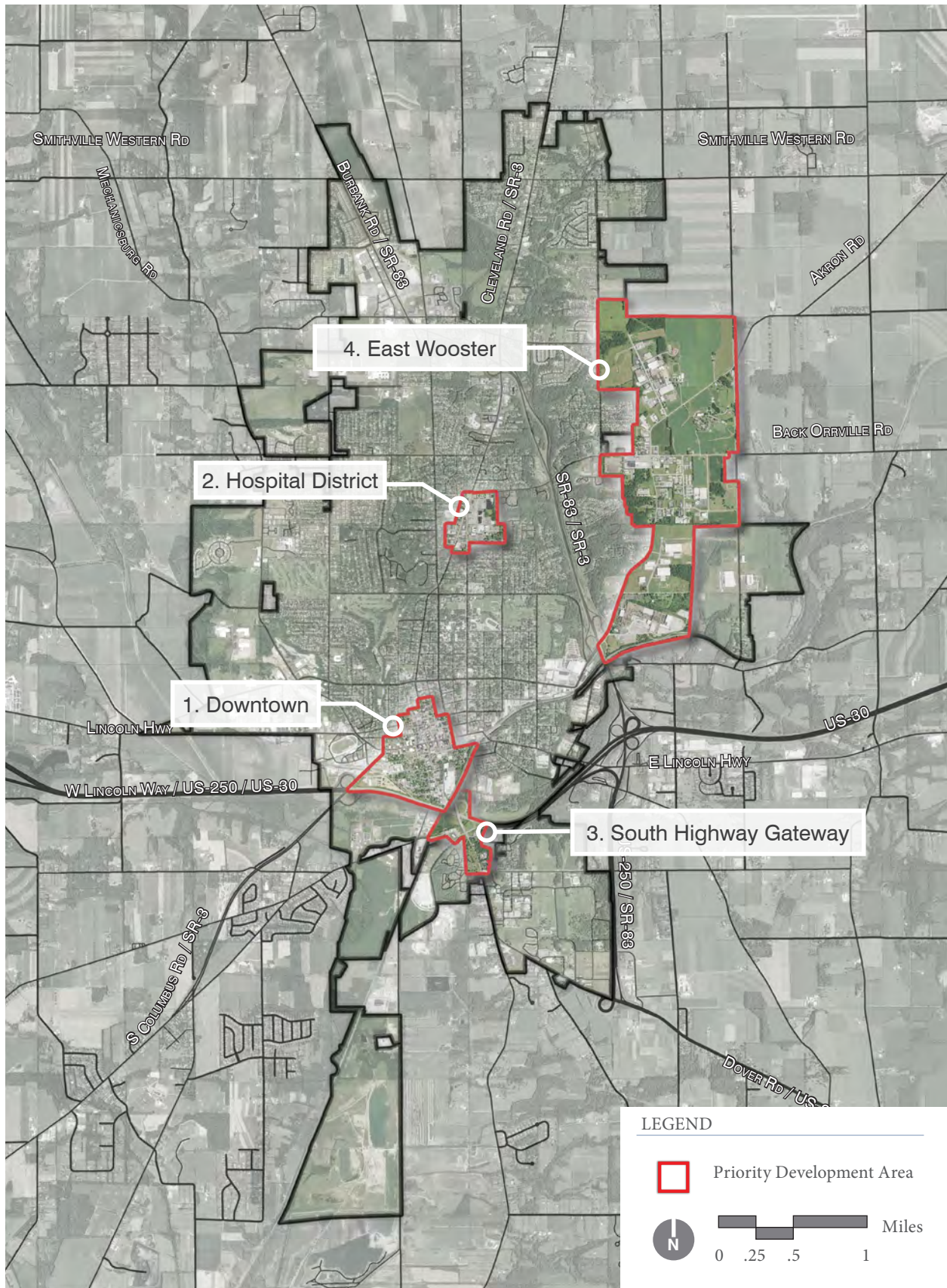
## 3. South Highway Gateway

- Define the entrance to the City and facilitate the efficient flow of traffic.
- Create a welcoming entrance that draws visitors and welcomes residents.
- Better utilize properties on major transportation routes to create infill opportunities.

## 4. East Wooster

- Create and promote opportunities for dining and personal services in the area to support continued economic growth.
- Enhance existing commercial/retail areas in the 585 Corridor (e.g. Hawkins Plaza).
- Promote multi-modal transportation options along the 585 Corridor to provide opportunities for pedestrian, bicycles, and automobiles.
- Plan and promote future development opportunities around the Rubbermaid factory.

Focus Area Map



# plan framework

Following the analysis of existing conditions, the public input, and current trends, a series of Plan principles were identified for each chapter of the Plan. These principles represent the large scale, broad outcomes that the community wishes to achieve. The objectives that follow the principles identify the tasks necessary to achieve the principle.

The following principles represent the overall framework for each chapter and serve as the underlying direction for the objectives and actions.



A prosperous and well-balanced community that ensures the small town character, green areas, and downtown atmosphere are preserved and enhanced, while carefully planning for the growth and development of existing and emerging economic centers and neighborhoods.

### **Objective LU.1**

Continue to enhance the downtown.

### **Objective LU.2**

Promote continued economic growth along the 585 Corridor through newly planned light industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and office space.

### **Objective LU.3**

Promote new residential development that includes traditional neighborhood characteristics.

### **Objective LU.4**

Improve rental housing.

### **Objective LU.5**

Expand housing opportunities.

### **Objective LU.6**

Enhance and plan for the area around the Hospital.

### **Objective LU.7**

Responsibly manage growth outside the City limits.



## 2 TRANSPORTATION

**PRINCIPLE: STAY CONNECTED**

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

### **Objective TR.1**

Make Wooster a more connected and walkable city.

### **Objective TR.2**

Facilitate the flow of traffic and parking in and around the City.

### **Objective TR.3**

Promote alternative modes of transportation.



## 3 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

**PRINCIPLE: GET ACTIVE**

Quality parks and public spaces with diverse opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and education for a variety of age groups and abilities.

### **Objective PR.1**

Preserve and expand open space areas.

### **Objective PR.2**

Be a leader in environmental stewardship.

### **Objective PR.3**

Maintain and enhance the existing park network.

### **Objective PR.4**

Partner with the private sector, local organizations, and civic groups to help support new and existing park spaces, programming, and public events in the City.

### **Objective PR.5**

Protect and enhance the Little Apple Creek greenway.



High quality public services and utilities that serve residents effectively and support future economic growth and expansion.

**Objective US.1**

Ensure the expansion and improvement of the City's infrastructure is a priority when making future planning and policy decisions.

**Objective US.2**

Promote 'green' stormwater management methods when improving or expanding the existing stormwater management system.

**Objective US.3**

Encourage above ground stormwater facilities with dual purposes including naturalized open spaces and public recreation.

**Objective US.4**

Develop projects, programs, policies, and procedures to enhance the overall quality of the local watershed.

**Objective US.5**

Emergency services should be carefully expanded to ensure resident health and safety.

**Objective US.6**

Code enforcement should be a focus in and around the downtown.



Plan for key development and redevelopment areas by supporting a balance of land uses in a vibrant and integrated development pattern to improve the economic and social characteristics of the community.







## 1. INTRODUCTION

Located in the rolling hills of northeast Ohio, the City of Wooster is known as a regional center for industry, education, agriculture, and community. The City is home to a nationally recognized liberal arts college, The College of Wooster, along with a research branch of one of the largest universities in the country, The Ohio State University. The City also boasts one of the best preserved,

best functioning, and economically vibrant historic downtowns within the State of Ohio. In the words of one resident, Wooster offers “big town amenities with a small town feel.”



# 1.1

## introduction

The success of Wooster did not happen by accident. It is the culmination of a long history of careful planning, wise policy decisions, and continual community involvement. The comprehensive planning process is meant as an incremental step in identifying and prioritizing what is most important to the community. It is a way for City leaders and residents to assess the current state of the City and chart a course for the future of the City. It is the document by which all future policy and budgetary decisions should be evaluated.

### WHY DO CITIES PLAN?

Cities plan in order to better understand their challenges and opportunities, define a vision and goals for the future, and establish and prioritize steps to achieve them. After a plan has been adopted, city leaders and staff work to implement the recommendations of the plan, while guiding development and making decisions that follow the plan. As codified ordinances and policies are changed and infrastructure and private development is constructed, a community will reap the benefits of the planning effort. Most decisions have a range of influences which will likely impact future revenues and expenses. The planning process can help city leaders

make informed decisions by defining and prioritizing community goals and aspirations. This is especially true for complicated decisions such as deciding where development should be encouraged and where infrastructure improvements should be made.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a broad policy document intended to guide decision making in order to manage long term development and growth. Comprised of policy statements, principles, objectives, actions, maps, and tables, a plan guides the physical, social, and economic development of the municipality and its environs. A comprehensive plan guides city officials, community organizations, and both private and public development entities. A comprehensive plan is implemented over time through many distinct decisions including annual budgeting, departmental work programs, rezoning, and subdivision of land.

A comprehensive plan is the chief policy instrument for:

- The administration of zoning and subdivision regulations;
- The location and classification of streets and thoroughfares;
- The location and construction of public and semi-public buildings and related community facilities and infrastructure (water, storm and sanitary sewers, gas, etc.);
- Promoting economic development;
- The acquisition and development of public and semi-public properties such as parks and open spaces; and
- The initiation of new programs, such as those in the areas of housing rehabilitation and economic development, to address pressing community needs (Source: Ohio Planning and Zoning Law).

This document is not a new plan; rather, it is an update to Wooster's past planning efforts. The updated Wooster Comprehensive Plan builds upon The 2002 Wooster Comprehensive Plan, as well as other documents, and introduces new guidance and concepts where relevant. Over the life of this Plan, it should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that it meets the changing needs of the City and continues to advance the goals of the community.

## WHY PRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a blueprint that defines a community vision and provides the framework to guide the coordination of multiple plans and infrastructure systems to achieve the vision. The result is a unified approach where the resulting changes in policies, city code, and zoning work together to help achieve common community goals. In addition, cost savings and increased efficiency are likely to be found when assessing the costs of building and maintaining infrastructure such as roadways, waterlines, and sanitary sewers in a coordinated manner.

In many communities that plan, the traditional approach is to study specific aspects or systems of the city, such as the thoroughfare network or water and sewerage systems, and develop plans for those systems. Such plans are reactive in nature, building upon assumptions made in previous (land use) plans and allow for incremental improvements to each system. Instead, this Plan is proactive and informed by community values and goals.

## WHY UPDATE THE PLAN?

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan has guided the community to address a variety of growth and redevelopment issues. However, new information and technologies are available to strengthen the Plan and the community faces new development that must be managed in a responsible and respectful way to protect and enhance Wooster's small town character while maintaining economic and social vitality. A concerted effort was undertaken to update the Plan to provide direction to elected and appointed decision makers that describes priorities for future development. This included extensive public involvement which validated the community's vision for the future.

# 1.2

## planning approach

### Overview

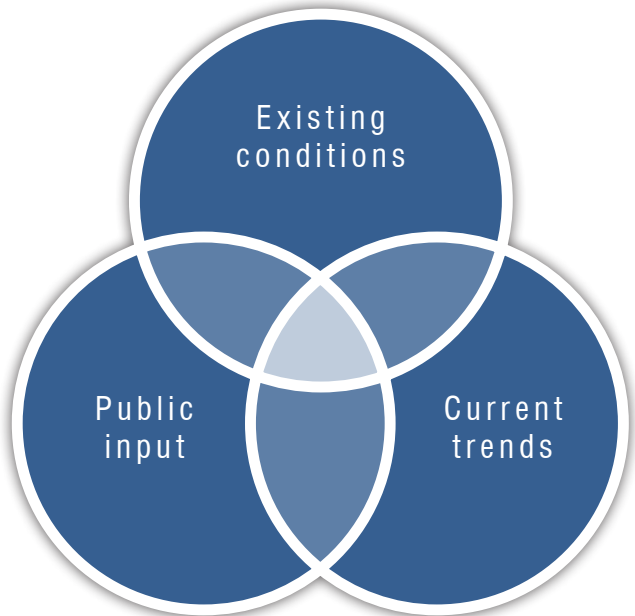
The planning process to prepare Wooster’s Comprehensive Plan Update was based on a balanced approach that included public input, existing conditions analysis, and consideration of both regional and national trends. Participation from a broad array of community stakeholders including key property owners, business owners, and City officials, ensures the Plan embodies the community’s identity and earns public support. The public process incorporated an extensive effort to engage the broader community through an online engagement tool, public meetings, and a telephonic survey.

### Plan Structure

The Wooster Comprehensive Plan Update is comprised of nine chapters followed by supporting appendices including existing conditions and public input information. Each element contains a plan principle and multiple objectives that relate to that principle. Each objective has specific actions that should be used to achieve the objective. Figure 1.2 shows the hierarchy of the Plan’s implementation organization.

*A total of five plan principles, 21 objectives, and 91 actions are described within the nine chapters of this Plan, the contents of each chapter are detailed to the right.*

Figure 1.1 - Planning process elements



## CHAPTERS 1-2

Includes the introduction of the planning process, the plan framework, and a description of the public input process and vision for the Plan. These chapters are the foundation upon which the rest of the Plan was formed.

## CHAPTERS 3-6

Focuses on individual components of the Plan such as land use and transportation. Each of these chapters begins with an introduction and a discussion of the existing conditions followed by an analysis of current trends and public input. The existing conditions result from technical analysis and extensive research of each component. An overview of the current trends pertinent to each component serves as a guide to anticipate future changes within the City. The public input section highlights results from the public input process, categorizing results into each of the Plan chapters, and is considered a foundation for the development of plan actions. A single overall planning principle concludes each chapter. The principle is supported by a series of objectives that outline the specific actions needed to achieve the desired outcome.

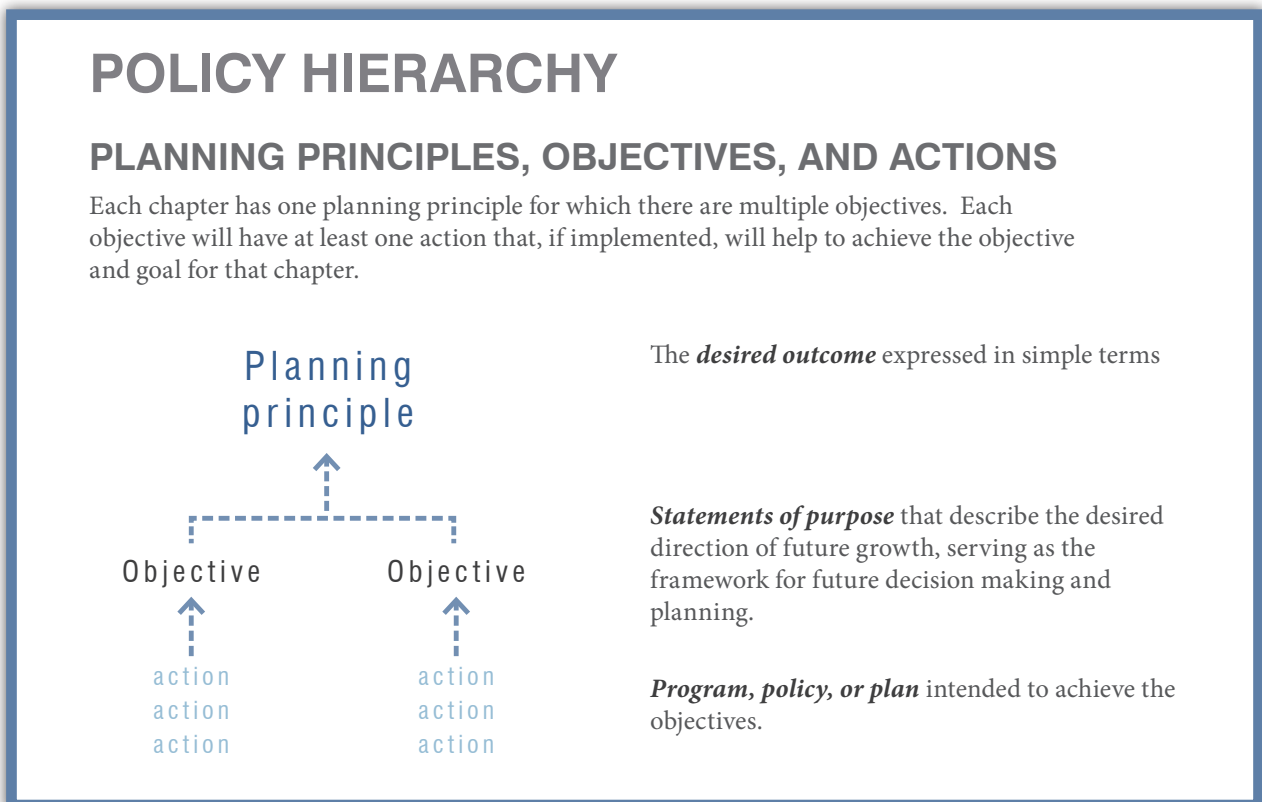
## CHAPTER 7

Includes the four Priority Development Areas identified through the public involvement process that should be considered priorities for future development or redevelopment.

## CHAPTER 8

Outlines the implementation strategy to aid in the fulfillment of the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendations. This chapter provides guidance on how the Plan should be used and when it should be updated and amended. This chapter also summarizes and prioritizes the recommendations made for each Plan component.

Figure 1.2 - Policy Hierarchy



# 1.3

## planning process

The Comprehensive Plan Update process spanned approximately twelve months and included both technical research and public involvement, resulting in an intuitive, informed, and progressive document.

By employing an innovative planning process, Wooster sought to develop a truly comprehensive plan that would fully integrate land use, transportation, parks and open spaces, economic development, utilities, and other public services planning.

The planning process (Figure 1.3 and 1.4), consisting of seven general steps, was developed at the beginning of the project. Given the breadth and complexity of the Plan, this process helped guide project activities, many of which were carried out concurrently in order to maintain the overall project schedule. The following is a brief summary of each step in the planning process.

### Project Launch

During this initial step in the planning process, the scope of services was defined for the Planning Team, while members of the Comprehensive Plan Task Force were identified and invited to participate.

### Technical / Existing Conditions Analysis

Throughout the Fall and Winter of 2013, the Planning Team collected and analyzed data about all aspects of the City. This information provided an understanding of the current conditions in the Wooster area and informed the recommendations in the Plan.

### Community Engagement

Concurrently with the existing conditions assessment, public input was sought using a combination of Steering Committee meetings, public meetings, surveys, and online engagement to gain insight into the concerns and needs of Wooster residents. This helped to form the development of recommendations in the Plan.

### Identify Plan Principles and Objectives

The overarching principles and objectives for the Plan were formulated by the Steering Committee, based on the public input received early in the process. The principles and objectives communicate the goals the City hopes to accomplish through the creation and implementation of the Plan.

### Develop Plan Components

This step in the planning process involved developing recommendations for each component of the Plan, including proposed land uses, upgrades to the transportation network, expansion of the pedestrian and



bicycle network, park and public space enhancements, development area plans, and utility improvements.

**Draft Plan Review and Feedback**

Perhaps the most integral part of the planning process, this step followed an iterative process allowing the Steering Committee and the general public an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft version of the Plan.

**Final Plan and Adoption**

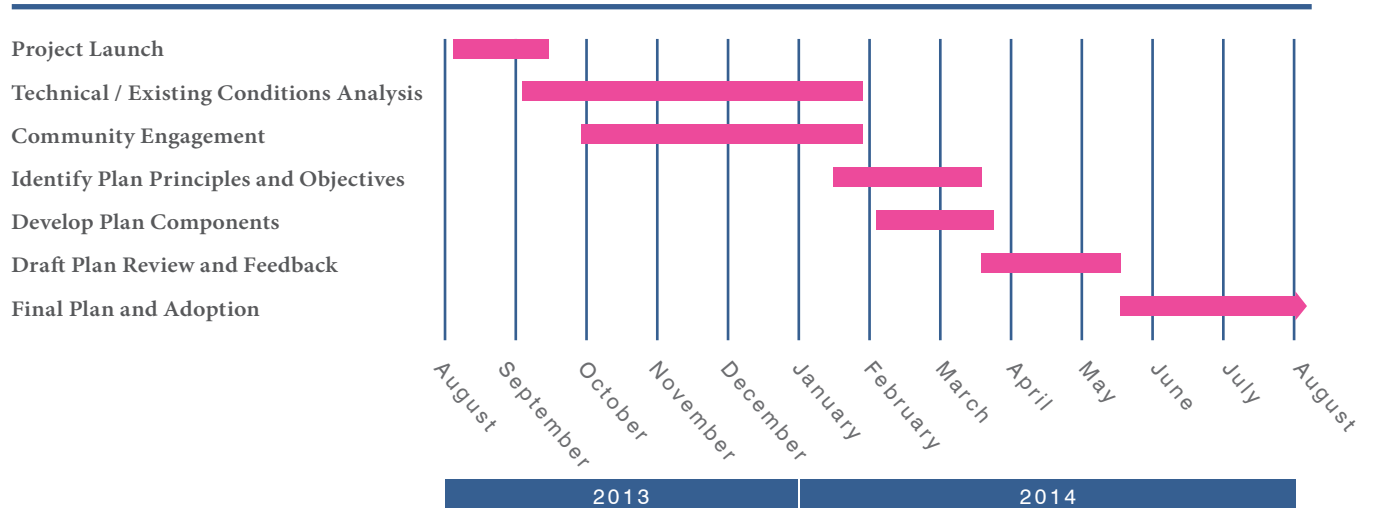
Once the plan components were completed, compilation of the Comprehensive Plan document began. The final Plan is a concise, understandable, and easily implemented document.

The final step in the comprehensive planning process included review and approval of the Plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. The Planning and Zoning Commission officially approved the Plan on October 22, 2014.

Figure 1.3 - Comprehensive Planning Process



Figure 1.4 Planning Process Timeline





## 2. PUBLIC PROCESS

Considering the ideas and aspirations of the public was at the heart of the planning process. An extensive public engagement effort yielded ideas that contributed to the development of the vision for the community. These ideas, values, and aspirations provided the foundation from which the Plan principles and objectives were derived.

Through this outreach campaign, more than 400 community members contributed their ideas and desires for the future of Wooster. Over 500 ideas were generated during this process through various input activities as described within this chapter.

# 2.1

## public meetings

### PUBLIC OUTREACH - OVERVIEW

More than 400 community members participated in the planning process, contributing hundreds of ideas, and sharing their community values and aspirations for the future.

A variety of public input strategies were employed as part of this process, including the following methods:

- **100+** online participants, with more than 6,000 page views
- **300** telephone survey respondents
- **7** Steering Committee Mtgs. - 21 members
- **2** Public Meetings
- **1** Main Street Wooster Meeting

### Overview

The City and Planning Team organized two public meetings to communicate the comprehensive planning process and to gather input and recommendations from the public. The meetings were designed to elicit open and transparent responses from the general public, City staff, and City officials. The public meetings involved an accessible approach, allowing citizens ample opportunity to share their hopes, visions, and ideas for the future of Wooster.

### Public Meeting #1

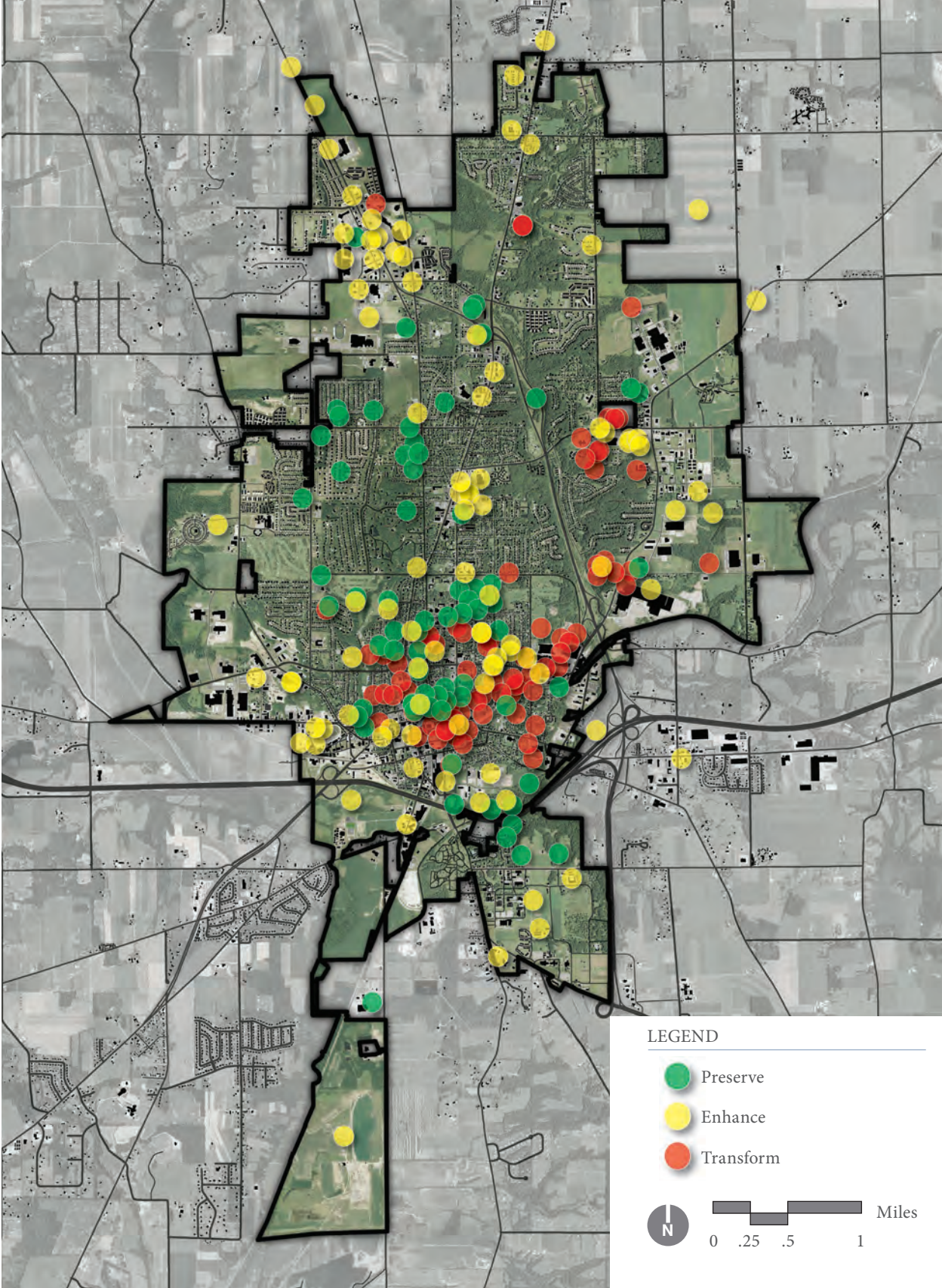
The first public meeting encouraged participants to “think big”, asking participants to consider the kind of community in which they want to live in the future. The meeting had two components; a presentation to give an overview of the planning process, key existing conditions findings, and an explanation of current trends affecting similar communities, followed by small group work during which participants worked with coordinators to generate ideas.

Participants within the small groups were asked to share their vision for the future of Wooster through an open idea generation activity as well as a mapping exercise. Participants were asked to place three different colored dots on a map of Wooster to signify areas they would like to see preserved (kept as is), enhanced (given a “facelift”) or transformed (changed entirely). Figure 2.1 shows the compiled results of all mapping exercises undertaken throughout the planning process.

### Public Meeting #2

The second public meeting offered the general citizenry an opportunity to review the draft policies of the updated Plan. The meeting utilized an open house format providing participants an opportunity to react directly to drafts of the Plan. Chapters and elements were displayed on large boards throughout the meeting and participants were asked to comment on each element of the Plan. Participants were also able to speak directly to the Consultant Team and City Staff about specific portions of the Plan.

Figure 2.1: Mapping Activity Results



# 2.2

## steering committee meetings



*Steering Committee members working on a small group exercise.*



*Steering Committee members working on a small group exercise.*

A Steering Committee of 21 members was established to guide and inform the development of the Plan. A total of six Steering Committee meetings were held, each focusing on a unique step of the planning process. Each meeting built upon the previous meeting, resulting in a linear and iterative process in which members created the elements of the Plan. Below is a brief description of each meeting.

### Meetings 1-3

The first three meetings were focused on orienting the Steering Committee to the project, including scope, schedule, and the overall purpose of the comprehensive plan update. These meetings included idea generation and mapping exercises as described in Public Meeting 1, as well as a detailed review of the existing conditions in the City for each element of the Plan.

The telephone survey was also developed and launched, and key findings were presented to the Steering Committee within the first three meetings. Meetings served as a project kick-off, where the Planning Team and City staff developed web and phone survey questions and reviewed existing conditions and findings from Wooster's previous comprehensive plan.

### Meetings 4-7

The final Steering Committee meetings were aimed at identifying principles, objectives, and actions in order to complete the Plan. Committee members completed worksheets individually and worked in small groups to determine principles, objectives, and actions. These results were used to determine the implementation strategies found later in the Plan.

The Committee also completed worksheets to provide feedback on Priority Development Areas. The worksheets aimed to identify appropriate boundaries, existing conditions, design intent, possible concepts, and other areas on which to focus. These meetings were an important driver to the Priority Development chapter found later in this document.

# 2.3

## mindmixer

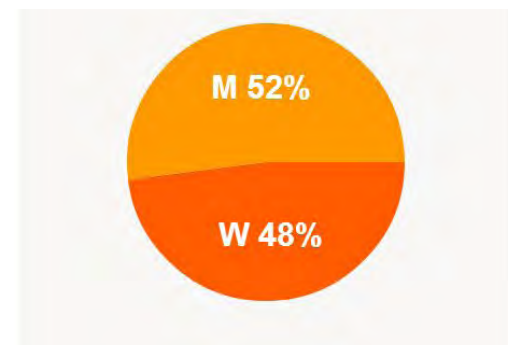
Figure 2.2: MindMixer Traffic Reports



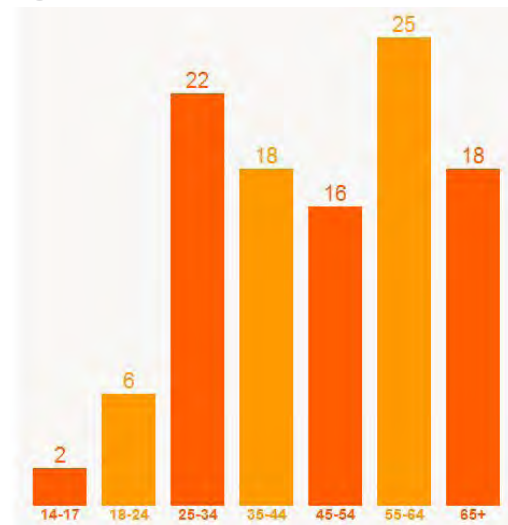
An interactive online engagement website was developed as part of this project. The purpose of the website was to provide a platform for engaging community members and to offer the public the convenience of joining a discussion from their own homes. The website created an opportunity for the continuation of discussions from previous meetings between City Staff, consultants, and citizens. Citizens were encouraged to visit and interact with the project website throughout the project.

During the course of the project citizens were engaged in a two-part format. In the first phase, the website was used to discuss and identify “big ideas” in Wooster, which provided guidance on what the public envisioned for the future of their community. The second phase involved citizens commenting on the major policy ideas and draft chapters of the Plan. The comments and ideas from the public during the second phase were considered by the Planning Team and Steering Committee and integrated into the Plan as appropriate.

Gender



Age



# 2.4

## telephone survey

A 40 question telephonic survey was conducted as part of the public input process. The survey was conducted to solicit more targeted feedback from citizens, which provided strategic insight into the attitudes and beliefs of community members, as well as their level of satisfaction with specific City services.

Residents were randomly selected and interviewed telephonically. A total of 300 interviews were completed over five days, generating statistically sound results within a 5.63% margin of error 95% of the time. The 40 question survey took the average respondent 12.5 minutes to complete.

Figure 2.3: Ward Map

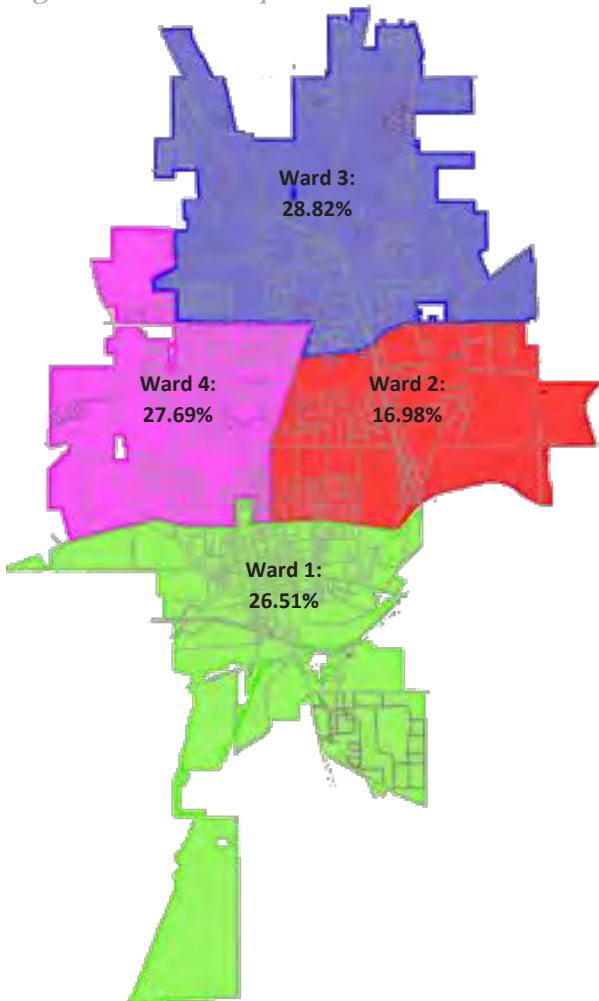
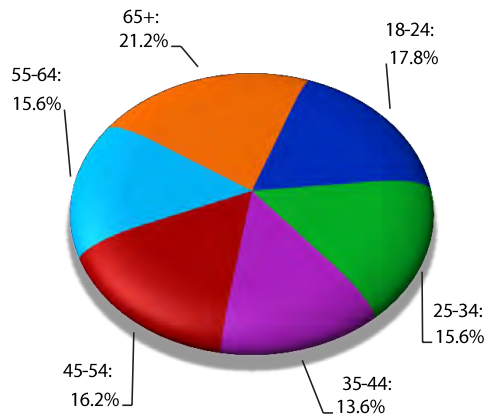
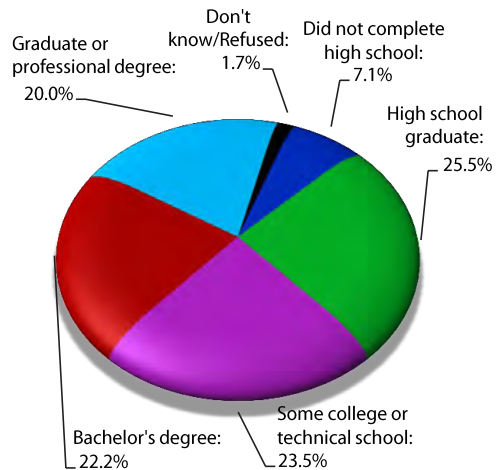


Figure 2.4: Profile of Respondents

**Age:**

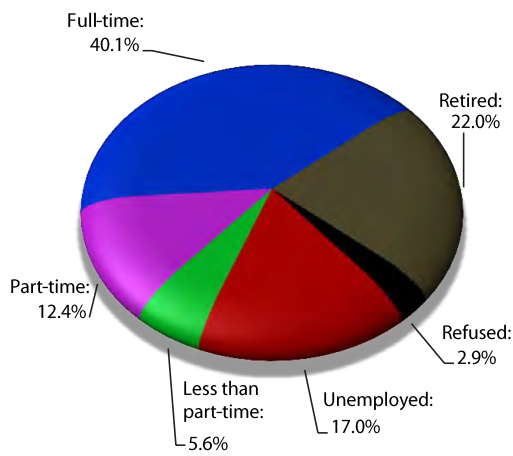


**Level of Education:**

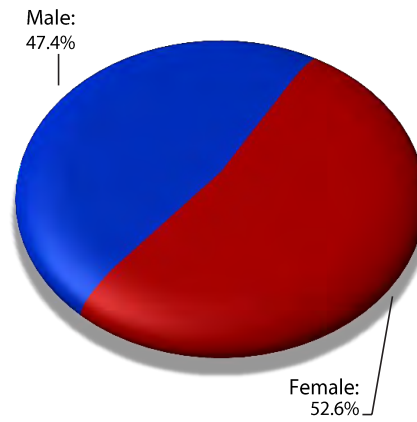




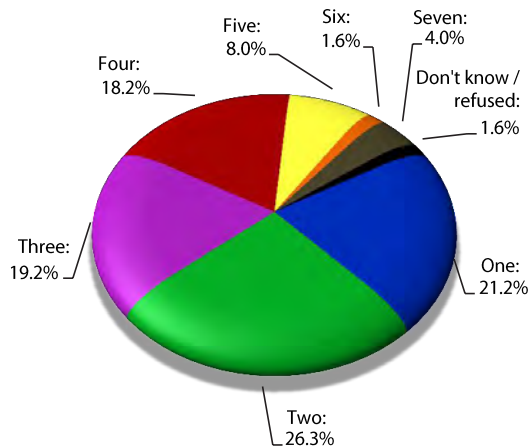
**Employment Status:**



**Gender:**



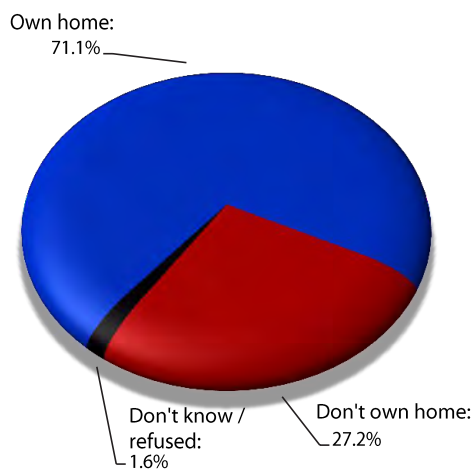
**Residents in household:**



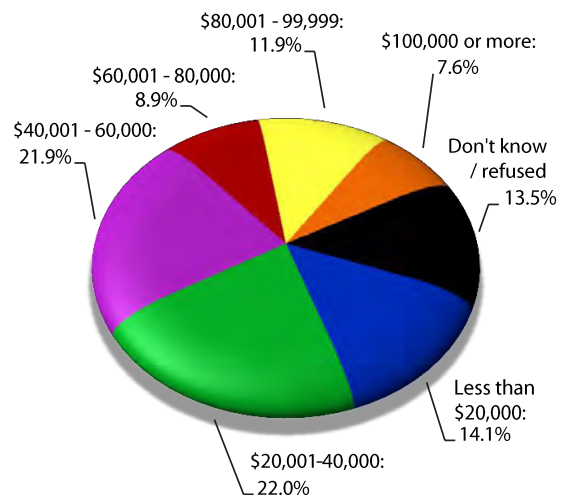
**Time living in Wooster:**



**Home ownership:**



**Household Income:**



# 2.5

## what did we learn?

### Overview

As part of the planning process, public input was compiled and reviewed then used to develop key themes. This section includes a general overview of these key themes as well as a breakdown of the key themes by each chapter of the Plan. These key themes directly inform the Plan principles and objectives throughout this Plan.

### Happy in Wooster

64% of citizens believe Wooster is headed in the right direction, while 21% believe it's on the wrong track. A 3:1 ratio of 'right direction' to 'wrong track' respondents indicates citizens are generally happy living in the City of Wooster and there is relative political stability. Citizens indicate they like Wooster's small town ambiance and friendly people most of all. Notwithstanding, there does appear to be some disparity between wards. Wards 1 and 3 have the most content citizens, while Wards 2 and 4 indicate a greater degree of discontent. Ward 4 citizens harbor the most negativity, with nearly twice the number of citizens believing things are on the wrong track than the City as a whole. There was also some disparity between age groups with citizens age 25-34 being most content and those 45-54 the most negative.

### Mid-Career Concerns

Citizens are split over whether Wooster has the right mix of jobs and employment opportunities to support their families for the next ten years. 49% of residents say the jobs they need are present, while over 40% indicate concern. Women have quite a bit more anxiety about the situation with a majority reporting they do not believe Wooster has the right mix of jobs to support them in the future. Most notably is that residents age 35-54 exhibit the most apprehension about their future job prospects in Wooster. The lack of perceived career opportunities by 63% of those age 45-54 is noteworthy and presents an important planning consideration because they tend to be the highest earners contributing to the Wooster tax base. Job creation is by far the highest priority for citizens when they consider their quality of life in Wooster and an absolute imperative for the 45-54 demographic.

### Redevelopment, Not Expansion

The citizens of Wooster have great clarity when it comes to their preference for future development. Nearly two-thirds indicate future development should be focused on redeveloping older areas near Downtown and another 18% want infill development within the city limits. Only 12% of residents believe expanding the city boundaries through annexation should be a priority. While there is a lack of consensus about what part of town should be

the highest priority for new development, it is clear that citizens perceive that plenty of in-fill and redevelopment opportunities exist and should be considered before expansion beyond the current city boundaries.

### It's All Here! (Almost)

Nearly three-quarters of Wooster residents find the goods and services they regularly require locally. 85% of men see no need to travel beyond Wooster to meet their needs. In contrast, 61% of women and 40% of younger residents stay local. Medical services, retail diversity, and restaurants are the primary draw for those who feel they need to leave Wooster for the goods and services they require.

### Downtown is the Cultural Center

Downtown Wooster truly serves as the cultural center of the City and a regular destination for the majority of citizens. Over half of residents report going Downtown 'all the time' and over 81% of them visit Downtown at least a couple times a month. Citizens primarily visit downtown to enjoy the restaurants, retail stores, entertainment, and the library. Not surprisingly, residents want more of the same. 73% of residents report that more retail, entertainment, and restaurants would encourage them to more frequently head Downtown. Finally, citizens note a desire for additional parking Downtown to make frequenting its destinations more convenient.

### Connectivity and Sustainability Matter

Nearly 74% of residents say connectivity is important with 52% indicating it is 'very important.' The vast majority of men and women in Wooster agree that it is essential that the community be connected with sidewalks, bike paths, and recreational trails. It is also clear that interest in these connections will only intensify over time. Over 80% of residents between the ages of 18 and 34 believe connectivity is important compared to 65% of senior citizens. It is equally important to the citizens of Wooster that the community become more sustainable by emphasizing green practices and policies. Over 69% of residents believe being a sustainable community is important. Women and the younger generations feel even stronger about it with 72% of women and 100% of 18-24 year olds signifying the importance of green practices.

### City Services and Safety Viewed Positively

The City of Wooster gained high marks across the board for its many services and utilities. Of particular note is the high opinion of Wooster's public safety forces that directly contribute to the fact that 86% of residents feel safe and secure in the community. The only guidance

relative to city services of note is the fact that some residents believe property maintenance is an issue and should be targeted on the south end of town.

### A Family Town

Wooster is, by all accounts, a family town. 65% of residents believe when it comes to homes and amenities available in the community, it is families who are most attracted to making their home in Wooster. While 49% of citizens believe that families is exactly what Wooster should continue to attract, over 40% believe the community needs to attract more young professionals.

### Future Priorities

In addition to guidance on redevelopment, connectivity and sustainability, residents provided some insight into the types of jobs they would prefer to see more of in the future. Nearly a third of residents want Wooster to attract light manufacturing jobs, while another third want more education and technology-oriented opportunities.

It is clear that the citizens of Wooster love their community and want to see it continue to evolve to provide even more opportunities for them to comfortably live, work, and play for generations to come. It is equally clear that economic development must be a priority and that it, more than any other consideration, has a significant impact on the ability of citizens to achieve their career goals without leaving town. The anxiety of those mid-career residents who are most invested in the community can be countered with a diversified and expanding job base that can support their next steps and their families. Equally important to consider is the next generation and whether they see Wooster as a place they can stay their whole life, rather than come back to later in life.

These challenges, and others, can be overcome with vision, leadership, planning, and innovative thinking. The citizens of Wooster have confidence in their city's leadership and are willing partners in building a community that continues to progress and thrive.



### 3. LAND USE, DEMOGRAPHICS, AND HOUSING

Land Use is an important element of the Comprehensive Plan as it guides the physical development and redevelopment of the City. Land use decisions will both be informed by and inform the multiple plan elements predominantly transportation, utilities and public services. It is important to understand and plan for each of these elements in order to guide future development in the community in a coordinated manner.

This chapter includes an assessment of the past and current land use decisions. It also outlines recommendations for how land use should be planned in the future to maintain and grow a high-quality community with a focus on minimizing outward growth to reduce the cost of building and maintaining the City's infrastructure, while promoting future economic growth and development in and around the City.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

# 3.1

## existing conditions

- Currently, the City has a sufficient amount of developable land within the city limits to accommodate projected population growth.
- When considering the environmental constraints, a total of 1,042 acres within the City is actually developable as opposed to the 2,137 acre gross development capacity.
- The sanitary sewer service planning area includes approximately 3,000 acres of undeveloped land.
- Assuming the population growth rate remains steady at 5% per decade, the City will gain an additional 1,305 residents from 2010 to 2020, for a population of 27,424 by the year 2020.
- From 2000 to 2010, an additional 1,148 housing units were constructed, while an additional 455 units became vacant.
- The City of Wooster currently has enough residentially zoned land to satisfy housing demand into 2020.
- Assuming an employment growth of 1% per year, the City of Wooster currently has enough non-residentially zoned land to satisfy demand into 2020.

# 3.2

## public input

- There is a desire for infill and redevelopment before outward expansion through new annexation.
- Enhancing the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is a priority.
- There is support for high-quality development that integrates green building and planning principles to conserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and promote environmental stewardship.
- There is a desire to focus on new high-quality multi-family and single-family residential development in and around the downtown.
- Preservation of older housing/historic housing in older 'first ring' traditional neighborhoods is important.
- There is a desire to attract and promote high-quality vibrant developments that will attract and serve a variety of age groups.

# 3.3

## current trends

- There is a growing trend of people wanting to move back into urban settings.
- Millennials and Baby Boomers are increasingly living in more compact and sustainable environments.
- Mixed-use development continues to be a growing trend.
- Public private partnerships are a growing trend that help achieve large and small economic development initiatives.
- Parking is one of the biggest land use challenges facing communities.

# 3.4

## plan principle + objectives

### **PRINCIPLE: GROW SMART**

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

#### **Objective LU.1**

Continue to enhance the Downtown

#### **Objective LU.2**

Promote continued economic growth along the 585 corridor through newly planned light industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and office space.

#### **Objective LU.3**

Promote new residential development that includes traditional neighborhood characteristics.

#### **Objective LU.4**

Improve rental housing

#### **Objective LU.5**

Expand housing opportunities

#### **Objective LU.6**

Enhance and plan for the area around the Hospital

#### **Objective LU.7**

Responsibly manage growth outside the city limits

# 3.1

## existing conditions

### Land Capacity

*Currently, the City has a sufficient amount of developable land within the city limits to accommodate projected population growth.*

The first step in calculating the City of Wooster’s land capacity was determining how land is currently being uses. A detailed database of land use information was compiled in GIS from the City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division. The results of the inventory are illustrated in Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1.

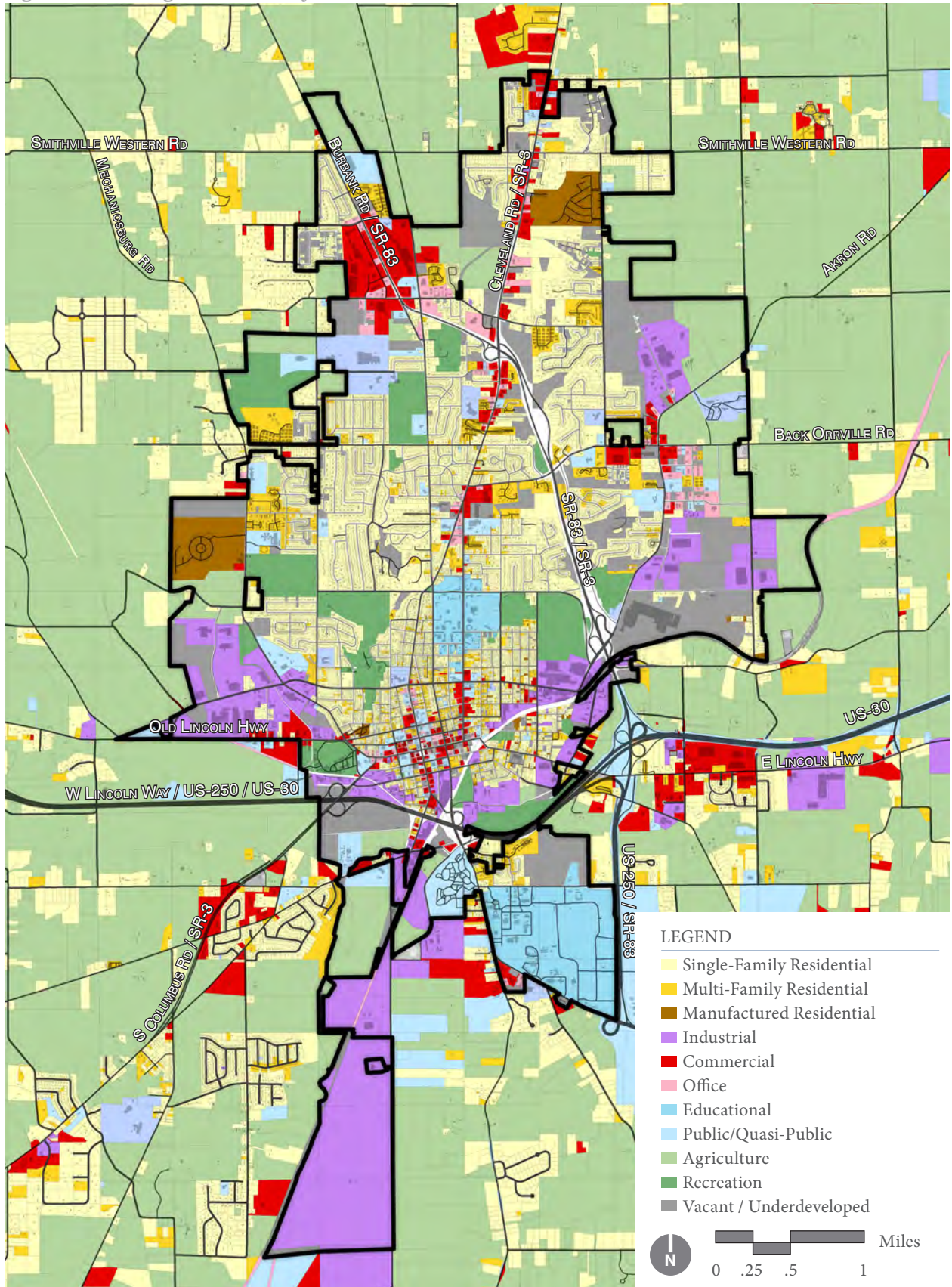
Currently, the City of Wooster has over 7,135 acres of developed land, which includes residential, manufacturing, commercial, office, educational, public/ quasi-public and recreational. This developed land accounts for just under 75 percent of the 9,539 acres total acres within the City.

**TABLE 3.1 CURRENT LAND USE, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2013**

Land Use	Acreage	Share of City Acreage
Single-Family Residential	2,537.15	26.60%
Multi-Family Residential	530.54	5.56%
Manufactured Residential	240.52	2.52%
Industrial	1,356.66	14.22%
Commercial	424.25	4.45%
Office	153.88	1.61%
Educational	718.51	7.53%
Public/Quasi-Public	441.43	4.63%
Recreation	732.25	7.68%
Agriculture	964.12	10.11%
Vacant	1,440.14	15.10%



Figure 3.1 Existing Land Use, City of Wooster, 2013



Single-family residential development represents the largest single land use in the community at 2,537 acres, or 26.60 percent. Multi-family residential consumes approximately 5.56 percent of the City’s land area.

Industrial land uses, which include both light and heavy manufacturing activities, total approximately 1,356 acres or 14.22 percent of the City’s land area. Office and commercial comprise 578 acres, or 6.06 percent of the City. Public parks and green open spaces including golf courses encompass 727 acres or approximately 8 percent of the City’s land area.

The City has approximately 2,369 acres of undeveloped land, which comprises the remaining 25 percent of the City’s total area. Undeveloped land, for the purpose of this capacity analysis, includes unimproved parcels and agricultural land.

The existing land inventory provided a basis for an overall understanding of land use patterns in the City of Wooster. This information was then used as a basis for estimating the existing capacity levels for potential future development within the City.

In assessing the capacity for growth in Wooster, the City’s gross development capacity was calculated using the City’s existing zoning classifications. These gross development capacity calculations were initially based on the allowable zoning densities and without regard to man-made or natural constraints of any kind.

The methodology used for the gross development capacity calculations were based on property identified through the existing land use inventory and visual survey of unimproved, underdeveloped or in agricultural use. These identified properties thus have a potential for development and are considered developable. Figure 3.2 shows the properties uses for the development capacity calculation.

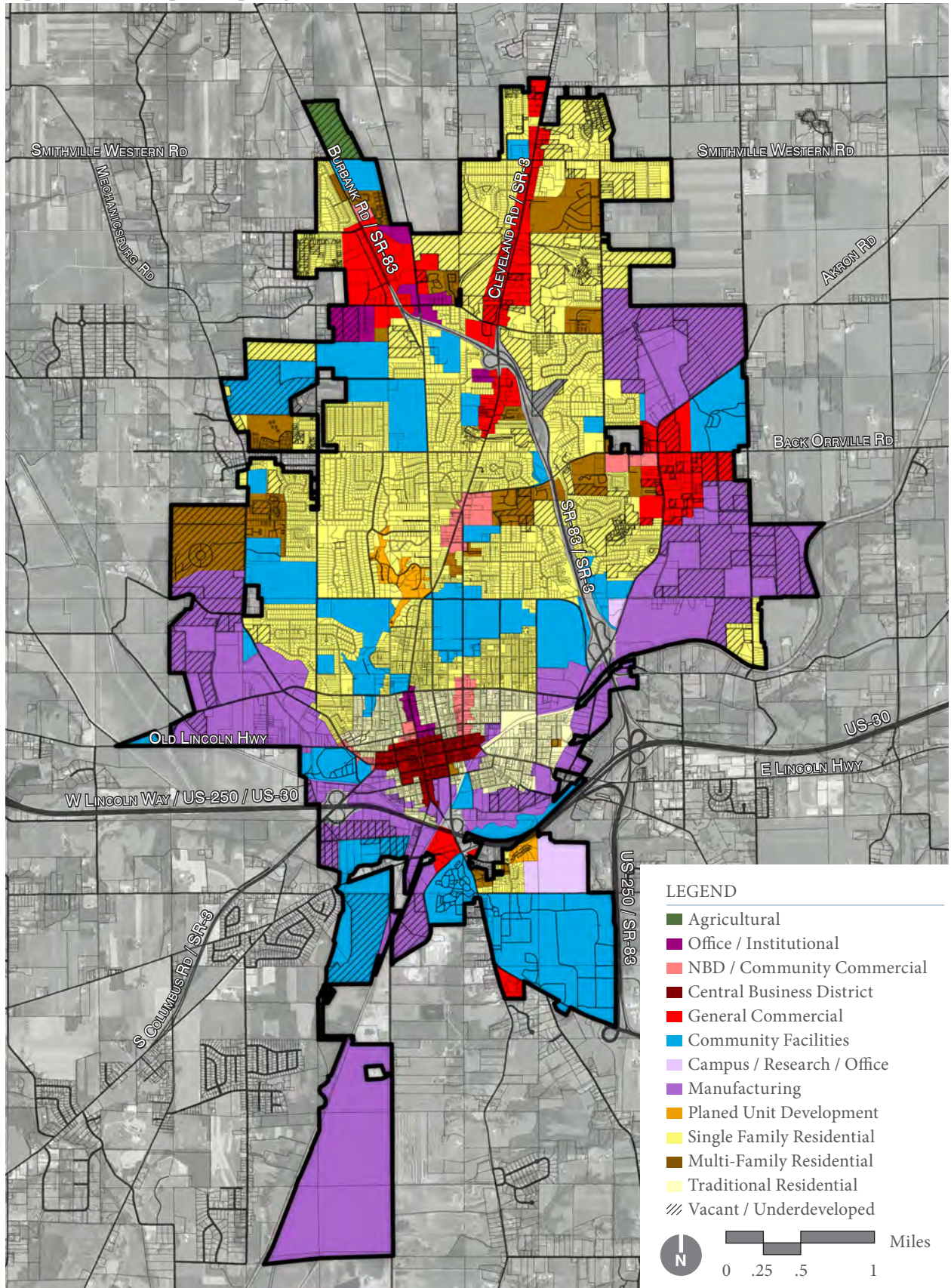
Table 3.2 summarizes existing zoning within the City of Wooster as a whole and the breakdown by percentage of the zoning district. These acreages do not account for right-of-way, and yield a higher total acreage than the land use calculation.

**TABLE 3.2 EXISTING ZONING, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2013**

Zoning Classification	Code	Acreage	% of City Acreage
Single-Family Residential	R-1	2,553.34	24.22
Medium Low Density Residential	R-2	1,004.15	9.52
Medium Density Residential	R-3	82.90	0.79
Medium High Density Residential	R-4	339.66	3.22
Manufactured Home	R-5	211.75	2.01
Traditional Residential	RT	399.08	3.78
Limited Manufacturing	M-1	353.70	3.35
General Manufacturing	M-2	1,572.38	14.91
Urban Manufacturing	M-3	41.38	0.39
Open Space/Heavy Manufacturing	M-4	698.04	6.62
Campus-Professional-Research-Office	CPRO	104.29	0.99
Planned Development Overlay District	PDOD	83.80	0.79
Community Facility	CF	1,987.51	18.85
Office and Institutional	C-1	122.63	1.16
General Business	C-2	74.86	0.71
Community Shopping Center	C-3	61.984	0.59
Central Business	C-4	113.25	1.07
Planned Business	C-5	677.38	6.42
Agriculture	AG	57.22	0.54
Unknown	UNK	4.93	0.05
<b>TOTAL CITY ACREAGE</b>	-	<b>10,544.32</b>	<b>100%</b>

City of Wooster, 2013

Figure 3.2 Existing Zoning, City of Wooster, 2013



*When considering the environmental constraints, a total of 1,042 acres within the City is actually developable as opposed to the 2,137 acre gross development capacity.*

While zoning categories represent the total density allowable, there are many areas within the City that have steep sloping topography, are prone to flooding or are heavily wooded. Figure 3.3 illustrates the location of these areas. To provide a more realistic measure of the land available for future development in the City of Wooster, it was necessary to arrive at a net development capacity. These calculations took into consideration the impact of environmental development constraints and typical industry building practices (also known as normal market build-out or NMB), which reduced the potential development capacity.

The most significant physical constraint taken into consideration is the presence of floodplains (see Figure 3.3). The 100-year floodplain (Type A and Type AE) is that area which on average will be flooded at least every 100 years. This is the generally accepted standard interval for measuring flood risk, as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

Additional development constraints taken into consideration were the potential right-of-ways needed and the normal market build-out standard for all future development. As a standard, right-of-ways may account for approximately 10 percent of a development’s total acreage. The normal market build-out for residential, commercial, and industrial development reflects past build-out trends in the City of Wooster, in terms of typical number of dwelling units or square feet per acre. The reduction factors aide in calculating realistic development projections for residential, commercial, and industrial development sites.

The application of development constraints such as flood plains, the ten percent (10 percent) right-of-way reduction and the usage of a normal market build-out standard, provides a more realistic assessment of the development potential of the vacant and agricultural land within the City of Wooster. In contrast to “gross development capacity” the amount of land available for development, under a “net development capacity” scenario factors in environmental and man-made constraints resulting in a more realistic measure of development potential (see Table 3.3).

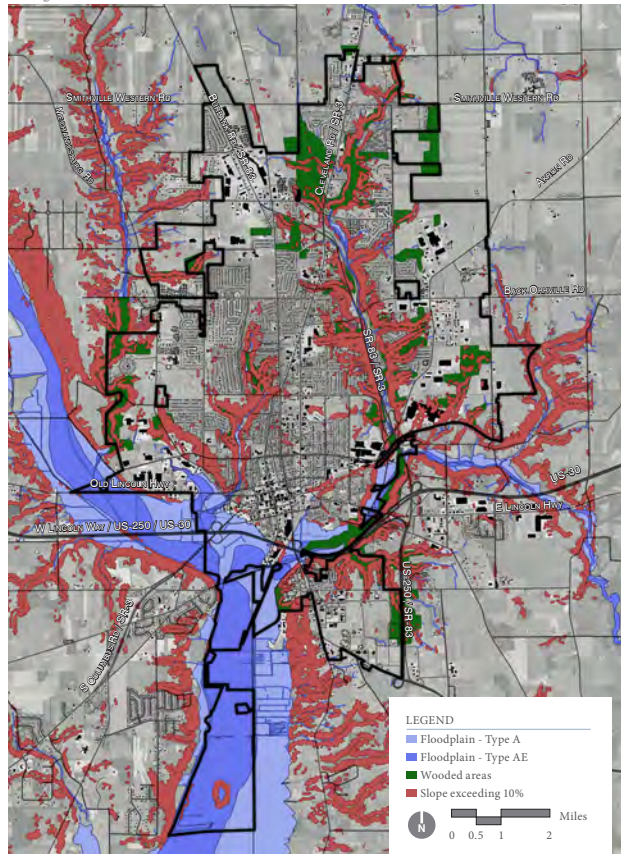
The effect of development constraints on the potential area of developable land zoned for residential is a reduction of approximately 60 percent, with the potential of an additional 1,913 dwelling units (see Table

**TABLE 3.3 RESIDENTIAL NET DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY BY ZONING CLASS, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2013**

Zoning Classification	Code	Gross Acreage	Undevelopable Land (ac.)	10% ROW (ac.)	Net Acreage	Max Units / Acre	Potential Addt'l d/u
Low Density Residential	R-1	471.5	261.9	20.96	188.64	5	943
Medium Low Density Residential	R-2	161.1	74.8	8.63	77.67	6.6	518
Medium Density Residential	R-3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medium High Density Residential	R-4	83.1	63	2.01	18.09	15	274
Manufactured Home	R-5	55.6	37.8	1.78	16.02	11	178
Traditional Residential	RT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planned Development Overlay District	PDOD	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		771.3			300.42		1,913 d/u

City of Wooster, 2013

Figure 3.3 Environmentally Sensitive Areas, City of Wooster, 2013



3.3). Note that additional land available for residential uses could be available within commercial districts.

Commercial and Industrial acreage were reduced by 45 percent, leaving 556 developable acres. With the development constraints, the right-of-way reduction, and the normal market floor area ratio (FAR), 8.2 million square feet of commercial and industrial space could potentially be developed.

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 illustrate the distribution of potential developable acreage within each Zoning Classification for residential and non-residential land uses respectively. Population and employment projections in the next section reference these numbers to determine if the current land capacity can meet the forecasted demand.

TABLE 3.4 NON-RESIDENTIAL NET DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY BY ZONING CLASS, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2013

Zoning Classification	Code	Gross Acreage	Undevelopable Land (ac.)	10% ROW (ac.)	Net Acreage	Floor Area Ratio	Potential Sq. Ft.
Agriculture	AG	54.3	0.3	5.43	48.87	0.2	425,755
Campus-Professional-Research-Office	CPRO	76	33	3.3	29.7	0.25	323,433
Community Facility	CF	218	133.1	8.49	76.41	0.25	832,105
Office and Institutional	C-1	31.5	0	3.15	28.35	0.25	308,732
General Business	C-2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Shopping Center	C-3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central Business	C-4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planned Business	C-5	115.8	35.9	7.99	71.91	0.25	783,100
Limited Manufacturing	M-1	189.4	37.3	15.21	136.89	0.35	2,087,025
General Manufacturing	M-2	544.9	292	25.29	227.61	0.35	3,470,142
Urban Manufacturing	M-3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Open Space/Heavy Manufacturing	M-4	135.9	0	13.59	122.31	0.35	1,864,738
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,365.80</b>			<b>742.05</b>		<b>10,095,030</b>

City of Wooster, 2013

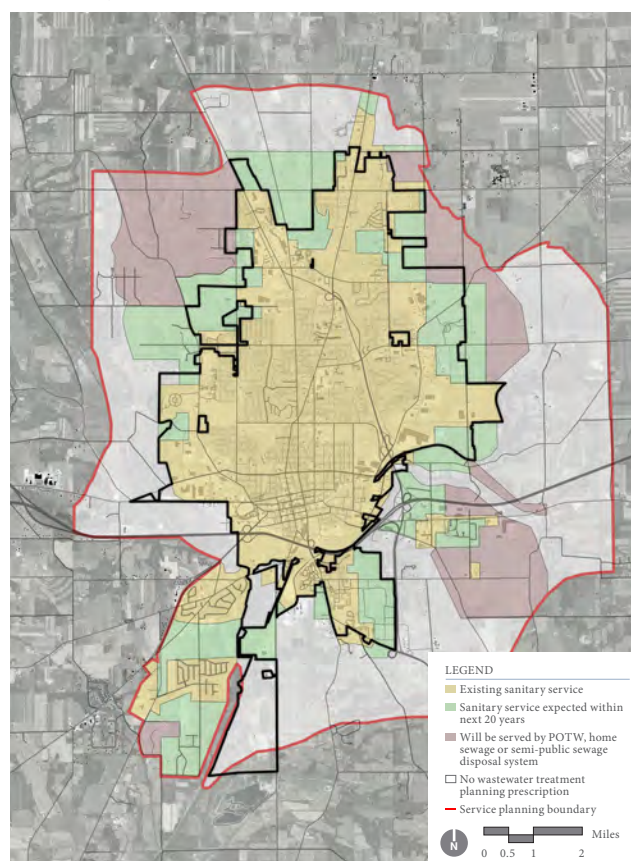
*The sanitary sewer service planning area includes approximately 3,000 acres of undeveloped land.*

The developable land capacity calculations do not take into consideration land that falls within the sanitary service planning area. Figure 3.4 shows the extents of the existing sanitary service, as well as the level of service expected by 2031. There is some considerable overlap between undeveloped/underdeveloped property and land having no access to sanitary sewer. Since a majority of the land within the City limits is planned to have sanitary access, these numbers were not removed from the calculation. For example, a property not

having sanitary sewer access would still have full development capacity potential.

Figure 3.4 shows a considerable amount of land outside the City that may be served by sanitary service in the future (see table 3.5). Since this property is outside the limits of Wooster, it is unknown what kind of development could occur. However, the potential availability of an additional 3,000 acres of land with access to sanitary sewer could provide a considerable amount of developable land in the future. Based on current development patterns it is likely a majority of this land would be served by low density residential, however the east side of Wooster would likely continue to support manufacturing and industrial uses.

*Figure 3.4 Sanitary Sewer Service, City of Wooster, 2013*



### Land Demand Analysis

This section examines the potential residential, industrial, and commercial growth demand within the 2020-planning horizon. Multiple sources were utilized in developing these projections for the City of Wooster. The projections presented in this analysis were extrapolated from local, regional and national historic trends.

This land demand analysis estimates the amount of land that could be consumed by future growth in Wooster, based on certain assumptions. These results are important to consider in comparison with the Land Capacity Analysis, which estimates the amount of land available in each of the land use categories, and in future development policies and land use decisions.

The demand analysis includes the following:

- Population figures, historic, current, and forecasted.
- Estimated demand for future residential development.
- Historic census employment trends in 13 different categories.
- Estimated non-residential square footage demand based on assumed employment growth.

**TABLE 3.5 SANITARY SERVICE, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2011**

Gross additional acres projected within 20 years	Within Wooster Limits	Outside Wooster Limits
4,664 ac.	1,576 ac.	3,088 ac.

*Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization, 2011*

## Residential Development Demand

*Assuming the population growth rate remains steady at 5% per decade, the City will gain an additional 1,305 residents from 2010 to 2020, for a population of 27,424 by the year 2020.*

Although the City’s population has continued to grow from 1980 to 2010, the rate of growth has slowed from 15% per decade from 1980 to 1990, down to 5.2% from 2000 to 2010. Since the growth rate per decade has continued to decrease since 1980 (see table 3.6), a conservative estimate of 5% growth was used to project the population at 2015 and 2020. Assuming a 5% population growth per decade, the City will gain an additional 1,306 residents for a population of 27,424 by the year 2020.

**TABLE 3.6 POPULATION TRENDS, CITY OF WOOSTER, 1980 - 2020**

Year	Population	10-year growth rate
1980	19,289	
1990	22,191	15.0%
2000	24,811	11.8%
2010	26,119	5.2%
2015 (Estimated)	26,772	5.0%*
2020 (Estimated)	27,424	

US Census Bureau, 2014

\*5.0% population growth rate per decade estimated for purpose of population projection for years 2015 and 2020.

Since the size of Wooster’s population is relatively small, a single event, such as a large employer moving in or out of the City could potentially change the growth rate significantly. The projected population will be used to determine if the City has enough available land to meet the housing demands of a larger population.

*From 2000 to 2010, an additional 1,148 housing units were constructed, while an additional 455 units became vacant.*

Data from the United States Census Bureau was used to calculate the City’s housing inventory from the years 2000 through 2010 (Table 3.7). Within this ten year period, an additional 1,148 housing units were constructed. The amount of vacant housing units increased from 634 to 1,089 during the same period, resulting in 10,733 occupied units in 2010.

The housing data also indicates the ownership status of the housing stock within Wooster, categorized by owner-occupied or renter-occupied. Owner-occupied units in 2000 accounted for almost 60% of the units within Wooster, with renter-occupied units making up the other 40%. The data from 2010 indicates less than a 1% change in the the ownership share of the City’s housing. While not a direct match, the types of housing can be inferred from the owner-occupied or renter-occupied classification, as owner-occupied units will tend to be lower density than renter-occupied units.

Data provided by the Wooster Building Department from the ten-year period between 2004 and 2013 (Table 3.8) show a dramatic decrease of single-family houses permits issues from 106 in 2004 to 9 in 2009, with a gradual increase to 23 issued 2013. Multifamily unit

**TABLE 3.7 HOUSING PROFILE, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2000 - 2010**

Structure	2000		2010		10-Year Change
	Count	% Share	Count	% Share	Count
Total Housing Units	10,674	100%	11,822	100%	+1,148
Occupied Units	10,040	94.06%	10,733	90.79%	+ 639
Vacant units	634	5.94%	1,089	9.21%	+455
Owner-Occupied Units	5,993	59.69%	6,322	58.90%	+329
Renter-Occupied Units	4,074	40.31%	4,411	41.10%	+364

US Census Bureau, 2014

construction has been in the single-digits yearly, with a jump of 62 units in 2013. Since 2010, 146 new residential units have been constructed, including single-family, two-family and multifamily dwellings. The Building Department data start to show a changing pattern of housing choice throughout the period, with a stronger preference for multifamily and a softening of demand for single family residential, a trend that has been seen nationwide.

*The City of Wooster currently has enough residentially zoned land to satisfy housing demand into 2020.*

Assuming a population increase of approximately 1,305 residents from 2010 to 2020 (see Table 3.6), and an average family size of 2.21, approximately 590 additional residential units are projected to be needed by 2020. Building permit data indicates an average of 47.6 housing units constructed per year from 2004 - 2013. The 146 units built from 2010 to 2013 lower the census estimate to 444, while the Wooster Building Departments expects approximately 336 additional units by 2020. Keeping in mind a stock of 1,089 vacant units in 2010, the total amount of additional land required for new residential development will be low, as some demand can be filled by vacant units. The City currently has enough developable acreage to accommodate an additional 1,913 dwelling units (see Table 3.3), which is more than enough to accommodate the amount of projected population growth and housing unit demand into 2020.

### Non-Residential Development Demand

As the Great Recession of 2007 has shown, the forecasting of economic activity can be difficult. Economic Census data currently available for the City of Wooster includes the 2000 Census, as well as the 2008-2012 5-year ACS estimates (Table 3.10). The issue with estimating long-term trends from this historic data, is that recession-era data represents an anomaly, which makes it difficult to predict which industries will experience growth in employment and which will experience a contraction. Since the official end of the recession in 2009, the national and state economy has been steadily improving, but data showing which industries within Wooster that have grown is not available.

**TABLE 3.8 NEW HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE, CITY OF WOOSTER, 2004-2013**

Year	Single Family	Two-Family	Multifamily	Total
2004	106	2	4	112
2005	87	1	5	93
2006	35	1	4	40
2007	44	1	7	52
2008	23	1	0	24
2009	9	0	0	9
2010	14	0	1	15
2011	25	0	2	27
2012	18	1	0	19
2013	23	0	62	85
10-Year Total	384	7	85	476
Yearly Average	38.4	0.7	8.5	47.6

City of Wooster, 2013

*Assuming an employment growth of 1% per year, the City of Wooster currently has enough non-residentially zoned land to satisfy demand into 2020.*

This intent of this section is to forecast land use demand based on an assumption of employment growth in various sectors. Since the data for this time period (Table 3.9) is not likely representative of the economy leading into 2020, a 1% per year growth of employment has been assumed. Starting with the 5-year ACS estimate of 12,538 employees and assuming a 1% growth in employment per year, a total of 1,312 employees could be added by 2020. Assuming a conservative estimate of 500 square feet per employee, a total of 656,000 square feet of commercial space could be needed by 2020. Table 3.4 calculates the amount of developable land currently within the City at over 10 million square feet, more than enough to meet any future demand in land.



TABLE 3.9 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR, CITY OF WOOSTER

Industry	2000	2008-2012*	% Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	104	271	+161%
Construction	555	308	-45%
Manufacturing	2,903	2,113	-27%
Wholesale trade	385	110	-71%
Retail Trade	1,534	1,490	-3%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	460	570	+24%
Information	303	277	-9%
Finance and insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	536	577	+8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	804	994	+24%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	3,033	3,935	+30%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,088	1,307	+20%
Other services, except public administration	558	370	-34%
Public administration	391	198	-49%
Total	12,654	12,538	-1%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2014

\*Indicates data from 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimate

# 3.2

## public input

### Development and Redevelopment

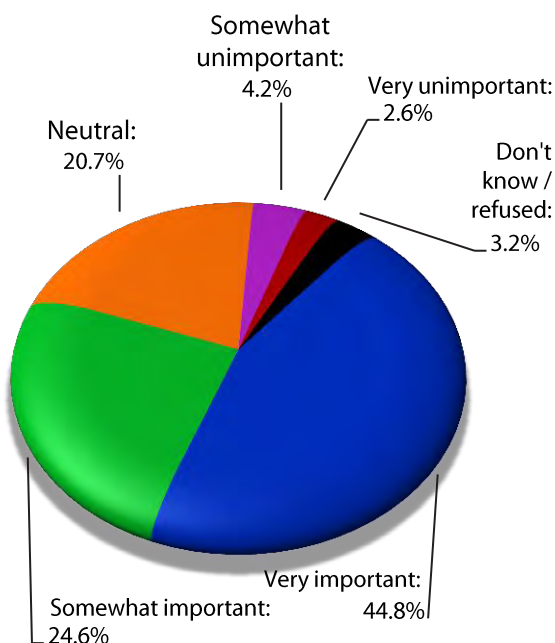
*There is a desire for infill and redevelopment before outward expansion through new annexation.*

The citizens of Wooster do not wish to expand their city. With a desire to preserve their historic, small-town character, residents would prefer to enhance the existing infrastructure and strengthen the core of the city.

*Enhancing the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods is a priority.*

Having a unique and vibrant community core is important to the public. Residents value Downtown as a cultural center and major focal point within the City. In a 2013 telephone survey, more than half of respondents (53.3 percent) declared that they visited Downtown frequently. Seventy-three percent reported that more retail, entertainment, and restaurants would encourage them to visit Downtown more often. In addition, enhancing the residential districts surrounding Downtown are a focus among citizens. Many conveyed at the first public meeting that they desire easy access to local amenities, such as, shopping, dining, and social activities.

Figure 3.7: How important is it to you that Wooster works to be a more efficient and sustainable community by focusing on green practices and policies?

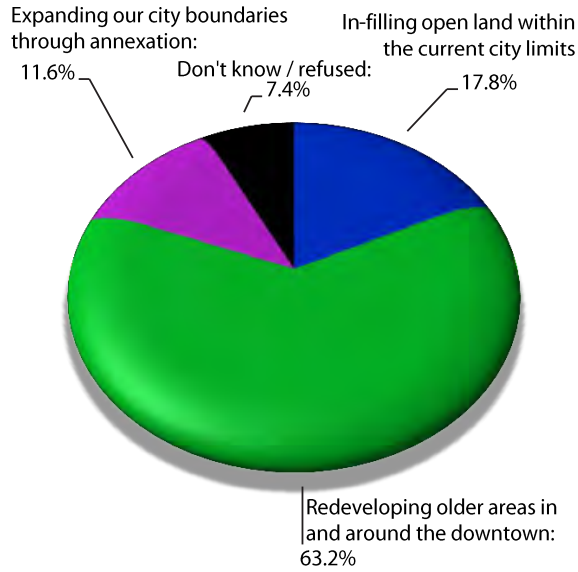


*There is support for high-quality development that integrates green building and planning principles to conserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and promote environmental stewardship.*

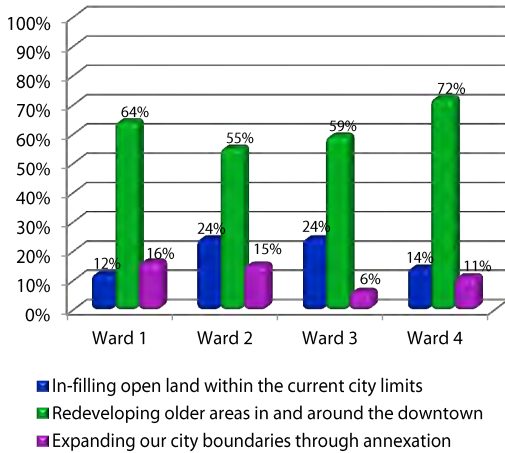
Residents place a high priority on environmental stewardship. At the first public meeting, citizens expressed an interest in preserving their existing greenspace and agricultural lands, modifying underutilized greenspaces to promote ecological and recreational activities, and developing spaces for outdoor community activities.

In addition, many suggested that there should be an increase in environmental awareness, including enforcing the land use code regarding the environment and considering the ecological impact of new development, especially along or near local watersheds.

Figure 3.5: How would you prefer for Wooster to develop in the future?



Ward Breakdown



Age Breakdown

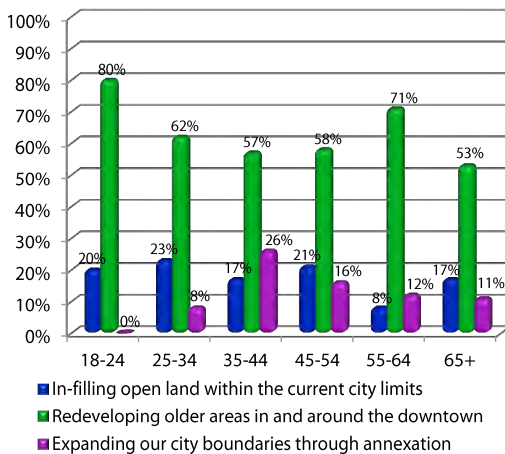
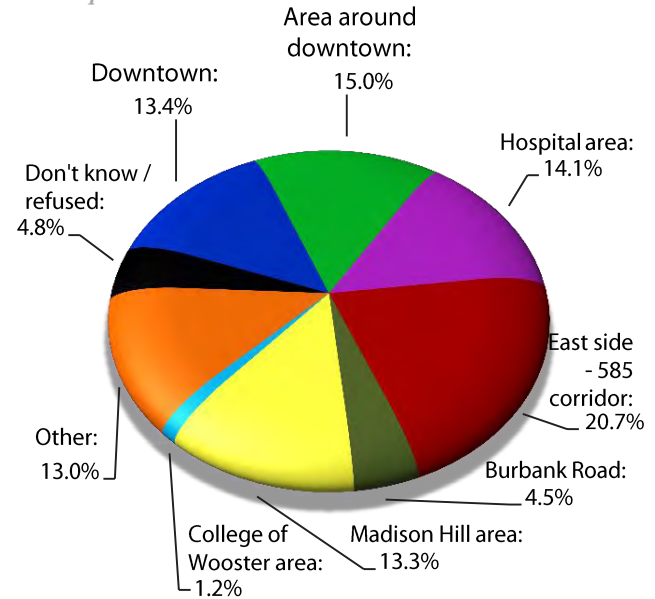
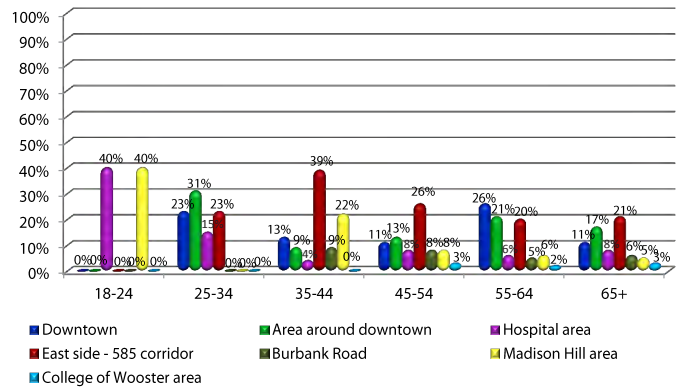


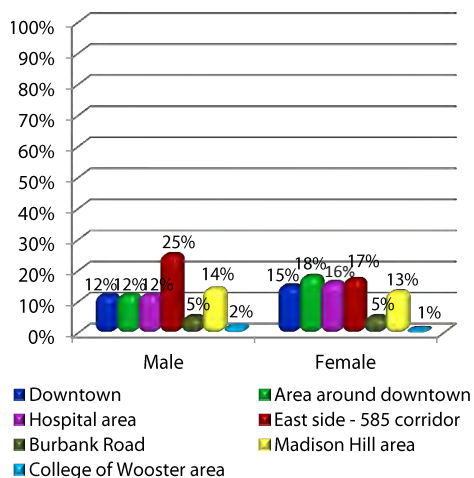
Figure 3.6: What part of the City do you believe should be the highest priority for the new development?



Ward Breakdown



Age Breakdown



## Housing

*Promoting a variety of housing options.*

Citizens expressed an interest in promoting a variety of housing options downtown, including housing for seniors, better quality low-income housing, and higher standards for rental properties.

*There is a desire to focus on new high-quality multi-family and single-family residential development in and around the downtown.*

A concern was conveyed among residents at the first public meeting regarding the increase of poor-quality multi-family housing in the City. The citizens declared that single-family dwellings were being converted to multi-family units, and that those units should be renovated back to their original condition and purpose. Residents expressed the need to focus on improving existing multi-unit housing along with developing high-quality multi-family residential areas near downtown.

*Preservation of older housing/historic housing in older 'first ring' traditional neighborhoods is important.*

Wooster residents are in agreement that downtown traditional housing should be a high priority in future development. It supports the citizens' desire to preserve the history of the City and the close-knit community feeling.

## Demographics

*There is a desire to attract and promote high-quality vibrant developments that will attract and serve a variety of age groups.*

The City continues to maintain and attract a family-oriented populations, and most residents agree that Wooster should continue to attract families. According to the 2013 telephone survey, 48.7 percent of participants wanted to attract more families with children.

On the other hand, 40.2 percent of participants desired to attract young professionals. At the first steering committee meeting, members supported an innovative culture that would attract young entrepreneurs and expand intellectual assets.



*Promoting a variety of options was noted as a priority by the community, this includes housing such as loft style apartments and new townhome or cluster style developments.*

Figure 3.8: How frequently do you visit downtown Wooster?

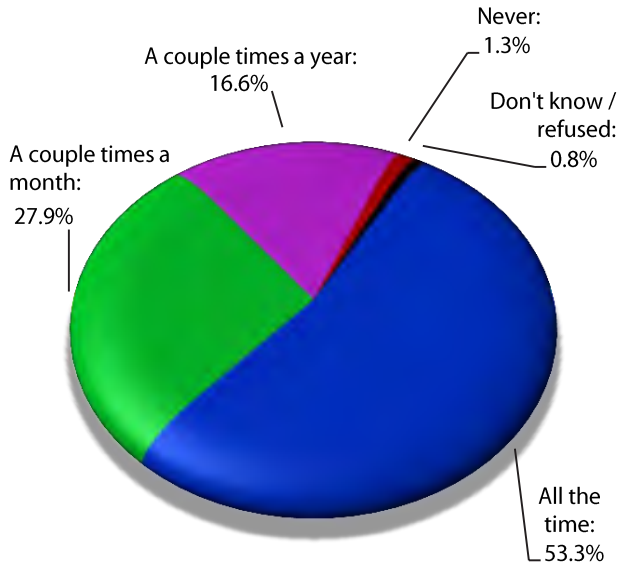
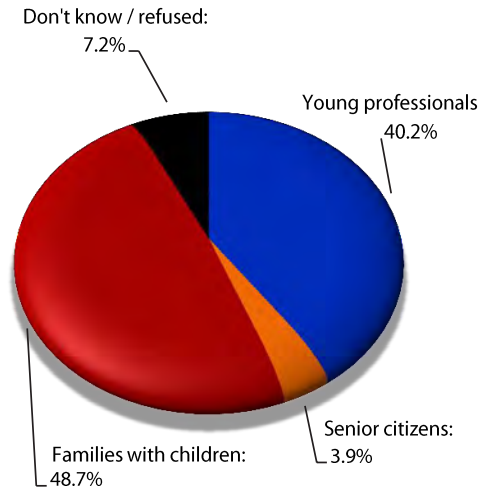


Figure 3.9: Which of the following groups would you most like Wooster to attract more of?



Ward Breakdown

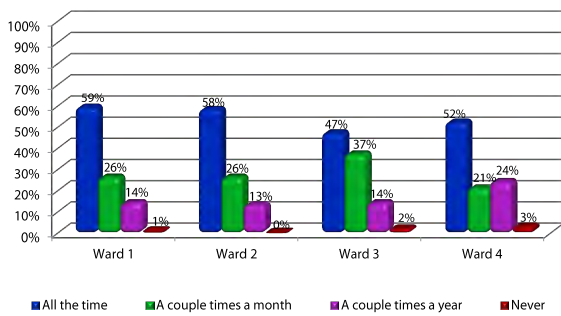
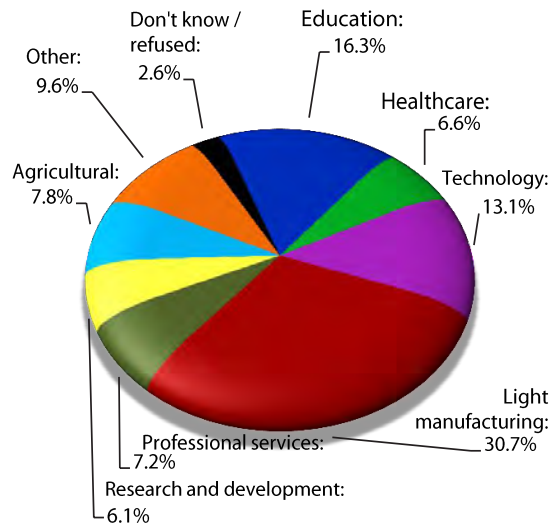
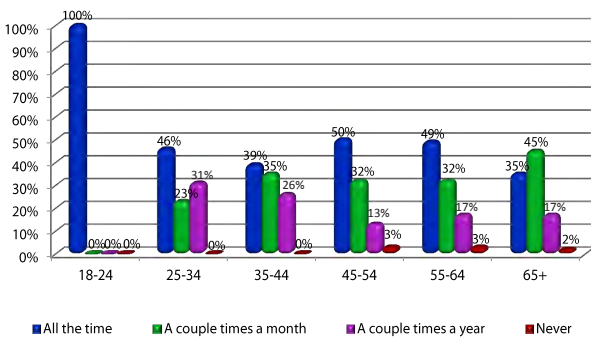


Figure 3.10: What kinds of jobs would you most like to see Wooster attract more of in the future?



Age Breakdown



# 3.3

## current trends

*There is a growing trend of people wanting to move back into urban settings.*

Recent trends in residential living have shown an increase of downtown living, resulting in an increased demand for new rental and owner occupied units in these areas. Main Street Wooster has made a push to capitalize on this growing trend by guiding new residential development in and around the downtown. This specifically includes incorporating multi-family as part of mixed-use buildings that supports larger economic development initiatives in Wooster.

*Millenials and Baby Boomers are increasingly living in more compact and sustainable environments.*

Currently Generation Y, or Millenials, and the Baby Boomer Generation, are two of the largest generations to move through the housing market in the history of the United States. These age cohorts are looking to live near services and amenities, in compact walkable environments. There is also an interest in renting before owning, so as to stay flexible and mobile in the job market, and or changing lifestyles.

*Mixed-use development such as the one below can incorporate a variety of uses including residential in many forms (e.g. lofts). Mixed-use development in more urban settings are often the result of creative public/private partnerships where a distinct public benefit is achieved that accomplishes a larger community vision.*

Offering a variety residential types allows cities to capture some of the population that is seeking these options. When cities capture these populations they reinforce the strength of their community by increasing workforce, spending power, and attracting and retaining the creative class.



*Mixed-use development continues to be a growing trend.*

Mixed-use development combines multiple uses such as retail, office, residential, hotel, or entertainment. These developments typically combine first floor retail or office space with residential units above, providing services and amenities to those living in the development while serving a broader range of users.

While mixed-use development is typically seen in downtown settings, it can also be successfully implemented in suburban areas, and create a unique environment or destination for work or play.

Mixed-use buildings also provides opportunities for new residential development. Having a greater variety of housing stock establishes a more sustainable market by creating a continuum of housing options. This continuum provide steps up and step down support for residents through the housing spectrum.

*Public private partnerships are a growing trend that help achieve large and small economic development initiatives.*

Public-private partnerships (P3s) are agreements between municipalities and one or more private sector businesses to finance, build, and/or operate a 'project'. This tool provides an opportunity for multiple parties to achieve a common vision and/or objectives. Usually, P3s are used to help finance projects that have a benefit to both the city and the private sector. These partnerships are often utilized fill the gap of infrastructure of new development where the city pays part of the cost to support private sector investment in a development that improves the community.

*Parking is one of the biggest land use challenges facing communities.*

Communities are reducing the impact of parking by consolidating multiple surface parking areas into new centralized public and/or private lots and structures that are accessible and conveniently located. In turn, this creates more sustainable communities by reducing the environmental impact of parking. By increasing the efficiency of parking, cities can work to solve their parking problem while keeping a connected and environmentally-friendly downtown.

Shared parking is also a tool that allows adjacent businesses or property owners to share parking spaces, reducing the total number of spaces needed. This can be done in conjunction with minimizing the required parking spaces in general for specific uses if current parking requirements are out date or excessive.

Utilizing shared parking also benefits the environment by planning for runoff in a more comprehensive manner. By designing parking for multiple lots together, runoff can be designed to be better collected and treated by the natural environment.

Shared parking can be done in two ways, contractual agreements between adjacent businesses and through parking management districts. By implementing requirements for shared parking agreements, cities can encourage smarter parking for new development that positively impacts the community and the business. Through implementation of parking management districts, a wide range of businesses can be served by parking that effectively serves businesses while minimally impacting the community.















# 3.4

## plan principle + objectives



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

### RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

-  WOOSTER LEADERSHIP
-  PLANNING AND ZONING
-  CITY ENGINEER
-  PARKS AND RECREATION
-  POLICE DEPARTMENT
-  FIRE DEPARTMENT
-  CODE ENFORCEMENT
-  WAYNE COUNTY
-  MAIN STREET WOOSTER
-  CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
-  THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
-  OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
-  WOOSTER COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
-  PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

### TIMEFRAME

Short Term	1-3 years
Medium Term	3-6 years
Long Term	6-10 years
Ongoing	Action to be continuously addressed



*Note: The objectives and actions outlined in this section of the plan reference land use recommendations and policies that describe the future land use condition of the City. These recommendations are described in text, and illustrated by [Figure 3.11 Future Land Use Map](#) found at the end of this chapter. Collectively the principle, objectives and actions together with [Figure 3.11](#) should be referenced when future land uses decisions are made.*

## Objective LU.1 Continue to enhance the Downtown.

### Action LU.1.1

*Encourage new higher density development where appropriate to support new businesses and residential growth.*

To promote the implementation of this action the City should ensure city code allows for medium to high density housing in and around the downtown. Additionally, public private partnerships should be considered as a viable tool to help promote new residential development in the downtown or other priority development areas.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.2

*Support new mixed use development that combine ground floor retail with upper story offices and housing.*

Endorse mixed-use development downtown that reinforces the downtown atmosphere of walkability and retail storefronts. Mixed-use development may also accommodate new residential units downtown, growing an environment to live, work, and play.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.3

*Continue to support retail activity within pedestrian areas, especially outdoor seating areas for restaurants.*

Policies should be adopted to enhance the pedestrian experience in order to bring people out to the street and increase social interactions. Pedestrian amenities should be provided by both the public and private sector in order to continue to promote Downtown as an attraction.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.1.4

*Consider the establishment of an Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) to provide enhanced services that strengthen the district.*

By implementing a business improvement district Downtown, Wooster can creatively plan for and implement a variety of improvements that enhance the overall quality of life in the downtown. The City should work with Main Street Wooster to establish boundaries and structure to create a BID that can operate independently.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.5

*Continue to investigate off-street parking options and implement short to mid-term parking solutions with a focus on Liberty Street.*

The City should ensure that parking is available and accessible in order to attract shoppers and visitors. Wooster should continue to promote wayfinding strategies that guide residents and visitors to public parking, and serves to enhance the image and brand of the area.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

### Action LU.1.6

*Support Main Street Wooster in marketing the downtown and promoting new economic growth.*

Downtown Wooster's beauty and historical character is in large part due to the effort put forth on promotion and advocacy by Main Street Wooster. The City should continue to work with and support Main Street Wooster to market Downtown and promote new economic growth in order to position Wooster in the regional marketplace.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

### Action LU.1.7

*Identify areas in and around the downtown that can be developed as new public space (e.g. plazas, gardens, pedestrian malls in alleys, etc.).*

Public spaces are a critical element of downtown. New public spaces that serve a variety of purposes should be considered as the downtown continues to develop and redevelop. Special care should be taken to ensure both active and passive areas are considered providing a full-spectrum of public spaces.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.8

*Explore alternative truck routes to eliminate truck traffic within the downtown and residential areas.*

In order to create a more pedestrian friendly downtown, options should be explored to better manage truck routes, with a focus on routing trucks around downtown, without comprising economic growth or community safety.



*Time Frame: Long Term*

### Action LU.1.9

*Enhance the gateways into and within the Downtown area such as those located on Columbus, Market, and Liberty streets.*

Improving gateways is an easy low to moderate cost initiative that can dramatically shape the first impression of a visitor, and leave a positive impression of the image and brand of a community. This in turn serve as a strong economic development initiative by enhancing the quality of a place or district.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

### Action LU.1.10

*Support the development of a new dynamic entertainment node in the Downtown.*

Similar to Action 1.1.7, this action is about creating public space. More specifically this action is addressing the need for a signature event space that can be used for a variety of purposes, is centrally located, and helps to advance the image and brand of downtown.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.11

*Create a redevelopment 'tool box' that can be used to market downtown development opportunities (e.g. tax abatements, tax increment financing, etc.).*

The City should establish a handbook of redevelopment tools including financing options and development techniques to promote new economic growth downtown. This will help to attract new development and allow the City to guide redevelopment in a strategic manner.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.1.12

*Upgrade streetscape improvements completed in 1993.*

In order to enhance and advance Downtown, the City should look to improve the streetscape by building on and improving upgrades made in 1993. Streetscape elements should be placed that enhance the pedestrian experience in order to make Downtown a destination that is walkable, safe, and comforting.



*Time Frame: Long Term/Ongoing*

### Action LU.1.13

*Create a culture campus in Downtown that integrates the library, Red Cross, and Wayne Center for the Arts.*

One of the strengths of the downtown is the cluster of civic and cultural groups that are clustered in the area. The presence and partnerships of these groups could lead to the creation of a collaborative space/district that helps to advance their individual missions, and the image and brand of the downtown. The goal of this action would be to promote new partnerships and civic culture throughout the area.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action LU.1.14

*Create a detailed redevelopment plan for East Liberty Street.*

The City should look to create a plan that details the strategic redevelopment of East Liberty that defines a vision and redevelopment plan for the area. Infill in this area should be focused on a with mixed-use development scenario that enhances the streetscape, provides new high-quality retail space, new public space, and residential uses.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

## Objective LU.2

**Promote continued economic growth along the 585 Corridor through newly planned light industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and office space.**

### Action LU.2.1

*Identify sites that can accommodate new commercial, office and industrial development along the 585 Corridor.*

The City should identify areas in East Wooster that are prime for commercial, office, and industrial development. This development should be appropriately planned to minimize impacts on existing infrastructure while accommodating and promoting new development.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.2.2

*Enhance the Portage and 585 intersection with gateway features, cross walks, improved street and sidewalks to create a welcoming gateway into the community.*

This area of the City was identified by the public as an area that needs to be redeveloped. The location of the area and traffic counts and pattern provide a perfect space to brand the community and construct gateway features and new land uses that promote the economic success of the area and larger community.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

### Action LU.2.3

*Consolidate public and private signage to minimize the visual impact from pedestrian and vehicular viewsheds.*

By consolidating signage and making it more cohesive, the City can create work to create a clean and refined look that promotes the existing and future economic success of the area. Special signage standards may be considered for this area that help to brand the corridor and industrial parks/areas.



*Time Frame: Long Term*

### Action LU.2.4

*Create special architectural and site controls for business park and light industrial development along the 585 Corridor to help grow a distinct image and brand for the area.*

The City should consider an overlay district along the 585 Corridor with the goal of establishing a brand and image for the area. The overlay should have specific architectural and site design standards that will create a coordinate image to the corridor, with a focus on creating a high-quality environment for economic growth.



*Time Frame: Long Term*

**Action LU.2.5**

*Improve Akron Road to enhance traffic flow and support future economic growth.*

By improving the road conditions and capacity, this area can advance its economic competitiveness in the region. Complete street elements should be considered such as bike lanes, and best management storm water practices should be incorporated as well.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

**Action LU.2.6**

*Incorporate walking and biking trails connecting to local and regional trails as part of future public and private sector developments.*

Bike trails and pathways serve to move residents and visitors in and around a community safely. They also can serve as amenity that is attractive to existing and new business to locate in an area. These types of amenities are important to a workforce with a growing desire to be 'green' and active.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Action LU.2.7**

*Actively market the Rubbermaid site to attract future development.*

The City should actively market this site, and may consider using outside consulting services that specialize in site selection, marketing, and promotion of the reuse of these types of facilities.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action LU.2.8**

*Maintain a strong and viable infrastructure network to support future economic growth.*

The City should continue to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure in the corridor to support anticipated economic expansion in the corridor. A focus of these improvements should be on the transportation network.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Objective LU.3**

**Promote new residential development that includes traditional neighborhood characteristics.**

**Action LU.3.1**

*Consider permitting small-scale neighborhood commercial development as part of large-scale master plan developments.*

Code and policy amendments should be made to allow for small-scale commercial development that serves new residential growth. By allowing small developments like corner grocery stores and other amenities that serve neighborhoods. As new



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

growth occurs a these new commercial nodes should be planned to promote multi-modal options that connect the commercial areas to surrounding neighborhoods, with a goal of having one commercial node within a half mile most residential areas.

### Action LU.3.2

*Create standards that require high quality pedestrian-oriented streets incorporating sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and tree lawns within newly developed residential areas.*

All streets within new residential development should promote walkability and provide pedestrian amenities. City codes should require the incorporation of sidewalks and bike paths/lanes, street trees, lighting, and tree lawns within new residential developments.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

### Action LU.3.3

*Create standards, or modify existing standards to allow for a mixture of housing types.*

City code should be updated or amended to allow a mixture of housing types within new residential areas. A mixture of housing types provides options to a variety of future home owners, especially millennials and baby boomers who are both looking for alternative housing options from the traditional single family housing product.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

### Action LU.3.4

*Encourage connections among neighborhoods via roads, sidewalks and multi-use paths.*

Providing multiple connections between districts and neighborhoods should be a priority. Connections should include pedestrian and bicycling options, as well as new roadway linkages that improve access and economic growth.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.3.5

*Actively pursue the redevelopment of non-conforming trailer parks.*

The City currently has multiple trailer parks that provide housing to local residents. As new development occurs and new housing options are provided within and around the City, these older trailer parks should be considered for redevelopment. The goal should be to promote the development of new housing options for existing trailer park residents prior to redeveloping the existing parks.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action LU.3.6**

*Review the zoning code and make changes that will allow for and incentivize traditional neighborhood development.*

Updates should be made to the zoning code that encourage traditional neighborhood development as opposed to “suburban-style” residential development. These zoning code updates should promote human scaled environments with smaller lots and setbacks, shared amenities, a range of housing types, and public spaces. Architectural and design standards should favor many architectural styles with a focus on quality, as opposed to “cookie-cutter” style development.

P&amp;Z

*Time Frame: Mid Term*

## **Objective LU.4**

### **Improve rental housing.**

**Action LU.4.1**

*Improve and expand code enforcement efforts.*

Code enforcement efforts should be improved to help manage the condition of both single family and commercial properties. Improvements could include increasing staffing, new educational strategies, as well as working with the legal counsel to prosecute repeat offenders.

CE

*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action LU.4.2**

*Continue to support neighborhood improvement efforts by community members and groups.*

One of the greatest strengths of Wooster is its community pride and involvement. The City should work to support and facilitate improvement projects by these groups. Specific strategies may include programs such as neighborhood improvement grants. Wooster should provide community resource grants that help residents improve their neighborhood.

W

*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action LU.4.3**

*Create a Neighborhood Improvement District to strengthen code enforcement and support neighborhood improvements.*

A Neighborhood Improvement District is an area in which certain public improvements are financed by the city through a special assessment against properties within the area.

The City should consider developing a Neighborhood Improvement District in the traditional neighborhood around Downtown. This District could help generate new financing for streetscape improvement including sidewalks, utilities, street lights, vegetation, and other neighborhood amenities.

W

CE

*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.4.4

*Provide incentives for redevelopment of properties.*

Wooster should provide tax incentives for infill development and redevelopment of existing residential neighborhoods, as a priority over new greenfield residential development.



*Time Frame: Mid Term/Ongoing*

## Objective LU.5 Expand housing opportunities.

### Action LU.5.1

*Create incentives that encourage moderately priced housing options in and around Downtown.*

Millenials/young professionals are one of the largest demographics to move through the housing market in the history of the U.S. This demographic has shown a desire to be close to an 'urban' setting with access to entertainment, and areas that are highly walkable. Wooster has the opportunity to continue to promote new multifamily options that are in and around the downtown to serve this market segment and support the overall economic health of the downtown.

Changing demographic and economic conditions has created a shift in the marketplace for a growing segment of buyers who are looking for small residential units that are both easier to maintain, and more cost effective. The City promote new residential options/projects that offer small and affordable units that include high quality features and amenities adding to the character and quality of the community. Specific incentives such as tax abatements or a streamlined approval process should be considered in order to advance this action.



*Time Frame: Mid Term/Ongoing*

### Action LU.5.2

*Support "downsized" housing options for residents.*

As the baby boomers continue to move through the housing market there is a growing need to provide new housing choices that are smaller, while still maintaining the same high-quality finishes and amenities demanded by the majority of this market segment. Similar to Action LU.5.1 these housing options should be close to goods and services and entertainment options, as well as medical facilities and emergency services.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.5.3

*Provide a menu of incentives to support interior and exterior renovation of older housing stock.*

Wooster has a strong traditional housing stock, especially in and around the downtown. New incentives and programs should be considered to support the maintenance and renovation of these structures. Through implementation of this action the



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*



maintenance and preservation of traditional neighborhoods can be achieved, in turn adding to the character and image of Wooster.

**Action LU.5.4**

*Promote new residential on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas.*



City code should be revised to promote residential development on greyfield land, or underutilized sites in the City. By promoting this type of development, the City can make for more sustainable residential areas within the community.

*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

**Objective LU.6  
Enhance and plan for the area around the Hospital.**

**Action LU.6.1**

*Work with the hospital to enhance and brand the streetscape and intersections near the hospital campus.*



The City should work with Wooster Community Hospital to improve the streetscape and intersections immediately surrounding the hospital. These improvements should help to brand the ‘Hospital District’ by creating a distinct character to the area. Specific elements may include new lighting, landscaping, signage, etc. Gateway features and treatments should also be added to brand the District and serve as traffic calming devices.

*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

**Action LU.6.2**

*Encourage new mixed-use development around the hospital that supports hospital activities and serves neighboring residential areas.*



Underutilized areas around the Hospital should be redeveloped into mixed-use development that encourages pedestrian activity and new vehicular connections that improve access in and around the hospital. Uses may include residential, medical offices, retail, restaurants, and small hotels. All of these uses should be used to complement the Hospital and build on the existing medical cluster. These uses will help support the overall economic health of the area and serve the visitors and employees in the area. The scale and form of this development should complement the surrounding neighborhoods and include high-quality architecture and public spaces.

*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

## Objective LU.7 Responsibly manage growth outside the City limits.

### Action LU.7.1

*Extend the City boundary only when the expansion will result in new targeted economic growth, or serve to accomplish other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan or other City policies.*

One of the clear themes from the public outreach conducted as part of this plan is to put a priority on infill and redevelopment before outward expansion of city boundaries. The City should put a priority on inward growth prior to outward growth to avoid sprawl development and place unnecessary stress on the existing infrastructure.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action LU.7.2

*New residential expansion should be designed in a cluster or conservation style development pattern.*

New residential development should be in a cluster or conservation style pattern. Minimizing the footprint of development reduces the short and long term cost of infrastructure, and promotes the preservation and access to public space and opens space.



*Time Frame: Short- Mid Term*

### Action LU.7.3

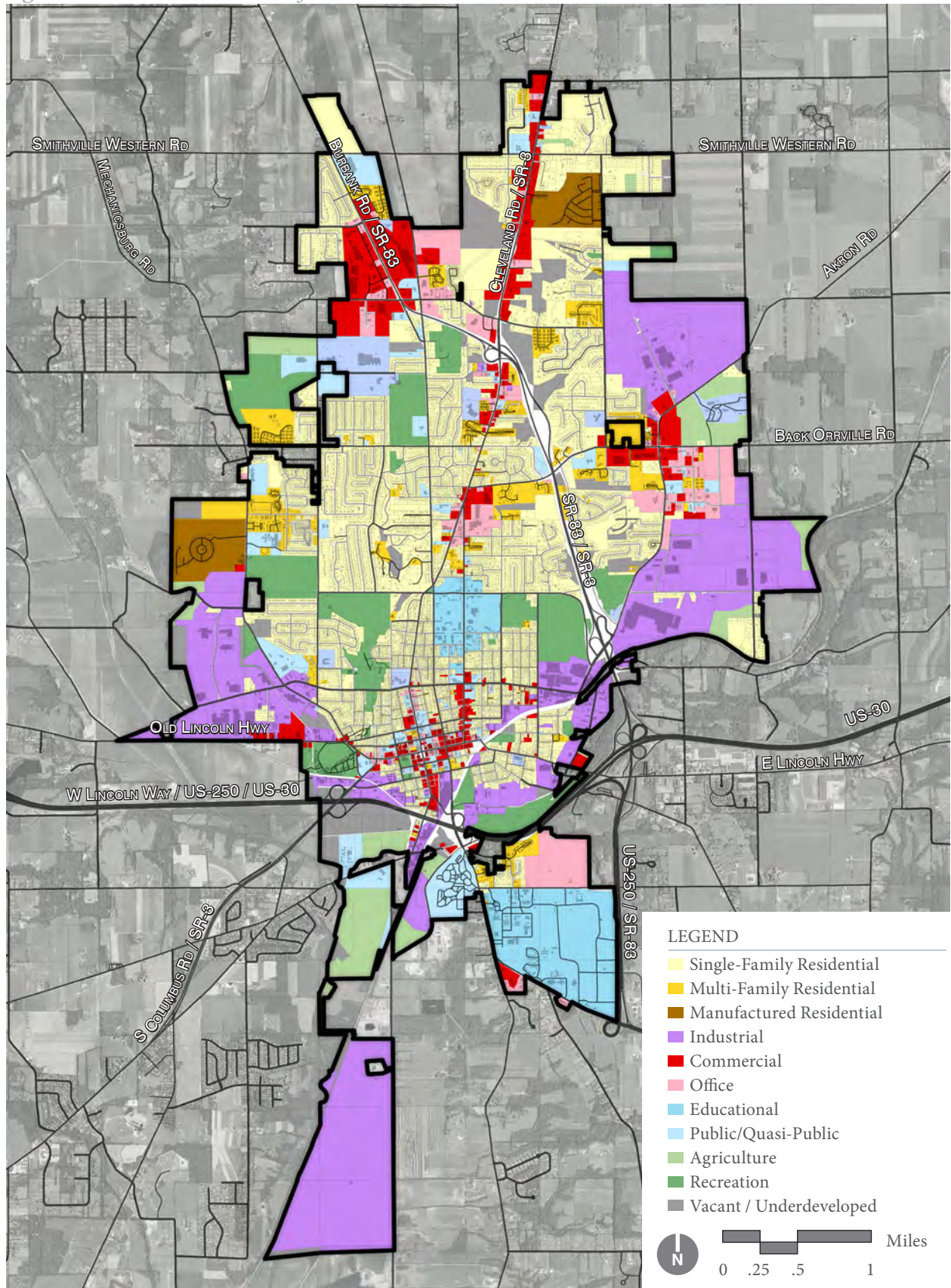
*Ensure new annexations can be served by city utilities.*

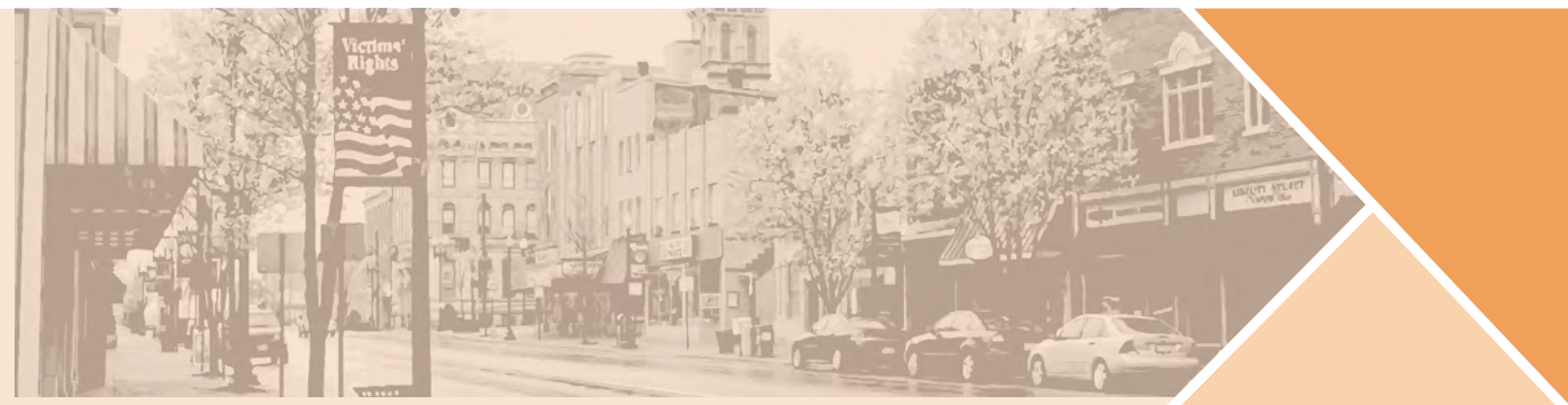
If and when land is annexed into the City the impacts to the local infrastructure network should be considered. Specific impact studies should be completed (e.g. traffic, sewer, water) to examine the cost of outward of an outward development pattern. These cost should be considered carefully so as to not 'tax' the existing infrastructure network.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

Figure 3.11 Future Land Use, City of Wooster, 2013





## 4. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a vital element in creating and maintaining a successful city. Transportation systems connect people, products, and places, and is one of the most fundamental aspects of city planning. An efficient system of transportation provides access to destinations efficiently and with minimal impacts on others. The ideal transportation system will present a variety of

transportation options, allowing for convenient access for vehicular traffic and the opportunity for walking and biking.

Both motorized and non-motorized transportation are presented in this chapter as well as the City's gateway structure.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

# 4.1

## existing conditions

- Wooster has convenient access to surrounding communities and major thoroughfares within the State.
- Significant industrial and commercial growth has occurred within close proximity to the freeways and rail lines within Wooster.
- The City does not currently have a well-connected and complete non-motorized transportation network.
- Destinations that serve as centers of commerce, business, and entertainment are not adequately connected by a non-motorized transportation network.
- Multiple entry points into the City provide opportunities for enhanced gateway entrances to define the image and brand of Wooster.

# 4.2

## public input

- There is a general desire to alleviate automobile traffic concerns Downtown.
- Citizens want to improve connections between various points throughout the City.
- Citizens support convenient and efficient free parking throughout the City.
- Bike trails that provide connections throughout the City and connect to regional systems are supported by Wooster residents.
- Residents support an assortment of public transportation options to serve a variety of age groups.

# 4.3

## current trends

- Complete streets are designed to accommodate all users, including multiple modes of transportation, ages, and abilities.
- Roundabouts are an alternative type of roadway intersection that can decrease traffic congestion and increase safety.
- Recent transportation planning concepts, including complete streets, have introduced room for cyclists roadway design, including sharrows and dedicated bike lanes.
- The State of Ohio has been one of the leading states in developing regional non-motorized transportation recreation connections.

# 4.4

## plan principle + objectives

### **GROW SMART**

*A prosperous and well-balanced community that ensures the small town character, green areas, and downtown atmosphere is preserved and enhanced, while carefully planning for the growth and development of existing and emerging economic centers and neighborhoods.*

#### **Objective TR.1**

Make Wooster a more connected and walkable city.

#### **Objective TR.2**

Facilitate the flow of traffic and parking in and around the City.

#### **Objective TR.3**

Promote alternative modes of transportation.

# 4.1

## existing conditions

### Overview

Like many cities within Ohio, Wooster's transportation network has developed outward from the historic downtown center. Because land use and transportation are intrinsically linked, the introduction of the automobile has allowed development to occur further from the city center. Since the end of World War II, improvements to the transportation system have focused on increasing the efficiency and speed of automobile transportation to serve the growing areas of the City.

Although the automobile is currently the primary means of transporting people and goods within and outside of the City, alternate modes of transportation must be considered as crucial pieces to a complete transportation system. Improving pedestrian and bicycle access is an important step in reducing the burden on the automobile network while providing a cost efficient and enjoyable transportation option.

### Motorized Transportation

As the primary means of transportation for a majority of Wooster's citizens, the automobile provides quick access through a fairly well-connected road network to local and regional destinations.

*Wooster has convenient access to surrounding communities and major thoroughfares within the State.*

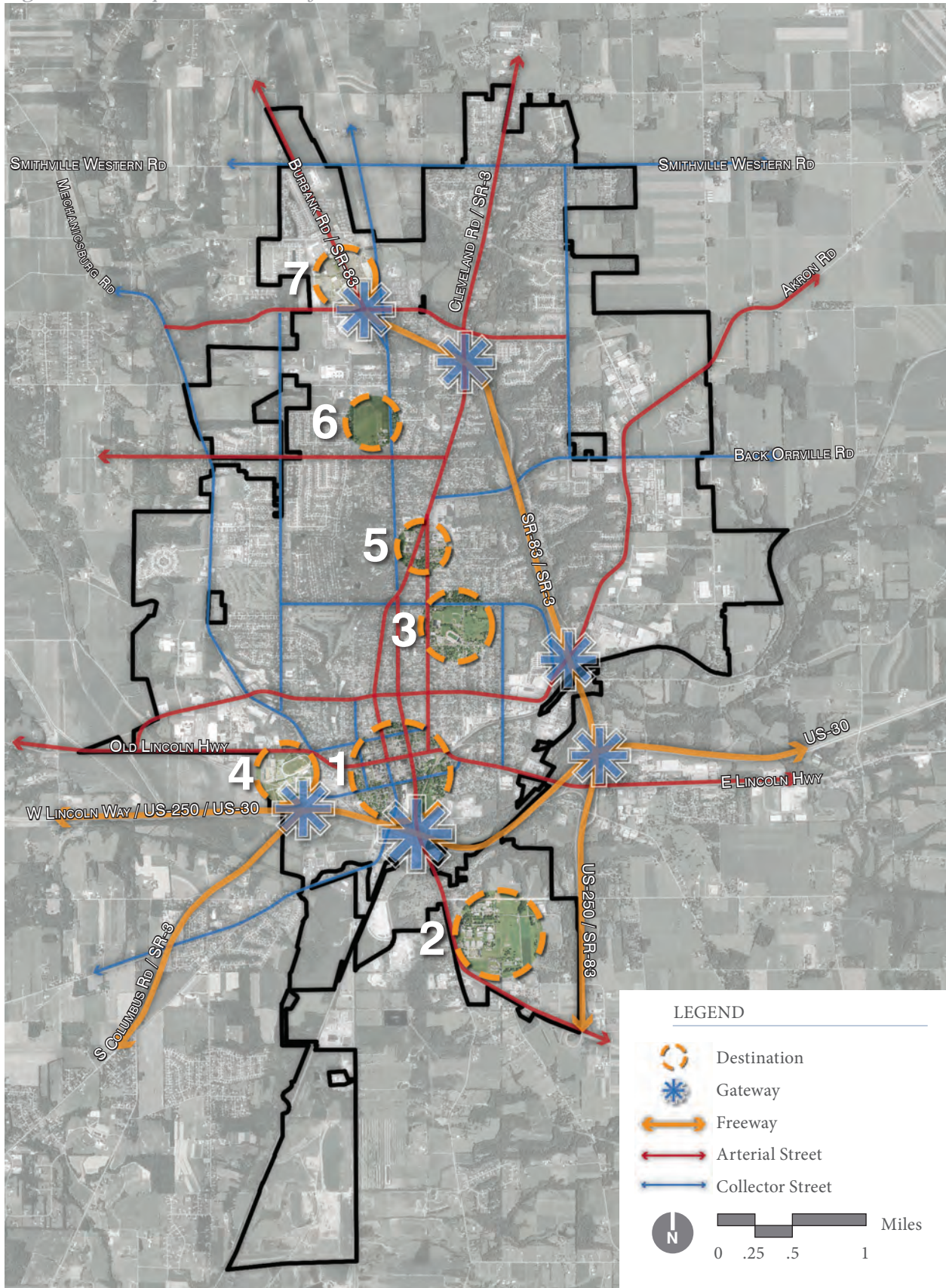
Located south of Downtown, U.S. Route 30 connects Wooster to Massillon, Canton, and I-77 to the east, and Mansfield and I-71 to the west. In addition, numerous state routes connect the City to the agricultural areas and smaller cities throughout the County. Dix Expressway (SR-83 / SR-3) provides freeway access to the industrial and residential areas to the north and east, connecting to U.S. 30 east of downtown. Although no freeways are located within the western side of the City, a series of arterial and collector streets give residents some opportunity for freeway access.

*Significant industrial and commercial growth has occurred within close proximity to the freeways and rail lines within Wooster.*

Transportation is critical and convenient access to freeways and rail lines, combined with lower land prices, has helped to establish the industrial and commercial areas located adjacent to both US-30 and



Figure 4.1 Transportation, the City of Wooster, 2013



Source: Gateway Planning and Design Standards, 2013

the Dix Expressway (SR-83 / SR-3). Warehousing, manufacturing, and research and development form the industrial base of the City, with industries taking advantage of the excellent access provided by the freeways and rail lines. A network of limited-access arterial and collector roads connect these areas to freeways and other areas within Wooster.

## Non-Motorized Transportation

*The City does not currently have a well-connected and complete non-motorized transportation network.*

Non-motorized transportation falls into two basic categories, pedestrian and cyclist. These modes serve the dual purpose of recreation and transportation while promoting the physical activity of residents. Safety and connectivity are two critical factors in creating a successful system, both of which must be addressed for the system to effectively serve residents.

While most primary roadways within the City provide sidewalks, some of the smaller local streets within post-war residential areas do not, creating a disconnect. Sidewalk condition is a concern in some of the older areas of the City, where the original sandstone or concrete walkway has deteriorated to the point where it is no longer fully accessible to pedestrians. The City has made efforts throughout the years to upgrade sidewalks and curb ramps to ADA accessible curb ramps, but many existing streets and neighborhoods have yet to be updated.

Cycling infrastructure can come in several different forms, from sharrows and dedicated bike lanes to multi-use paths. While cyclists have the option to ride along roads, the absence of bicycle markings (sharrows or dedicated lanes) is a safety concern that could possibly deter cyclists.

Multi-use paths that are devoted to serving cyclists and pedestrians alike can alleviate some of the current safety and connectivity concerns in Wooster, as conflict with cars is minimal and street crossings are typically well defined. Some effort has been made within Wayne County to transform vacant rail lines into cycling trails, but such trails do not currently connect to Wooster.

*Image 4.1: Sharrow example*



*Image 4.2: Dedicated bike lane example*



*Image 4.3: Dedicated bike lane example*



*Destinations that serve as centers of commerce, business, and entertainment are not adequately connected by a non-motorized transportation network.*

Destinations within the City that would benefit from non-motorized transportation options have been identified. These are areas that could have parking issues at peak times (fairgrounds), large amounts of non-drivers (colleges, recreational areas), or areas that

require frequent visits from residents (commercial, medical areas).

Figure 4.1 shows the locations of several primary destinations within Wooster:

1. Downtown Wooster
2. Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC)
3. College of Wooster
4. Wayne County Fairgrounds
5. Wooster Community Hospital
6. Soccer Complex and Gault Recreation Center
7. Burbank Road Commercial Area

### Gateways

*Multiple entry points into the City provide opportunities for enhanced gateway entrances to define the image and brand of Wooster.*

Gateways are entrances into the community that are frequently passed by visitors and residents, and provide the opportunity to showcase the brand and image of Wooster. Enhancing and branding these areas will clearly frame the entry into the City and help reinforce its identity.

Six primary gateways have been identified on Figure 4.1, and are primarily located at highway and freeway exits. Efforts have been made in recent years by the City to identify and improve gateway conditions in Wooster. In 2013 the City and GGJ, Inc. developed a Gateway Planning & Design Standards document that illustrates the gateway opportunities and enhancements at the Madison Avenue and State Route-30 exit that include both signage and landscape treatments (See Figures 4.2 - 4.4).

Figure 4.2: Concept sketches from 2013 Gateway Planning & Design Standards



Figure 4.3: Concept sketches from 2013 Gateway Planning & Design Standards

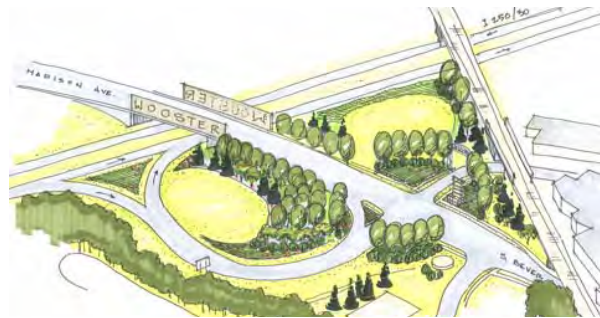


Figure 4.4: Concept sketches from 2013 Gateway Planning & Design Standards



# 4.2

## public input

### Motorized Transportation

*There is a general desire to alleviate automobile traffic concerns Downtown.*

The most common concern mentioned throughout online discussion and meetings were semi-truck traffic Downtown and multiple roadway and intersection locations.

Responses to the survey showed a 2.75 rating (1 highest, 5 lowest) of the traffic in the City. There was a large difference between those polled between 18-24 years of age and other age groups, as the younger group rated the traffic much worse. Ward 3 also had a slightly worse rating of traffic than the other wards.

*Citizens want to improve connections between various points throughout the City.*

Ensuring appropriate vehicular routes between destinations was stated multiple times throughout the public process. Some of the respondents wanted road extensions to help alleviate traffic and increase travel time.

*Citizens support convenient and efficient free parking throughout the City.*

Citizens agree on the overall success of parking in Downtown, especially free parking. Suggestions with the current network that were mentioned include:

- Building a parking garage
- Improving parking in commercial areas
- Eliminating the parking time limit
- Adding parking spaces

### Non-Motorized Transportation

*Bike trails that provide connections throughout the City and connect to regional systems are supported by Wooster residents.*

Input from residents showed an interest in connecting Downtown to residential areas and the OARDC with either bike lanes or trails. These comments also discussed the possibility of connecting to the Ohio to Erie Trail or to one of the surrounding rails-to-trails

networks. Residents stated that they wanted bicycle safety to improve with these upgrades.

For future development, citizens strive for a bicycle-oriented community by implementing bike lanes, bike paths, and sharrows linking the City together, as well as state-wide bike routes. In addition, there is interest for a bike-share system within Wooster.

Residents of Wooster generally agree that more walking paths should be implemented within the City to connect Downtown with residential areas.

*Residents support an assortment of public transportation options to serve a variety of age groups.*

Citizens have differing ideas regarding public transportation within Wooster. Some feel that the bus system should be enhanced, which may include incorporating city service buses and promoting bus system use with branding and communication tactics.

Other residents feel that the bus system should be a low priority and that the City should instead focus on offering a variety of mass transportation options such as taxi services, van circulators, car-pooling, and trains.

Figure 4.5: How would you rate Wooster's traffic? (1 highest, 5 lowest)



Ward Breakdown

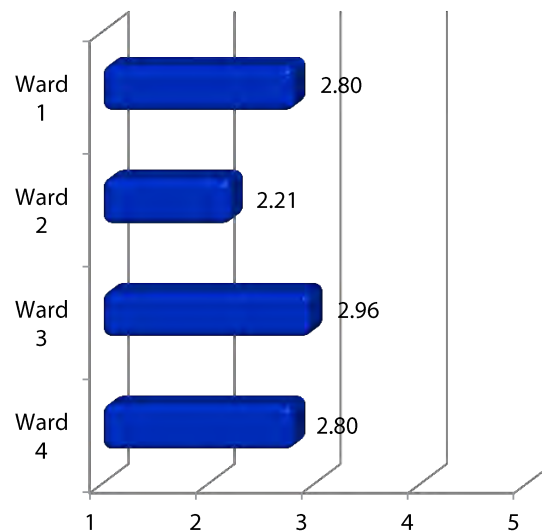
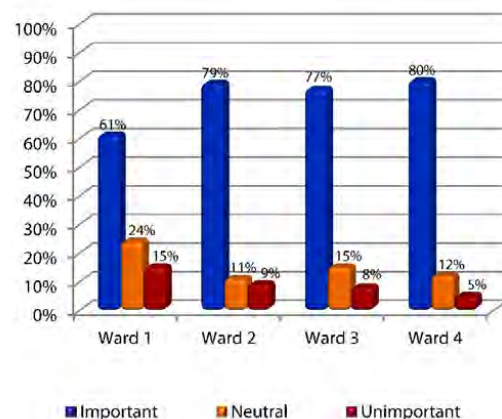


Figure 4.6 How important is it to you that the community be connected by sidewalks, bike paths, and recreational trails?



Ward Breakdown



# 4.3

## current trends

### Motorized Transportation

*Complete streets are designed to accommodate all users, including multiple modes of transportation, ages, and abilities.*

Transportation planning with a complete streets policy uses the entire right of way to increase functionality, convenience, and safety for users while maintaining traffic capacity and flow.

Complete streets can include, but are not limited to, the following elements:

- Bike lanes/sharrows
- Wide sidewalks
- Bus lanes
- Street trees
- ADA curb ramps
- Median islands
- Roundabouts

The focus of complete streets does not stop at providing alternate forms of transportation, but also places importance on the creation and enhancement of the public realm. The placement of street trees and parallel parking spaces can help protect pedestrians from automobile traffic, while traffic calming devices help to lessen the speed and intensity of traffic and noise. Ensuring the safety and comfort of cyclists and pedestrians will help increase pedestrian activity at the street and allow the street to function as a segment of the public realm.

*Image 4.4: Example of a complete street*



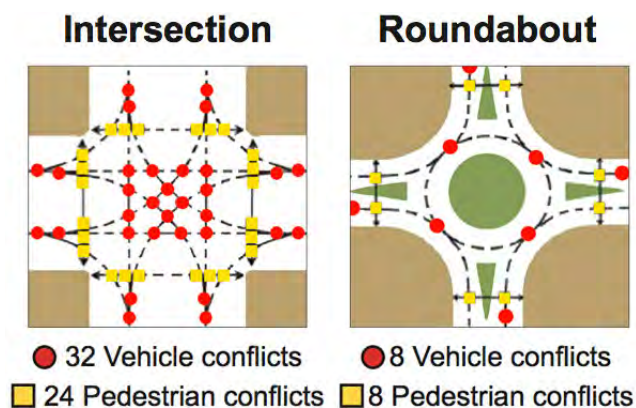
*Roundabouts are an alternative type of roadway intersection that can decrease traffic congestion and increase safety.*

Roundabouts are an increasingly common type of roadway intersection that have numerous benefits over a traditional four-way intersection. A traditional four-way intersection contains up to 32 potential points of conflict for vehicles, and an additional 24 points of conflict for vehicles / pedestrians. In comparison, a roundabout reduces the amount of conflict points to eight, for both automobiles and pedestrians (See Figure 4.7).

Studies by the Federal Highway Administration and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety have shown a reduction in traffic delays anywhere from 20 - 89%, and a reduction in vehicle collisions of up to 37%. Because speeds within a roundabout are lower, fatal collisions can see a reduction of up to 90%.

In addition to the safety and capacity improvements, roundabouts are also cheaper to maintain in comparison to an electronically signaled intersection. Replacement and repair costs for electronic signalization average from \$5,000-\$10,000 yearly. Maintenance for a roundabout will match that of a roadway, with a useful life of up to 25 years.

*Figure 4.7: Roundabouts vs. Traditional Intersections*



## Non-Motorized Transportation

*Recent transportation planning concepts, including complete streets, have introduced room for cyclists roadway design, including sharrows and dedicated bike lanes.*

Sharrows are markings painted on the road indicating cyclists are included in the traffic pattern, giving cities a cost effective solution to accommodate cyclists since the bikes are merged with traffic. While cheaper and easier to implement, sharrows offer little protection for cyclists against faster moving vehicles.

Dedicated bike lanes can be placed alongside traffic with painted lines distinguishing the lane. Bright painted lanes are effective at delineating bike lanes from vehicular traffic. In addition, the placement of physical buffers that protect cyclists from traffic can include the parallel automobile parking between traffic and the bike lane, as well as concrete or knock-down bollards. Physical buffers gives cyclists a better sense of safety, encouraging more bike lane use and better safety overall.

*The State of Ohio has been one of the leading states in developing regional non-motorized transportation recreation connections.*

Multi-use trails provide the opportunity for recreational activity, while giving residents and visitors a unique way to experience nature. The development of multi-use trails can utilize land that is not easily developable, such as land within a flood plain. These trails often serve the dual use of a mode of transportation, as well as passive parkland.

The Ohio to Erie Trail is one of the longest dedicated multi-use trails in the country, which when completed, will be a 325 mile long route that extends from the Ohio River in Cincinnati to Lake Erie in Cleveland. Four large metropolitan areas will be connected through this trail, Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland.

While most of this trail is complete or under construction, there are still large sections that must go on-road to connect. South of Wooster is one of the largest sections of the trail that has not been completed. To the south, the trail ends at Fredericksburg and continues to the north at Dalton.

# 4.4 plan principle + objectives



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

## RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- WOOSTER LEADERSHIP
- PLANNING AND ZONING
- CITY ENGINEER
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- POLICE DEPARTMENT
- FIRE DEPARTMENT
- CODE ENFORCEMENT
- WAYNE COUNTY
- MAIN STREET WOOSTER
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
- OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
- WOOSTER COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
- PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

## TIMEFRAME

Short Term	1-3 years
Medium Term	3-6 years
Long Term	6-10 years
Ongoing	Action to be continuously addressed



## Objective TR.1 Make Wooster a better connected and walkable city.

### Action TR.1.1

*Revise City Code to allow for and encourage a walkable mix of uses and amenities throughout Wooster.*

Incorporating the right mix of land uses, along with good site design, will help to promote walkability within Wooster. In addition, the incorporation of pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, benches, street trees, seat walls, waste receptacles, restrooms, and bike racks should be mandatory for new development.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

### Action TR.1.2

*Revise City Code and standards to require new development to build/incorporate multi-use paths on primary and secondary roadways.*

All new development should be required to dedicate space for alternative modes of transportation. This space will lessen the space needed for automobiles on the roadway, minimizing the impact on existing roadways.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action TR.1.3

*Support the development of complete street practices as new roadway infrastructure is planned and built.*

The City should ensure that pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular travel needs are given equal consideration, along with providing accessibility for all of Wooster's residents. Streets in Wooster should be designed to accommodate all modes of transportation, motorized and non-motorized, in a manner accessible to all portions of the population.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

### Action TR.1.4

*Continue to repair and expand the existing sidewalk network.*

Conduct regular inspections of public walks and paths to ensure they meet accessibility standards. Advertise on the City website and on pedestrian and bike facility maps how users can report maintenance problems or other concerns to the City.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action TR.1.5

*Connect Downtown, the OARDC, the College of Wooster, and the Wayne County Fairgrounds with multi-use trails and bicycle lanes.*

Construct a multi-use trail that connects the OARDC across the highway to a trail that runs along Little Apple Creek. Utilize on-street bike lanes to connect the Wayne County Fairgrounds, Downtown, and the College of Wooster to the Little Apple Creek Trail.

Explore options to build off-street multi-use paths in combination with on-street bike lanes that connect Downtown, the OARDC, the College of Wooster, and the Wayne County Fairgrounds.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid - Long Term /Ongoing*

### Action TR.1.6

*Continue to participate in ODOT's Safe Routes to School program.*

Wooster should continue to work with the School District to improve the walking and biking environment for students.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

### Action TR.1.7

*Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Implementation Project included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.*

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.9 indicate the planned motorized road and intersection improvements as outlined within the 10-year TIP.



*Time Frame: Long Term/Ongoing*

## Objective TR.2 Facilitate the flow of traffic and parking in and around the City.

### Action TR.2.1

*Explore opportunities to route truck traffic away from Downtown.*

In order to reinforce the pedestrian friendliness of Downtown, options should be explored to better manage truck routes. Truck traffic should be rerouted in a manner that supports the industrial community while promoting a clean and safe Downtown.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Action TR.2.2**

*Continue to consider the implementation of roundabouts instead of traffic lights as part of future intersection improvements.*

In the interest of reducing traffic congestion, maintenance costs, and safety issues, future intersection improvements should study the possibility of using roundabouts at select intersections. These considerations should also be part of any traffic study required for new developments.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

**Action TR.2.3**

*Improve awareness and access to public parking through a comprehensive wayfinding strategy.*

The City should complete a wayfinding study that investigates parking and mobility options. Within Downtown, this study should review wayfinding signage and public parking visibility. This study should provide recommendations to improve access and awareness of public parking options.



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Action TR.2.4**

*Traffic light timing and intersections with “No turn on red” restrictions should be evaluated.*

All traffic lights that prohibit turning on red lights should be examined to the necessity of that restriction. Lifting some of those restrictions can increase functionality and decrease congestion in the transportation network.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

## Objective TR.3 Promote alternative modes of transportation.

### Action TR.3.1

*Continue to plan local bikeway and trail connections that complement and tie into regional and statewide systems (e.g. the Ohio Trails and Greenways Plan, Ohio to Erie Trail).*

The Ohio to Erie Trail is planned to pass just a few miles southeast of Wooster and the City should look for ways to connect into the statewide system. By adding a trail head in Wooster to the Ohio to Erie Trail, the City can attract additional visitors and promote cycling within the community.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

### Action TR.3.2

*Create standards to promote bike facilities (e.g. racks or shelters) for all new commercial and public developments. .*

City Code revisions should be made that encourage new development to provide bike facilities in order to promote cycling as a viable transportation option. These standards will help encourage a bicycle-friendly and healthy community. Facilities should be aesthetically pleasing and attractive to pedestrians, while enhancing the image of the City as whole.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

### Action TR.3.3

*Develop a comprehensive bikeway network in Wooster that connects places of commerce, entertainment, neighborhoods, and institutions. Sharrows can be used as a short term strategy to identify the network for routes where funding is not available to create bike lanes or multi-use trails.*

Figure 4.8 shows the recommended on-street bike lanes and multi-use trails for the City. Policy should be created to plan for creating dedicated bike lanes and multi-use trails in these locations in the future. In the meantime, the City should fund the implementation of sharrows along these roads and educate citizens on the rules of sharrows. This education should be for motorists as well as cyclists in order to ensure safety for all parties involved.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

Figure 4.8 Proposed Non-Motorized Transportation

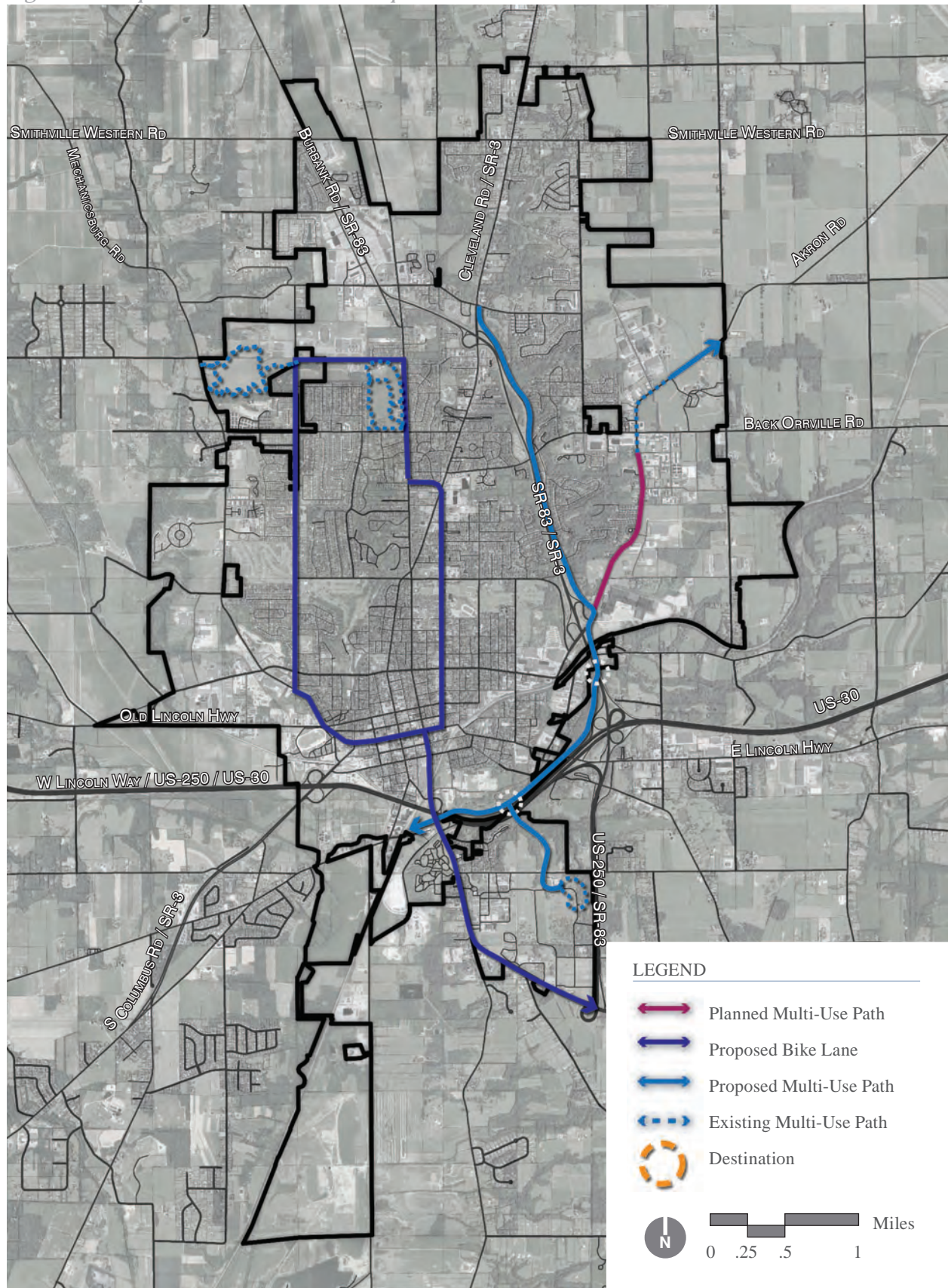
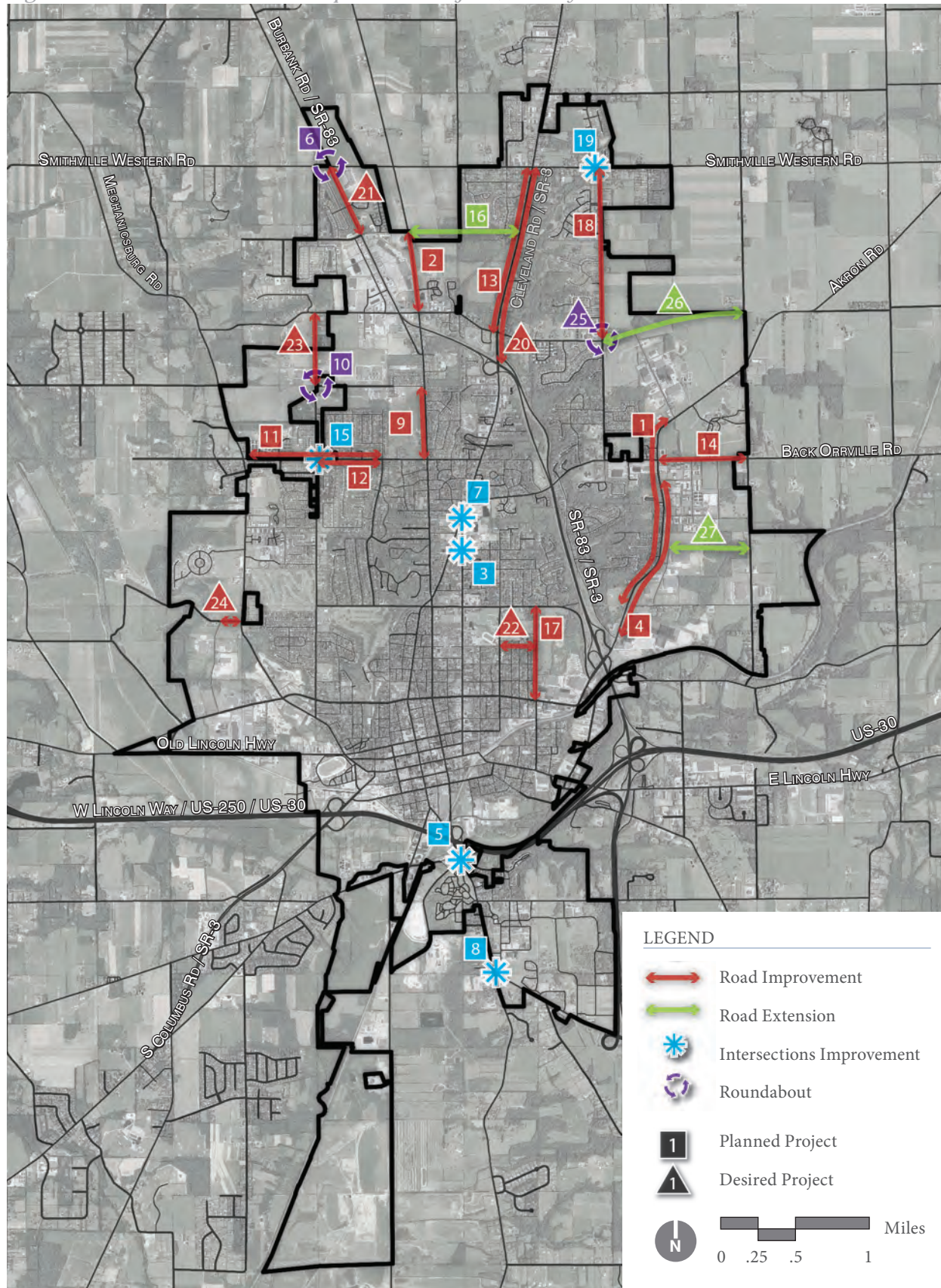


TABLE 4.1 PLANNED MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS, 2014

	Type	Location	Timeline
1	Road Improvement (Phase I completed, Phase II in progress)	Akron Road; Portage Road to Milltown Road	In Progress
2	Road Improvement (In progress)	Friendsville Road; Milltown Road to Riffel Road	In Progress
3	Intersection Improvement	Beall Avenue and Winter Street	In Progress
4	Road Improvement	Akron Road; Highland Park Road to Gateway Drive	In Progress
5	Intersection Improvement	Madison Avenue and Timken Road	2015
6	Intersection Improvement- Roundabout	Burbank Road and Smithville Western Road	2015
7	Intersection Improvement- Signal Replacement	Beall Avenue and Cleveland Road	2016
8	Intersection Improvements- Crosswalk and Signal Replacement	SR 302 and SR 83	2017
9	Road Improvement	Burbank Road; Highland Road to Oldman Road	2017
10	Intersection Improvement- Roundabout	Oak Hill Road and Oldman Road	2018
11	Road Improvement	West Highland Avenue; Christmas Run Boulevard west to corporate limits	2019
12	Road Improvement- Widening	West Highland Avenue; Christmas Run Boulevard to Oak Hill Road	2019
13	Road Improvement- Widening	Cleveland Road; Milltown Road to Smithville Western Road	2020
14	Road Improvements	Portage Road; Akron Road to Geyers Chapel Road	2020
15	Intersection Improvements	Highland Avenue and Oak Hill Road	2021
16	Extension	Riffel Road; Friendsville Road to Cleveland Road	2021
17	Road Improvement- Widening	Palmer Street; East Bowman Street to East Wayne Ave	2021
18	Road Improvement- Widening (Future)	Melrose Drive; Milltown Road to Smithville Western Road	2022
19	Intersection Improvements	Melrose Drive and Smithville Western Road	2022
20	Road Improvement- Widening (Future)	Cleveland Road; SR 83 to Smithville Western Road	Unknown
21	Road Improvement- Widening (Future)	Burbank Road: Riffel Road to Smithville Western Road	Unknown
22	Road Improvement- Curb and Gutter Improvements (Future)	University Street; Gasche Street to Palmer Street	Unknown
23	Road Improvement- Curb and Gutter Improvements (Future)	Oak Hill Road; Oldman Road to Milltown Road	Unknown
24	Road Improvement (Future)	Silver Road; Mechanicsburg Road to Venture Boulevard	Unknown
25	Intersection Improvement- Roundabout	Melrose Drive and East Milltown Road	Unknown
26	Extension	Milltown Road: Melrose Drive to Geyers Chapel Road	Unknown
27	Extension	Progress Drive: Enterprise Drive to Geyers Chapel Road	Unknown

Figure 4.9 Planned Motorized Transportation Projects, the City of Wooster, 2014







## 5. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, recreation, and open space are important community elements that add to the local quality of life, character, and economic competitiveness of the area. Parks provide public spaces to meet, play, and interact bringing the community together, strengthening the social fabric, and growing community pride. Open spaces are critical to create relief in the landscape and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to connect to the natural world.

Together these space create opportunities for recreational activities growing opportunities for children to engage in physical activities and establish healthy lifestyle patterns. For adults, these spaces create opportunities to forge relationships alongside practicing a healthy lifestyle.

By investing in the future of the park system, Wooster can continue to grow and promote the overall health of the community.

# 5.1

## existing conditions

- Wooster’s current park system, including those not owned by the City, contains 18 parks that occupy approximately 778 acres. The system also includes three indoor facilities consisting of a community center, an ice arena, and a recreational center.
- While the City is generally well served by community and regional parks, there is a deficit of approximately 24 acres of neighborhood parks and 11 acres of mini-parks when compared to national standards.
- Of the total park space in the City, approximately 34% are active and 66% are passive.
- Many of the residential areas in the west and northeast of the City are underserved by parkland. These areas are outside of the ¼-mile and ½-mile walking distances of parkland.
- Approximately 1,300 acres of undevelopable land within Wooster could potentially be used as parks or natural protection areas.

# 5.2

## public input

- Residents of Wooster are generally satisfied with the current parks, recreation, and open space network.
- There is a desire to add additional public/green space in and around the Downtown to further promote the economic success and pedestrian friendliness of the area.
- Citizens desire to strengthen local connections throughout the City by creating a complete network of bike paths and greenways.
- Enhancing park security and safety should be a priority to create a safe and comfortable environment in the parks.

# 5.3

## current trends

- Communities are creating new park spaces that are dynamic and engaging, balancing recreation, interactive play, and passive spaces in a dynamic environment that serves a variety of age groups and abilities.
- There is a growing trend to create new urban like public spaces in suburban and exurban communities to serve as places of entertainment and gathering. These spaces are typically heavily programmed with a variety of community events and activities to engage the community and grow the local economy.
- Creating new open space and passive parks and preserves is a growing trend communities are implementing to establish new economical ways of growing local park systems.
- Many communities are creating partnerships with the private sector to create, enhance and maintain parks and public spaces.

# 5.4

## plan principle + objectives

### *GET ACTIVE*

A leader in offering quality parks and public spaces with diverse opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and education for a variety of age groups and abilities.

#### **Objective PR.1**

Preserve and expand open space areas.

#### **Objective PR.2**

Be a leader in environmental stewardship.

#### **Objective PR.3**

Maintain and enhance the existing park network.

#### **Objective PR.4**

Partner with the private sector, local organizations, and civic groups to help support new and existing park spaces, programming, and public events in the City.

#### **Objective PR.5**

Protect and enhance the Little Apple Creek greenway.

# 5.1

## existing conditions

Wooster’s current park system, including those not owned by the City, contains 18 parks that occupy approximately 778 acres. The system also includes three indoor facilities consisting of a community center, an ice arena, and a recreational center.

Figure 5.1 shows the location of all the parks in Wooster’s current park system, as well as any school recreation facilities and undeveloped/vacant land.

Table 5.2, on the following page, is a detailed analysis of the condition and use of the facilities within the park system.

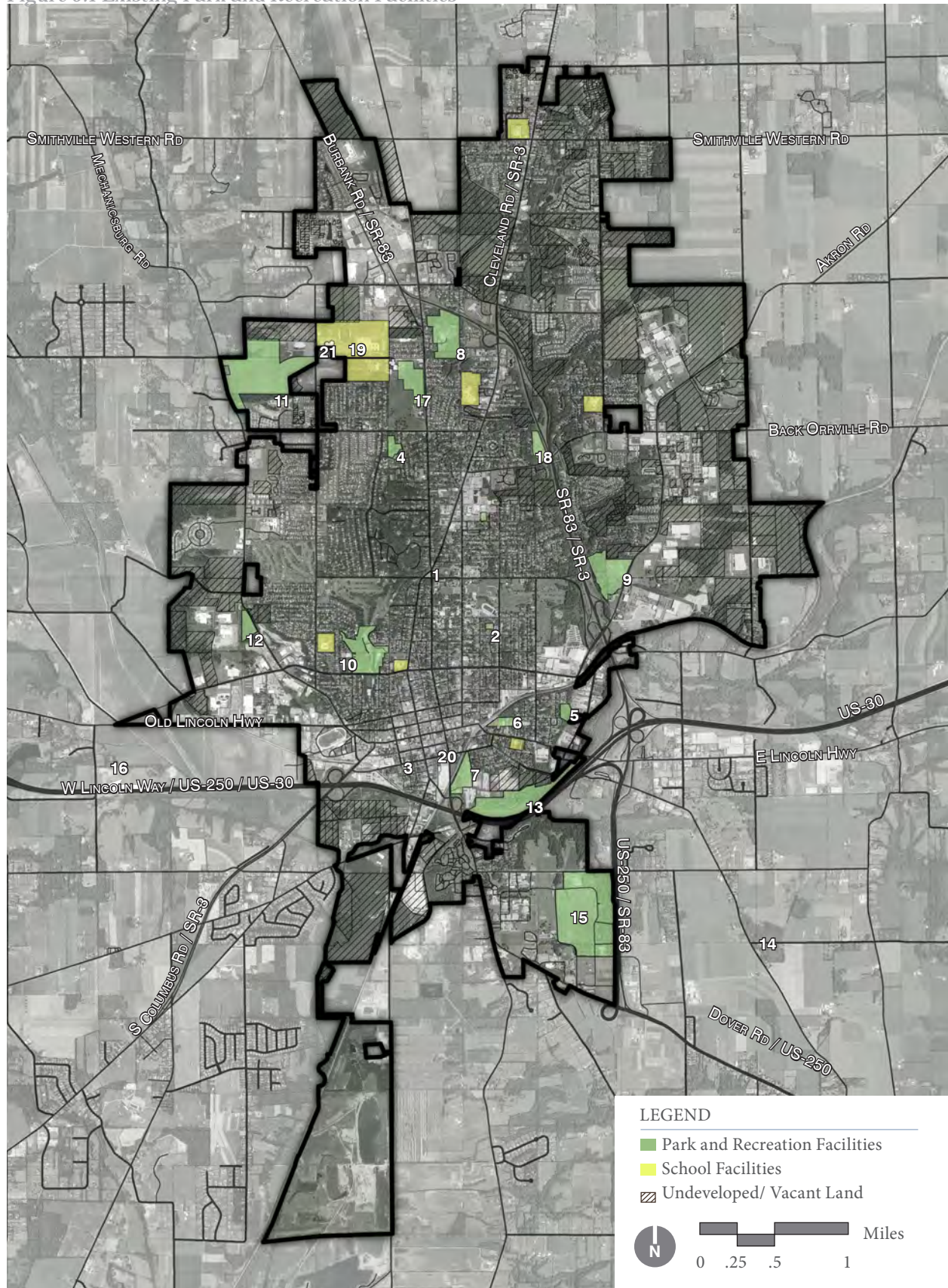
TABLE 5.1 EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Mini Parks		Acreage	Type
1	Diller Park	0.58	Passive
2	Jaycee Park	1.16	Active
3	Walnut Street Park	0.33	Active
Neighborhood Parks			
4	Cohan Park	5	Passive
5	Stan Miller Park	5.01	Active
6	Knights Field	6.16	Active
7	Schellin Park	12.78	Active
Community Parks			
8	Freedlander Park	31.9	Active
9	Gerstenslager-Martin Park	28.95	Passive
10	Christmas Run Park	35.3	Active
11	Oak Hill Park	105	Passive
12	Walton Woods	15.3	Passive
13	Grosjean Park	57.5	Passive
14	* Barnes Preserve	76	Passive
15	* Secest Arboretum	120	Passive
Regional Parks			
16	Wooster Memorial Park	253.7	Passive
Sports Complex			
17	* Soccer Complex	17	Active
18	* Miller Park	6.76	Active
Indoor Facilities		Square Footage	
19	* Gault Fitness and Recreation Center	55,000	
20	Wooster Community Center	17,250	
21	* Noble Ice Arena	31,000	

City of Wooster 2013

\* Indicates facility not owned by City of Wooster

Figure 5.1 Existing Park and Recreation Facilities



## Park Classifications

*While the City is generally well served by community and regional parks, there is a deficit of approximately 24 acres of neighborhood parks and 11 acres of mini-parks when compared to national standards.*

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is a national advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation. The mission of the NRPA is to advance parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people.

The NRPA classifies parks into two categories, regional and local/close-to-home parks. Local/close-to-home parks can be defined further as mini-parks, neighborhood parks/playgrounds, or community parks. A mini-park is defined as a specialized facility that serves a concentrated or limited population within a ¼-mile radius and is desirably one acre or less. A neighborhood park/playground is defined as an area for intense recreational activities, serves an area between ¼-mile and ½-mile, and is normally at least 15 acres. A community park is defined as an area of diverse environmental quality and may include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. A regional park is defined as an area 200 acres or larger that serves more than one community and is contiguous with or encompasses natural resources.

Table 5.3 shows the total acreage of existing park types in the City of Wooster compared to the NRPA suggested acreage.

## Passive and Active

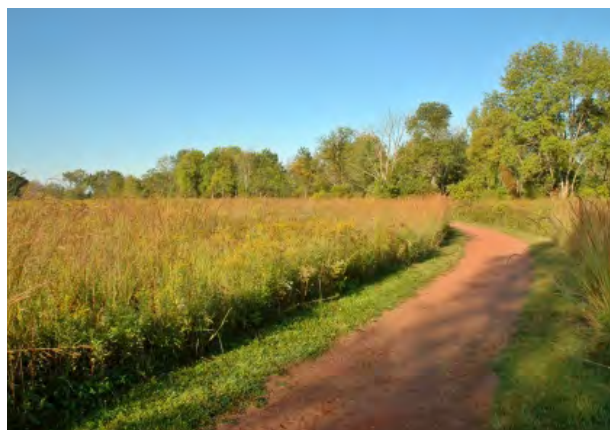
*Of the total park space in the City, approximately 34% are active and 66% are passive.*

Parks can also be divided into active and passive spaces. Active parks typically have recreational opportunities and encourage participation in activities. Active parks feature sports fields, playgrounds, splash pads, and other recreational activities. Passive parks require much less direct active recreation and focus primarily on open spaces and preserving natural states of the area. The City’s parks system currently contains more than 20

active and passive amenities distributed throughout the City.

Table 5.4 shows the amenities included in each park or open space. This table gives a current overview of amenities that can be found at each park. Analysis of the following data provides useful information to planning for the needs of the community as a whole and in specific locations throughout the City.

Physical conditions of the park system are an important part of this chapter. Knowing current maintenance and upkeep issues can help plan for future development, direction, and expansion of the park system as a whole. Table 5.2 shows the current park conditions within the Wooster park network. Comparing the conditions and usage of facilities identifies failures and successes in the current park system. Facilities with high usage and poor condition are seen as an issue, Wooster Community Center is an example. Successful parks include Schellin Park, Christmas Run Park and Freedlander Park as they all have high usage and good conditions.



*An example of a passive park with natural amenities.*



*This splashpad acts as an active park.*

TABLE 5.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND USAGE OF PARKS, THE CITY OF WOOSTER

Park	Condition	Usage	Type
Freedlander Park	Good	High	Active
Christmas Run Park	Good	High	Active
Knights Field	Good	Moderate	Active
Schellin Park	Good	High	Active
Wooster Memorial Park	Good	Moderate	Passive
Gerstenslager-Martin Park	Poor	Low	Passive
Cohan Park	Fair	Moderate	Passive
Jaycee Park	Fair	Moderate	Active
Stan Miller Park	Fair	Low	Passive
Walnut Street Park	Fair	High	Active
Oak Hill Park	High	High	Passive
Walton Woods	Fair	None	Passive
Wooster Community Center	Poor	High	Active
Diller Park	Good	None	Passive
Soccer Complex	Good	High	Active
Miller Park	Good	High	Active
Gault Fitness and Recreation Center; Shapiro Natatorium	Good	High	Active
Noble Ice Arena	Good	High	Active
Secrest Arboretum	High	High	Passive

City of Wooster 2013

TABLE 5.3 NRPA SUGGESTED PARK AREA TO POPULATION RATIO STANDARD, CITY OF WOOSTER

Park Type	Existing Total Acres	Suggested Park Size (NRPA Standards)	Existing Ratio (Total Acres/1,000 Population)	NRPA Suggested Ratio	Suggested Total Acres based on Population	Surplus or Deficit (Acres)
Mini Parks	2.07	<1 Acre	0.079	0.5	13.05	-10 .98
Neighborhood Parks	28.95	15+ Acres	1.067	2.0	52.24	-24.37
Community Parks	469.95	25+ Acres	17.99	8.0	208.95	+261
Regional Parks	253.7	>200 Acres	9.713	10.0	261.19	-7.49

City of Wooster 2013

\*Based on 2010 US Census Bureau population of 26,119

## Park Access

Many of the residential areas in the west and northeast of the City are underserved by parkland. These areas are outside of ¼-mile and ½-mile walking distances of parkland.

Park space accessibility measures for mini and neighborhood parks are quantified based on walking distances. Generally, average acceptable walking distance is between ¼-mile and ½-mile.

For analytic purposes, accessibility to local park space for Wooster residents has been identified as underserved for those outside of ¼-mile radius and severely underserved for those residing outside of a ½-mile radius.

## Open Space and Undeveloped Land

Approximately 1,300 acres of undevelopable land within Wooster could potentially be used as parks or natural protection areas.

While some of the 2,400 acres of undeveloped land may be held for future development, 1,300 acres of that land is undevelopable. This land may be within the 100-year flood zone, heavily wooded, or too steep for development.

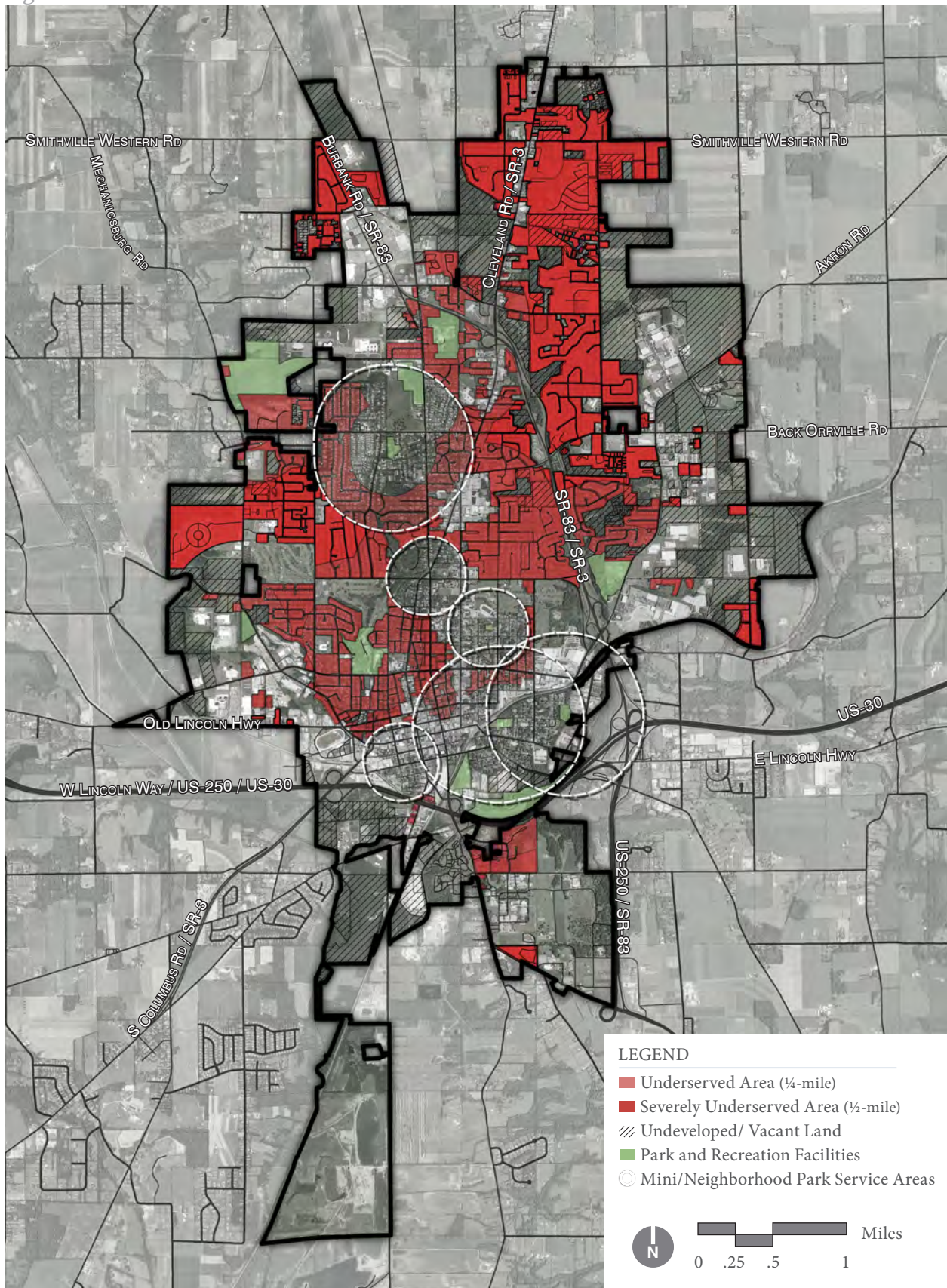
Undeveloped land within a city can be a valuable tool for parkland expansion. These areas can be targeted for future park construction. More important, some of these undeveloped lands can be used for passive parks that require little, if any, disruptions of their current natural state.

TABLE 5.4 EXISTING PARK AMENITIES, THE CITY OF WOOSTER

	Diller Park	Jaycee Park	Walnut Street Park	Schellin Park	Cohan Park	Stan Miller Park	Knights Field	Grosjean Park	Freedlander Park	Gerstenslager-Martin Park	Walton Woods	Christmas Run Park	Oak Hill Park	Soccer Complex	Miller Park	Wooster Memorial
Basketball Courts			●	●		●			●			●				
Volleyball Courts									●							
Tennis Courts							●					●				
Multi-purpose Field		●							●				●			
Ballfield		●		●		●			●	●					●	
Swing Sets		●	●	●	●	●	●		●			●				
Play Structures		●	●	●	●		●		●			●				
Pavilions		●		●	●		●		●			●	●		●	●
Picnic Tables		●		●	●		●		●	●					●	
Grills		●	●		●		●		●	●		●				
Benches						●	●					●			●	
Restrooms		●		●	●		●		●			●	●	●	●	
Horseshoe Pits							●		●							
Disc Golf									●							
Concessions									●			●		●	●	
Swimming Pool							●		●			●				
Lake, Ponds, & Streams				●	●				●			●				
Nature Trails									●							●
Ice Skating				●					●			●				
Fishing				●					●			●				
Dogcentric Area				●												
Skateboarding				●												



Figure 5.2 Underserved Park Locations



# 5.2

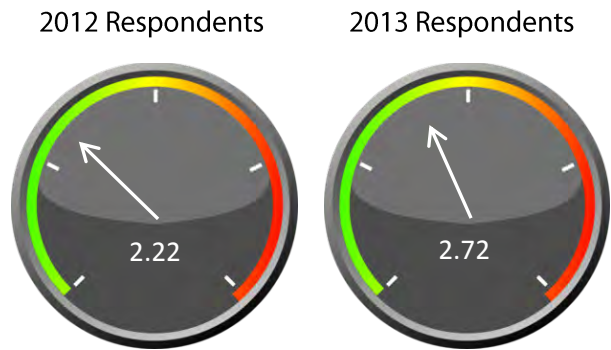
## public input

*Residents of Wooster are generally satisfied with the current parks, recreation, and open space network.*

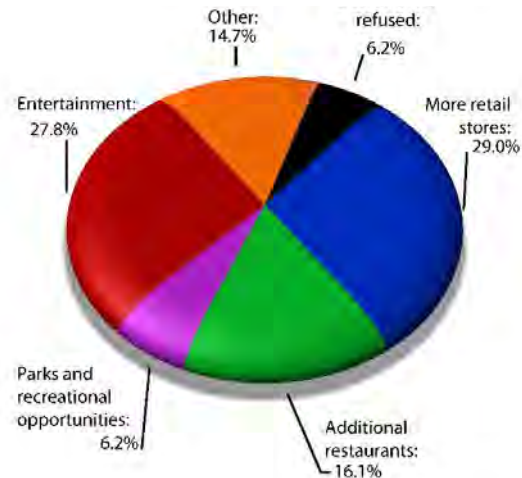
As part of the community survey residents were asked on a scale of one to five, with one being excellent and five being poor, the survey showed that the public rated Wooster’s recreational department at an average of 2.72. This response is similar to the survey conducted in 2012 indicating a general satisfaction with the department (see Figure 5.3).

Conversations and input gathered from both public meetings and Steering Committee meetings indicated a general satisfaction with parks and recreation. However there is some room for improvement. Generally, safety and public spaces in and around the downtown were noted as desired improvements in the park system.

*Figure 5.3: How would you rate the quality of Wooster’s recreational department? (1 highest, 5 lowest)*



*Figure 5.4: What would encourage you to come downtown more often?*



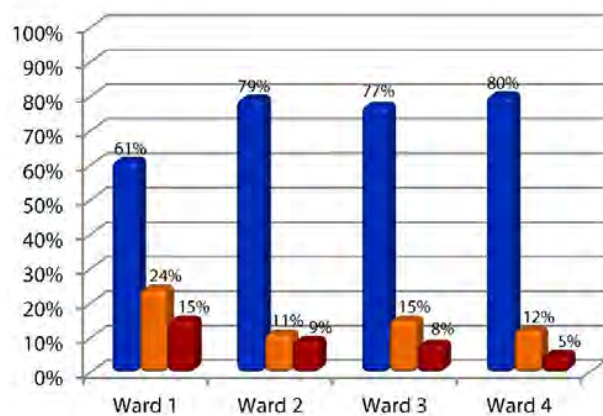
*There is a desire to add additional public/green space in and around the Downtown to further promote the economic success and pedestrian friendliness of the area.*

Wooster residents indicated a desire for new public space in and around the Downtown, including pocket parks, 'green' infrastructure, and community event space (see Figure 5.4). These responses indicated a need for green space that would attract more people to Downtown and create more opportunities for public programming and special events that add to the entertainment and economic value of the area.

*Figure 5.5: How important is it to you that the community be connected by sidewalks, bike paths, and recreational trails?*



*Ward Breakdown*



Also as indicated in Figure 5.4, 6.2% of respondents to the survey indicated that parks and recreational opportunities would encourage them to go Downtown more often.

*Citizens desire to strengthen local connections throughout the City by creating a complete network of bike paths and greenways.*

Over 50% of the telephone survey respondents indicated it as very important that the community be connected by sidewalks, bike paths, and recreational trails.

Online conversations indicated a strong need for non-motorized connections throughout the City. These discussions also indicated a disconnect between different parks in Wooster. Residents would like alternative connections between parks and recreational opportunities that would create a more cohesive network of parks.

*Enhancing park security and safety should be a priority to ensure a welcoming atmosphere for all age groups.*

Generally, the residents value their parks and have expressed the desire to increase the level of park activity throughout the City. However, many are troubled about the extent of park security at night. In order to maximize the usage of parks and attract a population with a wide demographic range, park safety and security needs to be considered as the City moves forward.

*Citizens have mixed thoughts regarding park improvements and developments.*

Some residents would prefer to enhance the quality of the existing parks rather than adding more parks to the City. Many have suggested improving the current parks by adding bicycle and walking paths to increase accessibility and convenience, implementing amenities to underserved parks, and promoting safety and security.

However, citizens have also proposed ideas regarding new park developments. Some have expressed that the existing parks are not well-dispersed throughout the City and that the focus of park development should be directed to the north and northeast part of town.

# 5.3

## current trends

*Communities are adopting placemaking strategies to create new park spaces that are dynamic and engaging, balancing recreation, interactive play, and passive spaces in a dynamic environment that serves a variety of age groups and abilities.*

Placemaking is a collaborative community process that highlights and capitalizes on local assets and potential to create interesting public spaces that serve common needs. Placemaking creates spaces that provide the medium for interaction which merges community values and goals. Parks provide a key tool for placemaking in cities by creating destinations and unique public spaces that increase community interaction.

*There is a growing trend to create new urban like public spaces in suburban and exurban communities to serve as places of entertainment and gathering. These spaces are typically heavily programmed with a variety of community events and activities to engage the community and grow the local economy.*

An important part of successful parks are the activities that take place within them including sporting events, community classes, and festivals. These programs benefit residents and provide the platform to fully utilize the park system. Appropriately programmed parks utilize the parks system throughout different seasons, creating a year round approach to park activity.

Parks and recreational services are often regarded as unimportant in city budgets because their cost exceeds their direct revenue. The benefits of parks and recreation services are instead measured by the social and economic impacts on the surrounding area and the community as a whole.

Home and business values of parcels bordering parks are generally higher than the surrounding area. This increased property values generates more tax revenue for the City. In many cases, construction of parks has almost doubled the value of surrounding properties. Parks and recreation services also act as a tourism attraction, generating revenue for a city by attracting outside visitors who spend their money within a city.

By investing in parks and recreation, cities can generate revenue for themselves while providing the social benefit

for the community that makes it a desirable place to live and raise a family.

*Creating new open space and passive parks and preserves is a growing trend communities are implementing to establish new economical ways of growing local park systems.*

Park preserves are dedicated areas of open space that have been dedicated as park space. These parks require no formal equipment and instead are left in their natural state. These parks are used as nature preserves that allow users to interact with the natural environment while getting exercise. Park preserves can be used by people of all ages and benefit the whole community. These are also frequently used by schools to teach students about nature.

Development of passive parks and preserves can be done at a low cost to the City, while providing high benefits to the community as a whole. These are simple and low-cost ways to utilize open land to enhance the park system as a whole. Parks and recreational services are often regarded as unimportant in city budgets because their cost exceeds their direct revenue. The benefits of parks and recreation services are instead measured by the social and economic impacts on the surrounding area and the community as a whole.

Home and business values of parcels bordering parks are generally higher than the surrounding area. This increased property values generates more tax revenue for the City. In many cases, construction of parks has

almost doubled the value of surrounding properties. Parks and recreation services also act as a tourism attraction, generating revenue for a city by attracting outside visitors who spend their money within a city.

By investing in parks and recreation, cities can generate revenue for themselves while providing the social benefit for the community that makes it a desirable place to live and raise a family.

*Many communities are creating partnerships with the private sector to create, enhance and maintain parks and public spaces.*

Public-private partnerships of park services are a way of utilizing private funding for operation, management and construction of park facilities. These partnerships can work in a number of ways, including:

- Concession services
- Activity programming
- Facility construction
- Programming

For the community, private partnerships relieve some of the stress placed on budgets by the parks and recreation department, making it easier to enhance current parks and expand the system if need be. For private companies, these partnerships allow them to give back to the community while gaining positive recognition.











# 5.4 plan principle + objectives



*Quality parks and public spaces with diverse opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and education for a variety of age groups and abilities.*

## RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

-  WOOSTER LEADERSHIP
-  PLANNING AND ZONING
-  CITY ENGINEER
-  PARKS AND RECREATION
-  POLICE DEPARTMENT
-  FIRE DEPARTMENT
-  CODE ENFORCEMENT
-  WAYNE COUNTY
-  MAIN STREET WOOSTER
-  CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
-  THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
-  OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
-  WOOSTER COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
-  PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

## TIMEFRAME

Short Term	1-3 years
Medium Term	3-6 years
Long Term	6-10 years
Ongoing	Action to be continuously addressed

## Objective PR.1 Preserve and expand open space areas.

### Action PR.1.1

*Promote the incorporation of open space in areas that are underserved.*

The City should analyze its location of parks in order to fully serve all residents and provide spaces for recreation and activity for all. Policy should be created to promote accessibility to parks for all residents.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action PR.1.2

*Support the development of the OARDC and the BioOhio Research Park through planned improvements to the area and low-impact land use planning around the complex.*

BioOhio and the OARDC should be buffered by low-impact green space and connected to the rest of the City by greenways. This will increase the overall attractiveness of the area while promoting connectivity and inclusion to the rest of the City. The creation of the greenway over or under Dix Expressway0 will better the connection between the OARDC and Downtown.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action PR.1.3

*Create standards to promote conservation style development to encourage preservation of natural areas.*

Policy should be established that requires the dedication of undevelopable land to be used as passive park space or natural preserves. This policy will ensure the preservation of natural areas while increasing overall park space for the City.



*Time Frame: Short - Mid Term*

### Action PR.1.4

*Require all new residential developments to create or dedicate park space or usable open space as a community amenity.*

### Action PR.1.5

*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.*

Policy should be established that holds natural areas for preservation in order to minimize development impact on the community while increasing park space. By strategically preserving this land, the City can create a network of greenspace that promotes healthy lifestyles and pedestrian connectivity. Adding greenspace to connect areas of interest will create a greenway network that will make Wooster one of a kind.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*



*Time Frame: Long Term/Ongoing*

## Objective PR.2 Be a leader in environmental stewardship



### Action PR.2.1

*Promote sound environmental practices through sustainable zoning and engineering standards.*

*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

By creating policy that protects vulnerable land from heavy development, the City can support environmentally-friendly development patterns such as cluster development that minimize infrastructure impact. By revising zoning and engineering standards to be more sustainable, Wooster can lessen its impact on the environment and be a healthier community. All engineering standards should be studied to maximize their long-term benefits of the City.

### Action PR.2.2

*Support programs which encourage the community to learn about and experience nature and natural resources (e.g., agricultural or watershed resource center).*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

Wooster should partner with the School District and the Parks and Recreation Department to create education programs about nature and the environment. These programs should include education about the benefits of preserving land, including agricultural resources.

### Action PR.2.3

*Support and promote green building standards as part of both public and private developments.*



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

Policy should be revised to set standards for sustainable building practices. Standards should establish requirements for all new private development to use "green" practices for construction as well as sustainable materials. All new public buildings should be LEED certified.

The City should offer incentives for private development that achieves certain LEED certifications.

### Action PR.2.4

*Work with local groups such as the OARDC or Trout Unlimited to make improvements to Grosjean Park that will enhance access and serve as a destination for environmental education and/or outdoor recreation.*

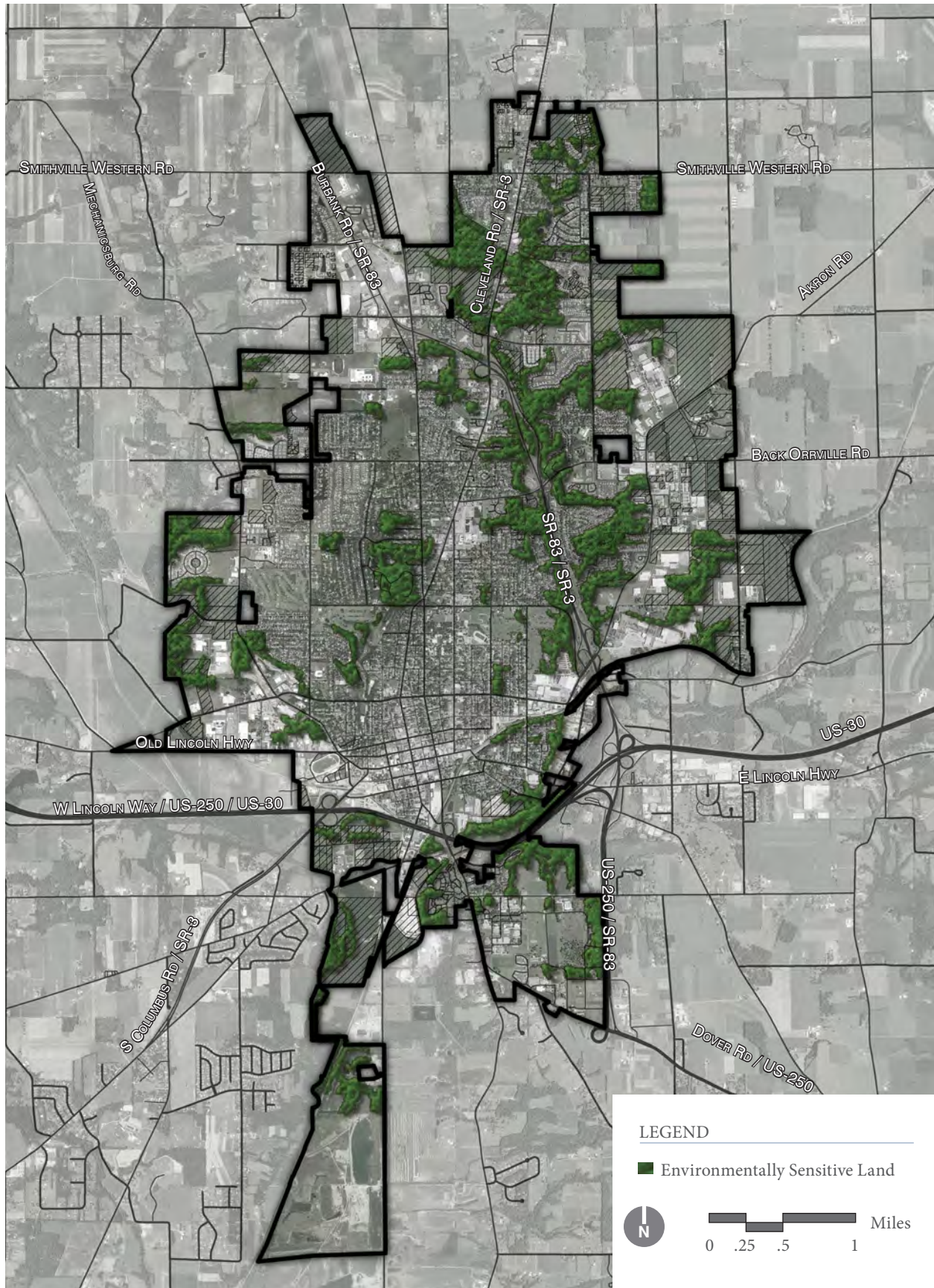


*Time Frame: Mid Term*

The proximity of Grosjean Park to the Little Apple Creek and Downtown make it a very valuable space for enhancements. By partnering with local groups, the City can use this space to educate while enhancing the function of the park itself. The



Figure 5.3 Undeveloped Areas



advancement of the park will establish it as a destination and resource.

### Action PR.2.5

*Work with the Wayne County Sustainable Energy Network to promote environmental stewardship in the region.*

Partnering with larger organizations like the Wayne County Sustainable Energy Network will allow Wooster to better promote themselves in the larger arena of environmental practices. Wooster's size and location make it an important asset to bettering environmental stewardship to the larger region.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

## Objective PR.3

### Maintain and enhance the existing park network.

#### Action PR.3.1

*Ensure new development near Little Apple Creek maintains naturalized, publicly accessible, passive park space.*

Little Apple Creek is one of Wooster's best natural assets and should be preserved at all costs. The area should be used as an asset to the whole community by making sure it is accessible to the public and undeveloped. Creating a bike path along the Creek will make it more attractive to residents while ensuring the area does not get developed.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

#### Action PR.3.2

*Identify low cost opportunities to create new park space in the western and northeast areas of the community with a focus on neighborhood parks.*

Policy should be created that enhances accessibility and access to neighborhood parks for residential areas to the west and northeast. Small, inexpensive parks should be constructed within these areas to ensure parks are evenly distributed throughout the City.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

#### Action PR.3.3

*Consider developing the Melrose Drive water tower site into park or open space.*

By taking advantage of already publicly owned land to establish new park space, the City can improve its overall system. Developing this land into park space can provide park access to new development in the northeast of Wooster.



*Time Frame: Mid Term*

**Objective PR.4**  
**Partner with the private sector, local organizations, and civic groups to help support new and existing park spaces, programming, and public events in the City.**

**Action PR.4.1**

*Work 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.*

Partnering with local organizations to host programs within Wooster’s park system will allow better utilization of the current system and provide more entertainment options for residents. Ideas for these partnerships could include park concert series, festivals, and art exhibits. These partnerships will create a more unified City while promoting community activities.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action PR.4.2**

*Collaborate with the Wayne County Fair Board to enhance the image and character of the area.*

Work together with the County Fair Board to create and maintain park space in and around the County Fair Grounds to make better use of the land when not in use. This allows the community to enjoy and use the area year round.



*Time Frame: Long Term*

**Action PR.4.3**

*Partner with the private sector (service clubs) to enhance and maintain existing park space.*

Establishing public-private partnerships for the park system will decrease the burden placed on the City to maintain the park system while adding vitality and activity to the parks. Ideas for partnerships include creating exhibits, operating concessions, and hosting and operating sports leagues.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

## Objective PR.5 Protect and enhance the Little Apple Creek greenway.

### Action PR.5.1

*Protect the riparian areas along the Creek.*

City Code should be revised to ensure vegetation and wildlife adjacent to the Creek is undisturbed and protected. Development around the Creek should be required to have minimal impact on the natural amenities of the riparian strip.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action PR.5.2

*Create new recreational and educational amenities and activities along the Creek.*

The City should create a multi-use path that runs alongside the Creek that does not disturb the present wildlife and vegetation. The Little Apple Creek Trail would provide recreational activities for the City and encourage visitors and residents to enjoy the beauty of the Creek.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action PR.5.3

*Support the creation of a “Friends of the Little Apple Creek” group for fundraising and volunteer labor, promotion, and security.*

This group would be responsible for promoting and fundraising an effort to keep the Creek beautiful and active. Members will work on a volunteer basis to maintain the Creek’s natural state while improving its surroundings.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action PR.5.4

*Work with Trout Unlimited to create or attract an angling or conservation event.*

Trout Unlimited is currently promoting the Creek as a high-quality angling destination in Ohio. The City should continue to work with Trouts Unlimited to help improve and promote the watershed as a regional destination for angling.



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*





## 6. UTILITIES & PUBLIC SERVICES

Utilities and public services are an important factor in the quality of a community, impacting and defining many community elements including land use and environmental systems. Modifying utility systems requires understanding its impact on land use policy, physical growth, and natural and social environments. Public services greatly affect the image, safety, and security of the community.

This chapter provides an overview of the existing utilities and public services in Wooster and considers public input and current trends to create a plan that maintains and improves these systems in the future.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

# 6.1

## existing conditions

- A number of water system improvements are planned in order to provide a high level of service to meet current and future demands.
- The City has been actively working to create a dedicated (separated) storm sewer system and to reduce the overall impact on the system through the integration of 'green' stormwater management practices.
- The existing sanitary sewage treatment plant has enough capacity to meet the demands of planned population growth through 2020.
- Emergency services are centrally located near the Downtown, with planned expansion of new fire station locations to improve coverage and response times throughout the City.

# 6.2

## public input

- Residents are satisfied with the current delivery of water and place a high priority on the continued maintenance and expansion of the water system.
- Residents support the integration of new 'green' stormwater management methods.
- Proper sewer maintenance and management in older areas should be considered in the future.
- Increased police presence is a priority among residents.
- Code enforcement should continue to be a priority with a focus in and around the Downtown.



# 6.3

## current trends

- Bioswales and rain gardens are becoming an increasingly popular way to reduce the amount of stormwater entering the system.
- Methods of downspout disconnection are particularly beneficial in cities with combined sewer systems.
- Advancements in technology have led to smarter utility delivery and monitoring, creating more efficient utility systems.
- The wide adoption of mobile devices has made updating to a next-generation 911 system a priority for many communities.
- Sharing city services is a cost effective method of reducing repetitive services provided within a service region.

# 6.4

## plan principle + objectives

### *SERVE EFFECTIVELY*

High quality public services and utilities that serve residents effectively, and support future economic growth and expansion.

#### **Objective US.1**

Ensure the expansion and improvement of the City's infrastructure is a priority when making future planning and policy decisions.

#### **Objective US.2**

Promote green stormwater management methods when improving or expanding the existing stormwater management system.

#### **Objective US.3**

Encourage above ground stormwater facilities with dual purposes including naturalized open spaces and public recreation.

#### **Objective US.4**

Develop projects, programs, policies, and procedures to enhance the overall quality of the local watershed.

#### **Objective US.5**

Emergency services should be carefully expanded to ensure the health and safety of residents.

#### **Objective US.6**

Code enforcement should be a focus in and around the Downtown.

# 6.1

## existing conditions

### Utilities

As one of the basic functions of government, the design, implementation, and maintenance of critical public utilities should remain a City priority. Traditionally, the City and the community has placed a high priority on the maintenance and development of the City's utilities. The following is a brief synopsis of the current conditions and plans for these services.

#### Water

*A number of water system improvements are planned in order to provide a high level of service to meet current and future demands.*

The water distribution system continues to be of high importance as the City plans for future growth and development. Based on current and future population trends, it is expected the City will grow to approximately 27,424 by 2020. The Water Distribution System General Plan was prepared to plan for future population growth and outlines a number of critical improvements that will support future development and improve the condition and function of the existing water infrastructure. Since the adoption of the Plan, the City has made considerable progress in maintaining and updating this critical piece of infrastructure.

#### Storm Sewer

*The City has been actively working to create a dedicated (separated) storm sewer system and to reduce the overall impact on the system through the integration of 'green' stormwater management practices.*

Storm and sanitary sewers throughout the City were originally constructed as a combined system, where large storm events could overload the system and result in untreated runoff into local waterways. To address this problem, the City has pursued a plan to separate all storm and sanitary sewers and has completed almost all separation of the combined system.

To reduce the overall demand on the system, the City has also started to incorporate 'green' infrastructure standards that will reduce the amount of water entering the storm system. These systems employ a range of tactics including curbless streets, bioswales, and pervious pavement.

### Sanitary Sewer

*The existing sanitary sewage treatment plant has enough capacity to meet the demands of planned population growth through 2020.*

Access to sanitary sewer service can be one of the largest limitations to future growth and development, and the City currently has enough excess treatment capacity to meet the demands of significant growth and development (see Figure 6.2).

In total, the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) treated a total of 1.536 billion gallons of wastewater with the average daily flow being 4.197 million gallons per day receiving a peak daily flow of 15.86 million gallons on January 27, 2012. This represents a total decrease of 670 million gallons from 2011. In addition, the plant removed 3.9 million pounds (design is 5.02 million pounds) of biological oxygen demanding (BOD) substances and 5.9 million pounds (design is 3.65 million pounds) of suspended solids from the wastewater. The design of the facility is for 7.5 million gallons per day with a hydraulic maximum of 27 million gallons.

In contrast to the wastewater treated at this facility the Water Treatment Plant produced on average 3.247 million gallons per day. The reasons for this obvious disparity of 2.753 million gallons per day between water produced and wastewater treated in 2009 is attributed to a combination of precipitation entering the WPCP through the combined sewer system, collection system infiltration, and unmetered sources. The infiltration component of this disparity continues



to be addressed through the implementation of a sewer separation program. Unmetered sources are being identified and metered as part of the continuing meter upgrade program, however, some areas of the system (i.e. Killbuck South Sewer District and some areas in Madisonburg) will not be metered as they are sewer only accounts and receive a flat rate billing.

*Figure 6.1: Existing Water Towers, City of Wooster*

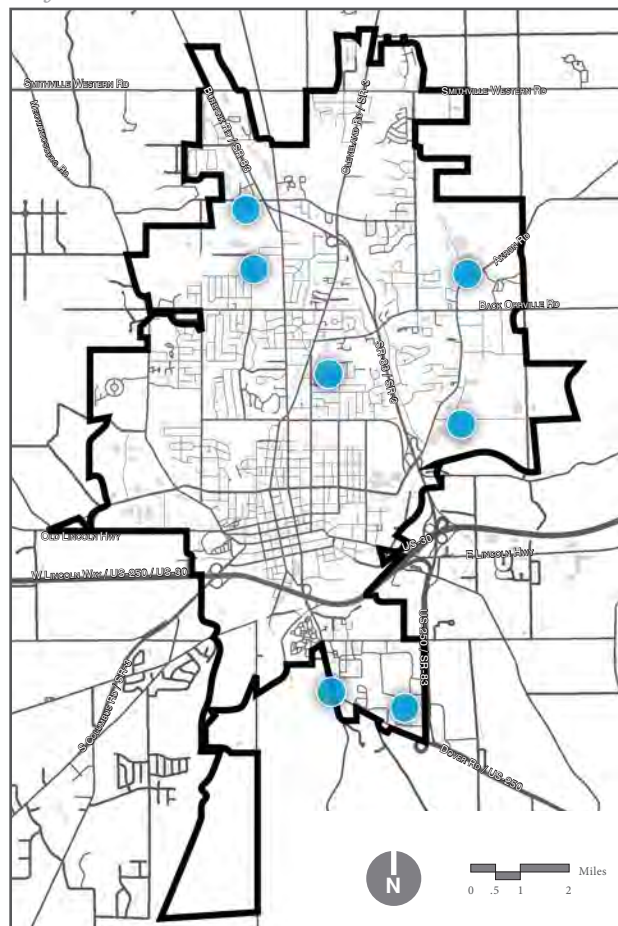
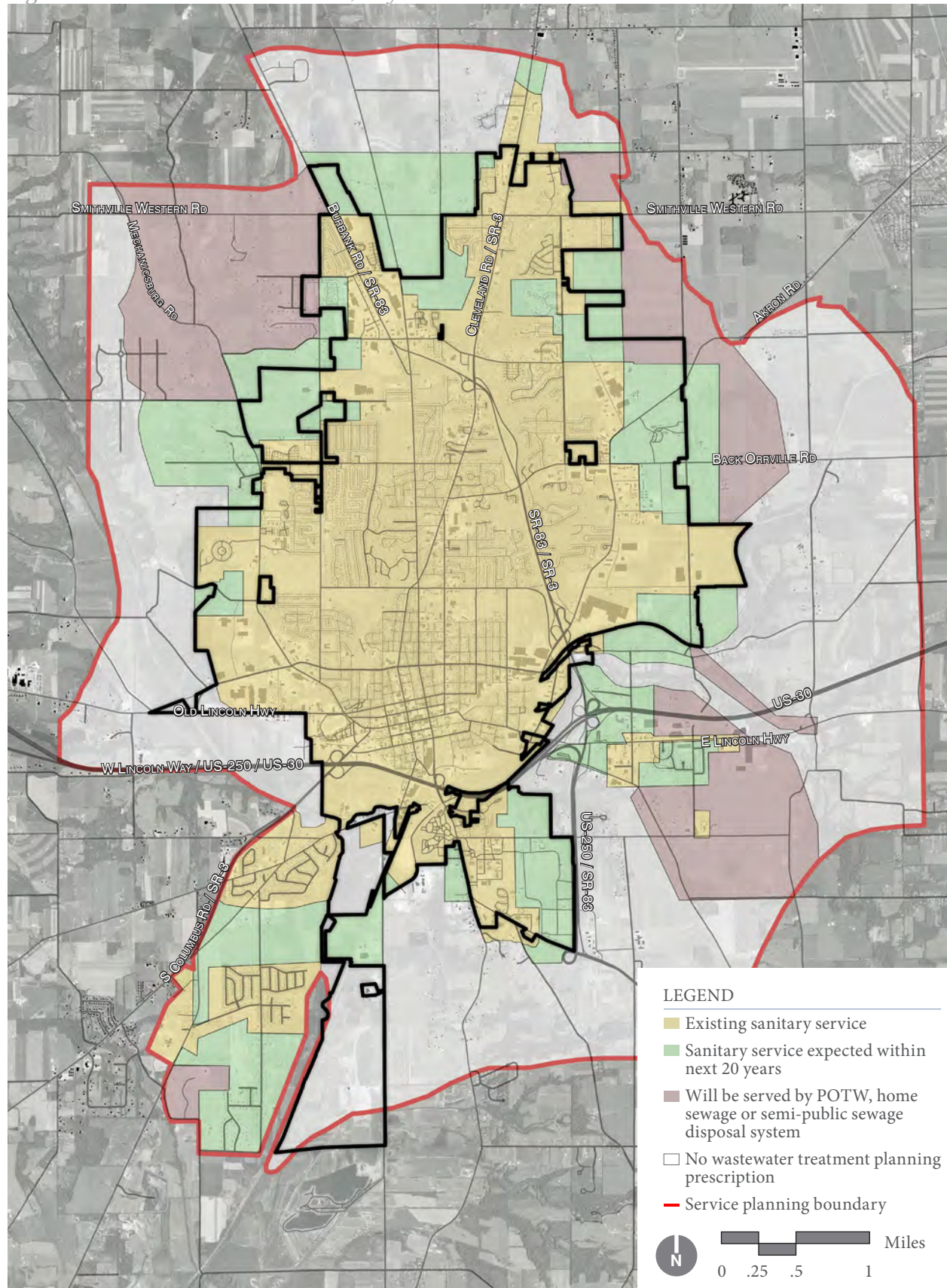


Figure 6.2: Sewer Service Boundaries, City of Wooster



## Public Services

### Emergency Services

*Emergency services are centrally located near the Downtown, with planned expansion of new fire station locations to improve coverage and response times throughout the City.*

The location of the police station Downtown is within close proximity to a high number of residents and businesses (see Figure 6.2). Because police units operate away from the central station on a continual basis, the response time is affected less by the number of stations than it is by the number of units. Police service could be strengthened by the addition of police substations that

would provide shorter travel times to outlying portions of the City.

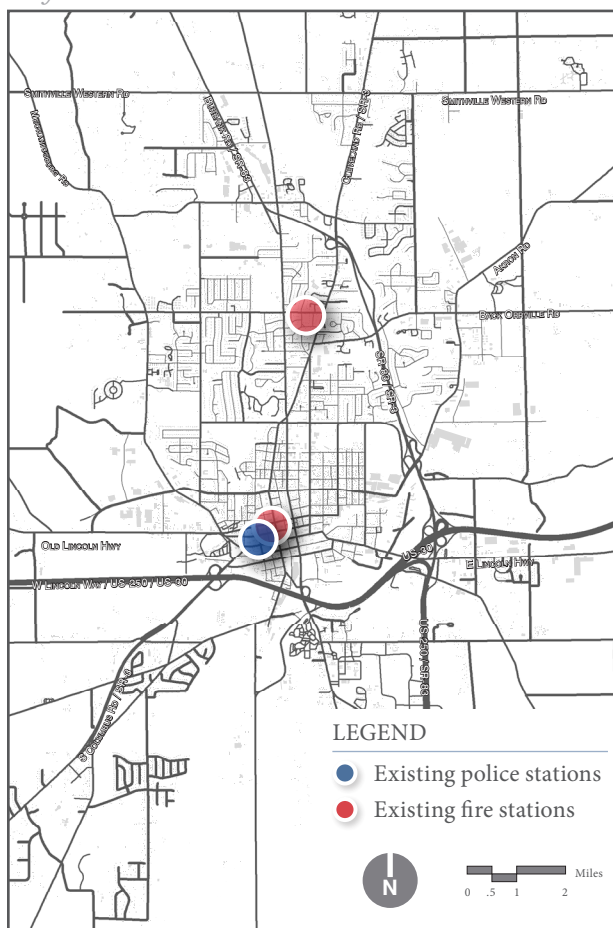
Response times are the most important aspect to fire and emergency medical services and should receive the highest priority when analyzing conditions of the system. Factors that effect response time include location, area of service, and surrounding land uses.

The *Fire Station Study and Master Plan (2007)* identified delays in response times for fire and EMS. Delays were attributed to crowded facilities, delays in dispatching, and the large size of the ‘fire districts.’

Wooster has two fire stations within the City that service the entire city limits. The department also provides mutual aid to many communities and townships across a large area surrounding Wooster.

The *Fire Station Study and Master Plan* indicated that Station 1 is located in an appropriate location Downtown and is the proper size to handle truck ingress/egress. Station 2 is located to the north on East Highland Avenue, but is smaller. This station’s location is within a single family residential district, but is not large enough to provide adequate service to the surrounding area.

*Figure 6.3: Existing Police and Fire Stations, City of Wooster*



# 6.2

## public input

### Utilities

#### Water

*Residents are satisfied with the current delivery of water and place a high priority on the continued maintenance and expansion of the water system.*

On a scale of one to five, with one being excellent and five being poor, the telephone survey showed that the public rated water utility at an average of 2.55 (1 highest, 5 lowest).

Response from the public through the open house and Steering Committee meetings indicated a need to prioritize the continuation of high quality, reliable water service throughout the City. As development and redevelopment within the City continues, water infrastructure should be prioritized to accommodate growth.

#### Storm Sewer

*Residents support the integration of new 'green' stormwater management methods.*

Residents agree that future stormwater infrastructure needs to minimize system costs while making Wooster a better and cleaner place. 69% of the 300 telephone survey respondents stated that focusing on green practices and policies was important or very important to making Wooster a more efficient and sustainable community.

An efficient stormwater system will serve the dual purpose of lowering hard infrastructure costs while promoting sustainable design features that add to the character of the City. The use of rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, and porous surfaces are examples of how 'green' infrastructure may be integrated into the City's operations.

Figure 6.4: Ward Map

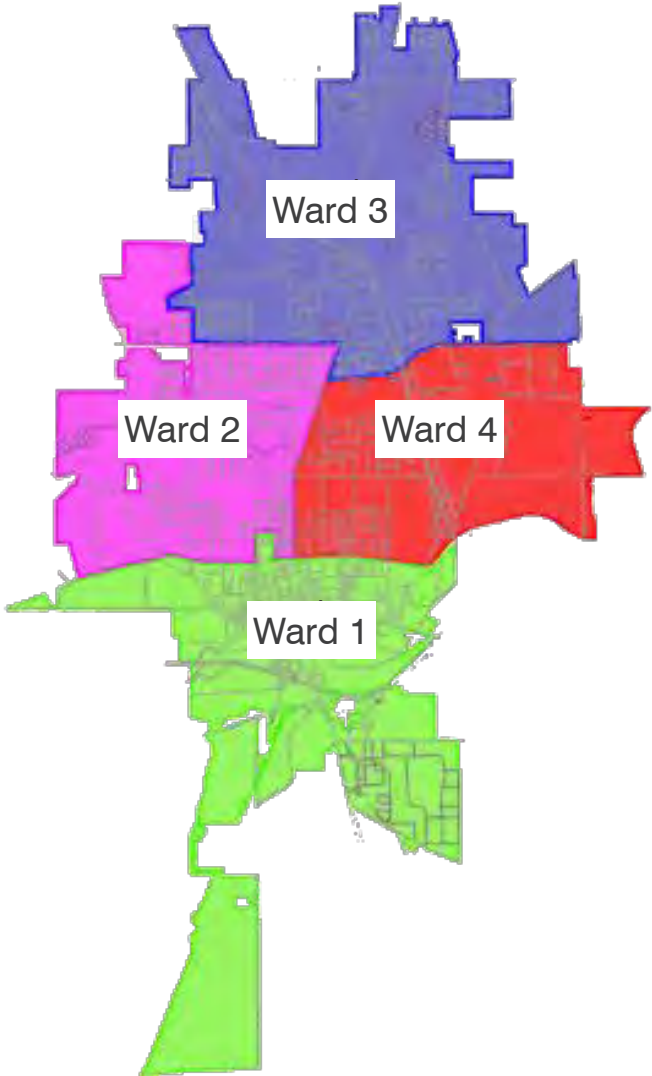


Figure 6.5: How would you rate the quality of Wooster's sanitary sewer service? (1 highest, 5 lowest)

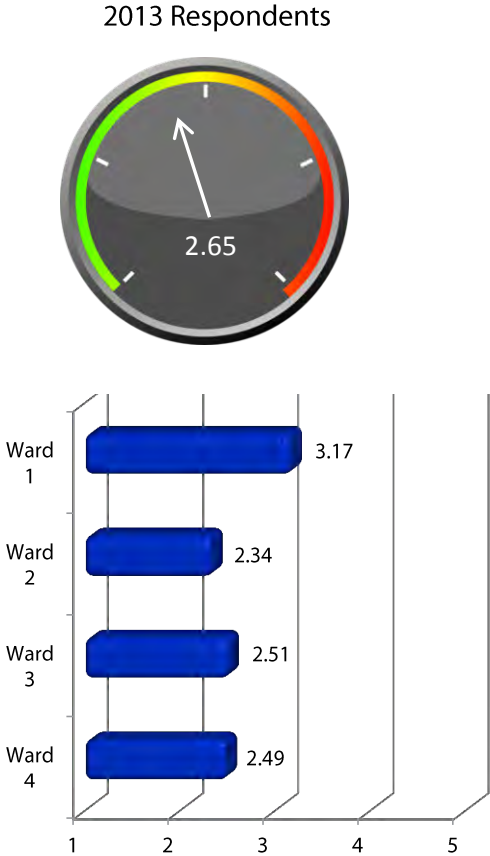
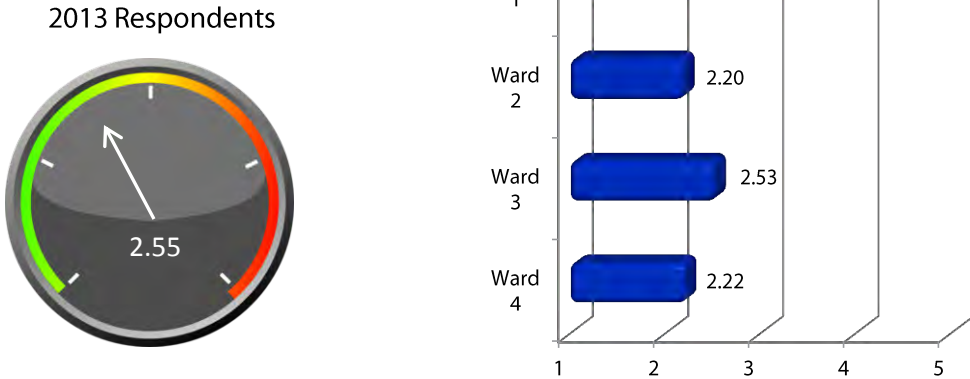


Figure 6.6: How would you rate the quality of Wooster's water service? (1 highest, 5 lowest)



### Sanitary Sewer

*Proper sewer maintenance and management in older areas should be considered in the future.*

Residents rated sanitary sewer service at 2.65, indicating an overall satisfaction with the service in Wooster. Their concerns with the system included maintaining and managing sewer systems in some of the older neighborhoods around Downtown in order to promote future development and redevelopment within these areas.

Throughout meetings and conversations with the public, concern for utility issues were not mentioned often. This is a sign of overall satisfaction by the current services offered by the City.

### Public Services

#### Emergency Services

*Increased police presence is a priority among residents.*

While citizens are content with the quality of police service within the City, there was a minor drop in overall satisfaction from the survey conducted the prior year. Residents and stakeholders expressed a need for stronger police presence in the City, specifically at the south end and in the Downtown area.

While residents rated the overall Fire Department as above average, the department experienced a 0.5 point drop in the perception of service quality from previous year's survey.

Survey respondents in Ward 2 generally rated emergency services from 0.5 to 1.0 points better than the other three wards, indicating a discrepancy in the perception of service level of areas within the City.

*Code enforcement should continue to be a priority with a focus in and around the Downtown.*

According to the telephone survey, many residents find property maintenance to be an issue and believe it should be targeted in the south end of Downtown. Statements made throughout the public input process identified enforcement of property maintenance issues as a priority for maintaining and promoting the unique character of Wooster.

Figure 6.7: How would you rate the quality of Wooster's Police Department? (1 highest, 5 lowest)

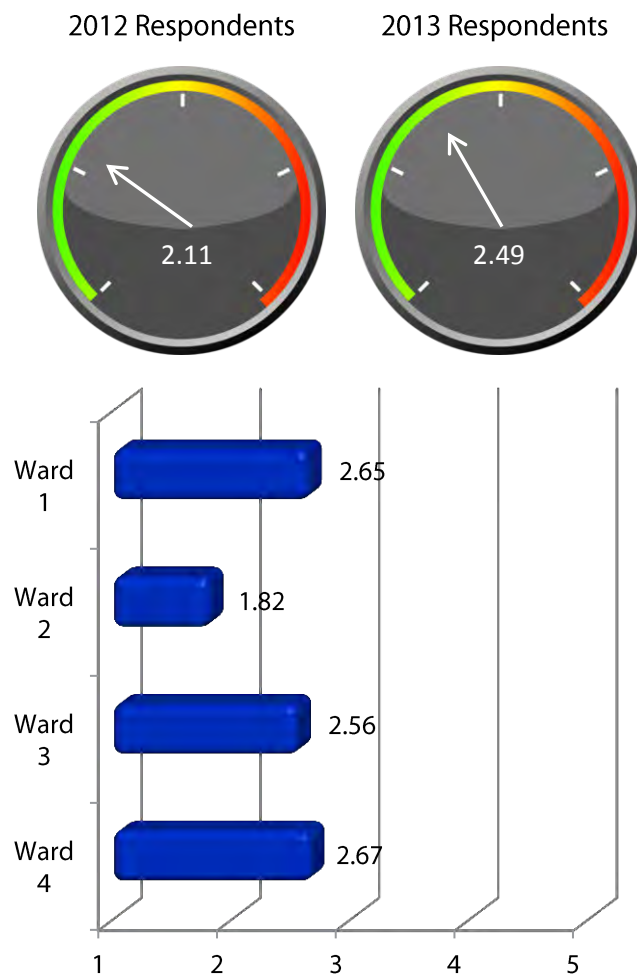




Figure 6.8: How would you rate the quality of Wooster's Fire Department? (1 highest, 5 lowest)

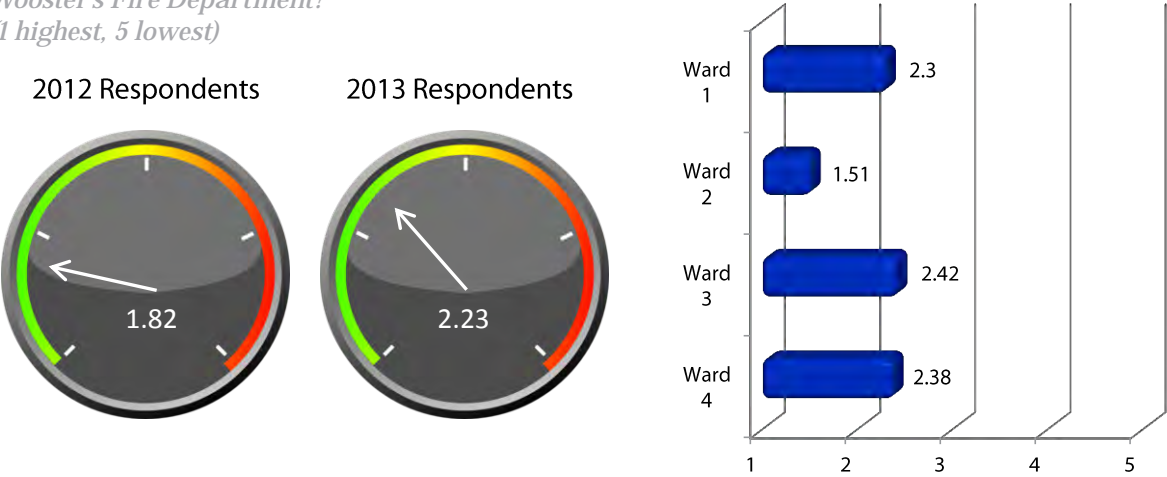
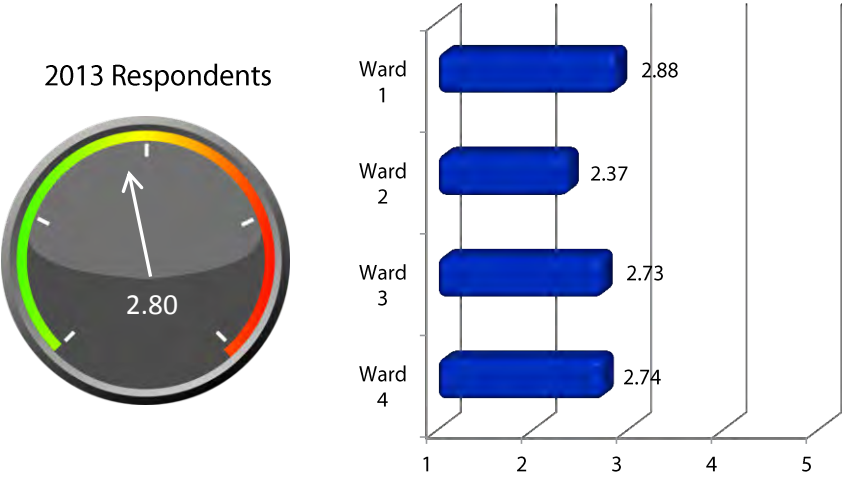


Figure 6.9: How would you rate the quality of Wooster's Property Maintenance Code Enforcement? (1 highest, 5 lowest)



# 6.3

## current trends

### UTILITIES

Recent trends in public utilities have shifted toward cleaner and sustainable methods that are efficient, effective, and financially balanced. This section contains a number of methods that should be considered as upgrades to the existing infrastructure are made or new expansion is conducted.

#### Bioswales and Rain gardens

*Bioswales and rain gardens are becoming an increasingly popular way to reduce the amount of stormwater entering the system.*

Bioswales are vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Vegetated swales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows, which then permeates into the soil, diverting stormwater from the system. As linear features, vegetated swales are particularly suitable along streets and parking lots.

Rain gardens (also known as bioretention or bioinfiltration cells) are shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from rooftops, sidewalks, and streets. Rain gardens mimic natural hydrology by infiltrating and evapotranspiring runoff.



*Rain garden used within a parking lot to reduce stormwater runoff.*



*Bioswale alongside roadway.*

### Downspout Disconnection

*Methods of downspout disconnection are particularly beneficial in cities with combined sewer systems.*

Downspout disconnection refers to the rerouting of rooftop drainage pipes into rain barrels, cisterns, or permeable areas instead of storm sewers. Downspout disconnection stores stormwater and/or allows stormwater to infiltrate into the soil, reducing the overall impact of surface runoff.

### Smart technology

*Advancements in technology have led to smarter utility delivery and monitoring, creating more efficient utility systems.*

Utility providers have begun to incorporate sensing and tracking technology to better manage water, sewer and stormwater flows. These advancements can make it easier to anticipate spikes in system use, as well as system problems that will inevitably arise. Utility providers have also standardized wireless technologies for meter reading, which allows a cost effective method for collecting usage data from consumers.

The incorporation of smart technologies has allowed consumers to monitor and reduce their amount of utility usage, notably to reduce the amount of electricity, water, and gas usage.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### Updated 911 Infrastructure

*The wide adoption of mobile devices has made updating to a next-generation 911 system a priority for many communities.*

Past 911 systems were built to track emergency location using telephone land lines as the point of emergency. Knowing the exact location of emergency calls made it easy to deploy emergency response units to the area. Since emergency calls can now be made from almost any location using mobile devices, it is more difficult for these existing systems to track emergency call locations. Existing 911 systems are now being updated to accommodate new methods of communication including mobile phone calls, text, and multimedia messages. Introducing text-to-911 capabilities into

the 911 system give people access to emergency communications in situations where a voice call could put the caller at risk. This also provides access to emergency response to those with disabilities who are unable to make a voice call. While text and multimedia messages are not a substitution for a voice call, they provide a wider scope of accessibility in emergency situations.

### Shared Services

*Sharing city services is a cost effective method of reducing repetitive services provided within a service region.*












With changing revenue streams from both State and Federal funding sources, communities are looking for ways to decrease spending while maintaining or enhancing the delivery of city services. One way cities achieve this is through shared services with neighboring jurisdictions. Through the sharing of services, both entities are able to reduce cost and maintain or enhance the delivery of services. In Ohio, shared services are often coordinated through cities and townships for fire protection and cities and counties for safety services.

# 6.4 plan principle + objectives



*High quality public services and utilities that serve residents effectively and support future economic growth and expansion.*

## RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

-  WOOSTER LEADERSHIP
-  PLANNING AND ZONING
-  CITY ENGINEER
-  PARKS AND RECREATION
-  POLICE DEPARTMENT
-  FIRE DEPARTMENT
-  CODE ENFORCEMENT
-  WAYNE COUNTY
-  MAIN STREET WOOSTER
-  CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
-  THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
-  OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
-  WOOSTER COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
-  PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

## TIMEFRAME

Short Term	1-3 years
Medium Term	3-6 years
Long Term	6-10 years
Ongoing	Action to be continuously addressed

**Objective US.1**  
**Ensure the expansion and improvement of the City’s infrastructure is a priority when making future planning and policy decisions.**

**Action US.1.1**

*Implement the recommendations of the Water Distribution System General Plan.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action US.1.2**

*Plan for the expansion of the water delivery system through the placement of new water tanks and towers in areas of inadequate coverage and/or low pressure.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action US.1.3**

*Continue to separate combined storm and sanitary systems as part of regular maintenance and planned infrastructure projects.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Objective US.2**  
**Promote ‘green’ stormwater management methods when improving or expanding the existing stormwater management system.**

**Action US.2.1**

*Promote ‘green’ street standards as a method of reducing stormwater runoff.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Objective US.3**  
**Encourage above ground stormwater facilities with dual purposes including naturalized open spaces and public recreation.**

**Action US.3.1**

*Amend applicable City Codes to strongly encourage consolidated stormwater facilities that provide service to all parcels within a subdivision.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

This code revision should prevent subdivided parcels from establishing their own detention or retention basin facilities. Where possible, arrangements should be made to connect such facilities and open spaces to those of adjacent developments creating larger, contiguous areas of open space and/or stormwater facilities. Such a policy should not preclude or discourage the use of rain gardens or rain barrels.

### Action US.3.2

*Encourage the improvement of above ground stormwater facilities and surrounding open space to allow its dual function as public recreation space.*

Policies should be established by which such spaces could be developed as park space in new (or existing) developments, counting toward a developer’s park space dedication requirement. Surrounding open space should include attractive landscaping and public access and may include recreational facilities such as walking paths, a shelter or gazebo, a playground, and perhaps a dock or boardwalk. The developer and the City would negotiate the financial arrangement for facility maintenance and upkeep.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

### Action US.3.3

*Create a policy to encourage developers to build a more diversified collection of flood water and stormwater storage and treatment facilities.*

Facilities should be encouraged to include stormwater retaining (constructed) wetlands, ponds with wetland planting shelves, meadows, and dual purpose grass recreation or athletic fields that may serve as storage space for particularly large storm events.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

## Objective US.4

**Develop projects, programs, policies, and procedures to enhance the overall quality of the local watershed.**

### Action US.4.1

*Identify ditches and streams throughout the City and develop recommendations as for whether these streams should be protected, restored, or reconstructed.*

Protect waterways and encourage developers and the City to restore or reconstruct waterways that need improvement.



*Time Frame: Long Term/Ongoing*

### Action US.4.2

*Restore ditches and streams that are recommended to be restored and place them in a conservation easement to protect these investments.*

Those developing properties adjacent to or including a ditch or stream should be strongly encouraged to reconstruct the corridor as a part of their project, relocating the waterway if needed. City-led projects adjacent to or including a ditch/stream corridor should include the restoration or reconstruction of similar ditch/stream corridors. When completed, the restored or reconstructed ditch/stream should be placed within an easement held, if possible, by the City.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Action US.4.3**

*Little Apple Creek should be enhanced and promoted as a unique environmental asset in the community.*

Ditches/streams that should be protected should be integrated into current or future parks or developments. When these areas are developed, the City should consider the promotion of conservation or cluster type development to protect the overall quality of the watershed and surrounding greenspace.



*Time Frame: Ongoing*

**Objective US.5**

**Emergency services should be carefully expanded to ensure resident’s health and safety.**

**Action US.5.1**

*Enhance police coverage and presence in and around the Downtown during evening and night hours.*



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

**Action US.5.2**

*Identify new areas within the community to build new, relocate or expand stations for fire, police, or related operations.*



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Objective US.6**

**Code enforcement should be a focus in and around the Downtown.**

**Action US.6.1**

*Focus on property maintenance issues in older neighborhoods around the Downtown.*



*Time Frame: Short Term/Ongoing*

**Action US.6.2**

*Create educational materials that inform residents about City property maintenance code.*



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Action US.6.3**

*Work with the local community leaders to develop a community service/clean-up day to assist homeowners who are seniors or disabled with property maintenance. As part of this event, the City should consider providing dumpsters or trash receptacles to support the neighborhood and the community in their clean-up efforts.*



*Time Frame: Short Term*

**Action US.6.4**

*Target repeat property maintenance offenders and work with the prosecuting attorney to develop short-term compliance strategies.*



*Time Frame: Ongoing*





## 7. PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Establishing Priority Development Areas allows the City to identify opportunities for development that can be catalysts for the enhancement of the surrounding area and the community as a whole. Analyzing and discussing these Development Areas provides a direction for how public dollars and projects can be aimed to advance private sector investment. Utilizing this approach,

the City can identify types of public projects that will support private sector investment in each Development Area. This also allows the City to preserve areas with the greatest development opportunity in order to strategically implement development that maximizes function and utility.

# 7.0

## introduction

The Priority Development Areas were identified by the Steering Committee based on a number of criteria, including their (re)development potential. The areas included some or all of the following characteristics:

- Underutilized land and/or buildings;
- Proximity to significant and essential land uses that can leverage additional economic opportunity;
- New opportunities to serve existing neighborhoods and districts;
- New opportunities to improve community identity;
- Significant economic development potential; and
- Opportunities to create a variety of housing choices and styles.

After careful consideration, the four Priority Development Areas described to the right were selected by the Steering Committee. A more detailed description of each Priority Development Area including development concepts and proposed character are described in the sections contained in this chapter.

As the City plans for the future, the focus areas should be considered a priority for City- and Developer-led infrastructure projects, as well as development incentives.

### Downtown

The Downtown Development Area is the cornerstone of the community. Continuing to preserve and promote the downtown as a destination will create a stronger sense of community, enhance the local identity, offer new housing options, and create a more vibrant economic environment. By creating a mix of uses and public spaces that attract a variety of residents and visitors, Downtown can continue to be a vibrant destination for the City and the region. Due to the historical character of Downtown, new development and redevelopment should be respectful of its context while accommodating new economic growth.

### Hospital District

The Hospital District consists of the area directly surrounding Wooster Community Hospital, including vacant and underutilized commercial properties to the north. By building on the medical industry and promoting the community, the City can create an economically vibrant and functional district that leverages an important community asset.

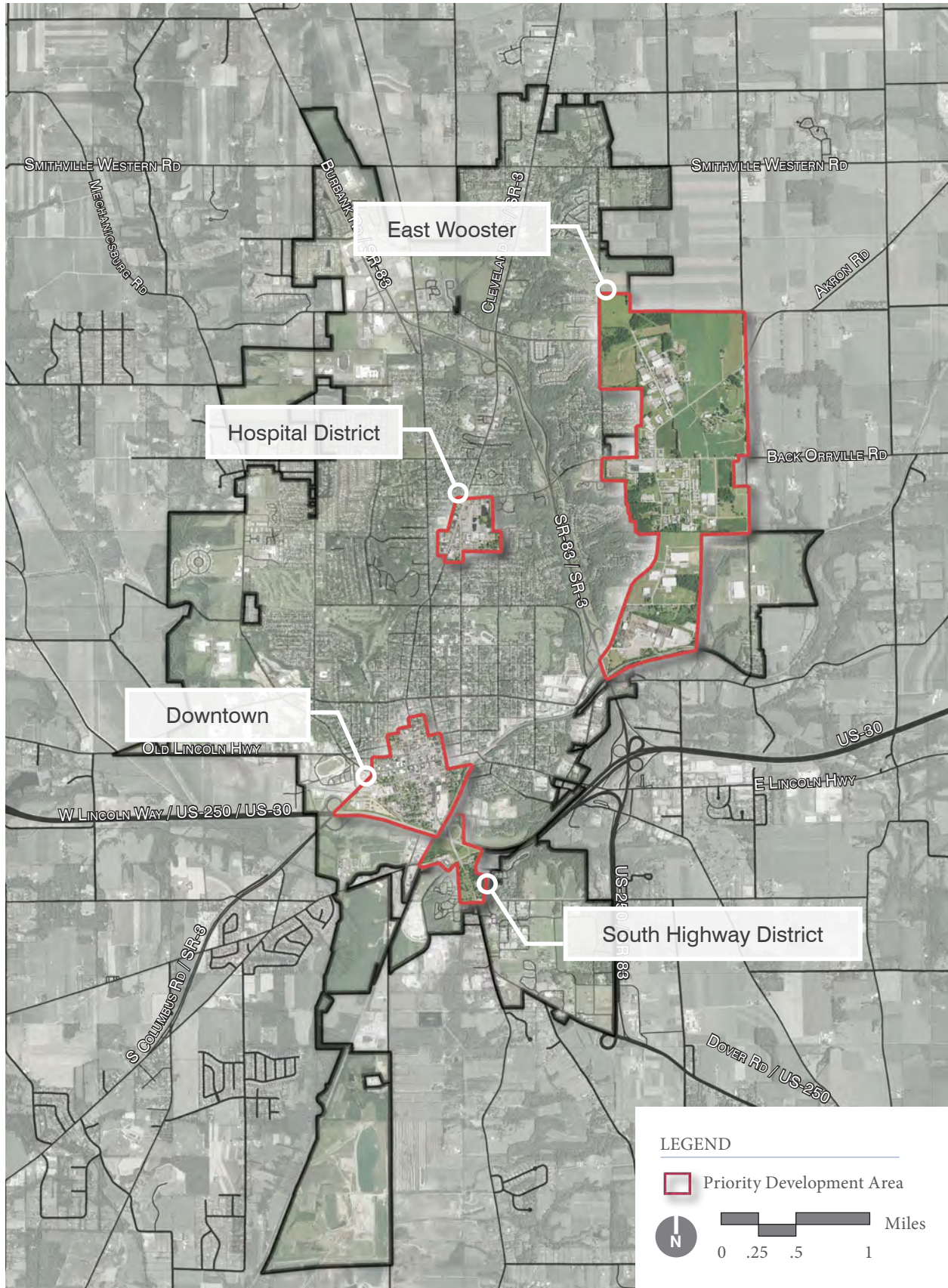
### South Highway District

The area between Downtown and the OARDC that encompasses the Madison Avenue exits from U.S. 30 serves as the primary entrance into the City of Wooster. Appropriate gateway and streetscape features should be designed and implemented in this area to form a connection between highway ramps and the City. This area should help to enhance community image by establishing a dynamic “front door” through both public investment and private redevelopment initiatives.

### East Wooster

Due to its proximity to highways and its availability of open space, East Wooster has drawn recent attention from new businesses and development. Serving as one of the economic hubs of the City, the area has attracted a number of manufacturing and industrial users who continue to provide a strong economic base for the City. Where the area has recently experienced new investment, new support services and enhanced image and brand will continue to elevate the economic competitiveness of the area.

Figure 7.1: Priority Development Area Map



# 7.1

## downtown

*Downtown Wooster is a dynamic commercial center that serves as the entertainment hub of the community. Redevelopment and development in this area should be planned appropriately to maintain its historic character while promoting infill and pedestrian orientation.*

Downtown is the historic center and community core of Wooster that plays a vital role in the identity of the City. While much of the historic character of the area is still intact, some vacant storefronts and disinvestment prove to threaten the character and economic viability of the area.

Downtown Wooster is comprised of a mixture of retail/commercial establishments and professional offices in historic buildings with small clusters of multi-family residential. This commercial core is surrounded by traditional neighborhoods to the north and underutilized commercial areas to the south.

A driving force for the preservation of the character and the success of the businesses within the downtown has been the continued effort of Main Street Wooster. While many Ohio communities have seen their historic centers lose businesses to newer auto-centric developments, Wooster has managed to maintain a vibrant downtown that attracts both visitors and businesses. Every effort should be made by the City and by Main Street Wooster to continue the significant progress they have made within the Downtown Core.

### Downtown Core

The Downtown Core of Wooster is the historic and civic hub for the City, serving as the backdrop for a thriving pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. A number of retail and dining options continue to draw residents and visitors

into the Downtown Core, and any future development occurring within the area should reinforce these current activities.

### East Liberty Street

Located to the east of the downtown core, East Liberty Street is an area that should be a target for continued public and private investments. The current development pattern is characterized by vacant buildings and surface parking lots, and is not at the highest and best use. The location of this area adjacent to the Downtown Core make it a target area to continue the development pattern of the Downtown by focusing on pedestrian oriented improvements and buildings, and to provide housing options within a short walk to the core.

### Traditional Neighborhood

While located mostly outside of the study area, the surrounding residential districts should complement the success of the Downtown. Residents located close to convenient, walkable amenities provide a stable base of customers for businesses within walking distance. Many of the historic homes within Wooster are located within this area, making it an attractive area for residents wanting to live close to downtown amenities, in an area with traditional neighborhood qualities.

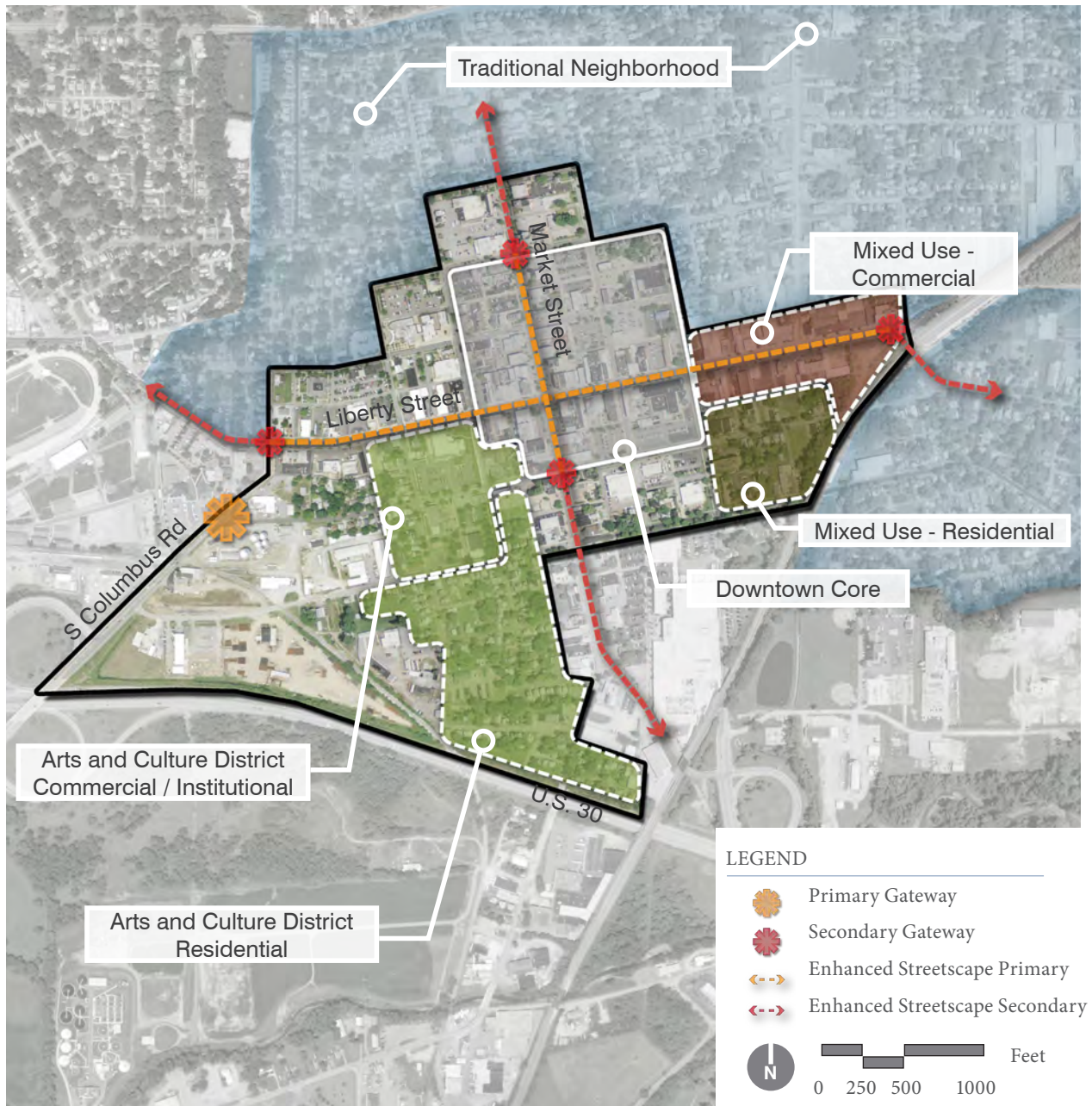
### Gateways

Primary and secondary gateways are indicated on Figure 7.2. The primary gateway, located at South Columbus Road, is intended to mark the entrance to the City from the highway. Secondary gateways located to the east and west of Liberty Street, as well as to the north and south of Market Street, are intended to signify entry into the downtown. Gateways can take the shape of entry features, signage, or enhanced landscape treatments.

### Arts and Culture District

The area south and west of the Downtown Core is currently occupied by outdated and underutilized properties and surface parking that detracts from the overall vitality of the downtown. By creating an innovative Arts and Culture District directly west of the Downtown Core, Wooster can add to its creative class and attract some of the Millennial population. This District would be complemented by a large residential district to the south that should be used to attract those working and creating in the area.

Figure 7.2: Downtown District Urban Framework Map



**Development Area: +/- 201 acres**

**Existing Land Use**

Commercial: 28.71 acres (21%)

Recreation: 4.88 acres (4%)

Public/Semi-Public: 16.01 acres (12%)

Office: 10.39 acres (8%)

Manufacturing: 31.26 acres (23%)

Multi-Family Residential: 10.22 acres (7%)

Single-Family Residential: 21.03 acres (15%)

## Development Intent - Downtown District



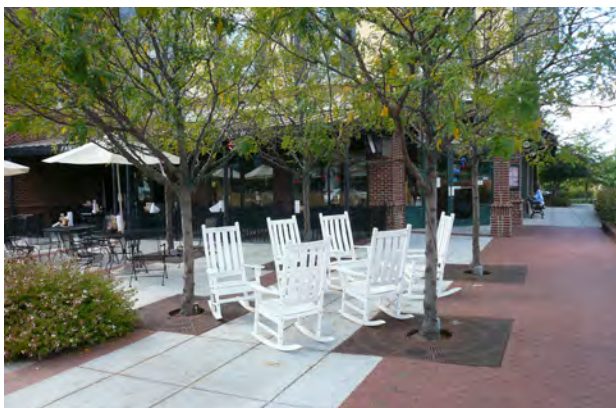
A mix of uses is encouraged with residential throughout the district and retail, commercial, and institutional uses focused along primary and secondary streets within Downtown Wooster. Uses can be organized vertically (within the same building) or horizontally (side-by-side), and should be focused on creating a pedestrian friendly environment. Residential uses on ground floors should be avoided along primary and secondary streets.



Streetscapes should be appropriately scaled with the pedestrian as the priority. Sidewalks should be spacious enough to provide a seamless pedestrian connection between the public and private realm. Sidewalks, pedestrian connections, crosswalks, curb extensions, and pedestrian signals should be used throughout the district. Streetscape improvements should include street trees, planters, and decorative street furniture such as public benches and street lights.



Site design for residential and commercial uses should encourage minimal setbacks with a primary façade that faces the street. Parking should be located to the rear in order to promote a pedestrian friendly streetscape to the front.



Public spaces encourage pedestrian activity along streetscapes and should include amenities such as street furniture, pedestrian-scale lighting, bike racks, trees, and trash receptacles. Public spaces should be designed to enhance the surrounding streetscape and adjacent structures and can include features such as outdoor dining, fountains, and recreation spaces which should be available for pedestrians.



**Residential Density** is an integral part of this Priority Development Area and residential buildings should range from two to four stories in height, built as either attached residential units at street level or above sidewalk retail or commercial uses.



**Pedestrian crossings** should be visible to oncoming traffic in order to increase safety and walkability. Crossings and curb ramps should also be accommodating to people of all abilities.



**Architectural character** should employ scaling and detailing that promote a pedestrian friendly environment. Design should complement existing historical character while employing high quality materials. Front façades should have a high level of transparency in order to activate and enhance the streetscape.



**Parking** should include both private and public parking. Private (on-site) parking shall be internal to each site, screened from the public right-of-way, and may be identified with signage at the discretion of the City. The impacts of on-site parking should be minimized through segmented parking areas, shared parking, rear parking areas, pervious pavement, and landscaping.

Figure 7.3: East Liberty Redevelopment Sub-Area - Existing Condition



### East Liberty Redevelopment

The intersection of East Liberty Street and Beall Avenue, including the area to the south, is a place that has been identified by the Steering Committee and the public as an area appropriate for infill and redevelopment. The area is currently a mixture of surface parking, vacant buildings, and retail uses.

The buildings in this area should support a mixture of uses, including retail, service, residential and office. Creating a pedestrian friendly environment is the overall intent of this area, which is accomplished by bringing the buildings closer to the street and providing an enhanced streetscape with pedestrian crossings and public space organized around the intersection. Parking should be located to the rear and sides of the buildings, minimizing the amount of parking lots that face the streetscape. The development pattern should be a continuation of the urban form that is seen throughout the downtown district.

### Concept Plan Elements:

1. Mixed-use Commercial
2. Mixed-use Residential
3. Enhanced Intersection and Streetscape
4. Gateway into the Downtown District





### Arts and Culture District

Located southwest of the Market Street and Liberty Street intersection is the Arts and Culture District. Anchored by several existing commercial and institutional uses, the Arts and Culture District is intended as a home to organizations, institutions and residents that are engaged in the arts or other culturally significant activities.

The commercial and institutional district to the north is in a prime location near the center of Downtown, and can take advantage of its proximity to the main thoroughfares in and out of the City. Every attempt should be made to retain and reuse existing historic buildings to maintain its existing character.

The residential district to the south can leverage its existing historic housing stock as a residential district with convenient access to the social and cultural amenities offered by the institutions in the district.

### Concept Plan Elements:

1. Arts and Culture District Commercial / Institutional
2. Arts and Culture District Residential

# 7.2 south highway gateway

*The integration of gateway features and streetscape elements between Downtown, U.S. 30, and the OARDC should aim to strengthen the image and character of Wooster by defining the “front door” to the City.*

This Development Area consists of the area surrounding the stretch of Madison Avenue, South Market Street, and South Bever Street that connects U.S. 30 and Downtown to the north and U.S. 30 and the OARDC to the south. Given the proximity to the highway, this area acts as the front door to the City for residents, Downtown visitors, College of Wooster students and family, and the OARDC commuters.

The location makes this area an important section of the City in which to design gateway features and streetscape elements that promote the identity of the community. Collectively, these gateways and the adjacent corridors into Downtown and the OARDC can help enhance the image of the surrounding area and the City as a whole.

## Bridge Enhancement

The Madison Avenue Bridge over U.S. 30 is the main connection between the OARDC and Downtown Wooster. This is an integral area to brand the community and better connect Wooster to the OARDC. In addition, the bridge and exit ramps provide a branding opportunity for the City along U.S. 30.

## Subarea A

Subarea A is the first vision of Wooster that visitors experience as they cross under the railroad towards Downtown. As it currently sits, this area is occupied by unattractive surface parking lots and poor landscaping.

## Subarea B

This Area is the next section of the entrance to Downtown, between Subarea A and the Downtown Core. It’s important that this area provides a transition between the manufacturing and industrial areas and Downtown.

## Madison Hill Corridor

Madison Avenue, south of U.S. 30, is bordered to the west by the Wooster Cemetery and to the east by mostly single-family housing. Two lanes carry traffic from the highway to the OARDC campus while a single lane runs the opposite direction. There are also currently no modes of pedestrian or bicycle-specific transportation along this area such as sidewalks or bike lanes. This stretch of road provides a unique opportunity to create a connection between Downtown and the OARDC by improving Wooster branding, streetscape elements, and transportation options. This area has the potential to be a greenway that promotes healthy transportation and connectivity.

## Little Apple Creek Path

Efforts should be made to reclaim the accessibility and function of the Little Apple Creek by adding a path that can accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. This path would add to the City’s non-motorized transportation network while improving the access to natural environments.

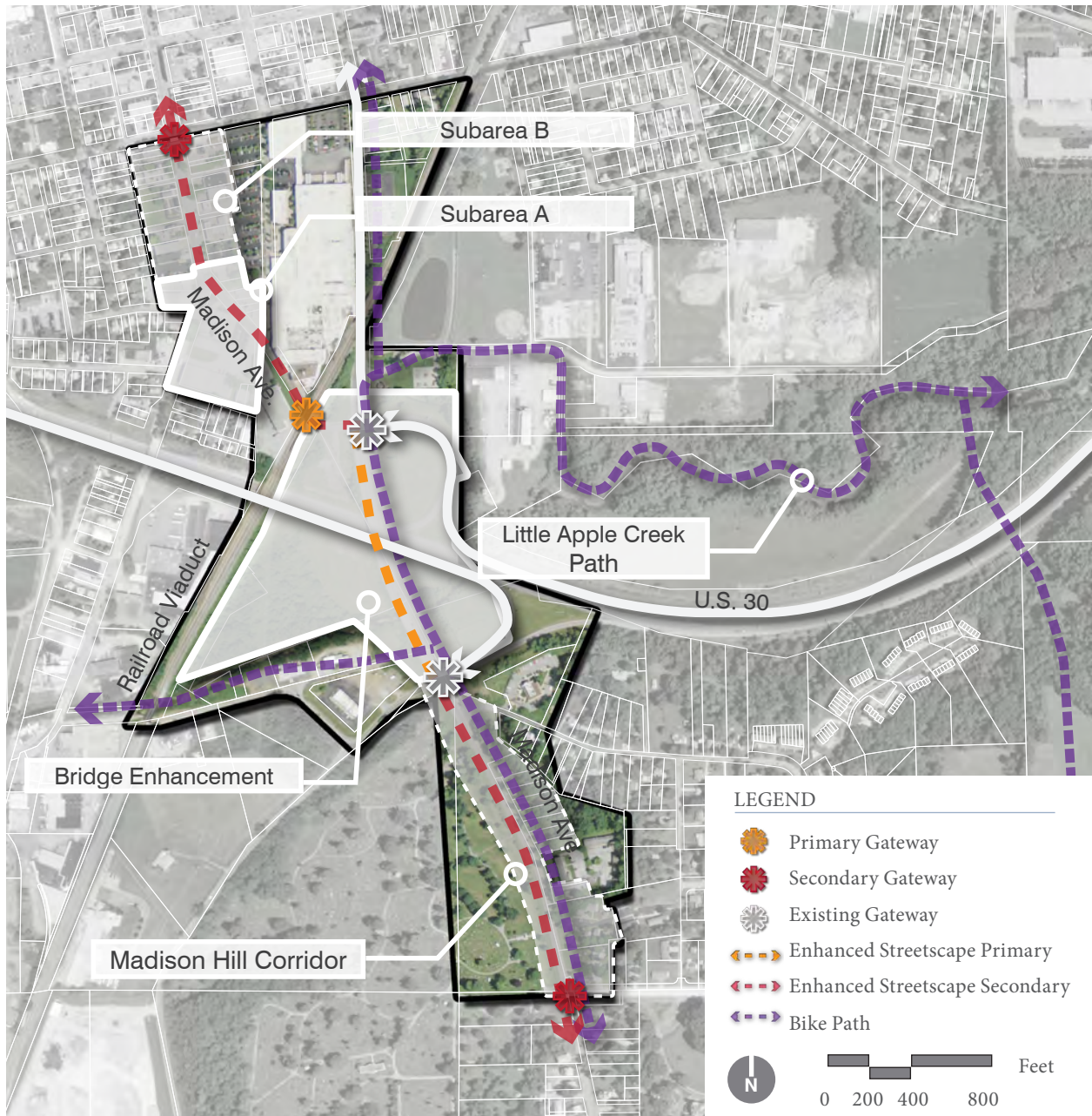
## Primary Gateway

The intersection of U.S. 30, South Bever Street, and Madison Avenue serves as the primary entrance from the highway into Downtown Wooster. Due to the complicated navigation from the highway to Downtown, it is important for this location to provide clear directions for visitors into Downtown. The area should also be used to promote community character and overall beauty by enhancing streetscape elements and gateway features.

## Secondary Gateway

The Madison Hill Gateway is the main entrance from U.S. 30 East to Downtown and the OARDC. This area gets heavy highway traffic, which the City should capitalize on to promote the brand and image of the community.

Figure 7.6: South Highway District Urban Framework Map



**Development Area: +/- 108 acres**

**Existing Land Use**

Commercial: 11.34 acres (19%)  
 Recreation: 2.03 acres (3%)  
 Community: 10.95 acres (18%)  
 Office: 0.59 (1%)

Manufacturing: 15.28 (26%)  
 Multi-Family Residential: 4.29 acres (7%)  
 Single-Family Residential: 3.32 acres (6%)

## Development intent - South Highway District



Gateway Features should be appropriately placed to create visual cues that reinforce the community brand and history. These features project the values of Wooster, while providing direction into Downtown. These features can range from landscape treatments seen from the highway to small signs or banners signifying the entry into the Downtown District.



Gateway Feature - Bridge enhancements and branding should be implemented to better utilize current assets and advance the image of the community. This space should work to motivate travelers along U.S. 30 to stop and visit Wooster.



Gateway Feature - Landscape and Signage should be added to enhance the image of the community and welcome visitors as they enter the City. Signage and landscape should provide a direction and path to Downtown. Image enhancements should act to create the best possible "first impression" of the City.



A mix of uses is encouraged both vertically and horizontally within this District including retail, service, office, and flex-office.



**Bicycle Connections** to the proposed Little Apple Creek Trail should be in the form of dedicated lanes or sharrows that are apparent to vehicles, establishing safe routes to and from Downtown and the creek trail.



**Streetscape** should provide accommodation for all modes of transportation including vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle. Streetscape elements should provide amenities for pedestrians while introducing residents and visitors to the downtown.



**Scale and architecture** should define the streetscape in a uniform manner, creating a solid edge of buildings throughout the district. Architecture should complement and provide an entrance to Downtown that welcomes visitors and enhances their experience.

Figure 7.7: Subarea A - Existing Condition



### Subarea A Development Concept

Because it is the first impression upon entering the City from under the viaduct, the properties surrounding the corners of Market Street, Madison Avenue, Buckeye Street, and Spruce Street should be of high priority for redevelopment. The current development pattern includes large expanses of surface parking buffering the street, and unimproved corners greeting visitors.

The concept to the right pulls the buildings closer to the road, while attempting to minimize the impact of parking. The unusual shape of the sites may not allow for a complete screening of parking by buildings, but landscaping screening may be added to address the street. Street trees should be used to soften the edge and to create a unified streetscape upon entering.

While not wide enough for development, the narrow corners do lend themselves as places for landscape or gateway improvements. The shape and orientation of the buildings are appropriate to accommodate a variety of uses, including flex-office, service, and retail. Every effort should be made to maximize the economic potential of the site and enhance the corridor.

Figure 7.8 Subarea A - Concept Plan



Preferred Uses:

- Retail
- Service
- Office
- Flex-Office

Concept Plan Elements:

1. Potential for gateway plaza, signage or landscaping
2. Buildings brought close to the street to frame the streetscape
3. Parking to the rear or sides of buildings
4. Street trees and pedestrian access

# 7.3

## hospital district

*Development within the Hospital District should leverage the success and economic opportunities created by the Hospital.*

The Hospital District consists of the Wooster Community Hospital and the surrounding area. This Development Area contains vacant commercial spaces and large areas of unattractive and environmentally unsafe surface parking.

The location of the Hospital District between Downtown, residential areas, and commercial strips to the north provides easy access from most of the City.

The location of the Hospital provides a unique opportunity for the area. This arrangement allows the City to capitalize on the health care industry, which is one of the fastest growing industries. By attracting medical offices, suppliers, and hotels, this industry can bring jobs to the City.

### Beall Triangle

The triangular portion of land bounded by Beall Avenue and Cleveland Road is currently a mix of office space, retail, and service establishments. The proximity to

the hospital and the Cleveland Clinic make this site appropriate for continued development of medical office and support services. The existing design of this space acts as a physical barrier in the middle of the area and deters pedestrian circulation and connectivity.

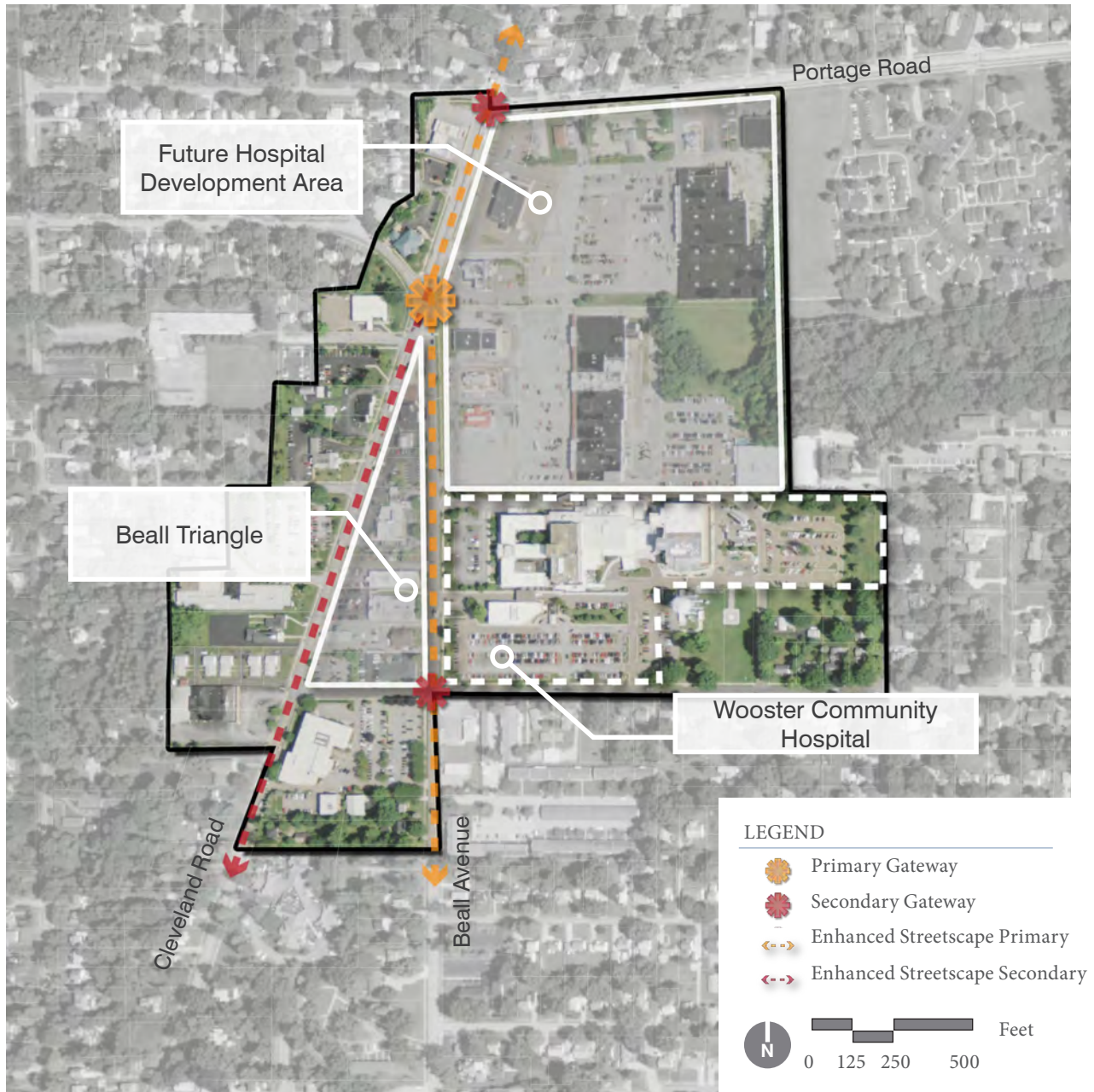
### Future Hospital Development Area

The hospital now owns the property directly north of its site and has recently demolished the existing retail structures on-site. Potential uses will include medical office, laboratories, outpatient facilities, and skilled nursing care. The retail development at the corner of Cleveland Road and Portage Road should be considered for additional hospital related development.





Figure 7.9: Hospital District - Urban Framework Map



**Development Area: +/- 73 acres**

**Existing Land Use**

Commercial: 20.56 acres (32%)

Recreation: 1.28 acres (2%)

Office: 25.62 acres (40%)

Vacant: 11.68 acres (18%)

Multi-Family Residential: 1.28 acres (2%)

Single-Family Residential: 3.34 acres (5%)

## Development intent - Hospital District



A **mix of uses** will build on the presence of the Wooster Community Hospital by attracting medical offices and other uses that support it including hotels and secondary care facilities. By using the Hospital to attract other medical businesses, Wooster can create a district that is both innovative and functional. Adding medical office space will increase economic activity and attract residents to live in the City.



**Site design** for medical, office, and commercial uses should encourage minimal setbacks with a primary façade that faces the street. Parking should be located to the rear or side in order to promote a pedestrian friendly streetscape to the front.

Buildings should be designed to address the streetscape by placing parking in the rear or side and screening surface parking where present. Buildings scaled at two to three stories should be promoted where possible.



**Gateway Features** should be appropriately placed to create visual cues that reinforce the community brand and history. These features promote the Hospital District while adhering to the brand and design of the City as a whole.



Streetscape should provide accommodation for all modes of transportation including vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle. Streetscape elements should be designed to prioritize pedestrian movement between uses to help connect the Hospital District.



Maintain connectivity for vehicular traffic that allows free traffic flow while promoting other modes of transportation including bicycling.



Enhanced pedestrian crossings should be visible to oncoming traffic in order to increase safety and walkability. Crossings and curb cuts should be accommodating to people of all abilities. Establishing safe pedestrian crosswalks across busy streets and intersections will create a better connected and cohesive District.

Figure 7.10: Beall Triangle Area - Existing

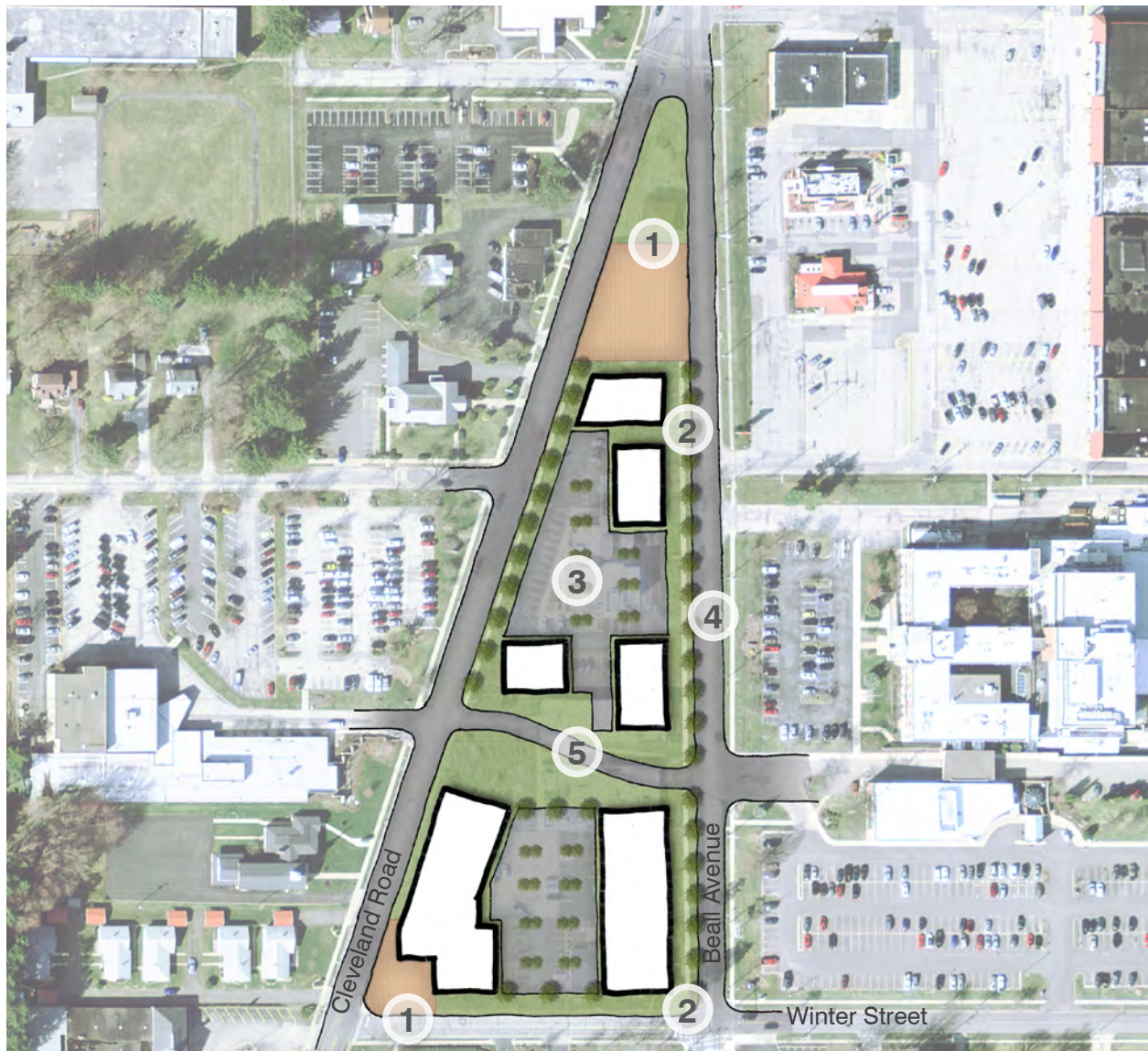


## Beall Triangle Redevelopment Concept

The Hospital District redevelopment concept leverages the existing Wooster Community Hospital as the foundation for future economic growth and development by clustering supporting land uses that reinforce the strength of the Hospital. The area has the potential to become a medical campus anchored by the hospital. To improve connectivity between the Hospital and the Cleveland Clinic and to provide better connectivity to local businesses, a connector road is proposed between Cleveland Road and Beall Avenue.

Streetscape beautification, enhanced pedestrian connections, and a gateway treatment are proposed for the area. Medical offices have been clustered near the Hospital that could offer a variety of specialized products and services. As the nature of medical care adjusts to more outpatient treatment, a hotel located nearby could give patients a convenient option for stays. Development capable of supporting a mixture of uses will allow flexibility to respond to specific market demands and can include uses such as restaurants, pharmacies, or retail.

Figure 7.11: Beall Triangle Area - Concept Plan



Preferred Uses:

- Medical Office
- Hotel
- Medical Support Services
- Retail

Concept Plan Elements:

1. Potential for gateway plaza, signage, or landscaping
2. Buildings brought close to the street to frame the streetscape
3. Parking to the rear or sides of buildings
4. Street trees and pedestrian access
5. Connector road from Cleveland Clinic to Hospital

Figure 7.12: North Hospital Area - Existing



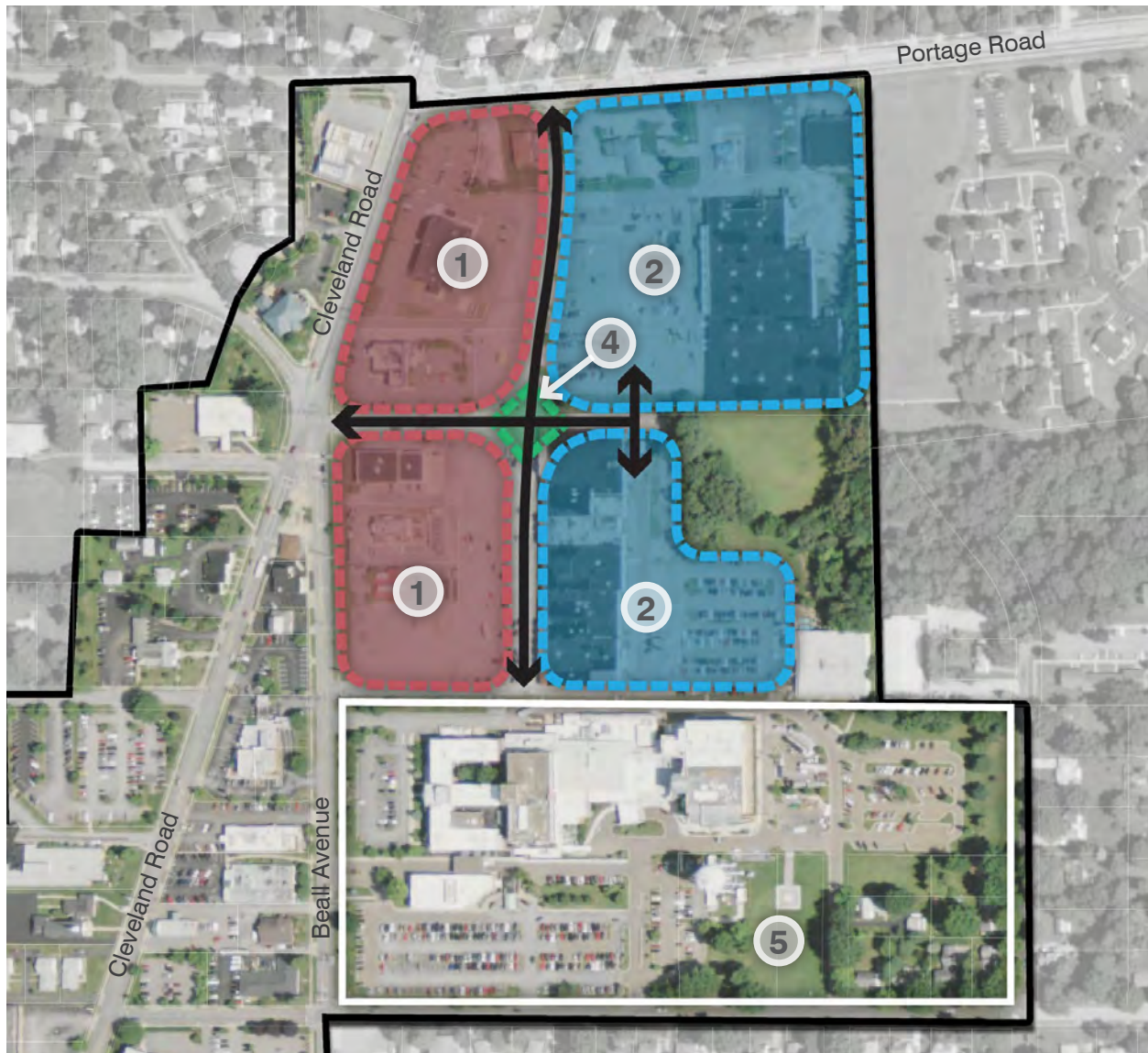
### North Hospital Redevelopment Concept

As with the Beall triangle, the North Hospital redevelopment area should take advantage of its proximity to the existing hospital. The concept shows a series of new connections that provide additional frontage within the site and give an opportunity to enhance the existing streetscape while providing space for an enhanced pedestrian realm. Commercial uses are given visibility along Beall Avenue and Cleveland Road, while medical office is placed to the rear of the site with frontage along the new connector road.

### Existing Plan Elements:

1. Existing strip retail centers
2. Existing commercial outparcel buildings
3. Existing electrical substation

Figure 7.13: North Hospital Area - Concept Plan



Preferred Uses:

- Medical Office
- Hotel
- Medical Support Services
- Retail

Concept Plan Elements:

1. Commercial Mixed-Use - Pedestrian scale development that reinforces the streetscape
2. Mixed-Use / Medical Office - Support uses for the existing hospital
3. Building frontages brought close to the street to frame the pedestrian realm
4. Enhanced intersection with pedestrian space framed by building facades
5. Existing hospital

# 7.4

## east wooster

*As a primary driver of economic opportunities and jobs within the City, further development within East Wooster should continue and expand upon the existing success of the District.*

Due to its proximity to highways and its availability of open space, East Wooster has recently drawn attention from new businesses and development. Serving as an economic hub for the City, the District has attracted a number of manufacturing and industrial users who continue to provide a strong economic base for the City.

### Hawkins Market

The Hawkins Market occupies the corner of the primary intersection of Portage Road and Akron Road within East Wooster. The aging building and surrounding parking lot remains vacant, giving some opportunity for redevelopment.



### Mixed-Use Development Area

The northeast corner of the Akron Road and Portage Road intersection contains a substantial amount of undeveloped property, currently in productive agriculture use. The proximity of this site to the existing and planned developments along Old Airport Road lends this to a potential extension of Old Airport Road with a significant amount of space for retail and office developments. A continuing trend within this type of development is to comprehensively plan the site and buildings in order to create an imageable and aesthetic pleasing layout.

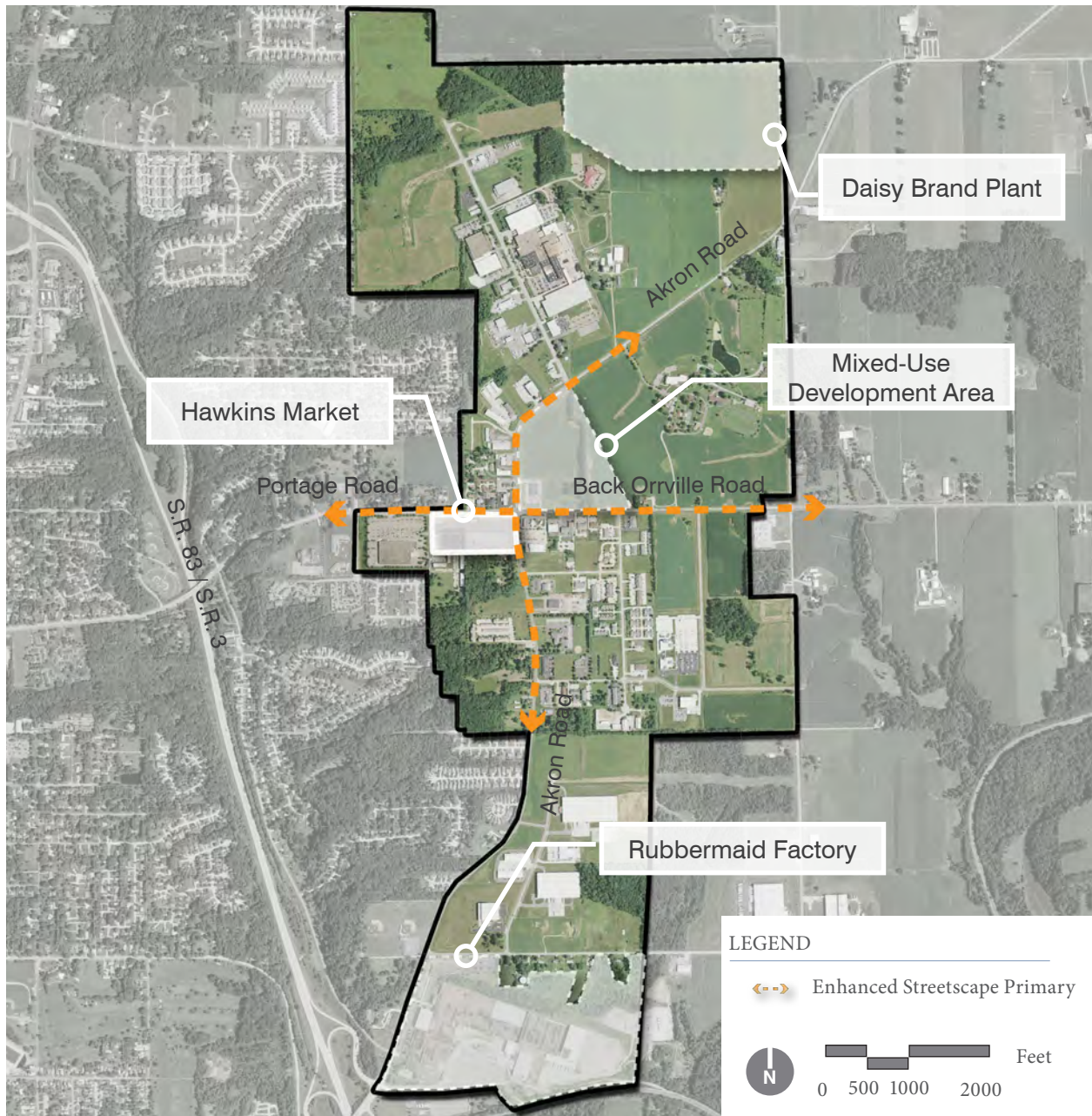
### Rubbermaid Factory

One of the largest industrial and manufacturing spaces in the City is the old Rubbermaid Factory to the south of the Development Area. This site has convenient access to transportation networks and is an ideal space for a large company. Portions of this space could also be used to house different uses like modern office space or a business incubator.





Figure 7.14: East Wooster - Urban Framework Map



**Development Area: +/- 932 acres**

**Existing Land Use**

Agricultural: 172.12 acres (20%)

Commercial: 58.34 acres (7%)

Public/Semi-Public: 48.49 acres (6%)

Office: 52.36 acres (6%)

Manufacturing: 162.75 acres (19%)

Multi-Family Residential: 25.44 acres (3%)

Single-Family Residential: 31.33 (4%)

## Development Intent - East Wooster



Easy and efficient **movement of vehicles** that allows for both commuter and commercial traffic should be a priority for investment and development within the area. Ensuring ease of vehicular movement makes the area more viable for commercial access that will promote continued commercial success.



**Green Buffers** should be placed along major arterials to screen heavy traffic and disturbances from developments. In addition, the inclusion of landscaping will enhance the character and brand of the district.



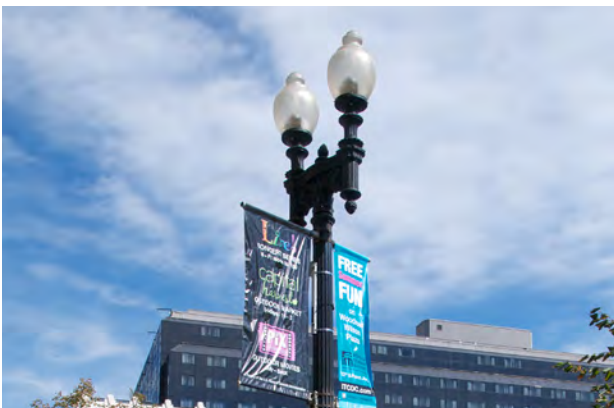
**Pedestrian accessibility** should be prioritized within development by installing appropriate sidewalks and bicycle paths in addition to public space. Better pedestrian connections outside the major thoroughfares minimizes vehicular impact and makes the area more attractive to potential businesses and residents.



A range of transportation options that connect to other areas of the City should be made to promote alternative means of transportation and pedestrian movements. These connections should make East Wooster a better place to locate a business while promoting healthy lifestyles.



Site Design should include parking in the rear when possible and should always screen parking from the street. The scale of the buildings should be one to two stories with façades that face the street.



Streetscape amenities that enhance the public realm should be a priority. Such enhancements include high quality lighting, mast arms, banners, and plantings.

Figure 7.15: Hawkins Market - Existing



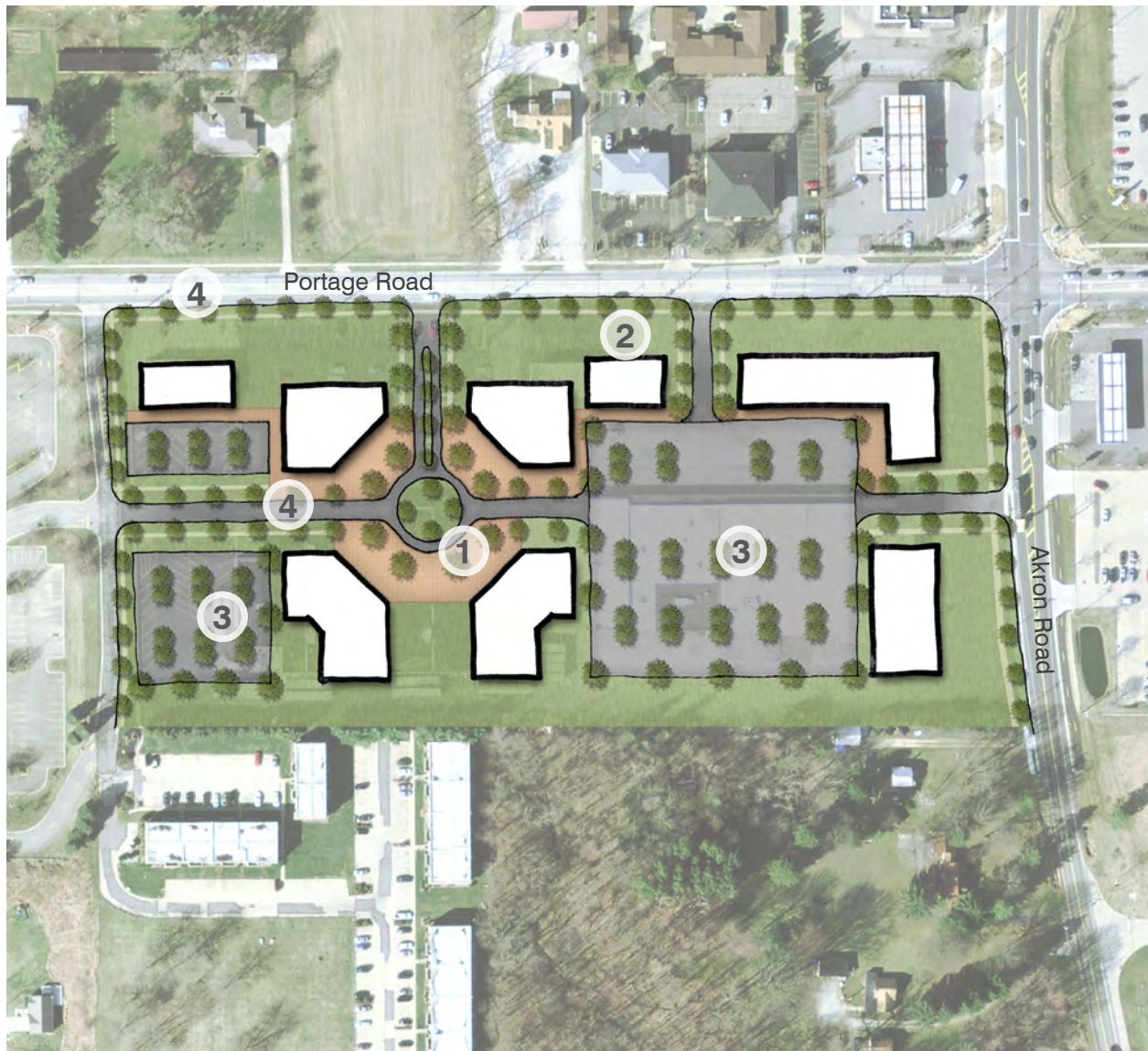
## Hawkins Market Redevelopment Concept

The aging retail center located at the southwest corner of the Portage Road and Akron Road intersection is an opportunity for potential redevelopment.

The concept to the right illustrates how the design intent within this section can be applied to a redevelopment site. The primary focus of this redevelopment concept is to accommodate automobile-oriented development while dedicating space for pedestrian activities within the site. Buildings have been placed close to the road while parking is located to the rear. Flex-office buildings

surround a center roundabout which acts as the primary circulation element within the site. Pedestrian spaces are located within the center space formed by these buildings.

Figure 7.16: Hawkins Market - Concept Plan



Preferred Uses:

- Retail
- Service
- Restaurant
- Office
- Flex-Office

Concept Plan Elements:

1. Incorporation of public space within the development
2. Buildings brought closer to the street to frame the streetscape while allowing a greenbelt within the frontage
3. Parking to the rear or sides of buildings
4. Street trees and pedestrian access



## 8. IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan is meant to be a working document that results in enhancements to the Wooster community. In a sense the Plan presents a “blueprint” for action that provides direction and assists decision makers with short and long range choices. Implementation of the objectives and actions presented in this Plan will take the coordinated effort from multiple parties. The tables in this chapter provide guidance to responsible parties to ensure the implementation of this Plan. This chapter is meant to be

accessed frequently by these parties so they understand their role in the future of Wooster.

Each action on the following pages is shown with the responsible parties that are to carry out that action as well as the time frame. For more detailed description of each objective and action, please refer to the individual Plan Elements in previous chapters of this document.

# 8.1

## land use objectives

■ = Responsible Party

ST = Short Term (1-3 years)

MT = Mid Term (3-6 years)

LT = Long Term (7-10 years)

O = Ongoing

	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND REC	POLICE	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	WEDC	MAIN STREET WOOSTER	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
<b>Objective LU.1 Continue to Enhance Downtown</b>															
Action LU.1.1 Encourage new higher density development where appropriate to support new businesses and residential growth.	ST/MT	■	■							■					■
Action LU.1.2 Support new mixed use development that combine ground floor retail with upper story offices and housing.	ST/MT	■	■							■					■
Action LU.1.3 Continue to support retail activity within pedestrian areas, especially outdoor seating areas for restaurants.	O		■	■						■					
Action LU.1.4 Consider the establishment of an Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) to provide enhanced services that strengthen the district.	MT	■					■			■	■				■
Action LU.1.5 Continue to investigate off-street parking options and implement short to mid-term parking solutions with a focus on Liberty Street.	ST/O	■								■	■				■
Action LU.1.6 Support Main Street Wooster in marketing the downtown and promoting new economic growth.	ST	■								■	■				
Action LU.1.7 Identify areas in and around the downtown that can be developed as new public space (e.g. plazas, gardens, pedestrian malls in alleys, etc.).	MT		■		■					■	■				
Action LU.1.8 Explore alternative truck routes to eliminate truck traffic within the downtown and residential areas.	LT			■		■									



	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP	PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND REC	POLICE	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	WEDC	MAIN STREET WOOSTER	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
Action LU.1.9 Enhance the gateways into and within the Downtown area such as those located on Columbus, Market, and Liberty streets.	ST		■	■												
Action LU.1.10 Support the development of a new dynamic entertainment node in the Downtown.	MT									■	■					■
Action LU.1.11 Create a redevelopment 'tool box' that can be used to market downtown development opportunities (e.g. tax abatements, tax increment financing, etc.).	O	■														
Action LU.1.12 Upgrade streetscape improvements completed in 1993.	LT/O	■		■							■					■
Action LU.1.13 Create a culture campus in Downtown that integrates the library, Red Cross, and Wayne Center for the Arts.	ST/MT	■									■					■
Action LU.1.14 Create a detailed redevelopment plan for East Liberty Street.	ST	■	■	■							■					■
<b>Objective LU.2 Promote continued economic growth along the 585 Corridor through newly planned light industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and office space.</b>																
Action LU.2.1 Identify sites that can accommodate new commercial, office and industrial development along the 585 Corridor.	O	■								■						
Action LU.2.2 Enhance the Portage and 585 intersection with gateway features, cross walks, improved street and sidewalks to create a welcoming gateway into the community.	ST/O			■												
Action LU.2.3 Consolidate public and private signage to minimize the visual impact from pedestrian and vehicular viewsheds.	LT		■	■			■									■
Action LU.2.4 Create special architectural and site controls for business park and light industrial development along the 585 Corridor to help grow a distinct image and brand for the area.	LT		■							■						■

	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP	PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND REC	POLICE	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	WEDC	MAIN STREET WOOSTER	CHAMBER OF WOOSTER	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
Action LU.2.5 Improve Akron Road to enhance traffic flow and support future economic growth.	ST/O		■													
Action LU.2.6 Incorporate walking and biking trails connecting to local and regional trails as part of future public and private sector developments.	ST	■	■									■	■			
Action LU.2.7 Actively market the Rubbermaid site to attract future development.	O	■							■							
Action LU.2.8 Maintain a strong and viable infrastructure network to support future economic growth.	O	■	■													
<b>Objective LU.3 Promote new residential development that includes traditional neighborhood characteristics.</b>																
Action LU.3.1 Consider permitting small-scale neighborhood commercial development as part of large-scale master plan developments.	MT		■													
Action LU.3.2 Create standards that require high quality pedestrian-oriented streets incorporating sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and tree lawns within newly developed residential areas.	ST	■	■	■												
Action LU.3.3 Create standards, or modify existing standards to allow for a mixture of housing types.	MT		■													
Action LU.3.4 Encourage connections among neighborhoods via roads, sidewalks and multi-use paths.	O		■	■												
Action LU.3.5 Actively pursue the redevelopment of non-conforming trailer parks.	O	■	■													
Action LU.3.6 Review the zoning code and make changes that will allow for and incentivize traditional neighborhood development.	MT		■				■									

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 PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

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Objective LU.4 Improve rental housing.													
Action LU.4.1 Improve and expand code enforcement efforts.	O												
Action LU.4.2 Continue to support neighborhood improvement efforts by community members and groups.	O	■											
Action LU.4.3 Create a Neighborhood Improvement District to strengthen code enforcement and support neighborhood improvements.	O	■											
Action LU.4.4 Provide incentives for redevelopment of properties.	MT/O	■											
Objective LU.5 Expand housing opportunities.													
Action LU.5.1 Create incentives that encourage moderately priced housing options in and around Downtown.	MT/O	■	■										
Action LU.5.2 Support “downsized” housing options for residents.	O	■	■										
Action LU.5.3 Provide a menu of incentives to support interior and exterior renovation of older housing stock.	ST/MT	■											
Action LU.5.4 Promote new residential on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas.	ST/O	■	■										
Objective LU.6 Enhance and plan for the area around the Hospital.													
Action LU.6.1 Work with the hospital to enhance and brand the streetscape and intersections near the hospital campus.	ST/MT	■											
Action LU.6.2 Encourage new mixed-use development around the hospital that supports hospital activities and serves neighboring residential areas.	ST/O		■										

TIME FRAME

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**Objective LU.7 Responsibly manage growth outside the City limits.**

Action LU.7.1 Extend the City boundary only when the expansion will result in new targeted economic growth, or serve to accomplish other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan or other City policies.	O	■	■	■														
Action LU.7.2 New residential expansion should be designed in a cluster or conservation style development pattern.	ST/MT	■	■															
Action LU.7.3 Ensure new annexations can be served by city utilities.	O			■														



# 8.2

## transportation objectives

■ = Responsible Party

ST = Short Term (1-3 years)

MT = Mid Term (3-6 years)

LT = Long Term (7-10 years)

O = Ongoing

TIME FRAME

WOOSTER LEADERSHIP  
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### Objective TR.1 Make Wooster a better connected and walkable city.

	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP	PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND ZONING	POLICE	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	WEDC	MAIN STREET WOOSTER	CHAMBER OF WOOSTER	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
Action TR.1.1 Revise City Code to allow for and encourage a walkable mix of uses and amenities throughout Wooster.	ST/O	■	■	■												
Action TR.1.2 Revise City Code and standards to require new development to build/incorporate multi-use paths on primary and secondary roadways.	ST/MT	■	■	■												■
Action TR.1.3 Support the development of complete street practices as new roadway infrastructure is planned and built.	ST	■		■												
Action TR.1.4 Continue to repair and expand the existing sidewalk network.	O	■	■	■												
Action TR.1.5 Connect Downtown, the OARDC, the College of Wooster, and the Wayne County Fairgrounds with multi-use trails and bicycle lanes.	ST/MT/ LT/O	■	■	■								■	■	■	■	
Action TR.1.6 Continue to participate in ODOT's Safe Routes to School program.	MT	■		■												
Action TR.1.7 Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Implementation Project included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.	LT/O	■		■												

TIME  
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WOOSTER LEADERSHIP  
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CITY ENGINEER  
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OARDC  
WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL  
PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

**Objective TR.2 Facilitate the flow of traffic and parking in and around the City.**

Action TR.2.1 Explore opportunities to route truck traffic away from Downtown.	ST			■														
Action TR.2.2 Continue to consider the implementation of roundabouts instead of traffic lights as part of future intersection improvements.	ST/O	■		■														
Action TR.2.3 Improve awareness and access to public parking through a comprehensive wayfinding strategy.	ST	■		■						■		■						
Action TR.2.4 Traffic light timing and intersections with “No turn on red” restrictions should be evaluated.	O			■														

**Objective TR.3 Promote alternative modes of transportation.**

Action TR.3.1 Continue to plan local bikeway and trail connections that complement and tie into regional and statewide systems (e.g. the Ohio Trails and Greenways Plan, Ohio to Erie Trail).	ST/O	■	■	■					■					■				■
Action TR.3.2 Create standards to promote bike facilities (e.g. racks or shelters) for all new commercial and public developments.	MT		■															
Action TR.3.3 Develop a comprehensive bikeway network in Wooster that connects places of commerce, entertainment, neighborhoods, and institutions. Sharrows can be used as a short term strategy to identify the network for routes where funding is not available to create bike lanes or multi-use trails.	ST/O	■		■						■		■	■					

# 8.3 parks, recreation, open space objectives

■ = Responsible Party

ST = Short Term (1-3 years)

MT = Mid Term (3-6 years)

LT = Long Term (7-10 years)

O = Ongoing

	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP	PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND ZONING	POLICE AND REC	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	WEDC	MAIN STREET WOOSTER	CHAMBER OF WOOSTER	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
<b>Objective PR.1 Preserve and expand open space areas.</b>																
Action PR.1.1 Promote the incorporation of open space in areas that are underserved.	O	■	■		■											
Action PR.1.2 Support the development of the OARDC and the BioOhio Research Park through planned improvements to the area and low-impact land use planning around the complex.	ST/MT	■	■										■			
Action PR.1.3 Create standards to promote conservation style development to encourage preservation of natural areas.	ST/MT	■	■		■											
Action PR.1.4 Require all new developments to create or dedicate park space or usable open space as a community amenity.	MT	■	■		■											■
Action PR.1.5 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.	LT/O	■	■		■											



TIME  
FRAME

WOOSTER LEADERSHIP  
PLANNING AND ZONING  
CITY ENGINEER  
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OARDC  
WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL  
PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

Objective PR.2 Be a leader in environmental stewardship													
Action PR.2.1 Promote sound environmental practices through sustainable zoning and engineering standards.	ST/O	■	■	■									
Action PR.2.2 Support programs which encourage the community to learn about and experience nature and natural resources (e.g., agricultural or watershed resource center).	O	■		■	■							■	
Action PR.2.3 Support and promote green building standards as part of both public and private developments.	ST/O	■	■										
Action PR.2.4 Work with local groups such as the OARDC or Trout Unlimited to make improvements to Grosjean Park that will enhance access and serve as a destination for environmental education and/or outdoor recreation.	MT				■							■	
Action PR.2.5 Work with the Wayne County Sustainable Energy Network to promote environmental stewardship in the region.	O	■							■				

TIME FRAME

WOOSTER LEADERSHIP  
 PLANNING AND ZONING  
 CITY ENGINEER  
 PARKS AND REC  
 POLICE AND REC  
 FIRE  
 CODE ENFORCEMENT  
 WAYNE COUNTY  
 WEDC  
 MAIN STREET WOOSTER  
 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
 COLLEGE OF COMMERCE  
 OARDC  
 WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL  
 PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

**Objective PR.3 Maintain and enhance the existing park network.**

Action PR.3.1 Ensure new development near Little Apple Creek maintains naturalized, publicly accessible, passive park space.	O		■		■														■
Action PR.3.2 Identify low cost opportunities to create new park space in the western and northeast areas of the community with a focus on neighborhood parks.	O		■		■														■
Action PR.3.3 Consider developing the Melrose Drive water tower site into park or open space.	MT	■		■	■														

**Objective PR.4 Partner with the private sector, local organizations, and civic groups to help support new and existing park spaces, programming, and public events in the City.**

Action PR.4.1 Work 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.	O	■			■	■	■					■	■						
Action PR.4.2 Collaborate with the Wayne County Fair Board to enhance the image and character of the area.	LT	■							■			■							
Action PR.4.3 Partner with the private sector (service clubs) to enhance and maintain existing park space.	O	■				■													

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Objective PR.5 Protect and enhance the Little Apple Creek greenway.														
Action PR.5.1 Protect the riparian areas along the Creek.	O		■	■										■
Action PR.5.2 Create new recreational and educational amenities and activities along the Creek.	O		■	■										■
Action PR.5.3 Support the creation of a “Friends of the Little Apple Creek” group for fundraising and volunteer labor, promotion, and security.	O			■				■					■	■
Action PR.5.4 Work with Trout Unlimited to create or attract an angling or conservation event.	ST/O			■										

# 8.4 utilities + public services objectives

■ = Responsible Party

ST = Short Term (1-3 years)

MT = Mid Term (3-6 years)

LT = Long Term (7-10 years)

O = Ongoing

	TIME FRAME	WOOSTER LEADERSHIP	PLANNING AND ZONING	CITY ENGINEER	PARKS AND REC	POLICE	FIRE	CODE ENFORCEMENT	WAYNE COUNTY	MAIN STREET	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	COLLEGE OF COMMERCE	OARDC	WOOSTER COMM HOSPITAL	PRIVATE LAND OWNERS
<b>Objective US.1 Ensure the expansion and improvement of the City's infrastructure is a priority when making future planning and policy decisions.</b>															
Action US.1.1 Implement the recommendations of the Water Distribution System General Plan.	O			■											
Action US.1.2 Plan for the expansion of the water delivery system through the placement of new water tanks and towers in areas of inadequate coverage and/or low pressure.	O			■											
Action US.1.3 Continue to separate combined storm and sanitary systems as part of regular maintenance and planned infrastructure projects.	O			■											
<b>Objective US.2 Promote 'green' stormwater management methods when improving or expanding the existing stormwater management system.</b>															
Action US.2.1 Promote 'green' street standards as a method of reducing stormwater runoff.	O		■	■											

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**Objective US.3 Encourage above ground stormwater facilities with dual purposes including naturalized open spaces and public recreation.**

Action US.3.1 Amend applicable City Codes to strongly encourage consolidated stormwater facilities that provide service to all parcels within a subdivision.	O		■	■														■
Action US.3.2 Encourage the improvement of above ground stormwater facilities and surrounding open space to allow its dual function as public recreation space.	O		■	■	■													■
Action US.3.3 Create a policy to encourage developers to build a more diversified collection of flood water and stormwater storage and treatment facilities.	O		■	■														

**Objective US.4 Develop projects, programs, policies, and procedures to enhance the overall quality of the local watershed.**

Action US.4.1 Identify ditches and streams throughout the City and develop recommendations as for whether these streams should be protected, restored, or reconstructed.	LT/O		■	■														
Action US.4.2 Restore ditches and streams that are recommended to be restored and place them in a conservation easement to protect these investments.	O	■		■				■										■
Action US.4.3 Little Apple Creek should be enhanced and promoted as a unique environmental asset in the community.	O	■	■		■													

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**Objective US.5 Emergency services should be carefully expanded to ensure resident’s health and safety.**

Action US.5.1 Enhance police coverage and presence in and around the Downtown during evening and night hours.	ST/O	■					■				■	■					
Action US.5.2 Identify new areas within the community to build new, relocate or expand stations for fire, police, or related operations.	ST	■					■			■							

**Objective US.6 Code enforcement should be a focus in and around the Downtown.**

Action US.6.1 Focus on property maintenance issues in older neighborhoods around the Downtown.	ST/O		■						■								■
Action US.6.2 Create educational materials that inform residents about City property maintenance code.	ST								■								
Action US.6.3 Work with the local community leaders to develop a community service/clean-up day to assist homeowners who are seniors or disabled with property maintenance. As part of this event, the City should consider providing dumpsters or trash receptacles to support the neighborhood and the community in their clean-up efforts.	ST	■							■		■						■
Action US.6.4 Target repeat property maintenance offenders and work with the prosecuting attorney to develop short-term compliance strategies.	O								■	■							

