

City of Wayland MASTER PLAN

JUNE 2023

RESOLUTION 2023-18

CITY OF WAYLAND CITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE ADOPTION OF THE
CITY OF WAYLAND MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("MPEA," PA 33 of 2008) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a "Master Plan" pertinent to the future development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wayland Planning Commission has prepared a draft Master Plan for the municipality, to update and replace its previous Master Plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wayland City Council authorized the distribution of the draft City of Wayland Master Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Planning Commission on May 9, 2023, pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission finds the proposed Master Plan as submitted for the public hearing is desirable and proper, and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the City, and has passed a resolution recommending adoption of the plan to the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City of Wayland City Council hereby resolves to adopt the updated City of Wayland Master Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Planning Commission to form the complete Master Plan, including the Future Land Use Map.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify the foregoing resolution was approved by a majority of the members of the City of Wayland City Council at a regular meeting held on this 19th day of June, 2023 in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by: _____ Mathis _____

Seconded by: _____ Stepek _____

City Clerk: _____  _____
Lee Ann Clausen

Acknowledgements

This plan acknowledges that the land of Wayland was historically home to the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi Indians.

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Background



Downtown signage.

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan is a long-term community policy document that guides decisions affecting land, people, and structures. The Master Plan inventories the city's existing systems, how they work together, and how trends have affected these systems over time. It also includes community input on preferences for development and concludes with recommendations about how the city can achieve its goals in the future. The plan is intended to be comprehensive, goal-oriented, and community-driven. As a reflection of community consensus, the document is then used by decision makers to ensure that their actions align with the Master Plan. Per state law, the Planning Commission is required to evaluate the Master Plan every five years to determine if it needs to be updated. It was determined that due to consistent population growth, an update was necessary to ensure that growth in Wayland is managed responsibly.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

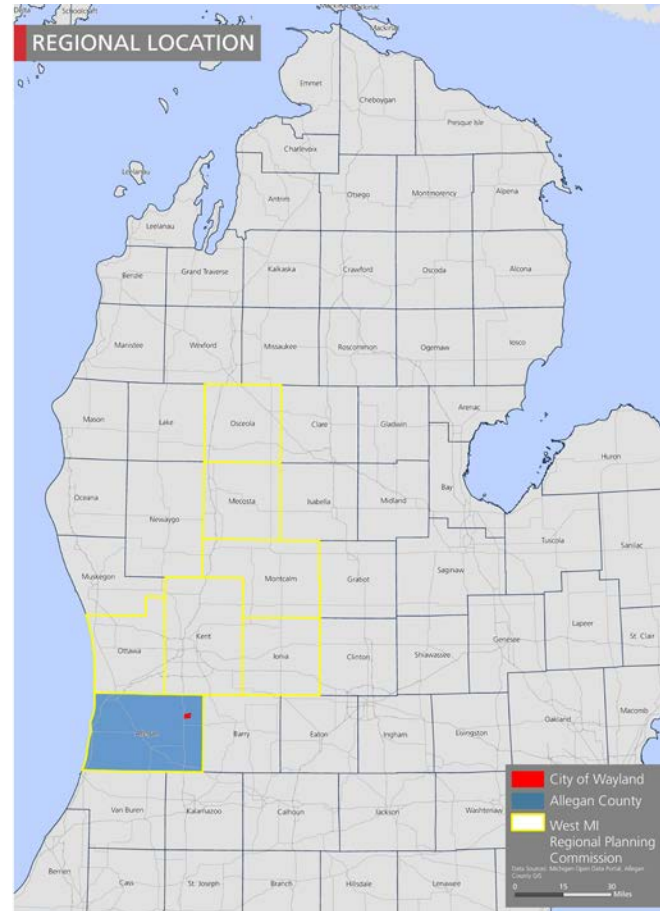
The City of Wayland is located on the west side on the state in Allegan County. It is bordered on the west by US-131 which runs from the southern border of the United States to Petoskey, Michigan. US-131 connects the major cities of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, which Wayland sits between as a rural bedroom community. Wayland is bordered by Wayland Township (to the south and east), Leighton Township (to the north and east), Dorr Township (to the northwest), and Hopkins Township (to the west). Allegan, the county seat, is approximately 20 miles from Wayland. Grand Rapids is about 21 miles north of Wayland and Kalamazoo is approximately 30 miles to the south. The proximity and easy access to both cities make Wayland an ideal community for commuters who desire a “small town charm” but also want access to urban centers for employment and entertainment.

HISTORY

The area of Wayland was first inhabited by the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of the Potawatomi tribe of Native Americans who were supported by the area’s forests and farmland. The Tribe is federally recognized and headquartered in Wayland Township.¹ In the early 19th century, the area faced pressure for development from European colonists. By 1826, the land had been surveyed for development and shortly after Colonel Isaac Barnes purchased land and began operating a wood mill along the Rabbit River. Then, the Chambers family arrived in 1837 and began farming the land. By 1844, enough families and children lived in the area to establish a school.² According to the 1850 Census, 96 families lived in Wayland for a total of 405 people, 13 farms, 9 horses, 36 milk-cows, and 82 sheep.³

Wayland’s location between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo contributed to its early success. By 1855, a wooden plank road was built between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, connecting Wayland to the regional transportation network. This road connection made Wayland a stopping place between the two larger cities, and as a result, businesses started to take advantage of this link, and the community grew. In 1868, the name of Wayland was adopted. In 1870, the railroad arrived in Wayland and spurred another period of

Map 01: Regional Location



development. Shortly thereafter, US-131 replaced the plank road. By the mid-20th century, Wayland had become a bustling community.⁴ The third event that stimulated the community’s growth was the development of the Gun Lake Casino in 2011, which is located south of Wayland and is owned by the Gun Lake Tribe.⁵

PAST PLANNING

2015 Wayland Master Plan

The city adopted its most recent community Master Plan in 2015. The 11 goals and respective actions outline in the plan are:⁶

1. Strengthen the business climate and promote the long-term viability of the city’s Central Business District by fostering a mixed use, pedestrian-oriented character in downtown.
 - a. Work with the DDA and Main Street Program to develop a DDA Plan.

- b. Revise the CBD Zone District by the creation and implementation of “form based” code provisions.
 - c. Maintain a downtown parking inventory and monitor utilization.
 - d. Monitor parking needs and, if necessary, commission a parking study to establish or revise parking policies.
2. Accommodate a wide range of retail and service businesses that meet comparison and convenience needs of Wayland market areas expanding population while preserving the essential character of the city’s downtown area.
- a. Re-evaluate the appropriateness of the range of land uses allowed in each business district.
 - b. In the corridor commercial settings, improve access controls to promote safety and enhance property values.
 - c. Consider the potential for adaptive uses of older structures.
3. Enhance current city parks and acquire new parks and open space sites to broaden the recreation and leisure time activities available to residents and better serve all age groups and abilities.
- a. Maintain an up-to-date comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan.
 - b. Cooperate with Wayland Schools and local organizations to ensure that playground and athletic fields are adequate and open to the community at large.
 - c. Encourage private property owners, land developers, and private organizations to preserve and dedicate open spaces and active recreation areas.
 - d. Catalog, describe, and prioritize parcels of environmental, recreational, and historic value for potential public acquisition and recreation use.
4. Create an integrated sidewalk and trail system connecting significant open space areas, parks, neighborhoods, schools, and business district.
- a. Implement a comprehensive plan for the completion of sidewalks and on-street bicycle routes.
 - b. Pursue multi-purpose trail development along the inter-urban route.
 - c. Establish the ultimate route and extent of the trail system and establish the desired types and standards for the construction of the various trail segments.



Park pavilion.

- d. Plan for a pedestrian crossing of the Rabbit River that eventually links public lands north and south of the river.
 - e. Work with the school and adjoining communities to promote trail expansion and regional connections, as well as joint financing.
5. Provide a well-balanced array of organized recreation and leisure time programs and special events for residents of all ages.
 - a. Aggressively pursue private, non-profit, and non-local funding for land acquisition facility improvements and program development.
 - b. Continue to sponsor successful events, such as concerts in the park, and evaluate the feasibility of new special events, such as craft shows and flea markets.
 - c. Prepare a public outreach program that maximizes the participation in programs and the use of existing facilities.
 - d. Identify and encourage public and private programs for senior citizens, organized sport, arts and drama, and commercial entertainment, such as movie theaters and outdoor amusements.
 6. Pursue a “complete streets” policy to create a more efficient and safer street pattern within the city and surrounding area that is proportionate with current and projected residential and economic development patterns. Provide safe and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and when feasible, public transportation, to increase use of these modes of transportation, enable convenient and active travel as part of daily activities, reduce pollution, and meet the needs of all users of the streets, including children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities.
 - a. Develop and maintain a short and long-term street plan.
 - b. Provide an interconnected, logical, and efficient street pattern for new residential and business development.
 - c. Integrate, where feasible, complete streets infrastructure and design features in the design and construction of street projects.
 7. Provide all residents and businesses with safe and adequate public services and infrastructure.
 - a. Monitor demands and maintain plans and implementation programs for increased water and sewer capacity.
 - b. Monitor update and implement trunk line and transmission line plans for the city.
 - c. Periodically review and revise utility extension policies pertaining to development within and outside of the city’s boundaries.
 - d. Prepare and implement a DPW facilities plan to provide for the departments’ operation needs.
 - e. Maintain a wellhead protection plan in the city and rely upon its recommendation when considering land use changes.
 8. Work with fire and police departments and other emergency service providers to achieve and maintain a high-quality emergency service to all residents and areas of the city.
 - a. Monitor and understand the relationships of facility location and equipment needs with population, housing, business, and employment patterns.
 - b. Plan future facility locations well in advance of actual need.
 - c. Plan future street and waterline locations and extensions to ensure appropriate access, response times, and water pressures.
 - d. Continue to utilize utility extension policies, access control, and site plan design standards.
 9. Optimize the city’s ability to finance public improvements.
 - a. Prioritize six-year capital improvements.
 - b. Develop public/private partnerships in financing major improvements that will benefit the city at large.

- c. Require developers to finance improvements that primarily benefit specific projects.
 - d. Actively identify and pursue private, federal and state grants and low interest loan opportunities for infrastructure improvements.
 - e. If justified, seek dedicated millage to finance specific improvements.
10. Through proactive planning and investment in public infrastructure, create a positive environment that retains current business and encourages new industry to locate here.
- a. Ensure appropriate street access.
 - b. Work with railroad officials to maintain rail service.
 - c. Determine the appropriate mix of basic and non-basic industries and adopt performance standards for each.
 - d. Identify desirable target industries for the city owned industrial land.
 - e. Adopt utility and infrastructure concurrency policies for use in managing the timing of planned industrial land expansion.
11. Provide well served, diverse housing opportunities for the full range of socio-economic circumstances, while integrating public improvements such as parks, pedestrian ways and open space linkages that maintain and enhance the livability of neighborhoods.
- a. Continue to allocate land for various housing densities of the Future Land Use Plan.
 - b. Arrange the density zones so that higher densities do not weaken the integrity of low-density areas.
 - c. Utilize medium and higher densities as transitional uses between nonresidential and low-density zones.
 - d. Provide for a wide range of lot sizes in the city's Zoning Ordinance.
 - e. Encourage quality single-family unit development by enforcing suitable pedestrian, street, and "green" amenities in the design standards.
 - f. Encourage cluster residential development.
 - g. Ensure quality development through the site plan review process and enforcement of high design standards for mobile home parks and multi-family development.
 - h. Ensure that "infill" development is compatible with existing development.
 - i. Recognize the demand, and make provisions for, alternative housing styles in the downtown area as part of the city's effort to promote an economically viable historic but mixed-use center.

2019 Wayland Capital Improvements Plan

A capital improvements plan (CIP) outlines how a community finances and builds large scale projects. The CIP illustrates the city's priorities as they relate to large municipal projects. The years 2020 to 2024 are large spending years, roughly \$1.8 million is slated for investment in the city's sewer infrastructure, \$1.6 million is marked for investment in water infrastructure, and roughly \$950,000 is for investments in streets. The two largest projects over these years are the City Hall / Police Department and improvements for S. Main Street from Locust St to Maple St.⁷

Wayland Downtown Development Authority Plan

In 1990, the City of Wayland established the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA encompasses the Central Business District and a section of W. Superior St generally bounded on the west by US-31 and on the east by Forest St. In 2014, the DDA updated its plan to reflect the current objectives of the DDA board such as:⁸

- » Improve the overall business climate of the district to deter economic decline and improve tax base.
- » Encourage the retention and expansion of

employment opportunities.

- » Maintain and improve public facilities.
- » Provide guidance for compatible land use development within the district.
- » Improve the general appearance and visual amenities in the district while preserving sites with unique features or character.

According to the 2014 plan the major expenses/projects for the DDA from 2014-2023 are street scaping improvements in the Central Business District, building façade improvement program, and the administrative/management cost of the DDA.⁹

2012 Downtown Wayland Market Study

In 2012, Wayland conducted a market study for the downtown, with assistance from the Michigan Main Street Center. The study identified targets for downtown development should be focused on retail uses, office and service uses, and housing. The three specific retail types that are recommended for recruitment are, in the following order: specialty food stores, eating and drinking places, and sporting goods, hobby, book, & music stores.¹⁰

Allegan County 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan

Per Michigan Department of Natural Resource guidelines, Allegan County updated its Park and Recreation Plan in 2020. While the county does not operate any parks within the City of Wayland or have plans to expand or build facilities in Wayland, connecting the two park systems provides residents access to county facilities.¹¹

West Michigan Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The West Michigan Planning Region adopted a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) in 2017. Goals of the CEDS include promoting a diverse economy, investing in long-term projects , and maintaining a clear vision of economic development. In the last funding cycle the West Michigan Planning Commission provided funding sources for streetscaping improvements and water and sewer infrastructure upgrades. Over the past four CEDS funding cycles the City of Wayland had not applied for any funding from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission. Future applications during CEDS cycle can aid the City in financing large capital improvement projects.¹²

Sources

- 1 "Our Heritage", Gun Lake Tribe, <https://gunlaketribe-nsn.gov/about/our-heritage/>
- 2 "Wayland History", Downtown Wayland, <https://downtownwayland.com/about/wayland-history/>
- 3 "History of Allegan County, MI", Genealogy Trails, <http://genealogytrails.com/mich/allegan/historywaylandtwp.html>
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "Our Heritage", Gun Lake Tribe, <https://gunlaketribe-nsn.gov/about/our-heritage/>
- 6 "Future Land Use Plan" City of Wayland, Adopted Nov. 16, 2015. <http://cityofwayland.org/Portals/1004/Master%20Plan%202015%20COMPLETE.pdf>
- 7 "City of Wayland Capital Improvements Plan", City of Wayland, Updated Apr. 23, 2019. http://cityofwayland.org/Portals/1004/2019_04_23%20Wayland%20CIP_1.pdf
- 8 "Downtown and Tax Increment Financing Plan", City of Wayland Downtown Development Authority, Feb. 2014. http://cityofwayland.org/Portals/1004/DDA_%26_TIF_Plan_-_Wayland.pdf
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 "Summary Report: Market Study and Business Development Strategies", City of Wayland Main Street Program, Aug. 2012.
- 11 "Allegan County Park 2020 – 2024 Recreation Plan", Allegan County, Adopted Dec. 12, 2019. <http://cms.allegancounty.org/sites/Office/Parks/ParksPages/2020-%202024%20Recreation%20Plan.pdf>
- 12 "2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy", West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, Adopted Aug. 31, 2017. <https://wmsrdc.org/project/ceds-2018/>

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Demographics



Mural on the side of a local winery.

Demographic analysis provides valuable insight about a community's socio-economic characteristics, growth, and development patterns, and changing needs and preferences. A thorough understanding of demographic trends is therefore imperative to address land use issues and advance sustainable goals. Critical to Wayland's current and future planning efforts, information about households, age, and income aid decision-makers in an equitable planning process. This section analyzes Wayland's historic, existing, and forecasted demographic data and trends and also explores regional data for Allegan County, Allegan County communities, and other similar sized West Michigan communities to situate the city in a regional demographic context.

DATA SOURCES

The demographic data in this chapter is derived from the following sources, in this preferred order:

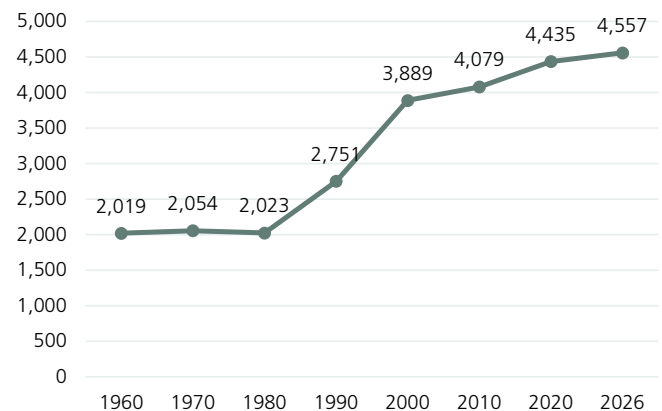
- » **2020, 2010, 2000, 1990, 1980, 1970, 1960 US Decennial Census.** Mandated by the United States Constitution, the decennial census is the most accurate source of information recorded by the United States Census Bureau as it aims to survey 100% of the population. The decennial census is extremely valuable as it provides comparable data points at regular 10-year intervals since 1790. This data is also the basis for congressional apportionment and redistricting which determines funding and resource allocation for a community for the next decade. While the significance of the decennial census for planners cannot be debated, it is important to note that the data is limited. This short-form census only covers questions about population and housing. Additionally, the 10-year gap between surveys indicates that demographic and housing patterns within the decades are not captured in this census.
- » **American Community Survey.** The American Community Survey (ACS) was initiated in 2000 as a replacement of the long-form census and collects more detailed information on social, economic, and housing characteristics compared to the decennial census. Instead of collecting data every 10 years, this survey collects data on an ongoing basis and releases data periodically. However, the long-form characteristic makes it difficult to administer the ACS for 100% of the population. Alternatively, this survey samples a percentage of the population, to determine estimates for the overall population; therefore, the accuracy of the ACS depends on the population of the sampling area. To maintain statistical validity, the Census Bureau collects sample data over two different time frames, 1-year and 5-year, depending on the size of a community. In smaller communities, where the population is less than 20,000, data is collected over 60 months to achieve a valid sample size and generate estimates for the overall population. Since Wayland has a population less than 20,000 this plan uses the ACS 5-year estimates.

- » **ESRI ArcGIS Business Analyst.** This proprietary software presents privately generated market research data. In addition, it estimates Census and ACS data for geographic configurations other than Census-defined tracts, blocks, and places. ESRI also provides 5-year demographic forecasts—revised annually—to draw on the latest data. This plan analyzes Wayland’s future demographic trends using ESRI’s 2021-2026 projections to inform planning decisions.

POPULATION

The 2020 decennial census data reported Wayland’s total population to be 4,435. Over the past 60 years, the city has witnessed an overall increase in population, except between 1970 and 1980. The extended economic recession experienced throughout Michigan during this period caused significant manufacturing job losses and forced families to move out of the area. This outward migration from Wayland in search of alternative livelihood could likely explain the population growth in Allegan County during the same period. Prior to the 1980s, a relatively slow growth rate can be associated with a primarily agrarian economy slowly transitioning to a bedroom community, dependent upon a regional manufacturing-based economy. Wayland experienced rapid growth in the 1990s (36.0%) and 2000s (41.4%) likely caused by the overarching migration trend from urban to suburban areas due to the proximity to employment centers, and the availability of housing options, better amenities, and public services. Since the 2000s, population growth has

Figure 01: Population Change, 1960 - 2026



Source: 2020 Decennial Census, Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst

slowed dramatically. Projections from ESRI ArcGIS Business Analyst predict Wayland’s growth rate will further slowdown with a net increase of only 2.8% in 2026, approximately 1/3rd the growth rate experienced between 2010-2020. However, with nearly 400 new residential dwelling units underway, the city is anticipating an addition of at least 800 residents in the near future.

A regional comparison of Wayland’s growth was conducted with other similar sized west-Michigan municipalities. Between 1990 and 2000, no other municipality experienced the same population boom as Wayland. Leighton Township also experienced growth during this period, but at less than half the rate of that of Wayland. Housing affordability coupled with the availability of utilities and land for residential construction were likely the factors contributing to this rapid growth in Wayland.

During Michigan’s “lost decade,” between 2000 and 2010, the recession significantly dampened the demand for growth, particularly in the later part of the decade. Though the population of Wayland grew by nearly 9% over the last decade, Wayland Township’s growth rate was nearly double and

Leighton Township’s was approximately seven times that of Wayland. Mirroring the trend between 1990 and 2000 that caused the population boom in the City of Wayland, the abundance of land for development is a major factor driving population growth in the two adjoining townships. Additionally, the 2026 population projections predict the county and Wayland Township will grow approximately 1.5 times faster than Wayland, indicating that the city will capture only a portion of growth in the region over the next five years. However, given other municipalities in the region are expected to experience population decline, responding to the regional demands in housing and economy may funnel regional migration into the city, and ensure sustained growth in the forthcoming years.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND LANGUAGE

As Wayland’s population has grown, it has also diversified over the last decade, transitioning from a community with 95% White population in 2010 to 88.6% in 2020. The percentage of population identifying as Hispanic or Latino (considered an ethnicity and not a race in the US

Table 01: Population Change, County and Neighboring Municipalities, 1960 - 2026

	Wayland City	Allegan County	Leighton Township, Allegan County	Wayland Township, Allegan County	Otsego City, Allegan County	Lowell City, Kent County	Sparta Village, Kent County	Coopersville, Ottawa County
1960	2,019	57,729	1,951	3,450	4,142	2,545	2,749	1,584
1970	2,054 (1.7%)	66,575 (15.3%)	2,354 (20.7%)	1,661 (-51.9%)	3,957 (-4.5%)	3,068 (20.6%)	3,094 (12.6%)	2,129 (34.4%)
1980	2,023 (-1.5%)	81,555 (22.5%)	2,772 (17.8%)	2,131 (28.3%)	3,802 (-3.9%)	3,707 (20.8%)	3,373 (9.0%)	2,889 (35.7%)
1990	2,751 (36.0%)	90,509 (11.0%)	3,069 (10.7%)	2,569 (20.6%)	3,937 (3.6%)	3,983 (7.4%)	3,968 (17.6%)	3,421 (18.4%)
2000	3,939 (43.2%)	10,5665 (16.7%)	3,652 (19.0%)	3,013 (17.3%)	3,933 (-0.1%)	4,013 (0.8%)	4,159 (4.8%)	3,910 (14.3%)
2010	4,079 (3.6%)	111,408 (5.4%)	4,394 (20.3%)	3,088 (2.5%)	3,956 (0.6%)	3,783 (-5.7%)	4,140 (-0.5%)	4,275 (9.3%)
2020	4,435 (8.7%)	120,502 (8.2%)	7,001 (59.3%)	3,573 (15.7%)	4,120 (4.1%)	4,142 (9.5%)	4,244 (2.5%)	4,828 (12.9%)
2026	4,557 (2.8%)	126,150 (4.7%)	6,907 (-1.3%)	3,737 (4.6%)	4,222 (2.5%)	4,115 (-0.7%)	4,163 (-1.9%)	4,717 (-2.3%)

Source: 2020 Decennial Census, Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst

Note: The percentages in parenthesis indicate the rate of population change over the last decade.

Census) in Wayland slightly increased over the last decade from approximately 4% in 2010 to 5% in 2020. Countering the increase in Hispanic and Latino population in Wayland, the percentage of population 5 years and older speaking Spanish language decreased from 1.4% to only 0.2% between 2014 and 2019. Simultaneously the percentage of city residents 5 years and over speaking "English only" increased from approximately 96% to 99%, indicating an overall increase in English language proficiency in the city. Compared to Allegan County's nearly homogenous population with nearly 94% of the population identifying as "White only", Wayland is more racially diverse.¹ It is therefore crucial to heed to the city's changing racial and ethnic composition to ensure the city grows inclusively and equitably.

HOUSEHOLDS

The population growth in Wayland brings about an expected increase in the total number of households, from 1,353 in 2014 to 1,715 in 2019. Despite similarities in the population growth trend with the county, the household growth rates differ; while the total households in the county grew by 3.9%, the rate in Wayland was nearly six times at 26.8%.

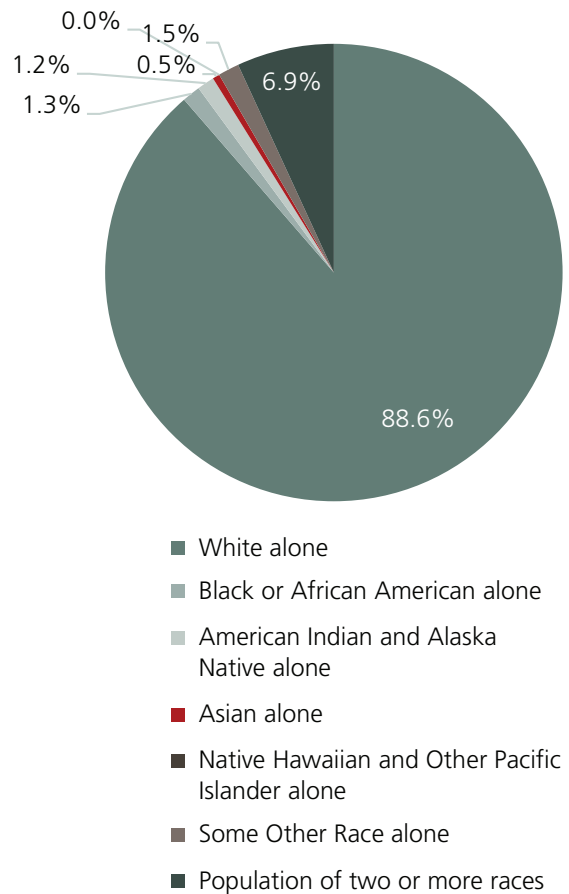
Consistent with the increase in the number of households, the average household size, and the average family size both decreased from 2014 to 2019 in Wayland, opposing the shift towards growing households and families in the nearby communities. The city transitioned from an average household size of 2.95 in 2014 to 2.39 in 2019, and an average family size of 3.67 to 2.91.² Although the county, the state, and the nation also have shrinking households and families, the change is marginal.³

Household: A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit.

Family Household: A group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing together.

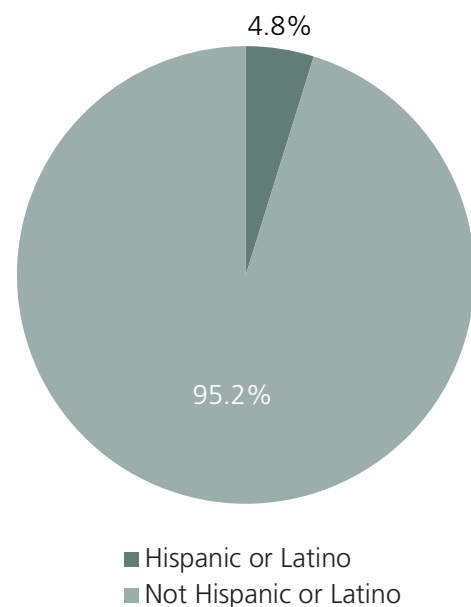
Non-Family Household: A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

Figure 02: Racial & Ethnic Composition, 2020



Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Figure 03: Hispanic Population, 2020



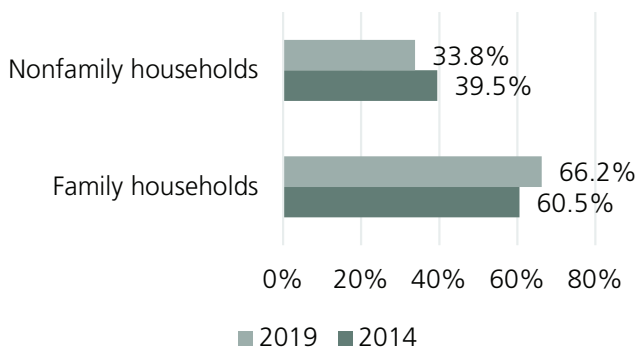
Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Table 02: Household Change, Wayland City & Allegan County, 2014-2020

	City of Wayland		Allegan County	
	Estimate	Growth	Estimate	Growth
2014	1,353		41,767	
2019	1,715	26.8%	43,416	3.9%

Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Figure 04: Family vs Non-Family Households Change, 2014-2019



Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Wayland still predominantly consists of family households; however, between 2014 and 2019 the total family households fell from 66.20% to 60.50%. Coinciding with this trend, the “married-couple family” households dropped by 6.30% in Wayland. This is important to note because there are 3.5 times more female single-parent households as there are male single-parent family households, and the former group tends to live in higher poverty rates.⁴ Concurrently, Wayland has been transitioning towards “non-family” households, which includes cohabiting couples, same-sex couples, people living alone, and people living with unrelated roommates. As of 2019, nearly 40% of households fall into this category, compared to 33.8% in 2010. The household composition in Wayland is undeniably diversifying, and due to this national trend the 2019 ACS shifted away from the traditional family/non-family categorizations to include an array of new household typologies (refer call out box below) to reflect these changes.

The shrinking family size indicates that the number of families with children is decreasing. Over the last five years, the estimates for family households

Changes in Household Typologies

2019 Census Household Types	2014 Census Household Types
Married-couple family	Family households (families)
With own children of the householder under 18 years	With own children under 18 years
Cohabiting couple household	Married-couple family
With own children of the householder under 18 years	With own children under 18 years
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	Male householder, no wife present, family
With own children of the householder under 18 years	With own children under 18 years
Householder living alone	Female householder, no husband present, family
65 years and over	With own children under 18 years
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	Nonfamily households
With own children of the householder under 18 years	Householder living alone
Householder living alone	65 years and over
65 years and over	Households with one or more people under 18 years
Households with one or more people under 18 years	Households with one or more people 65 years and over
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

with children under 18 years has dropped steeply to 27.0% of total family households from an estimated 37.4% in 2014.

These changing household statistics in Wayland have important planning implications, especially with respect to housing and land use. Smaller households induce a demand for smaller housing units. Given the availability of land, neighboring townships of Wayland and Leighton will primarily cater to larger households and families, and therefore it is even more crucial that Wayland embraces its changing household dynamics and presents itself as a place for all.

AGE

Emulating national and statewide trends, Allegan County and Wayland are aging. The median age of the residents of Wayland increased from 31.6 years in 2010 to 33.3 years in 2019.⁵ However, the city's median age is still considerably less than Allegan County as a whole (39.8 years) and the state (38.1 years).⁶

The combined age cohort of 20 to 44 years is important as it represents both strong wage-earning and family formation years. About 40% of the city's population falls in this age group, and a large number of new, younger families provides a plausible explanation for the rapid increase (37.5%) in population in the 0-5 years age group.

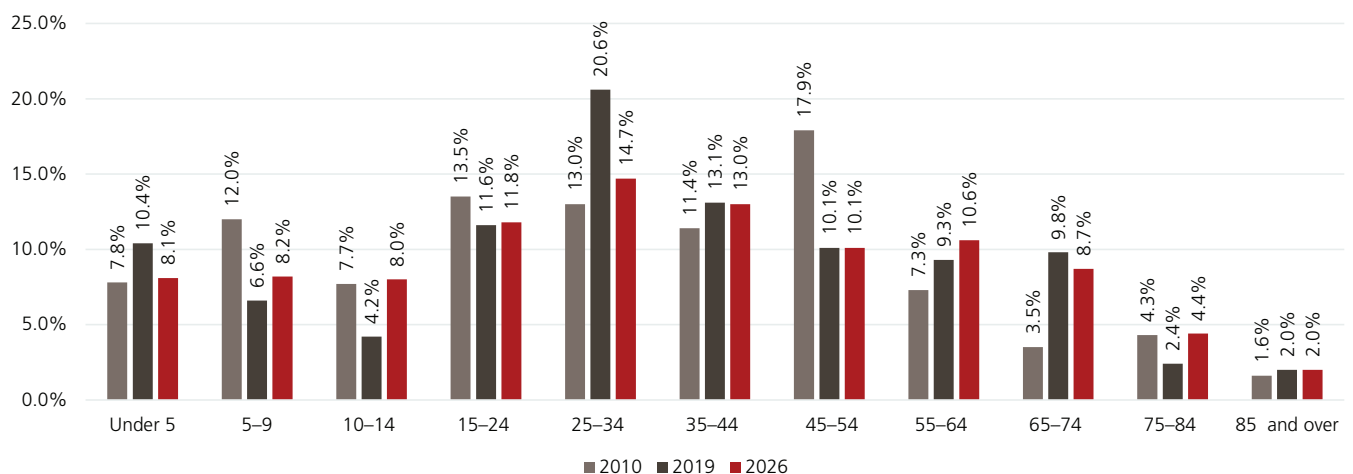
Table 03: Median Age, County and Neighboring Municipalities, 2019

	Median Age
Wayland City	33.3
Allegan County	39.8
Leighton Township, Allegan County	33.6
Wayland Township, Allegan County	42.7
Otsego City, Allegan County	43.5
Lowell City, Kent County	37.8
Sparta Village, Kent County	34.0
Coopersville, Ottawa County	30.5

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

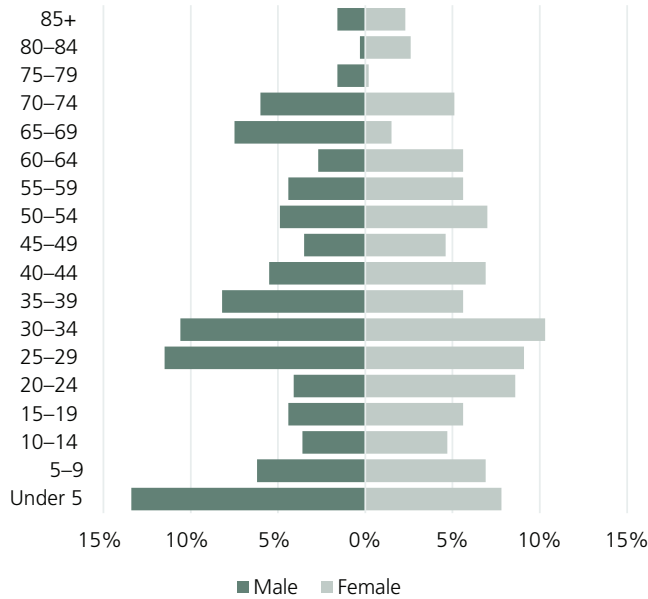
In sharp contrast, the city witnessed a dramatic fall in population in the "school-age" cohort in 2019 (ages 5-19). The comparatively older median age (42.7 years) in the adjacent municipality, Wayland Township, suggests a trend of migration of "mature families" (35-54 years) from the city, perhaps due to lower taxes and/or larger housing options. Compared to Wayland Township, the City of Wayland has an older housing stock which is more suited to function as "starter homes" for younger families and does not cater to the sizing or quality needs of mature families. Wayland must therefore focus on addressing the needs and preferences of

Figure 05: Age Distribution, 2010-2026



2010, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst

Figure 06: Age Cohorts by Gender, 2019



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

the youth and mature families to ensure sustainable growth and development patterns in the future.

The term “empty nesters” generally refers to households that no longer have children living at home. Typically aged 55-64 years this cohort has grown by 79.7% in the last decade. Consistent with an aging population, the most significant growth occurred in the seniors’ cohort, aged 65 years and above. Between 2010 to 2019, the residents in the 65-74 years and above 85 years age groups have increased by nearly 192% and 32% respectively. The city is exploring options to create designated areas which provide independent or assisted living options, near quality healthcare services, to ensure the seniors in Wayland can age in place.

Projections from ESRI ArcGIS Business Analyst predict Wayland city’s age distribution is not expected to experience wild shifts over the next five years. As people live longer, the city will need to provide a wide range of living options to serve both younger and older generations. The aging population also induces a greater demand for health care, specific housing types, and leisure. Wayland can expect to invest in these areas for the foreseeable future.

Table 04: Socioeconomic Indicators, 2014-2019

	2014		2019	
	Estimate	% Total	Estimate	% Total
Education				
Less than High School	326	13.9%	232	8.2%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	867	37.0%	1,065	37.7%
Some college or Associate's degree	690	29.5%	960	34.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	458	19.6%	567	20.1%
Total	2,341	100.0%	2,824	100.0%
Income				
Median Income (Inflation-Adjusted)	\$46,250	-	\$54,886	-
Poverty				
People in poverty	-	15.9%	-	8.4%

Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

Education

Educational attainment is a key indicator of socio-economic status, and the quality of schools and education institutions impact a community’s overall growth and economic development. Higher educational attainment levels also generally correlate with higher earning or income potential and lower poverty rates. Mimicking the county and state-wide trend, nearly 92% of persons over 25 years of age have the equivalent of a high school education or better, a 6% increase from the 2014 estimates.⁷ A little over 20% of the population, 25 years or older, hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. Approximately 30% of people above 25 years have some college degree or higher; this is an important statistic to monitor as Wayland is gradually transitioning away from a manufacturing-based economy towards a service-based economy, which requires an educated and skilled workforce.

Income & Poverty

Median household income is traditionally used to measure the economic strength of a region.

Income can also have land use implications, as people with high incomes often invest more in larger home and therefore expect more services from local government through their taxes. A growing economy also attracts new investments and businesses. The 2019 median household income for Wayland was \$54,886, approximately \$8,640 higher than the 2014 estimate.⁸ Despite a substantial increase in the last five years, the city's median income figure still falls lower than the estimated \$66,278 for the county and \$59,584 for Michigan overall. Household incomes in surrounding municipalities are also on average substantially higher than in the city, ranging from roughly \$56,560 in Coopersville City to as high as \$75,350 in Leighton Township.⁹

As a sign of the economic recovery in Michigan, the percentage of the population currently living beneath the poverty level dropped from to 15.9% in 2014 to 8.4% in the city in 2019. The 2019 poverty level in Wayland is also lower than the county and state average, estimated at 12% and 13% respectively. The drop in poverty levels is likely caused by an overall increase in median income combined with the unemployment rate in the civilian labor force falling from 9.9% to 1.2% between 2014 and 2019. While the overall lower poverty rates indicated economic progress, it is important to note that over 15% of households with female householders (no spouse present) fall below the poverty level. Ensuring equitable housing, income, and job opportunities will be crucial to ensure these households can work their way out of poverty.

Sources

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau; 2020 Decennial Census, Table P1.
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau; 2014 & 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP02.
- 3 U.S. Census Bureau; 2014 & 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP02.
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau; 2014 & 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP02.
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 & 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP05.
- 6 U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP05.
- 7 U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP05.
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03.
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP03.

3

Housing



Housing development on the northside.

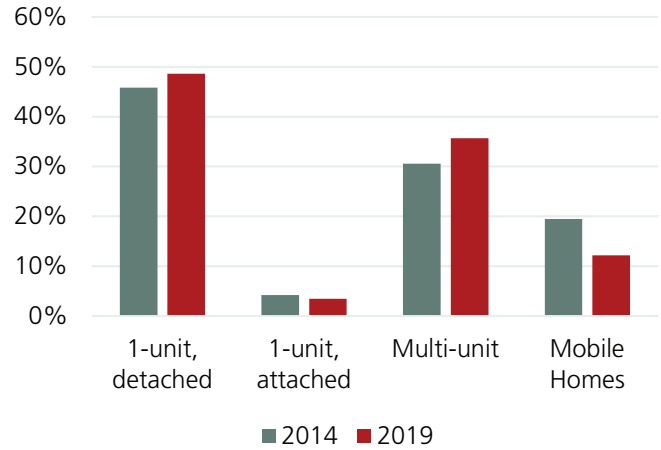
HOUSING TYPES

The housing stock in Wayland is surprisingly diverse for a small-town community in Michigan. Of the 1732 total housing units in the city in 2019, approximately 50% were detached single dwelling units, 3.5% were attached single dwelling units, 36% were multi dwelling units, and interestingly 12% were mobile homes. In the past many communities desired to maintain a predominance (60% or better) of detached single dwelling units, however; the evolving economic realities and social makeup require greater housing choices. While detached single dwelling units continue make up the largest category of housing type, the city's housing stock has diversified to include more multi dwelling units over the last five years.

Regionally, the monopoly of detached single dwelling units is noticeably lower in Wayland in comparison to the county and the neighboring municipalities. Consistent with the demand induced by growing households and families, the adjacent townships of Leighton and Wayland have the highest percentages of detached single unit homes. These regional patterns, combined with the shrinking average household and family size trend noted previously, are indicative of an imminent demand for diversifying housing stock in Wayland. For instance, empty nesters who wish to downsize, working households with limited discretionary income, couples without children, or young adults moving out of their parents' homes, may prefer smaller units. A shortage of such options will push residents, and potential residents, to seek desired housing outside of Wayland, and because the neighboring townships have less to offer in this regard, it could push them out of the region entirely.

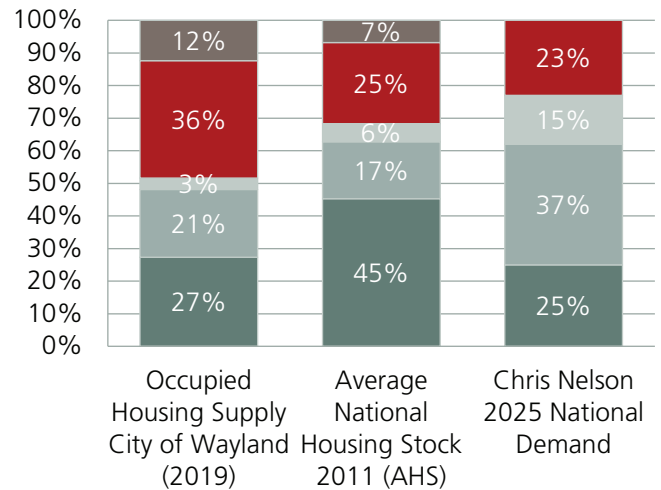
The chart "Shifting Housing Preferences" is the output of a housing model designed by Envision Tomorrow, an open-access scenario planning package that aids communities with decision making by analyzing current and future growth patterns. The left column charts Wayland's 2019 housing data, the center column national trends, and the third a scenario prediction based on empirical research conducted at the Metropolitan Research Center. The prediction is that small lot single-unit homes will witness the highest demand in the Wayland in the forthcoming years.

Figure 07: Housing Diversity, 2014-2019



Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Figure 08: Shifting Housing Preferences



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates, Envision Tomorrow

Table 05: Housing Diversity, County and Neighboring Municipalities, 2019

	Wayland City	Allegan County	Leighton Township, Allegan County	Wayland Township, Allegan County	Otsego City, Allegan County	Lowell City, Kent County	Sparta Village, Kent County	Coopersville, Ottawa County
1-unit, detached	48.6%	77.3%	84.7%	90.1%	80.2%	64.7%	61.3%	57.1%
1-unit, attached	3.5%	2.9%	0.1%	0.0%	3.7%	3.1%	8.0%	0.0%
Multi-unit	35.7%	8.6%	1.4%	0.8%	16.0%	27.0%	29.3%	21.1%
Mobile Homes	12.2%	11.1%	13.8%	9.0%	0.0%	5.1%	1.4%	21.8%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

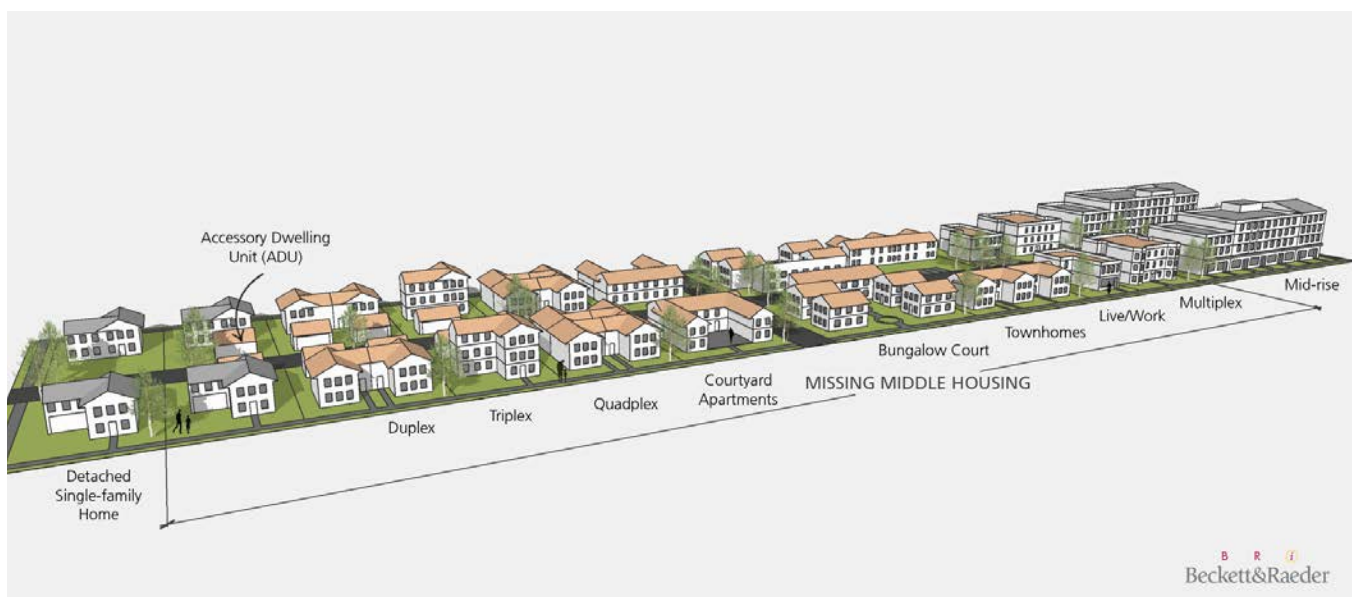
Recent housing data, as discussed above, demonstrate that the city has largely embraced housing diversity; however, there is still a wide range of housing options between single dwelling units and multi dwelling unit apartment complexes that remain unexplored. In housing terms, the city needs to delve into the “Missing Middle” housing—a term that refers to housing that is similar in size to single-family structures, but instead are either clustered or have multiple units.¹ Missing Middle housing typologies: Duplex, Triplex, Quadplex, Bungalow Courts, Multiplex, Live/Work units, effortlessly weave density and diversity into the fabric of traditional single-family residential neighborhoods. The missing middle ethos also paves the path towards equitable housing by addressing two very important aspects of housing: housing availability and housing affordability. Typically, when smaller units are built on reduced lot areas, they generally have lower purchasing prices and maintenance costs. Recently, the city has approved about 400 new residential units of different typologies.

Accessory Dwelling units (ADUs) are another effective way to diversify the existing housing stock and offer low impact increases to density. Colloquially referred to as “in law units” or “granny flats,” they are smaller units located in the rear lots of residential parcels, subordinate to the principal structure, that can be used to house family members or to be rented to a nonfamily member. ADUs offer a lower cost way to add new units, that

are compatible with the existing neighborhood composition, that are not being supplied by the private market. The lower costs can be passed on to the tenants to provide more affordable housing options for young adults, the elderly, or residents in transition to homeownership. Moreover, the city should educate the public about the large-scale advantages of ADUs, and undertake efforts to streamline the planning, approval, and construction of ADUs in the permitted zones.

As noted earlier, the city also includes a considerable percentage of mobile homes (12.5%). Even though the proportion has dropped since 2014, the current percentage is significant enough to warrant regulation. Despite the history of prejudice against mobile homes all over the country, recent studies have shown that these housing types prove to an effective short-term solution to increase housing affordability in communities.² While it may not be feasible to fully integrate this type of housing into conventional residential neighborhoods, regulating mobile homes in certain parts of the city which are well connected and have access to public services and infrastructure will promote an inclusive housing environment in Wayland. Consistent with these recommended best practices, Wayland’s mobile park area is located within city limits north of the city, with easy access to grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants, and is about half a mile walk to the downtown.

Figure 09: Missing Middle Housing

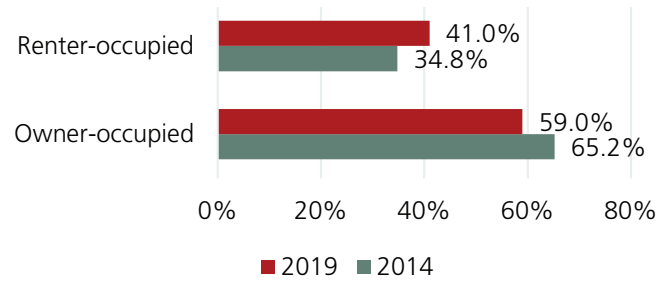


HOUSING TENURE & VACANCY STATUS

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Wayland is primarily comprised of homeowners (59%), but the proportion is noticeably lower than the county (82%) and most neighboring municipalities. On one hand, the proportion of homeowners dropped over the last five years, from the estimated 65% in 2014. On the other hand, the renter submarket has simultaneously been on the rise, increasing from approximately 35% in 2014 to 41% in 2019. This trend of a growing rental market is consistent with a regional trend; according to Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) 2019 report many existing single-family homes are being converted to rental units in the Prosperity Region Four (West Michigan Prosperity Alliance) comprising of Allegan County and twelve other neighboring counties.³

A high percentage of owner-occupied units is generally perceived as a healthy market characteristic. Another related measure of the health of a community is the ratio of renter occupied homes to owner-occupied homes. Many urban and growing communities try to maintain a 2:1 to 3:1 ratio of owner-occupied to rental housing within the market. As of 2019,

Figure 11: Housing Tenure, 2014-2019

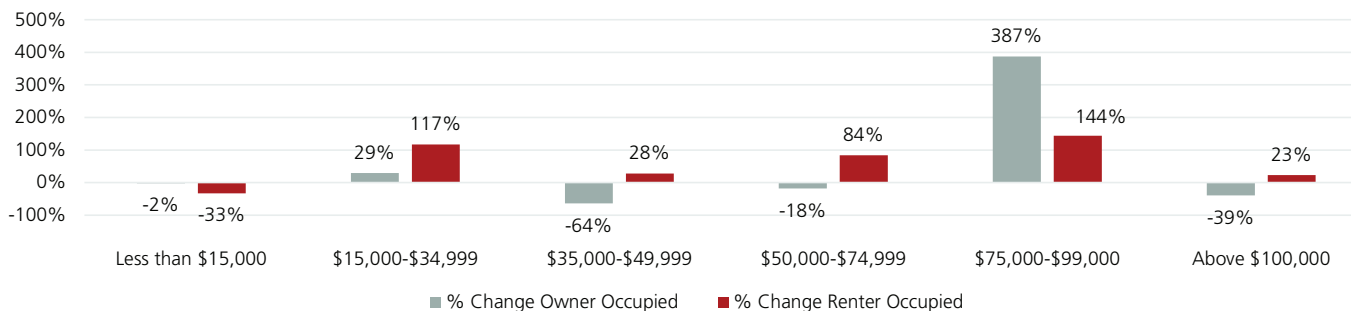


Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Wayland has a ratio under 2:1, gravitating away from the county and general regional trends. However, given that many Michigan communities are still recovering from the adverse impacts of the foreclosure crisis triggered by the Great Recession between 2007 and 2010, the declining homeownership rate is not completely unforeseen. Furthermore, with continually evolving household and housing preferences, the transient nature of rental properties perhaps offers a level of flexibility needed in the market.

The figure "Housing Tenure by Income, 2014-2019" shows the change in renter-occupied units and owner-occupied units by different

Figure 10: Housing Tenure by Income, 2014-2019



Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Table 06: Housing Tenure, County and Neighboring Municipalities, 2019

	Wayland City	Allegan County	Leighton Township, Allegan County	Wayland Township, Allegan County	Otsego City, Allegan County	Lowell City, Kent County	Sparta Village, Kent County	Coopersville, Ottawa County
Owner-occupied	59.0%	82.6%	88.3%	91.0%	66.4%	58.9%	73.8%	73.8%
Renter-occupied	41.0%	17.4%	11.7%	9.0%	33.6%	41.1%	26.2%	26.2%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

income categories between 2014 and 2019. There is an overall increase in renters in almost every income category, except those earning less than \$15,000, perhaps due to lack of attainable housing options. In contrast, there is a decline in homeownership in all income categories, excluding the \$15K-\$35K and \$75K-\$100K. Moderate income household also show a growing difficulty in becoming homeowners. The concentrated growth in homeowners in the higher income spectrum suggests increase in supply of prime real estate as opposed to more affordable housing options, which is likely pushing more households towards rental units.

The shockingly low vacancy rates in both housing submarkets further reiterate a severe demand supply mismatch in Wayland’s housing market. Typically, all housing units have periods of vacancy when they are up for sale or between leases. It is desirable to have at least low vacancy rates so that some housing is available. The 2019 homeowner and rental vacancy rate in Wayland is 0%—meaning that one household cannot move into another housing unit without displacing the previous occupants. Over the last five years, the homeowner vacancy rate has remained at 0% and the rental vacancy rate dropped from 8.4% in 2014 to 0% in 2019, implying severe competition for units irrespective of the tenure category. A total of 17 housing units fall under the “other vacant” category, which typically refers to an abandoned property. Though marginal, rehabilitating such abandoned and/or dilapidated properties will increase housing supply while simultaneously revitalizing neighborhoods. Increasing housing supply by promoting the correct diversity of housing is crucial, to equitably improve housing opportunities and affordability for Wayland’s residents.

AGE OF HOUSING

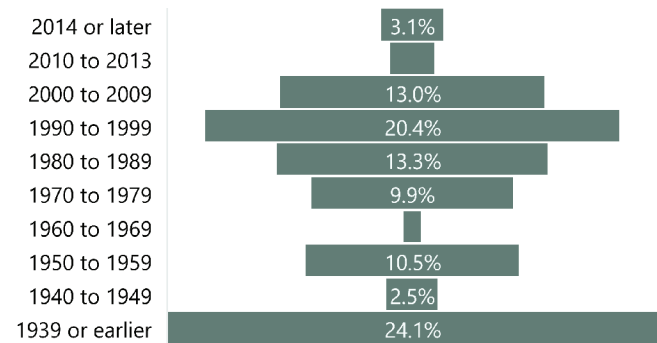
Census figures from 2019 show that 5.3% of Wayland’s total housing stock was built in the last decade. A large proportion of units were built between 1990-1999 which directly corresponds to the population boom the city witnessed during the period. Nearly one quarter of Wayland’s housing units were built prior to 1939 and classify as historic homes. While historic homes undeniably add character to neighborhoods, without proper upkeep they often lack modern amenities that modern families and residents are seeking, and likely causes them to move to the neighboring

Table 07: Housing Vacancy, 2014-2019

	2014		2019	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
Total Housing Units	1,442		1,732	
Occupied Housing Units	1,353	93.8%	1,715	99.0%
Vacant Housing Units	89	6.2%	17	1.0%
For rent	43	48.3%	0	0.0%
Rented, not occupied	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
For sale only	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Sold, not occupied	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	46	51.7%	0	0.0%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other vacant	0	0.0%	17	100.0%

Source: 2014 and 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

Figure 12: Age of Housing, 2019



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

townships which have more land to develop. Some common shortcomings of historic homes include poor insulation, lack of storage, higher maintenance costs, and noncompliance with modern building code that may be intimidating to inexperienced homeowners. The slow rate of new builds in Wayland is consistent with the trend in Allegan County and neighboring cities and is a contributing factor to the housing supply shortage in the city.⁴

To address the housing needs of current and projected future households, several new housing development projects—consisting of single dwelling units, condominiums, and multi-unit apartment complexes—are underway in the city. The map “Vacant Residential Parcels” uses the assessor’s land codes, to illustrate vacant residential

Map 02: Vacant Residential Parcels

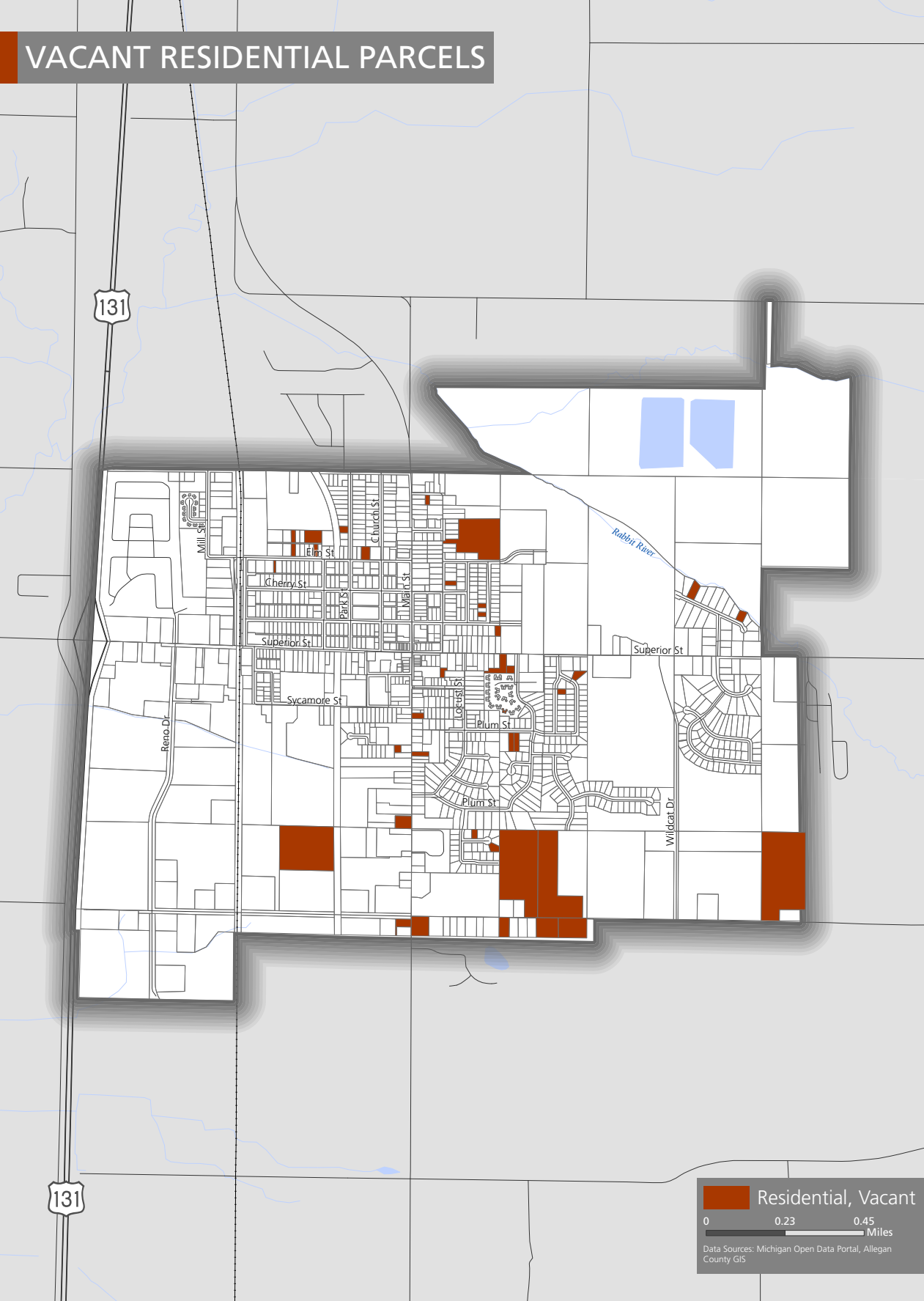
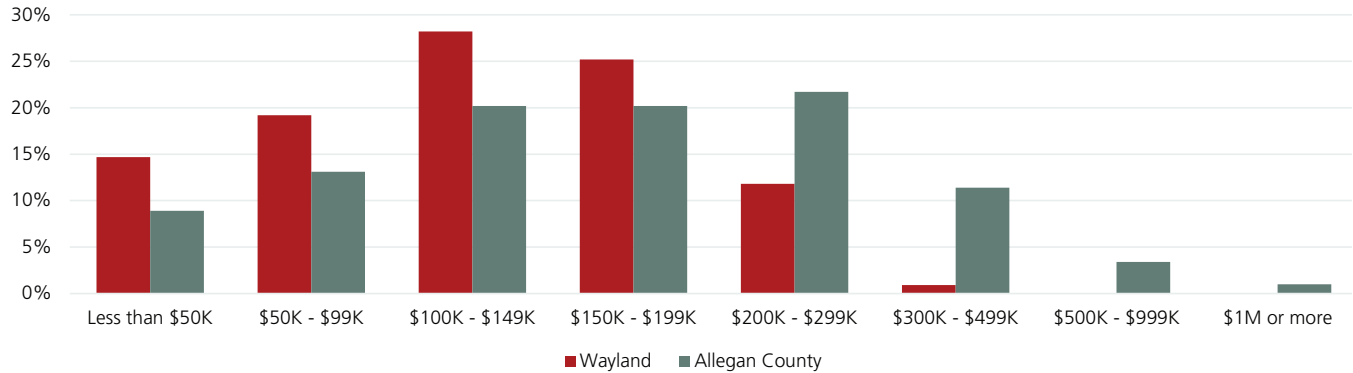


Figure 13: Housing Value, 2019



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates

parcels where new housing could be built. Recently, the city has either approved or is in the process of approving new residential developments, including both single and multi-dwelling units. A combination of strategies such as developing new housing on vacant properties, exploring infill development by introducing missing middle housing types (as outlined above), and revitalizing abandoned/blighted properties will help roll out the required housing supply and bridge the demand-supply mismatch in the Wayland.

HOUSING VALUE

Between 2014 and 2019, the median home value in Wayland grew from \$81,700 to \$126,400 but remains significantly lower than the county figure of \$165,400. The figure “Housing Value, 2019” illustrates a concentration of moderate value homes and shows a relatively smaller proportion of units in the lower price range as a challenge for potential buyers with lower household incomes. The surrounding townships of Leighton and Wayland boast noticeably higher median homes values, \$199,000 and \$191,500 respectively, and can likely be correlated to the larger homes and high median incomes owing to the higher average household and family size. Although the upcoming housing projects promise to increase overall quality and value of housing in the city, high costs associated with new construction suggest that most new housing will likely be available only to households with income at or above the Area Median Income (AMI). Therefore, it is even more crucial to target infill and revitalization projects at affordable price ranges to increase expand housing choices for the low- and moderate-income households.

HOUSING COSTS & AFFORDABILITY

As per the 2019 ACS 5-year estimates, the median gross rent in the city was \$779 and the median “selected monthly owner costs” (SMOC), a figure that includes a mortgage payment as well as insurance and other housing-related expenses, was \$1,190. Both values are lower than the respective county figures of \$814 and \$1,247.

Since 2014, the median gross rent grew marginally by 1.5% while SMOC grew by approximately 17%. Despite the increase in SMOC, almost 83% of homeowners in Wayland can afford their housing costs, while the remaining 11% and 6% live in unaffordable and severely unaffordable units. MSHDA’s 2019 report for prosperity region 4, found that the median sales prices for an existing single dwelling unit of \$157,000, was out of reach for households under 80 percent of AMI.⁵ Even though the median home value in Wayland is slightly lower (\$126,400) compared to the region, there is a strong indication that the homeowner market tends to be disproportionately concentrated within households having a higher purchasing power. To further aggravate the precariousness of lower income households, the value of new single-family dwelling units tend to be 64% higher than the existing stock, implying a severe under supply of affordable homes by the private housing market.⁶

Renters on the other hand experience higher housing cost burden; only 59% of renters live in units affordable to them. Nearly one quarter (26%) of all renters live in unaffordable units and the remaining (15%) in severely unaffordable units. Given the market is only affordable to a little over

Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

Affordable: spending <30% of income on housing costs

Unaffordable: spending 30% - 50% of income on housing costs

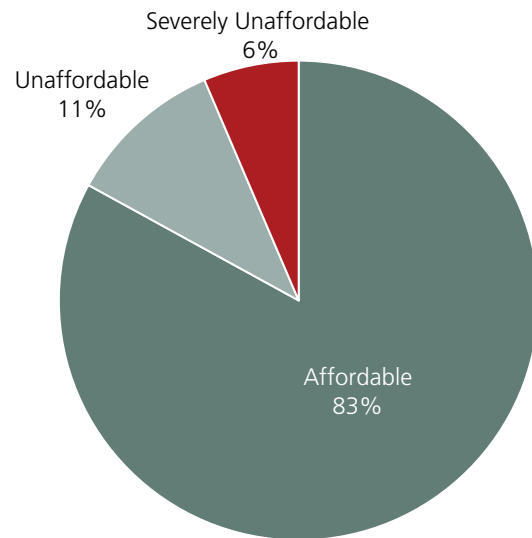
Severely Unaffordable: spending >50% of income on housing costs

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

half the renter population and the vacancy rates are so low, the housing supply shortage forces lower and moderate-income groups to rent units above their affordability threshold, forcing them into financially unstable situations.

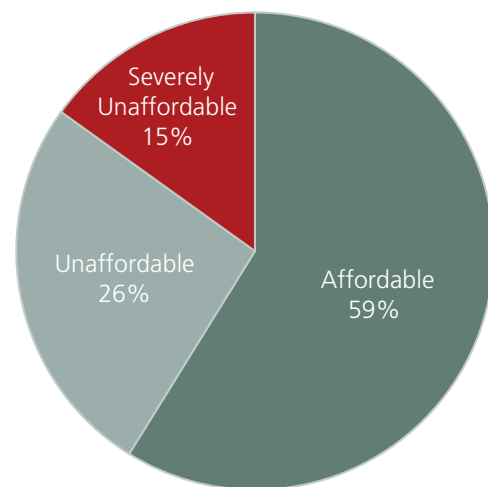
The overall housing costs and affordability dynamics in both the rental and homeowner markets consistently reiterate one persistent issue—a shortage of provision of affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households by the private market. This is a key area where the city should help to bridge the gap. Strategies such as development incentives, density bonuses, tax incentives in tandem with previously identified approaches such as investing in missing middle housing, building smaller infill units, revitalizing rundown properties, and advancing mixed use developments will help diversify housing choice for households in all income ranges.

Figure 14: Cost Burden Homeowner, 2019



Source: Envision Tomorrow, 2019 ACS 5-year Estimate

Figure 15: Cost Burden Renter, 2019



Source: Envision Tomorrow, 2019 ACS 5-year Estimate

Sources

- 1 Opticos Design. Missing Middle Housing. <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>
- 2 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. "The surprising success of manufactured homes as affordable housing." Lincoln House Blog. August 2015. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/news/lincoln-house-blog/surprising-success-manufactured-homes-affordable-housing>
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4

Natural Features



Trailhead to the Rabbit River Trail.

Community growth in population and land mass has often been at the expense of the natural environment. The degradation of natural features to make room for more development has compounding negative effects over time. At moments of expansion, their removal has often been considered a “cost-free” trade off when in fact natural features provide many important ecosystem services, including water and air filtration, stormwater management, a beautiful backdrop to small town living, biodiverse habitats, ambient cooling, and recreational space. When their total value is considered, a paradigm that integrates them into urban planning becomes financially and socially worthwhile. This section provides an inventory of Wayland’s natural features and recommendations to preserve and enhance natural features to help the city combat common and intensifying instances of flooding and heat.

WATER

Flooding

Flood events are caused by an excess of water moving through natural or built systems. While flooding is a natural event, it does present a risk to developed areas' residents, property, and essential infrastructure. In fact, developed areas exacerbate flood events because water cannot infiltrate into impervious surfaces as easily as it can into natural areas. One of the main contributors to urban flooding is impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces are considered any material that interrupts the transition of flowing surface water to ground water. Parking lots, roads, and roof tops are the largest sources of impervious surfaces in urbanized areas. The map "Impervious Surfaces" shows which areas in Wayland have the most impervious surfaces.

According to climate scientists, the number of severe rain events is expected to increase, meaning that flooding events will only become more prevalent and severe. Figure 16 shows the number of severe thunderstorm and flood warnings by type issued by the National Weather Service for Wayland.¹ It also shows that in the last decade, even as the number of thunderstorms has decreased, flood warnings and advisories have stayed steadily higher than in the 1990s.

Map 03: Impervious Surface

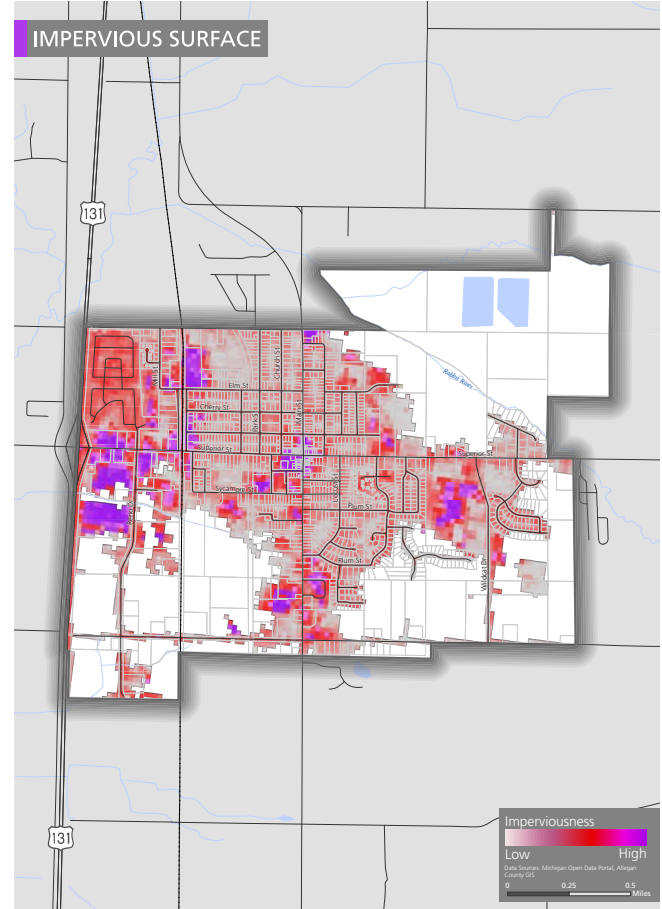
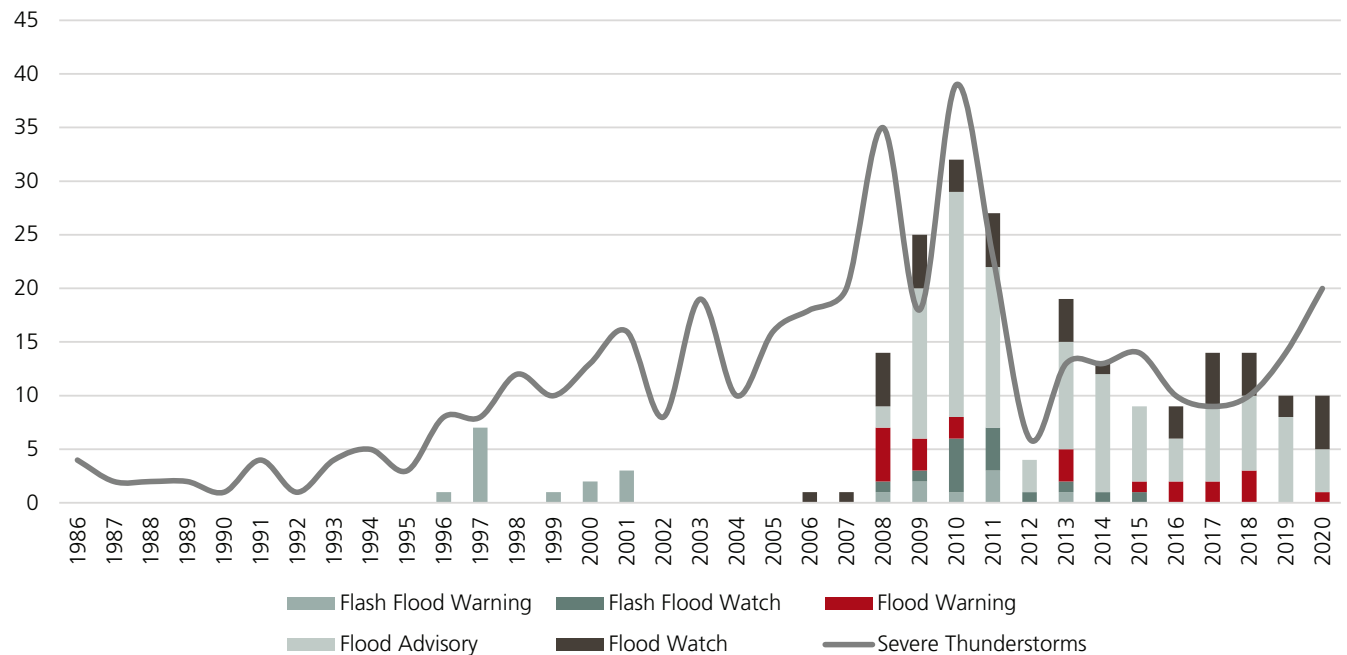


Figure 16: Warnings Issued by the National Weather Service



As of 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of updating and modernizing the data for the flood hazard areas in Wayland. The city has two designated flood hazard areas, one along the Rabbit River and the other along a Rabbit River tributary in the western area of the city. Once these records are released the city will have a more accurate understanding of what areas of the city are at risk of flooding. When floodplain maps consider current trends in building patterns and precipitation, they typically grow in area, reducing the available building footprint for the city.

Watershed

A watershed is a geographic drainage basin, defined by high points in topography. Because they do not necessarily follow political jurisdictions, they are managed by larger bodies known as Watershed Councils. Wayland is within the broader Kalamazoo Watershed and the Upper Rabbit River Sub-Watershed. The 2009 Rabbit River Watershed Management Plan outlines the current conditions of the watershed and best management practices. Goals outlined in the Watershed Management Plan include restoring and maintaining impaired designated uses (indigenous aquatic life and wildlife), protecting and preserving designated uses (coldwater fishery, navigation, and body contact recreation), educating stakeholders, and creating a sustainable strategy for implementing the watershed management plan. Best management practices outlined in the plan include wetland restoration/preservation, other land preservation, land use planning, pollution reduction, and other agricultural practices.² The city should consider representation on the Watershed Council to ensure that its land use practices do not impede on larger goals.

Riparian Area Protection Overlay: Flood Mitigation and Watershed Preservation

Fortunately, flood mitigation and watershed preservation can be enhanced by preserving existing natural areas along hydrological features. To preserve the Rabbit River, Wayland adopted a Riparian Area Protection Overlay Zone in 2006. The intent of the overlay is to protect water quality, the city's resources, protect habitat quality, maintain riverbank stability, and permit property owners to enhance native vegetation along the river corridor.

The overlay covers 50 feet on either side of the stream, with the first adjacent 35 feet designated as the natural vegetation zone and the next 15 feet designated as the transition zone. The natural vegetation zone prohibits the construction of structure and must be maintained in a natural setting. The transition zone is less restrictive but still prohibits the construction of buildings and has less stringent vegetative requirements.³ The overlay is an excellent standard that should be maintained to protect natural features and structures from high risk of damage.

Wetlands

Wetlands' value to urban areas cannot be overlooked as they provide many "free" ecosystem services. Wetlands filtrate water, store atmospheric carbon, hold excess water during flooding events, provide habitat for vulnerable flora and fauna, and are a recreational asset. When considering that instances of flooding are on the rise, it is within the city's best interest to protect wetlands from development pressure.

There are two types of wetlands: freshwater emergent wetlands and forested/shrub wetlands. Emergent wetlands are characterized by seasonal flooding, saturated soil, and dominated by perennial plants. Forested wetlands have more woody vegetation, compared to emergent wetlands, and have less saturated soils. These types of wetlands are nutrient rich and allow for flourishing micro-ecosystems.⁴ Wayland has 282.4 acres of wetlands which equals a substantial 14.7% of the city's total acreage. Most wetlands are forested and located along the Rabbit River and its tributaries, yet some are located on the western, more commercially developed side of the city that could be victim to encroachment if not protected locally.

Types of Wetlands

Freshwater Emergent: characterized by seasonal flooding, saturated soil, and dominated by perennial plants

Forested: characterized by more woody vegetation, compared to emergent wetlands, and have less saturated soils

Table 08: Wetland Types and Size

Wetland Type	Acres	% of Wetlands	% of Wayland
Emergent Wetland	75.2	20.3%	3.9%
Forested Wetland	207.2	55.8%	10.8%
Existing Wetland Total	282.4	-	14.7%
Restorative Wetland	88.8	23.9%	4.6%
Total	371.2	100%	19.3%

Source: Michigan Open Data Portal - EGLE

Wetland Preservation & Rehabilitation

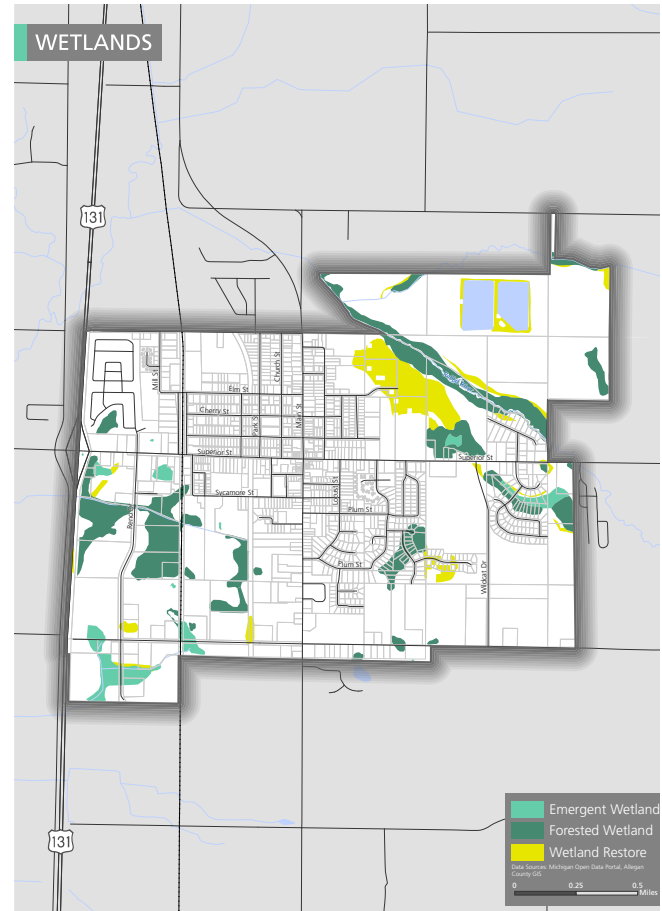
Wetlands, in part, receive protection from the state’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). However, EGLE only provides protection to wetlands that are larger than five acres. Wayland has 35 separate wetlands and 21 are under five acres. These smaller wetlands total 30.4 acres or 10.8% of existing wetlands. Because these wetlands are not protected, the city has the authority to develop additional standards through its code of ordinances. Standards, such as a 100-foot development setback and standards that minimize runoff, known as low impact design standards, can be adopted into the zoning ordinance to preserve the existing wetlands. These standards are consistent with best management practices outlined by the Rabbit River Watershed Management Plan.

Additionally, EGLE maintains a historic record of wetlands that have disappeared (seen as yellow on the map). These areas are prime for wetland rehabilitation because the land has shown the ability to “perform” as a wetland. Wayland, with assistance from EGLE, should investigate potential areas and funding sources for wetland restoration, specifically near the Rabbit River or other naturally significant features.

Wellhead Preservation Areas

While the City of Wayland is served by municipal water, the city’s water source is groundwater. To protect municipal wells from environmental contamination, EGLE establishes wellhead protection areas around municipal wells and runs a voluntary opt-in monitoring program, the Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP). Wellhead protection areas are defined as a 10-year travel distance for contaminants around the wellhead. In other words,

Map 04: Wetlands



if a contaminant were spilled at the edge of the wellhead protection area it would take 10 years for the contamination to reach the wellhead.⁵

Wayland has two delineated wellhead protection areas, one around the Central Business District and the other along the southeastern border of the city. Both areas have environmental contamination (Part 201), presenting a threat to the city’s water quality. Of the 15 sites of environmental contamination in the city, five are in the central wellhead protection area. Two additional sites of environmental contamination are in the southern wellhead but are outside city boundaries. Furthermore, two leaking underground storage tanks (Part 213) are located in the central wellhead protection area.⁶ The combination of sites of environmental contamination and leaking underground storage tanks present a significant threat to the city’s water supply. The city should work with EGLE to determine if the sites present an urgent danger to the water supply and then work with property owners to remediate the contamination.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

An additional strategy to maintain water quality and mitigate the impact of flooding is the widespread incorporation of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is broadly defined as “the range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement, or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspiration stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters.”⁷ The main goal of green infrastructure is to manage the flow of water into the ground instead of into the sewer system. Green infrastructure has many benefits, one of which is reducing the impact of impervious surfaces by facilitating the movement of water into the ground or into vegetation so that it does not overload the stormwater system. The Table "Green Infrastructure Methods" shows several examples of green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure improvements can be included in public investment with streetscapes updates, or in private investment as a requirement for new development. To incentivize green infrastructure, credits towards landscaping requirements can be given for preserving mature existing trees, or density bonuses could be given for additional buildable area if green infrastructure is included in the development.

LAND

Soils

According to the United States Soil Survey there are eight soil ecological classes in Wayland. Soil characteristics, such as water holding capacity and composition, impact development. For example, developments in wetter soils necessitate strategies to control stormwater to avoid soil slippage that could compromise the structural integrity. Soil classifications also indicate their suitability hosting tree species, and ability to absorb precipitation. The following soil types are listed in order of prevalence in the city:

Dry Sandy Lake Plain (55%, 1,035.8 acres)

The dry sandy lake plain soils are classified as excessively well drained and are generally 90% - 100% sand. These soils have limited water holding capacity and make vegetation more susceptible to drought. Trees that are successful in these soils

include sugar maple, beech, white pine, white oak, red maple, and red oak. These soils are well suited to development.⁸

Moist Sandy Depression (17%, 320.1 acres)

Moist sandy depression soils are classified as poorly drained sands and are 85% sand. These soils are well suited by beech-sugar maple forests. These soils are well suited to development.⁹

Moist Loamy Drift Plains (13%, 238.0 acres)

The moist loamy drift plain soils are somewhat poorly drained and comprised of course loams, fine loams, and clays. The top 50 centimeters of this soil type is 30% sand. These soils are favored by beech-sugar maple forests and are well suited for development.¹⁰

Wet Sandy Depression (9%, 165.0 acres)

Soils in the wet sandy depression class are very poorly drained. The top 50 centimeters of these soils are 90% sand and 5% clay. These soils are well suited for low-nitrogen tolerant species such as hemlock and yellow birch. The understory is usually dominated by dwarf raspberries. These soils are somewhat suited to development and more suited with water retention and infiltration strategies.¹¹

Wet Floodplains (3%, 51.9 acres)

Soils in the wet floodplain are poorly drained to very poorly drained and are likely to flood. These soils are suitable to wetland species and flood tolerant tree species. Wet floodplain soils are not suited for development.¹²

Mucky Depressions (2%, 29.5 acres)

Soils in this class are very poorly drained soils and anaerobic. These soils are comprised of mainly decomposing plant matter or peat. Established mucky depressions are considered as swamp forests with trees that may be partially submerged in water. These soils are extremely unsuitable to development.¹³

Wet Loamy Depression (1%, 25.5 acres)

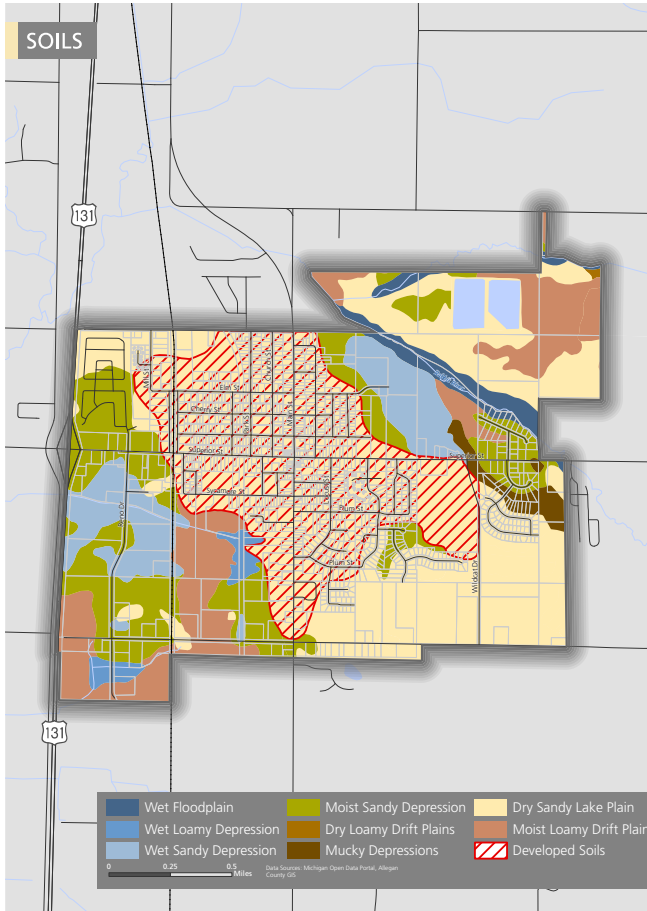
These soils are poorly to very poorly drained. Roughly 25% of this soil class is sand. Vegetative composition is similar to floodplains and is mainly comprised of silver maple and green ash trees. These soils are somewhat unsuited for development.¹⁴

Table 09: Green Infrastructure Methods

Method	Description	Example
Rainwater Harvesting	Systems that collect and store rainwater for later use.	
Rain Gardens	Shallow, vegetated gardens that collect and absorb runoff from streets, sidewalks, and roofs.	
Planter Boxes	Boxes along sidewalks, streets, or parking lots that collect and absorb rainwater; they can be designed with a notch to allow additional stormwater to flow in, as with rain gardens. These also serve as streetscaping elements.	
Bioswales	Linear and vegetated channels, typically adjacent to a road or parking lot, that slow, retain, and filter stormwater.	
Permeable Pavement	Pavement that absorbs, filters, and stores rainwater.	
Green Roofs	Vegetated roofs that absorb and filter rainwater.	
Tree Canopy	Trees reduce and slow stormwater flow.	

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Map 05: Soils



Dry Loamy Drift Plains (<1%, 1.8 acres)

Dry loamy drift plains are well drained soils and is comprised of 65% sand. Common trees in this soil class include white oak and bur oak. These soils are suited for development.¹⁵

Natural vegetation requirements should be adapted to the soil type to ensure that the vegetation and soil are suitable. Additionally, development should be conscious of preserving soils because once the soil is disturbed or moved it cannot easily be replaced/reconstructed. To ensure that development is appropriate for the soil typology the city can continue to work with the county on enforcing such standards during the site plan review process.

AIR

Pollution

Air pollution can have many negative impacts on public health including increased risk for respiratory illness and conditions and higher risk of cancer. As the figure "Air Quality Index in Allegan County" shows, the number of substandard air quality (PM 2.5 and ozone) days in Allegan County has decreased over the past decade.¹⁶ However, one major source of concern is the proximity of Wayland to US-131. Wayland ranks in the 71st percentile for pollution relating to traffic proximity.¹⁷ Screening devices, such as trees, are a good strategy to reduce the pollution for highway traffic. North of West Superior Street, a row of trees separates US-131 from the city but additional trees could be planted South of West Superior Street to further screen residents from the highway pollution.

Urban Heat Island

The urban heat island is the phenomena wherein urbanized areas have higher temperatures than the surrounding areas. This is a result of impervious surfaces, building mass, and a lack of natural

Figure 17: Air Quality Index in Allegan County

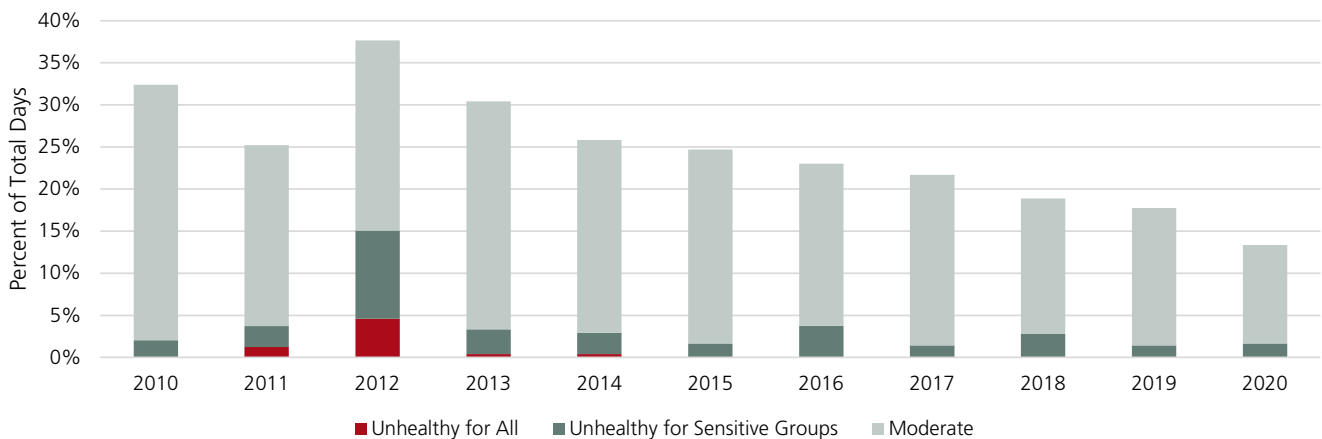
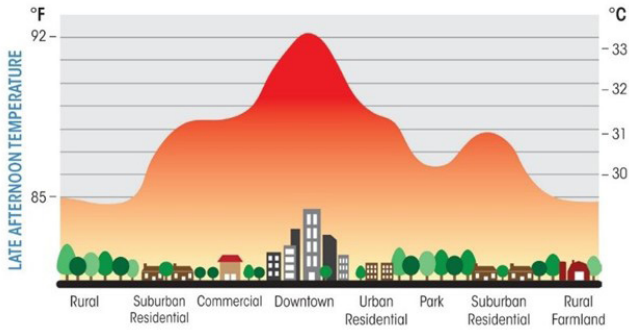


Figure 18: Urban Heat Island

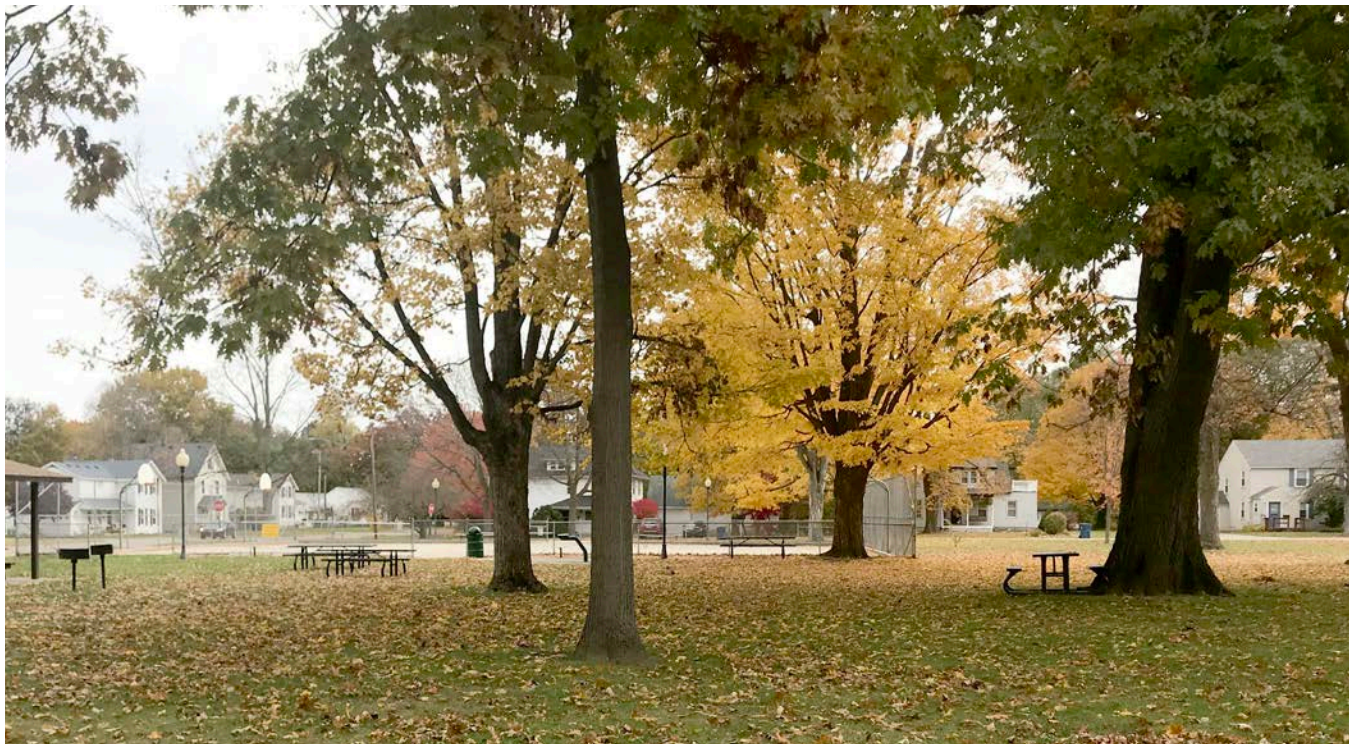
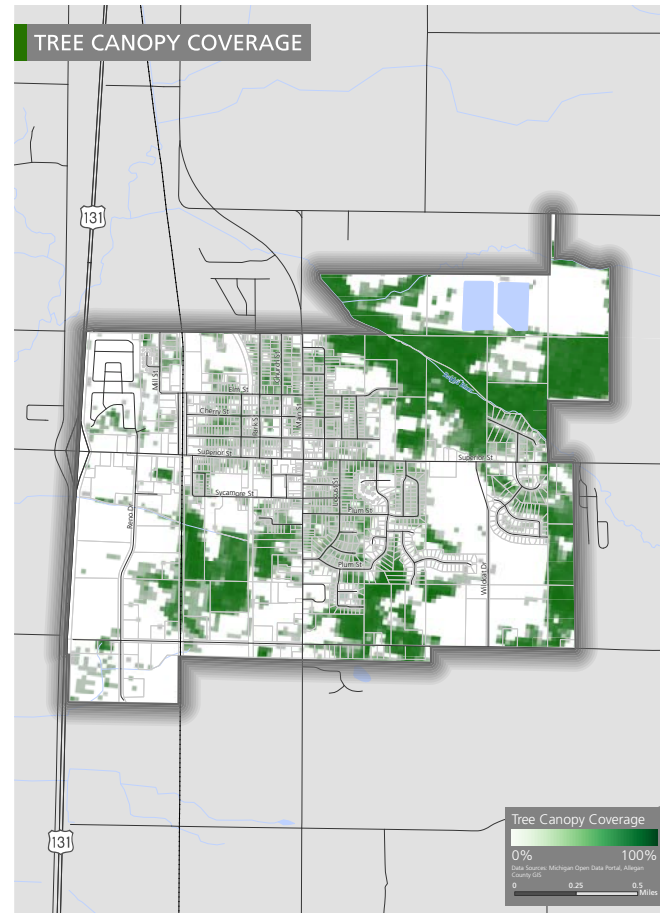


vegetation, which retain heat and radiate it back into the surrounding area (Refer figure "Urban Heat Island").¹⁸ This can be especially dangerous to sensitive groups such as the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. Strategies to reduce the urban heat island include increasing natural areas in developed areas and reducing impervious surfaces.

Tree Canopy

Trees are one of the best strategies to mitigate environmental challenges in urbanized areas. Trees reduce ambient temperatures through evapotranspiration (the release of water into the atmosphere), capture stormwater runoff, and provide habitat to local fauna. The map "Tree

Map 06: Tree Canopy Coverage



Existing trees in the City.

Canopy Coverage" shows the tree canopy coverage for the city in 2016. The data was generated by the federal government using remote sensing and satellite imagery and will be updated in 2021 and released in 2022-23. As the map shows, the northeastern area of the city along the Rabbit River has a strong tree canopy. Two other areas on the south side of the city have a large concentration of trees. The northern neighborhoods have some tree canopy coverage which is a result of the street trees and other trees on residents' property.

The City of Wayland has a tree board whose responsibility is "to study, investigate, develop, update and administer a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of street trees and park trees." The board is also responsible for presenting a tree plan to City Council on an annual basis but has not been active for the last five years due to high turnover and a perceived apathy among residents to get involved. The city does not have a substantial budget to plant new trees; much of the existing budget is used to remove trees after large storms strike them down. Therefore, the city must rely on a tree ordinance that protects existing trees and requires new development to include new plantings.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- » Maintain natural features along the Rabbit River.
- » Maintain and enforce the Riparian Overlay Zone.
- » Adopt wetland preservation and protection regulations.
- » Adopt other natural features preservation and protection regulations.
- » Investigate sites and funding sources for wetland restoration.
- » Include green infrastructure in street and streetscape improvement projects.
- » Include green infrastructure in municipal development projects.
- » Adopt development bonuses for green infrastructure.
- » Include green infrastructure in landscaping requirements.
- » Plant screening vegetation along US-131 south of Superior Street.



Agricultural land.

Sources

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5

Community Facilities



Henika Ladies Library.

One of the principal functions of the local government is to provide essential services and amenities to its residents, for example, public safety. Wayland has a suite of services that are currently tailored to the needs of its residents.

SERVICES

Water and Sanitary Sewer

The majority of the City of Wayland is connected to the municipal water and sanitary sewer system. Expansion of the system is dependent on development, so the undeveloped areas in the southeast side of the city are not connected to the system. While some of 133rd Ave is developed, these properties are not connected to the system and rely on on-site water and septic systems. Some residents have chosen to not connect to the system, but they have the option to connect in the future.

The expansion of the system is primarily reliant on developers who pay for the cost of extensions to the infrastructure. Water for the system is sourced from municipal groundwater wells and treated wastewater is discharged into the Rabbit River from the wastewater treatment plant in the northeast corner of the city. The system is well suited for additional residential development and has enough capacity to support future residential development. However, the system does have some limitations, especially on the west side of the city along US-131. The size of the pipes and capacity of the system can not handle a water intensive facility, such as manufacturing, and the system would likely need to be upgraded to support those uses along US-131. The need for expansion and capacity of the system is reevaluated when new development comes to the city, to ensure that the system can support all properties.

One primary concern with water and sanitary systems is the health and condition of the pipes. Recent events around Michigan (Flint and Benton Harbor) have highlighted the need to monitor and replace out of date or dangerous water infrastructure. Currently, property owners across the city are replacing lead and copper pipes and the city has been monitoring corrosion within the system. Recent corrosion tests have been in the 90th percentile, indicating that the pipes and overall system are in good physical condition.

Stormwater System

Stormwater systems differ from sanitary systems because they do not transport household wastewater and capture water flowing from the streets, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces. The City of Wayland operates a stormwater system separated from the sanitary system. Roughly 90% of the city is serviced by stormwater and the system discharges to the Rabbit River and other county drains. Expansion for the stormwater system is approached on a case-by-case basis when new development occurs in the city.

Public Safety

Fire Department

The City of Wayland's Fire Department is comprised of a mix of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff. The Department provides fire protection to the city and is under contract to provide protection

to Wayland Township. The fire department has a ladder apparatus that allows the city to provide fire protection services to structures at greater heights than two stories.

Police Department

Similar to the Fire Department, the City of Wayland's Police Department is a mix of full-time and part-time staff members. Of the police staff, six are full-time and three are part-time.

Emergency Medical Services

Allegan County funds ambulance services and one of the three stations in the county is located in Wayland. The services provide emergency and non-emergency medical transportation to healthcare facilities in Allegan County.¹

Solid Waste

Solid waste services in the city are not provided by the city and instead contracted to private sector actors. Residents individually contract with private providers for solid waste services. There are multiple providers for curbside trash services and one provider for curbside recycling services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Library

The Henika District Library is located at 149 South Main Street in Wayland and serves the city and Wayland Township. The library is supported by a tax millage of 1.5 mills and has an annual budget of roughly \$500,000.² The library is a member of the Michigan Library System meaning that they have access to the collections of all member libraries, allowing patrons to access titles that may not currently be on site. Programming at the library includes adult, youth, and family-oriented activities. In 2022, the library allocated \$12,000 to programming.

Schools

The City of Wayland is in the Wayland Union Schools District which includes the city and portions of Byron, Dorr, Gaines, Hopkins, Leighton, Martin, Orangeville, Watson, Wayland, and Yankee Springs Townships. There are three public elementary schools, one public middle school, and one public high school in Wayland. There is also a private K-5

Catholic School in the city. Student enrollment has remained fairly consistent over the past decade: in the 2011-2012 school year there were 2,844 students enrolled in the district, and in the 2020-2021 school year 2,946 students were enrolled. Extracurriculars available to Wayland Union students include fall, winter, and spring sports, art programs, band, choir, dance, orchestra, and theater.³

The Career Connections Academy is an alternative education opportunity for high school students to engage in technical education and offers students 16 different career paths. Students attend at least one year at the Allegan County Area Technical Education Center. Students remain engaged with the traditional high school through extracurriculars, athletics, and administrative support.⁴

Community Events

There are several community events that are coordinated by the city and other partners such as

the DDA. The Main Street Celebration is a summer event that includes food and art vendors, live entertainment, and games.⁵ Art Hop (an artists' event in the winter) and local Farmers' Market are also sponsored by the DDA.⁶ Other organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, host events or activities in conjunction with these special events.

CONCLUSION

The City of Wayland is well-positioned as it relates to water, sanitary, and stormwater systems. Each system has room and functional capacity to grow as development occurs in the city. Some uses, specifically water intensive manufacturing, may stress the system but there is no urgent need for expansion or revision of the existing system. The Fire and Police Departments do not call for any major reductions or expansions at this time. The robust school system presents many academic, athletic, and extracurricular opportunities for students and draws students from outside city limits.



Main Street celebration.

Source: Downtown Development Authority

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6

Parks & Recreation



Trailhead to the Rabbit River Trail.

A robust open space and recreation system is vital to build a desirable living environment and enhance a community's overall wellbeing, especially during an unceasing global pandemic, where the outdoors has become more essential than ever to avoid isolation. In addition to offering numerous health benefits, park and recreation facilities also serve measurable economic and environmental purposes. A recent study found that capital investments by local parks and recreation authorities resulted in approximately \$1.9 billion in economic activity, \$470 million in labor income, and 14,000 jobs in Michigan.¹ Moreover, open spaces are a proven green infrastructure solution to mitigate stormwater runoff. To this end, this chapter inventories Wayland's open spaces, outdoor recreation areas, trails, and bike paths to define community priorities and guide strategic future improvements.

STRUCTURE

Wayland’s Park Committee was established in 1986. The primary role of the Park Committee is to address park issues and maintenance, program and/or enhance existing facilities, and plan new recreational facilities. In recent years the Park Committee has not been meeting regularly but has a goal of completing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in the near future to organize a list of projects to implement. The Park Committee works directly with the City Council, guided by an ad-hoc committee of three Councilors, to establish an annual budget to ensure proper disbursement of funding for planned improvements which must coincide with the Planning Commission’s land use policies regarding open space and development. Parks located with the Downtown Development Authority’s district are managed by the DDA with the help of volunteers. Finally, the Department of Public Works (DPW) plays a critical role in the day-to-day operations, maintenance, and upkeep to ensure the quality and sustainability of existing open space and recreation facilities.²

OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION INVENTORY

The City of Wayland provides several open space and recreational opportunities for its residents including six public parks along with access to several school facilities and other regional parks and recreation areas.

Public Parks

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)—the state agency dedicated to managing the state’s natural and cultural resource—developed

MDNR Park Classifications

Mini Parks: Typically, less than one acre and located less than ¼ mile in a residential setting, mini parks address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.

Neighborhood Parks / Playgrounds: With an area between 5-10 acres and located ¼ to ½ mile distance uninterrupted by physical barriers, these parks serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood, with opportunities for both informal active and passive recreation.

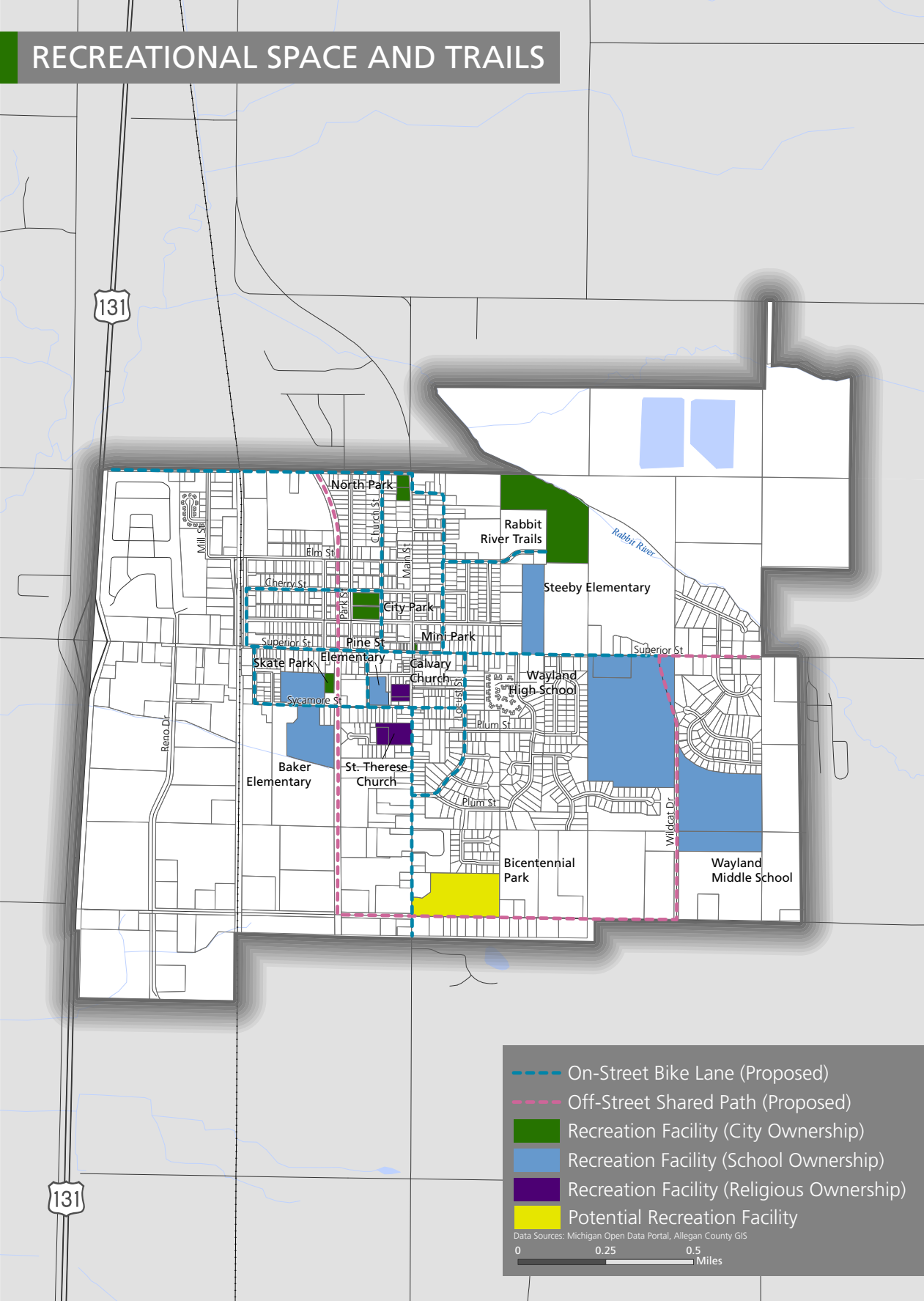
Community Parks: Community parks are usually larger than neighborhood parks and serve a broader purpose by showcasing an array of recreational facilities which cater to at least two neighborhoods—½ to 3-mile distance.

Special Use Parks: These parks cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented towards a single-purpose use.

Table 10: Public Park Inventory

Name	Type	Area (Acres)	Accessibility	Amenities
Wayland Mini Park	Mini Park	0.1	3/5	Benches, picnic tables, parking
Wayland City Park	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	3.5	3/5	Benches, picnic tables, picnic shelters, large playground, basketball courts, splashpad, tennis, pickleball, walking path, public restrooms, parking
North Park	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	1.0	1/5	Open play field
Rabbit River Park	Community Park	28	3/5	Benches, picnic tables, picnic shelter, river frontage, walking/biking trails, public restrooms, parking
Wayland Skate Park	Special Use Park	0.5	1/5	Skateboarding facilities (half pipe, launch ramp, pyramids), parking
Potential Parkland				
Bicentennial Park	Undeveloped, former landfill	10	1/5	No current amenities; wooded area in need of remediation prior to development

Map 07: Recreational Space and Trails



a classification system that describes recommended size, locational reach, and general use/purpose of parks. The table “Public Park Inventory” uses MDNR’s system to categorize the city’s public parks and the map “Recreational Sapce and Trails” spatially situates the parks and trails systems within the city limits.

Rabbit River is a prominent hydrologic feature in Wayland which offers high-quality recreational facilities to the community with access at Rabbit River Park. The 62-mile-long river flows west from Leighton Township and crosses many jurisdictions in Allegan County before merging with the Kalamazoo River near New Richmond. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) classifies the section of the Rabbit River that crosses through Allegan County as a Type 1 trout stream.³ The MDNR continues to use the 135th Street station along the Rabbit River to stock trout populations in the system. In 2020, roughly 16,000 rainbow trout and 1,400 brown trout were stocked in the Rabbit River.⁴

Accessibility

In December 2021, the MDNR updated its best practices manual called the “Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans.” The “Accessibility” column in the table “Public Park Inventory” follows the Accessibility Rating scale defined in the guide. Wayland Mini Park, Wayland City Park, and the Rabbit River Park receive a moderate accessibility rating of three while Wayland Skate Park, North Par receive a low rating of one. While only 7.6% of survey-takers responded that they have a disabled

person in the household, nearly 14% of Wayland’s population is disabled and low accessibility scores are an equity issue.⁵ Priority should be given to boosting these scores to at least a four, starting with parks that have the lowest ratings.

Residential Proximity to Public Parks

The table “Access to Recreational Space ” shows the number parcels located within walking distance of the city parks and schools and churches with recreational equipment or facilities. The map “Recreational Space Access” shows ¼-mile and ½-mile radius around each site, commonly accepted walking distances. Of the total 1,009 residential parcels, about 70% are located within a ¼-mile radius and 87% are within ½-mile. Distance is just one indication of park access; another level of analysis would include the quality and connectivity of the sidewalks and bicycle lanes to the parks. As many park users are children and teenagers, nonmotorized paths to parks is an essential part of access.

While the existing parks offer several facilities for the residents, the shortage of smaller neighborhood-scale parks equally distributed throughout the city is evident from the map. Most of the parks are concentrated in the northern half of the city. The northern portion of the city was built on a traditional grid with smaller lots so parks are a more in demand resource for recreation. In the southern part of the city where subdivisions were built with bigger lots, households have room in their yards for passive recreation. The community reiterated the concern of lacking parkland during

MDNR Accessibility Rating Scale

1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines

5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using principals of universal design



Pavilion at trail entrance.

Table 11: Access to Recreational Space

Parcel Type	Parcels within 1/4 Mile Buffer	Parcels within 1/2 Mile Buffer	Total Parcels
Residential	710	882	1,009
Total	885	1,112	1,298

the public engagement sessions. The city can work to identify potential lots to acquire to provide greater accessibility to parks and recreation options, with diverse programming, within walking distance to more households.

Community Feedback on Public Parks

Wayland residents are the direct beneficiaries of the city’s parks and recreation facilities; therefore, their feedback is invaluable for improving the existing facilities and defining new programming in the city parks. In April 2021, the Parks and Recreation Committee engaged with the public through a survey, an open house session, and a social media post to understand what works well and what needs to be improved in Wayland’s public parks.

Of the 106 survey respondents, over 70% were satisfied with the recreational opportunities in the city. The respondents are avid park goers; the majority of survey-takers go to parks at least 5-9 times per year. Wayland City Park and the

Rabbit River Park are the community favorites, with over 75% visiting one of them over the last year. However, 21 respondents noted that the absence of diverse amenities, safety, and accessibility as major factors for not using the park facilities. While the majority were satisfied with the overall conditions of facilities in the public parks, respondents also felt that diverse facilities are needed to accommodate all age groups ranging from preschoolers to seniors. Some of the most common needs from the public include smaller neighborhood parks, a community garden, dog parks, paved trails, pavilions, and additional sports fields. The community also unanimously stated increased waterfront access and year-round programming in public parks as a priority.

School and Church Recreational Facilities

There are five recreational facilities associated with public schools, one associated with a private school, and one with the Calvary Church in Wayland. The table titled “School and Church Facilities” inventories available amenities in each of these seven facilities. While the schools provide diverse active recreation facilities, their hours of operation for the public are limited. There is no formal agreement between the school district and the city, but the public is free to use campus facilities when school is not in session.

Table 12: School and Church Facilities

Name	Amenities
Baker Elementary School	Swings, playground, play structure, sand box, open play field, athletic fields (baseball, football)
Pine Street Elementary School	Swings, playground, volleyball court, indoor basketball court
Steeby School	Swings, play structure, sand box, open play field, athletic fields (baseball, football)
Wayland Union Middle School	Basketball courts, athletic fields (baseball, softball, soccer), tennis courts, indoor basketball court
Wayland Union High School	Athletic fields (baseball, softball, football, soccer), track, tennis courts, indoor basketball court, fitness center, swimming pool.
St. Therese School	Basketball court, indoor basketball court.
Calvary Church	Basketball court, baseball field, indoor basketball court.

Source: Wightman & Associates, Inc., City of Wayland Recreation Plan Draft.

Map 08: Recreational Space Access

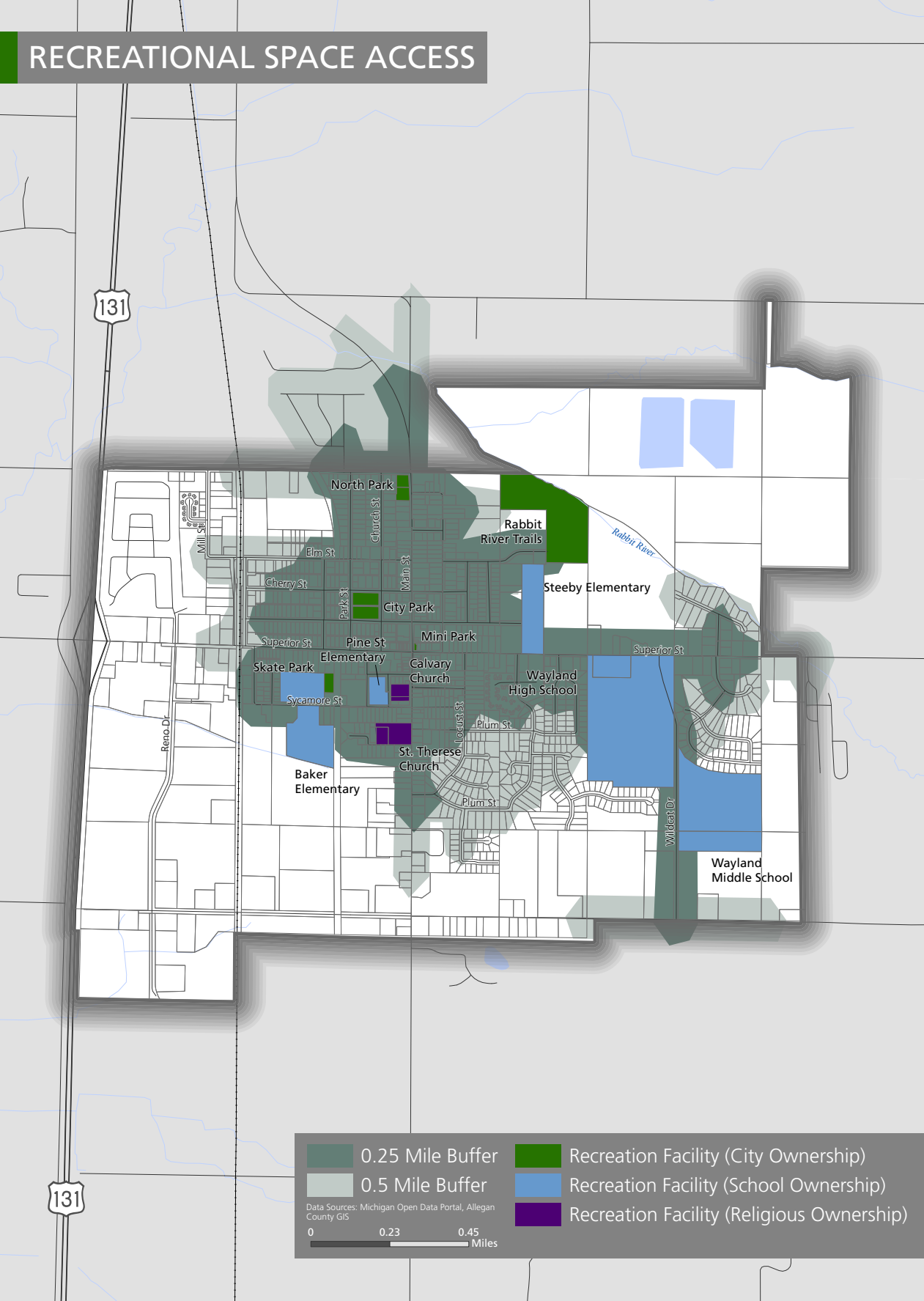


Table 13: Regional Parks

Name	Distance from Wayland (Miles)	Amenities
Bysterveld County Park	5.2	2-miles of nature trails, a picnic shelter, playground, fishing pond, picnic/recreation areas, public restrooms, parking
Green Lake	8.1	Fishing area (Black Crappie, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Rock Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Yellow Perch)
Barry State Game Area	12	Public land for hunting
Gun Lake	12	Summer and ice fishing, playground, basketball court, pavilion, restrooms, a boat launch, and over 450 feet of beach
Yankee Springs Recreation Area	12	Three special points of interest: Devil’s Soup Bowl (a glacially carved kettle formation), Graves Hill Overlook, and the Pines; mountain biking, horseback riding trails, fishing piers, beaches, and nine lakes for fishing and winter activities
Dumont Lake County Park	15.8	Picnic tables, grills, pavilion, playground, public restrooms
Silver Creek County Park	16.7	25-miles of riding trails, 75 campsites, grills, picnic tables, walking trails.
Allegan State Game Area	20-25	Camping, hunting, unique ecosystem of oak-pine barrens
Littlejohn Lake County Park	23.3	Picnic tables, grills, playground, nature trails, pavilion
West Side County Park	39	630 feet of sandy beach, baseball diamond, picnic tables, pavilions, playground, public restrooms

Source: Wightman & Associates, Inc., City of Wayland Recreation Plan Draft.



Utility trail.

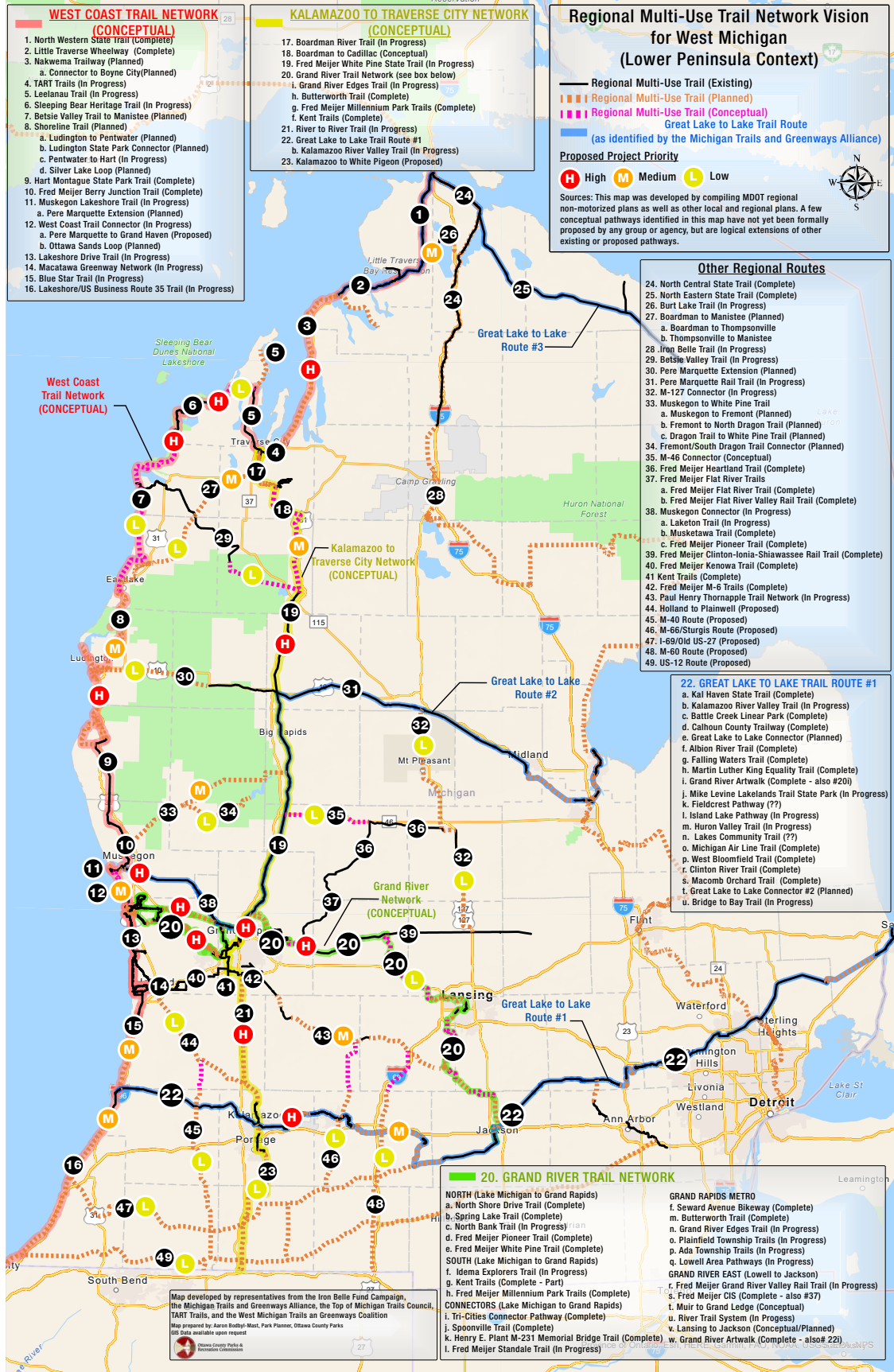
Regional Parks and Recreational Facilities

The city of Wayland is situated among various regional recreational sites with assets typically not offered by local parks. Their specialized amenities attract residents from Wayland and other surrounding communities alike. A brief description of the regional parks and recreational opportunities are noted in the table titled “Regional Parks.”

NONMOTORIZED TRAIL SYSTEMS

Non-motorized trails are often the most desired recreational assets requested by residents. They are dynamic in that they provide numerous health, social, economic, and environmental benefits to residents and the city. Walking and biking trails increase access to the city’s natural resources such as the Rabbit River, parks, wetlands, and woodlands and heighten a community’s awareness to protect these invaluable assets. In addition to local trails, regional trails offer a unique opportunity to connect people and communities and are often instrumental in advancing the economic prosperity of a region.

Map 09: Proposed Trails in Western Michigan



Source: Ottawa County Parks and recreation Commission

Existing Trails

The Rabbit River Nature Trail is the city's prominent nonmotorized trail system accessed via the Rabbit River Park. The nearly mile-long trail is built on a 35-acre space and provides a mix of paved and unpaved paths.⁶ The contiguous park is the only access to the Rabbit River and offers other amenities including a covered picnic area and a scenic overlook with benches.

Proposed Trails

The map "Recreational Space and Trails" shows proposed on-street and off-street bike lanes in Wayland; the two different bike lanes interlink to provide access to almost all the public park in Wayland. Logical integration of the trails with the existing and future sidewalks and the existing street system will help to extend walkable and bikeable

streets throughout the city. Under this approach, the network of sidewalks, off street pathways, and designated bike routes will make the entire city (residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools and parks, and open space) accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. It is therefore vital that the city strive to put this in the Capital Improvements Plan and works with the DDA to ensure that such projects are funded.

The "Interurban Trail" is proposed to run north-south through the City of Wayland and is proposed to be built on abandoned railroad corridor which is currently a Consumers Energy right-of-way. This non-motorized, greenway trail, will ultimately connect with the extensive trail system in southern Kent County, and with trails in the Kalamazoo area. It will also be connected to sidewalks and bicycle routes developed within the city.



Wooded area.

Sources

- 1 National Recreation and Park Association, The Economic Impact of Parks, <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/research/economic-impact-study-summary-2020.pdf>
- 2 Wightman & Associates, Inc., City of Wayland Recreation Plan draft.
- 3 MiFish, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, <https://umich.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1772bc3d96ba46feb510bc5dd29c6b37>
- 4 Fish Stocking Database, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, <https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/fishstock/>
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table DP02.
- 6 Herb Woerpel, "Rabbit River Nature Trail in Wayland set for grand opening this Saturday," MLive, 2019, https://www.mlive.com/penaseeglobe/2011/06/rabbit_river_nature_trail_in_w.html

7

Transportation



Downtown Wayland.

Transportation networks are the physical links that support mobility in a community. Roads, public transit, sidewalks, and other nonmotorized paths allow residents to move between home, work, places to socialize, and other everyday destinations. Transportation infrastructure also enable connections between communities facilitating exchange of products and services with other economic markets. Typically, housing, businesses, and amenities tend to concentrate along well-connected road networks thereby establishing transportation infrastructure as a fundamental element of land use planning. Good quality and affordable public transportation also ensure the mobility of all socioeconomic groups while simultaneously reducing a community's carbon footprint. This section presents an overview of Wayland's existing roadways and transit systems and provides recommendations to improve the city's infrastructure to support multimodal transportation networks.

ROAD SYSTEMS

The City of Wayland has 24 miles of roads within its boundary.¹ US-131 runs along the city's western boundary connecting Wayland to the major metropolitan regions of Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids before continuing north to its terminus at Petoskey. Wayland's proximity to US-131 is a major factor in the city's desirability; the city is well connected to job, goods, and services.

Road Classification and Traffic Volumes

The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a hierarchical system developed by the Federal Highway Administration and used by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to determine federal funding allocation for different roads. Roads are categorized based on mobility, trip distance, speed limit, and traffic volume. All of Wayland's roads fall into one of the following three classifications: Freeway, Major Collector, and Local Roads.

The map "National Functional Classification" represents Wayland's road network based on the NFC hierarchy. The US-131 is maintained by MDOT and therefore eligible for federal funding; however, since it falls under the purview of MDOT, the city has limited jurisdiction over any road improvements. Main Street and Superior Street runs are both these major collector roads and their intersection divides the city of Wayland into four quadrants. Collector roads are also eligible for federal funding and are managed by the city. All other roads in Wayland are local roads maintained privately or by the city; since local roads are not eligible for federal funding, the city must undertake the responsibility of upkeep. Most cities struggle to keep roads well maintained due to funding shortages. To keep a schedule for local roads maintenance forecasting, Wayland should continue to include maintenance costs in the capital improvements plan.

MDOT estimates the number of vehicles that travel daily by road throughout the year, using a metric termed Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT). The AADT estimates in Wayland are indicated in the map "National Functional Classification". The AADT numbers closely follow the NFC hierarchy; roads with higher ranking receive larger traffic volumes. Correspondingly, US-131 receives an AADT of approximately 42,800 followed by Superior Street which receives over 8,000

National Functional Classification

Freeway: These roads are at the top of the NFC hierarchical system and generally carry long distance, through-travel movements.

Major Collectors: Provide access to property and funnel traffic from residential or rural areas to arterial roads.

Local Roads: Provide access to properties

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

vehicles and Main Street which receives nearly 5,000 vehicles per day on an average. Given the high traffic volumes on Superior Street and Main Street—both of which pass through Wayland's downtown—continual road improvements and upkeep is essential to maintain the safety, quality of roads, and pedestrian experience.

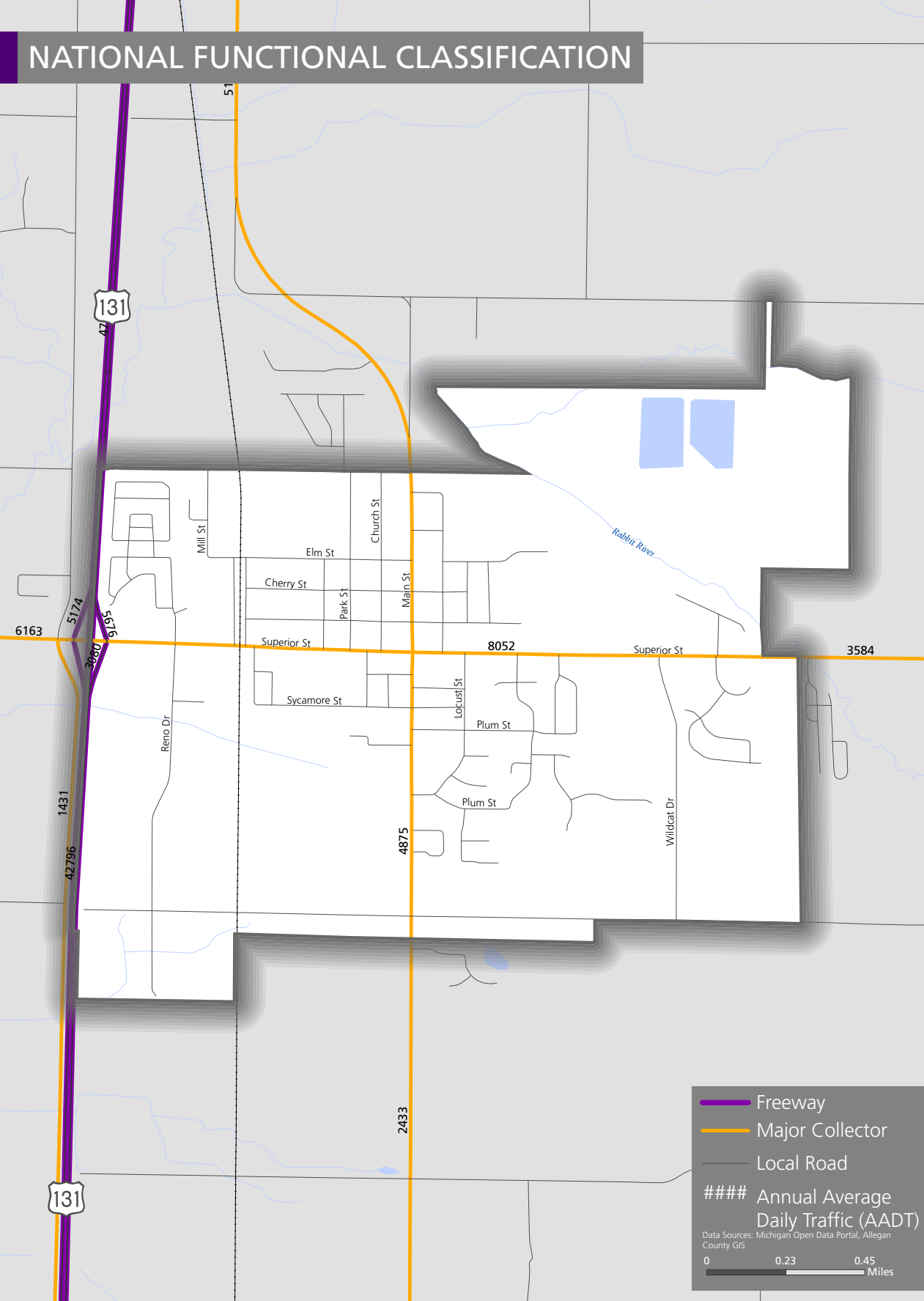
Road Conditions

The quality of roads impacts mobility and safety. The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) conducts a visual survey called the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) to evaluate the conditions of roads. This survey uses a scale of 1-10 to rate roads and then categorizes them as good, fair, or poor (shown in green, yellow, and red respectively); the map "Road Conditions" presents the conditions of Wayland's roads using this scale.

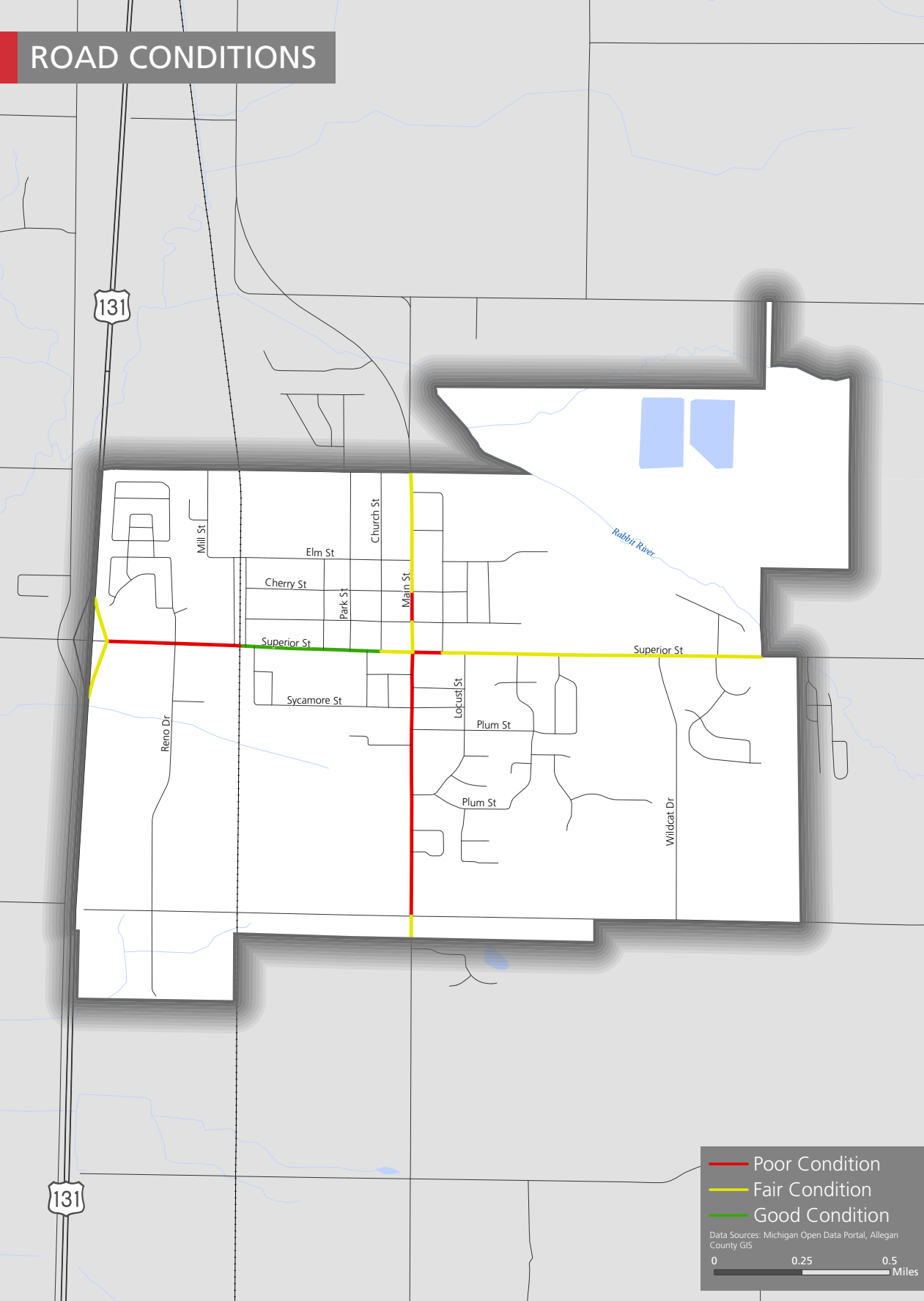
The condition of Wayland's major corridors Main Street and Superior Street varies along different segments. Moving north to south along Main Street the road quality falls from fair to poor. However, Wayland's Capital Improvements Plan has allocated a budget of \$70,000 for the year 2021-2022 and \$300,000 in 2022-2023 for street improvements along South Main Street with the goal of bringing that section of the road into "good" condition in the near future. Another \$150,000 of grants from Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) will be dedicated to South Main Street to reduce vehicular idling and accelerating.

The segment of Superior Street linking to the US-131 highway is in poor condition; since this is the gateway to Wayland from US-131 freeway, poor road quality

Map 10: National Functional Classification



Map 11: Road Conditions



could be perceived poorly by visitors and residents. Moreover, vehicles from the freeway likely enter the city at faster speeds and poor road quality is a major safety concern under such circumstances. The city should prioritize road infrastructure improvements along West Superior Street to ensure safety and present an improved image of Wayland. On the contrary, the stretch of West Superior Street between the now inactive interurban railway track and Main Street is in good condition; most of East Superior Street is in fair condition, except the segment where it intersects with Main Street. Since this intersection lies in the heart of Wayland's downtown, it is important to upgrade the road quality. In addition to funding from the city, budget for street improvements along segments of both Main Street and Superior Street corridors which fall within the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA's) boundary may be eligible for funding from the DDA as well; therefore, proper coordination between both the City and the DDA authorities will maximize infrastructure advances along the city's major corridors, which in turn will magnify the benefits enjoyed by the residents.

Road Safety

Road safety is undoubtedly the most essential element of transportation systems which includes reducing the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. While accidents can unfortunately occur at any segment of a road, 31% of Michigan's fatal auto accidents in 2019 occurred at intersections.² The map "Traffic Crashes, 2016 – 2020" uses official crash data from the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) website to identify precarious intersections and road segments in Wayland where maximum accidents occurred.

The following road intersections witnessed highest density of crashes:

- » US-131 and Superior Street
- » Reno Drive and Superior Street
- » Main Street and Superior Street

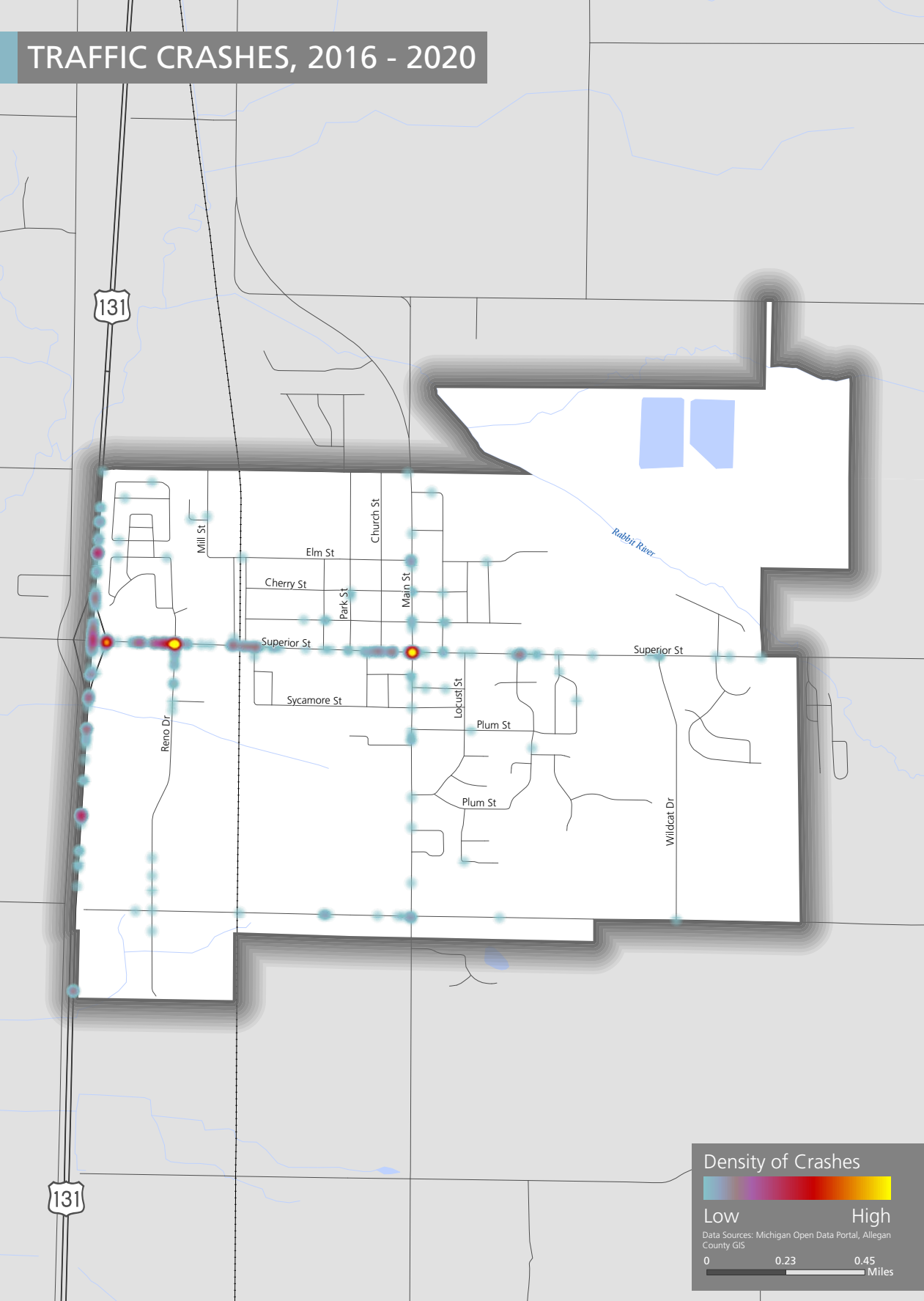
When comparing the two maps, "Traffic Crashes, 2016-2020" and "Road Conditions", it is evident that road quality directly impacts road safety. Similarly, high traffic volumes passing through Wayland's downtown, which tends to have a large percentage of pedestrians and cyclists, makes the intersection between Main Street and Superior Street risky. A total of 323 crashes occurred in Wayland between 2016 and 2020. Of these 323 crashes, four involved pedestrians, two involved bicyclists, six resulted in a serious injury, and one resulted in a fatal injury involving a bicyclist; most of these occurred along Superior Street. The location of each of these crashes is documented in the table "Location of Pedestrian, Bicyclist, Serious/Fatal Crashes".

Adopting safety measures such as adding stop signs and safe crossings, reducing the speed limit, and improving sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure are simple ways to reduce accidents at troubled intersections. Additionally, well-designed roundabouts are proven solutions to reduce accidents at intersections; if the city is able to secure adequate funding, traffic studies for these three problem intersections could find solutions to significantly increase road safety in Wayland. A step further would be upgrading major corridors and intersections with "Complete Streets" elements as discussed below.

Table 14: Location of Pedestrian, Bicyclist, Serious/Fatal Crashes

Type of Crash	Location of Crash
Bicyclist Involved, Minor Injury	South Locust Street + East Superior Street
Bicyclist Involved, Serious Injury	Commerce Street + West Superior Street
Bicyclist Involved, Fatal Injury	Along Vancouver Place
Pedestrian Involved, Possible Injury	Reno Drive + West Superior Street
Pedestrian Involved, Minor Injury	Reno Drive + West Superior Street
Pedestrian Involved, Minor Injury	Main Street + Superior Street
Pedestrian Involved, Minor Injury	Main Street + Superior Street
Single Motor Vehicle, Serious Injury	Along East Superior Street
Single Motor Vehicle, Serious Injury	Along West Superior Street
Rear End, Serious Injury	Main Street + 133rd Avenue
Rear End, Serious Injury	Along West Superior Street
Rear End, Serious Injury	Along US 131

Map 12: Traffic Crashes, 2016-2020



COMPLETE STREETS & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation advocates have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. Alternatively, to single-use roads, advocates have pushed for “Complete Streets,” a movement rooted in equity and sustainability that calls for multimodal transportation by designing streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users of all ages and abilities, in addition to motorists. Complete Streets elements vary from small additions or enhancement to complete redevelopment projects; depending on existing road conditions and funding availability, road authorities can choose elements that suit the needs of the community best. Simply put, they are

improvements that would make the trips more safe and pleasant for nonmotorized users.

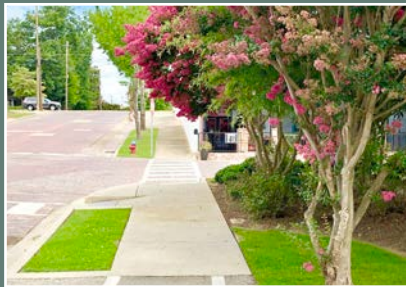
Sidewalks

Critical to the “Complete Streets” concept is the completion of the city’s sidewalk system. Keeping pace with transportation best practices, Wayland has identified priorities for sidewalk extensions based on the following criteria:

Primary Priorities:

- » Provide a sidewalk on one side of the street along segments currently missing a sidewalk on either side of the street where a sidewalk provision fills a missing link and/or connects two significant pedestrian generators including parks, schools, community centers, post office, shopping, employment.

Complete Street Elements



Sidewalks



Bicycle Lanes



Curb Extensions



Safe Crossing



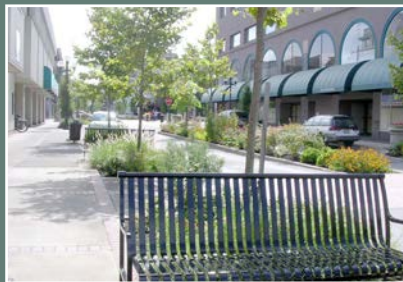
Wayfinding Signage



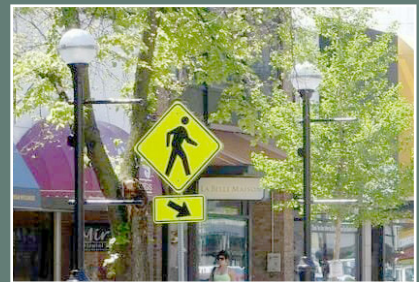
Street Landscaping



Green Infrastructure



Street Furniture



Street Lighting

- » Provide a sidewalk on one side of the street to fill gaps along a truck route through a residential neighborhood.
- » Sidewalk provision near a school or along a route serving school-age children who use walking as a primary form of transportation.

Secondary Priorities:

- » Sidewalks on residential cul-de-sac and dead-end streets are low priorities unless they are tied to a cut through used to make a direct connection to a high pedestrian generator.
- » Minor industrial side streets are low priorities given their low use by pedestrians.

Segments in each of the categories above should be periodically evaluated to determine their ultimate priority on an annual list of sidewalk projects.

Bicycle Routes

In addition to sidewalk improvements, designating certain street segments as “bicycle routes” is important to encourage multimodal transportation in Wayland. Bicycle routes can fall into two categories: on-street routes or off-street routes. On-street bicycle routes are those where bicyclists share the street with motorist and are required to adhere to strict design guidelines to ensure safety. In comparison, the off-street trail is still within the street right-of-way but is essentially an extra wide sidewalk designed to accommodate the higher travel speeds of cyclists.

Taking it one step further, Wayland can also explore the adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance so that all new roads or renovations to existing roads must undergo improvements that incorporate Complete Street elements. Lastly, the City of Wayland should continually aim to integrate trails, sidewalks, and bicycle routes that connects significant parks and open spaces, neighborhoods, schools, and the business district to achieve overall community cohesiveness. The city’s proposed bicycle routes in the map “Recreational Space and



Conceptual Rendering of Complete Street Improvements along a Neighborhood Main Street

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials

Trails” (in the parks and recreation section) show an effort to make those connections a priority. The figure above is merely illustrative of one potential scenario. Redesigning the downtown roads and intersections will require extensive planning, some of which should consider the interaction of heavy semi-truck traffic and nonmotorized users and how to maximize their safety.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to quality public transportation at affordable rates and regular frequency enables mobility for residents of all age groups and income levels. While individual automobile ownership has remained the norm in the US, and in Michigan particularly due to the dominance of the automotive industry, public transportation ensures equity and in recent years has proven to be an effective solution to reduce a community’s carbon footprint.

There is no other means for public transportation aside from the Allegan County service. This program just received increased funding to expand services so it remains to be seen if this can serve the needs of workers, the disabled, the elderly, and the lower-income households’ transportation needs. A lacking public network can be a major equity concern since about 11% of households in Wayland do not own a vehicle.

Sources

- 1 Michigan Open Data Portal, All Roads (v17a), <https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/all-roads-v17a/explore?location=44.564300%2C-86.307700%2C7.26>
- 2 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts, 2019 General Facts, https://publications.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/2019/Quick_Facts.pdf

8

Economic Development



Downtown Wayland.

Economic development generally refers to the practice of engaging in activities designed to improve the wealth, well-being, assets, and amenities associated with a particular group of people, often defined by geography. This section has opted for a community-based economic development approach that uses the institutional framework of local government and related organizations as a key tool to achieve those outcomes. Because a local economy is embedded within a regional, state, national, and even international context, a city must rely on a larger network to meet its goals.

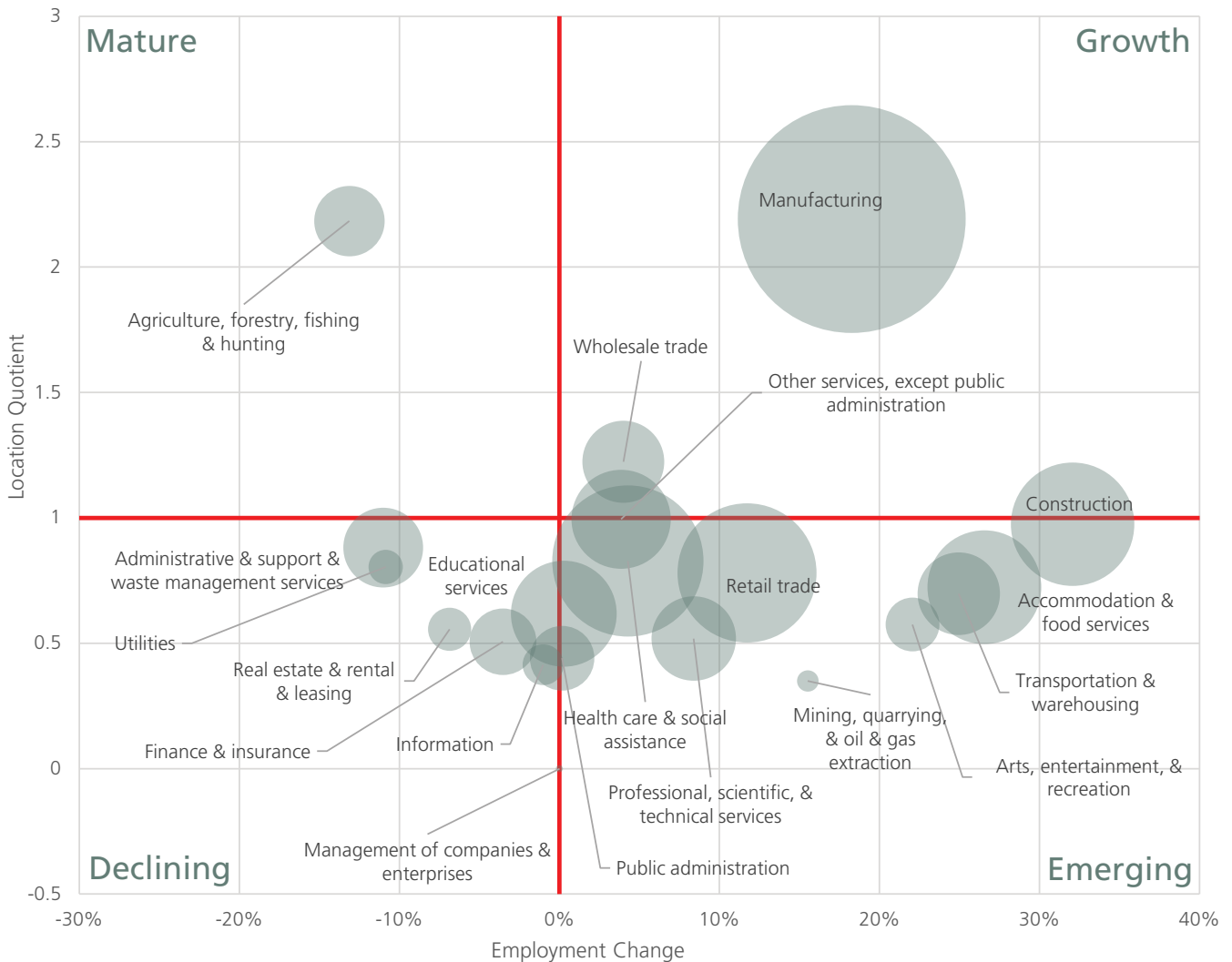
REGIONAL REVIEW

Though economic development activities can be locally focused, economic systems are large and highly intertwined, often measured at the county level. Allegan County is served by the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC, Region 8). The WMRPC maintains the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which identifies projects of regional importance and serves as the local link to the United States Economic Development Administration. The following economic clusters are named in the CEDS for the West Michigan region: manufacturing, health sciences, education, retail, public sector employment, tourism, agriculture, and value-added agriculture including agritourism. No projects are shown within the Wayland city limits in the 2017 Strategy.

EMPLOYMENT SECTORS AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

A combined analysis of industries' location quotient and employment changes in the county can show their relative size in the local market and suggest recent and future trends. Understanding these two factors can help a city determine if and how to invest in sectors based on their competitive advantage and employment growth. Location quotient measures a region's industrial specialization, usually compared to the nation.¹ If the location quotient is greater than one, the area has some specialization in that industry. To determine the direction of that industry's recent changes, this statistic (which is a snapshot in time) is combined with information about changes in number of employees. Industries which have a location quotient greater than one and have

Figure 19: Employment Sector Analysis



added employees are “growth” industries, while those which have a location quotient greater than one but are not adding employees are “mature” industries. On the other hand, “emerging” industries are those which are adding employees but have not yet outpaced the national share, and “declining” industries have neither employment growth nor a measurable location quotient. In the figure titled, “Employment Sector Analysis,” the size of the bubble represents the overall number of employees, and the position on the chart reflects its location quotient (y-axis) and employment change by percentage (x-axis).

Growth

As is the case in much of Michigan, manufacturing is the major growth industry and the largest industry overall. As such, it dominates the “growth” quadrant. Wholesale trade, on the other hand, is an industry that employs more people than a comparison with the national rate, but still relatively few in comparison to others. Focusing on Wayland, summary business data from ESRI Business Analyst can be combined with the US

Economic Census for select industries to get a glimpse of local establishment composition.² This vantage makes clear the importance of wholesale trade to the local economy: it is the highest in sales and volume by far, with over \$200M in receipts in 2017, and it is also among the fastest-growing, with receipts up 64% and payroll up 31% between the 2012 and 2017 Economic Census surveys.

Emerging

Health care, retail trade, and construction follow manufacturing in terms of number of employees in the county; their position below the location quotient of one suggests that they are providing these vital services within the local economy rather than serving an area wider than Allegan County. They are emerging and therefore warrant specific attention related to economic development policy.

Transportation and Warehousing, closely related to the “growth” industry of wholesale trade, has grown even faster in terms of percentage of increase for both receipts and payroll. Jobs in these fields are well-paid and should be supported,

Table 15: Businesses, Receipt and Payroll Change Wayland, 2012-2017

	Current Snapshot		2017		2012		2012-2017	
	Number of businesses	Percent of businesses	Sales, value of shipments, or revenue (\$1,000)	Annual payroll (\$1,000)	Sales, value of shipments, or revenue (\$1,000)	Annual payroll (\$1,000)	Change in receipts	Change in payroll
Wholesale Trade	5	2.9%	\$228,673	\$8,205	\$83,450	\$5,648	64%	31%
Retail Trade	27	15.8%	\$119,553	\$11,672	\$86,422	\$7,847	28%	33%
Transportation & Warehousing	5	2.9%	\$14,578	\$1,944	\$4,869	\$957	67%	51%
Health Care & Social Assistance	15	8.8%	\$11,987	\$5,763	\$14,040	\$5,832	-17%	-1%
Accommodation & Food Services	13	7.6%	\$7,775	\$2,205	\$5,628	\$1,572	28%	29%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	27	15.8%	\$3,801	\$1,055	\$3,409	\$856	10%	19%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	9	5.3%	\$2,385	\$556	\$1,349	\$158	43%	72%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	11	6.4%	\$654	\$246	\$778	\$191	-19%	22%

Sources: Esri Business Summary accessed February 2022; US ECN ECN A1 2012 and 2017

Table 16: Allegan County Agricultural Census Data

Market Value of Products Sold	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in State	Rank in Country
Total	584,373	2	75
Crops (30% of total sales)	176,650	5	203
Grains and dry beans	69,400	15	585
Vegetables	25,686	7	115
Fruits and tree nuts	17,790	9	118
Nursery	59,040	4	48
Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	1,438	7	33
Other crops and hay	3,294	17	778
Livestock (70% of total sales)	407,723	1	63
Poultry and eggs	134,989	2	97
Cattle	26,166	4	605
Milk from cows	109,519	3	73
Hogs and pigs	133,904	1	32
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	406	9	417
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	726	6	278
Other animals and animal products	2,013	4	87

Source: US Census of Agriculture, Allegan County, 2017

though when considering implementation strategies to do so, it will be important to discern how much of the activity is related to the fact that the area is currently growing, and how much of the activity can be expected to remain once this period of growth stabilizes. A cue may be provided in the growth rates of the Retail and Accommodation / Food Services categories, which lie at the end of the development timeline—by the time people are shopping and going out to eat regularly in an area, they have generally already secured a job and a place to live. Receipts in these industries grew at about half the rate of the fastest-growing sectors. Overall, industry in Wayland follows similar trends to those found in the county-wide location quotient/employment analysis, though it is worth noting that manufacturing data were not available in these reports.

Mature

Industries with the NAICS code for “agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting” are the only ones in Wayland that are defined as “mature.” The Census of Agriculture is conducted separately from the US Census, and its data is available only at the county

level. However, even a cursory review shows that the agricultural considerations of Allegan County have both state and national significance: the market value of Allegan County farm products was over half a billion dollars in 2017—the second most valuable in Michigan and in the top 2% of all counties nationally.³ The majority of these sales are in livestock (70%), though crops generate significant value as well.

From a business perspective, this information could generate considerable future study. Food production is not closely connected to food consumption in terms of geography, so any activity that intentionally places processing activities closer to production, and consumption closer to processing, has the potential to keep the value-added dollars at every stage circulating within the community. The details of these possibilities are generally not well-suited to the scale of a Master Plan, because they take place at the regional economic level and at the supply level. However, there is an overall land-use consideration at play for Wayland to acknowledge, which is that dense development—such as that found in cities—concentrates workers and customers in an area

Table 17: Number and Value of Farm Products in Allegan County

Total Overview	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	1,172	-16%
Land in farm (acres)	229,743	-15%
Average size of farm (acres)	196	+1%
Market value of products sold (\$1,000)	\$584,373	+1%
Net cash farm income (\$1,000)	\$104,479	+13%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, Allegan County, 2017



Existing agricultural land.

near enough to the farmland to be in relationship with it without altering the characteristics that allow it to be productive. This is important because prime farmland and developable land have similarities, but conversion can only go in one direction: once farmland is developed, its food production capability is irretrievable. A detailed map produced by The American Farmland Trust shows prime farmland in Allegan County (“above state median PVR – production, versatility, and resiliency”) in dark green, and highlights conversions in red.⁴ The Agricultural Census reports that the county had 15% less farmland in 2017 than in 2012 even as the value produced by that shrinking acreage increased. While this does indicate that farmers have the resources to be more productive on fewer acres, this is not a sustainable trajectory as the steady loss of farmland will not fare well over the long run. From a city’s perspective, this translates into developing efficiently within the city boundaries so that new construction does not sprawl onto prime agricultural land.

Map 13: Conversion of Agricultural Land in Allegan County, 2001-2016

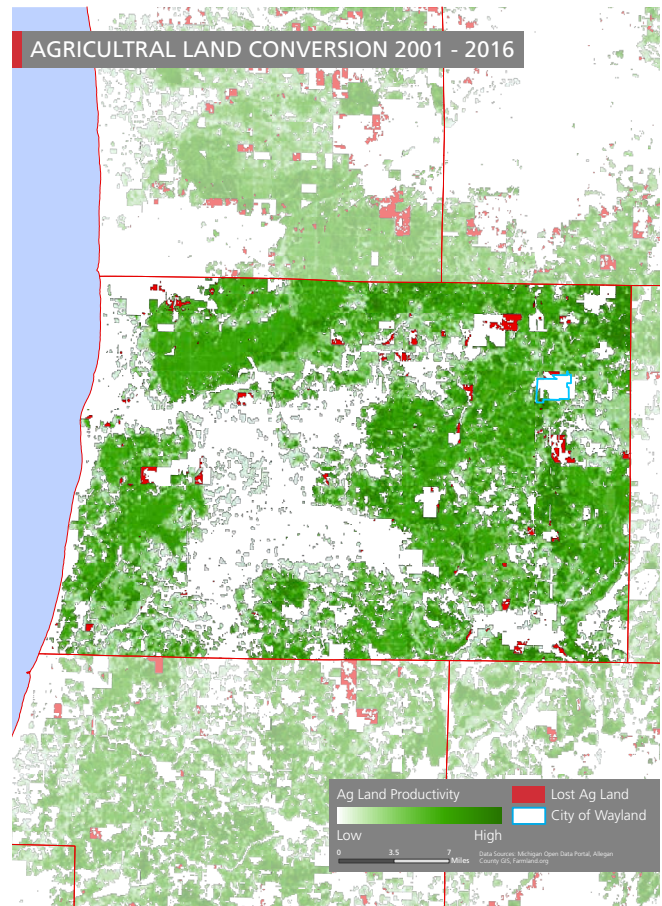
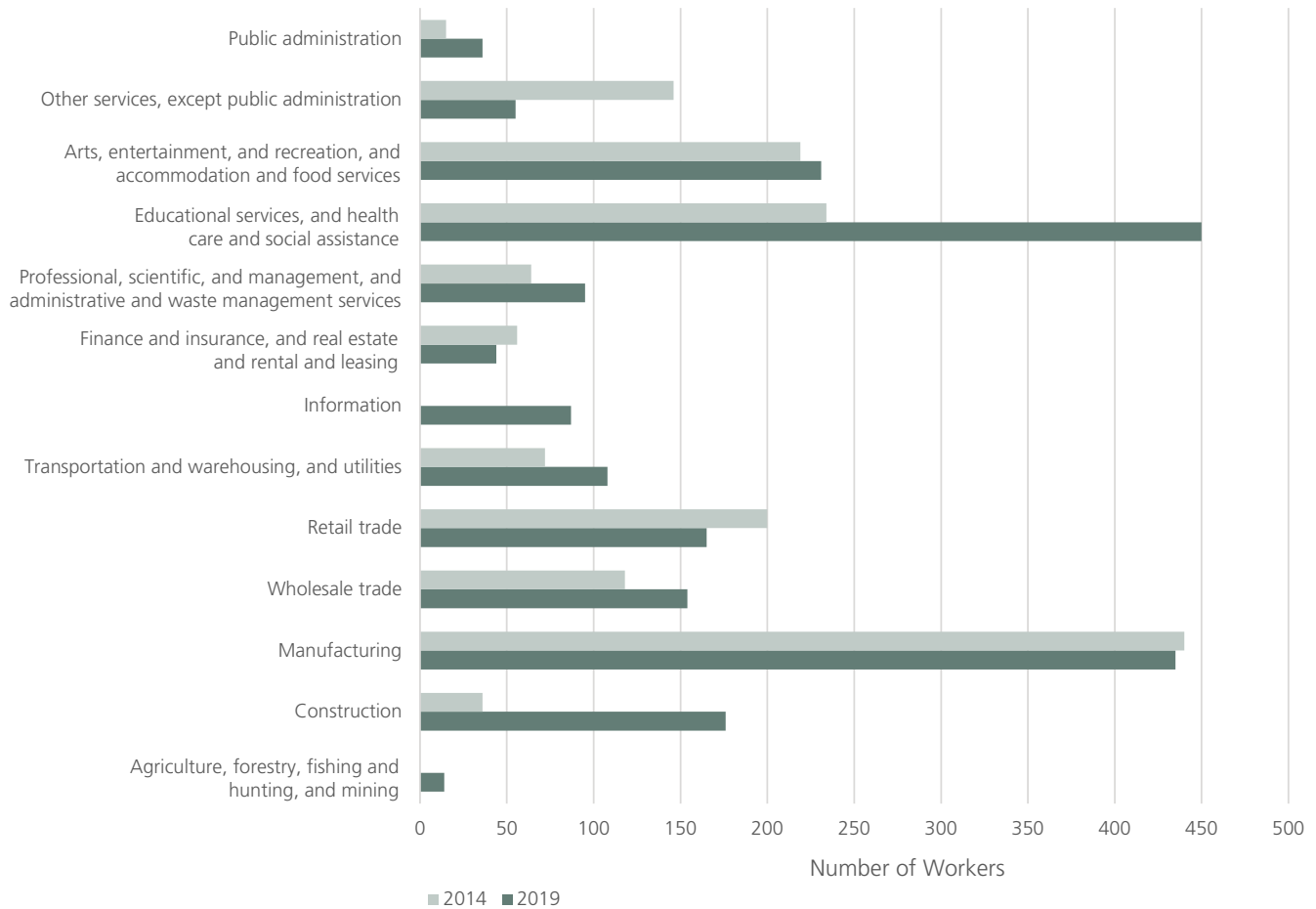


Figure 20: Workers by Industry, 2014 and 2019



Source: ACS DP03 2014, 2019

HUMAN RESOURCES

Workers

This analysis begins with the community’s workers, defined as people who live in Wayland and have a job. This is the local economy’s most important asset—its human resources. Their education and skills are available to local businesses to serve the business’s customers, perform its operations, and expand its reach.

As Wayland’s population has increased, so has the number of employed persons: from 1,600 in 2014 to 2,050 in 2019, a gain of about 28%.⁵ Figure “Workers by Industry, 2014 and 2019” shows that the greatest gains by far are in the “eds and meds” industry categories, both of which are emerging sectors in the county analysis. These industries have grown to surpass the mature manufacturing sector in terms of percentage of Wayland workers employed (eds and meds increased from 15% to

22% of workers while manufacturing decreased from 28% to 22% of workers). The number of Wayland workers in the Construction field, another countywide emerging industry, has quadrupled and also significantly increased in overall share (9% of workers in 2019 vs 2% in 2014), a logical result of a growing area. Wayland continued to support the county’s emerging transportation, professional, and public administration sectors, as well as the mature wholesale trade category, by adding workers.

In some cases, conditions in Wayland did not reflect countywide trends. Though Retail Trade added workers throughout the county, the share and number of retail workers within the city limits fell between 2014 and 2019. The same is true of the “Other Services” category. Because receipts within the City of Wayland increased in these industries over roughly the same time period, it can be deduced that more workers are now commuting into the city to fill these jobs. In another example, the Information sector did not add workers to

the countywide total, but did add 87 workers within the City of Wayland—a relative large gain, achieving 4% of all workers in the city.

In general, the industries which gained workers have higher pay than those which lost workers, and this is reflected in a 19% increase in median household income in Wayland between 2014 and 2019. This is a significant increase which is representative of overall growth in Allegan County, where overall median incomes increased by 26% during that time period. For full-time, year-round workers in Wayland, these gains narrowed the gendered wage gap by six percentage points, so that women’s earnings are now 79% of men’s earnings rather than 72% as they were in 2014. Where median income is increasing, it is reasonable to expect that educational attainment is also increasing, and this, too, is reflected in the data: since 2000, the proportion of Wayland residents with a bachelor’s degree has doubled from 10% to 20%. Significant progress is underway toward aligning this number with the state and national proportion of about 30%.

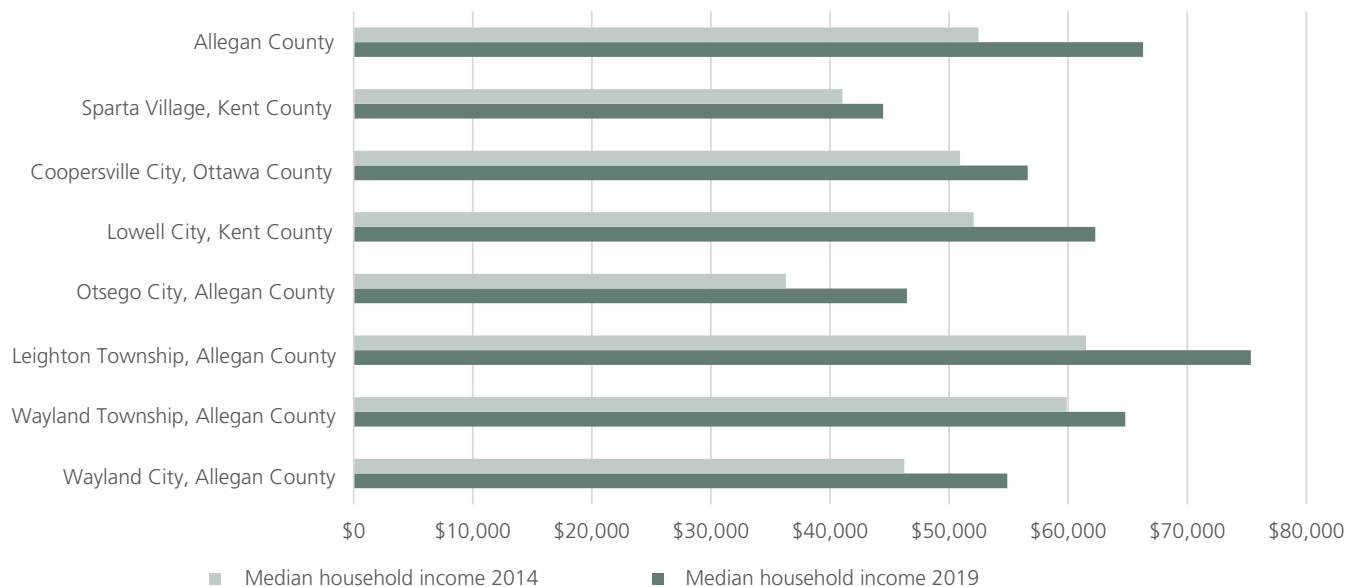
Commuting

Wayland workers commute an average of 26 minutes to their jobs, and those who travel are mostly headed north towards Grand Rapids.⁶ The percentage of those who drive alone to work has fallen from 88% in 2014 to 81% in 2019.⁷ A large proportion of this change was due to the

emergence of a section of the population who works at home, rising from none recorded in 2014 to 6% in 2019. These data were recorded before the COVID-19 pandemic generated an enormous incentive for as many office workers as possible to convert to working from home at least part-time. Fewer people commuting out of the city on a daily basis could be a boon for the local economy. It’s possible now that more residents will rely on shopping within the city limits as a result.

Commuting is a reflection of the fact that economies are regional in nature, and that its effect on a local economy are complicated. The connection between where a household lives and where it works demonstrates the interconnectedness of the community to the region and vice versa. The scale of this dynamic relationship represents an opportunity for economic gardening, or the practice of developing business activity among the skills and assets already present in the community. The entrepreneurial spirit already exists in Wayland and keeping it in the city (as opposed to commuting out) would behoove the local economy: 22 respondents to the community survey expressed interest in starting or expanding a business in Wayland but were unaware of resources that could assist them. This is vital information for cultivating business on home soil, retaining existing business, and attracting local investors to keep money circulating in the city.

Figure 21: Household Income Change, 2014-2019



Source: ACS DP03 2014, 2019

Employees

The following table compares the industries of workers in Wayland with those of the employees of Wayland, where employees are defined as people who work in Wayland, regardless of where they live.⁸ The largest number of employees in the city are retail service providers, followed by employees in the health care and social assistance fields. Other major employment sectors include accommodation/food services, education services, and manufacturing. On the other end of the spectrum, a relatively small number of construction and real estate employees are located within this growing community.

The analysis suggests that a comparable number of workers leave Wayland for their jobs (614) as employees arrive from elsewhere (590). Those who leave are concentrated in the manufacturing and construction industries, while those who arrive are concentrated in the traditional customer-facing daily service industries such as retail trade, foodservice, entertainment, and accommodation. These patterns flow directly from the land use and population needs of those industries: manufacturing and construction uses can be space-intensive and are often located near transportation and power assets that may not be best suited for the dense development pattern of a city, while the

Table 18: Workers, Employees, and Income

	Workers (live in Wayland, work anywhere)		Employees (work in Wayland, live anywhere)		Workers leaving Wayland		Employees coming into Wayland		Possible live/work		Allegan County Median Income
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	108	5%	66	3%	42	39%	-	-	66	61%	\$50,758
Manufacturing	435	21%	197	10%	238	55%	-	-	197	45%	\$49,857
Wholesale trade	154	8%	104	5%	50	32%	-	-	104	68%	\$49,074
Construction	176	9%	13	0.6%	163	93%	-	-	13	7%	\$43,544
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	14	0.7%	0	0	14	100%	-	-	0	0%	\$43,043
Public administration	36	2%	90	4%	-	-	54	60%	36	100%	\$42,351
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	44	2%	84	4%	-	-	40	48%	44	100%	\$41,300
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management services	95	5%	58	3%	37	39%	-	-	58	61%	\$39,041
Educational services, health care, social assistance	450	22%	552	27%	-	-	102	18%	450	100%	\$34,028
Information	87	4%	17	0.8%	70	80%	-	-	17	20%	\$32,339
Retail trade	165	8%	351	17%	-	-	186	53%	165	100%	\$23,476
Other services, except public administration	55	3%	120	6%	-	-	65	54%	55	100%	\$21,148
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	231	11%	374	18%	-	-	143	38%	231	100%	\$12,321
Total	2,050		2,026		614		590		1,436		

Sources: ACS DP02 2019, Esri Business Summary accessed 2022, ACS S2413 2019

customer-facing service occupations depend on a high density of potential customers in order to capture a proportion that will keep them afloat.

However, a planning concern emerges when the chart is sorted by the county-wide median income of each industry, because it reveals that the industries which are location-dependent upon being in the city, and which import workers from outside the city limits in order to satisfy that location-dependent demand, are all at the very bottom of the pay scale. People who hold these jobs earn less than half of the area median income, which is formally described by federal and state housing authorities (HUD and MSHDA) as “very low income” and qualifies for housing subsidies.⁹ These conditions are true for 22% of all workers who live in Wayland, and for 67% of the employees who work in Wayland but live outside the city—a total of up to 845 households. This data supports the housing affordability analysis conducted in Housing chapter, which describes the shortfall between residents’ incomes and housing costs. It also adds information about the constraints on those incomes: it is generated at least partly by the labor conditions of industries which are dependent on their location within the city. This is a tough position for communities to negotiate because neither wages nor housing costs are under local control, yet its business districts cannot achieve vibrancy without staff who are highly affected by both conditions.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PREFERENCES, & OPPORTUNITIES

Wayland has two types of industrial areas: integrated light industrial uses in the northwest

quadrant, and larger consolidated, planned areas for heavier industrial uses at the northeast and southwest corners of the city limits.

Industrial Areas

Railroad Street Light Industrial Areas

Light industrial uses are tightly woven into the development fabric along the east side of Railroad Street, including its terminus at Bay Valley Foods. Several automotive services, the rail freight depot, and a lumberyard all share access to this short strip of road, which is narrow and generally provides direct access to one row of parking located between the building and the rolled curb. This area is generally functioning as intended, supporting the existing businesses and industrial operations.

Planned Industrial Areas

The city has two planned industrial areas, as defined by their I-2 zoning. The first is a section of the northeast corner of the city between the Rabbit River and the Failes Drain. This area is currently largely undeveloped.

The second is a large swath in the southwest corner of the city, on both sides of 133rd Avenue from the western City limits to South Main Street, including rail and power corridors. Utility investments, the construction of Reno Drive, and road improvements to 133rd Avenue have been conducted to support the development of a modern industrial park in this area. One development consideration is the presence of county drains, which exist both south of 133rd Avenue and on the northern edge of the district, generating significant wetlands along the riparian border. Industrial development should be



Downtown Wayland.

encouraged where possible to cluster buildings and transportation amenities around these areas, leaving the wetlands as undisturbed visual assets or even trail amenities for employees. This strategy has wide residential application in the Wayland Zoning Ordinance, suggesting that the groundwork may already be laid for translating it to industrial development.

Commercial Areas

Wayland has two “general business” districts. A third commercial area, the downtown Central Business District, is addressed separately in the next section.

Superior Street Businesses

This area, extending from the US-131 access ramp to the railroad right-of-way, is the largest commercial district in the City. It takes advantage of both access and visibility from US-131 to offer amenities to long-distance travelers: lodging, quick-service restaurants, fuel, financial institutions with drive-through service, and food-based retail. These uses are highly concentrated at the west end of the corridor, while more locally oriented establishments such as personal care, pet grooming, specialty stores, and medical services are integrated into the mix as one travels east toward downtown Wayland. The corridor also captures visitors to the city’s only regional commercial district, which hosts an RV center.

The character of the district is decidedly auto-oriented, though sidewalks on both sides of the street provide welcome nonmotorized access to this portion of the community and are complemented by an investment in pedestrian-scaled lighting. Lawn panels provide a buffer between the fast-moving traffic and the sidewalk. Street trees are scarce and would improve both the aesthetics and the comfort of the corridor. Parking is generally located in front of the buildings, reinforcing the auto-centric character. Just east of the railroad tracks, the road narrows and the buildings are placed closer to it; the sidewalk offers continuity as the land use changes from commercial to residential.

There are several large-scale development opportunities in this business district. The largest is an approximately 3.6-acre site on the highly visible southeast corner of Superior and Reno.

On the north side of Superior, a little further east, vacant land of about an acre is divided between an unimproved site and a paved pad. These parcels are zoned B-2 General Business. In the B-3 Regional Business district directly to the south, there are approximately seven undeveloped acres fronting Reno Drive south of the RV center.

Immediately to the south of the corridor is an area zoned for a Planned Enterprise/Residential Cluster, with some existing multifamily residential development already built on it. The intent of this area is “to promote the development of a blend of moderate to high density residential clusters in close proximity to clusters of office and business uses as well as significant areas of light manufacturing.” Undeveloped areas with the same zoning exist on the opposite side of the railroad tracks to the east of it, and to the south separated by an existing industrial area. There are considerable wetlands in both of these areas which are acknowledged by language in the ordinance intent: “Reserved and dedicated open spaces consisting of a combination of undisturbed wetlands, modified wetlands and surface waters and greenbelted street and pedestrian corridors are encouraged to define the various use groups.”

South Main Street Businesses

There is a small concentration of parcels zoned for business and office uses (B-2 General Business and RO Restricted Office) surrounding the intersection of South Main and South Locust streets. Existing businesses in the area include a hall maintained by Veterans of Foreign Wars, a realtor’s office, an arcade, and an auto detailing business. Another patch of business zoning is separated from this cluster by land that is industrially zoned and used. The area does not give the impression of a “district”: the commercial uses are interspersed with vacant parcels and industrial uses, and the occasional residential home gives the feeling of an area in transition. On the west side of the street, a sidewalk serves nonmotorized travelers. On the east side, a sidewalk terminates into the asphalt of the northernmost business parcel and no other nonmotorized facilities are provided. Lighting is provided by auto-scaled fixtures mounted over the road.

The 2015 Master Plan states that this business corridor represents a carryover from a time when South Main was the major entrance to the city and served as its vehicular commercial corridor.

The proposed strategy is to rely on increasing traffic volumes over time to lead to a revitalized corridor. Given the existing mix of land uses and the presence of vacant land, this strategy may be worth revisiting.

Community Business Preferences

In general terms, the community survey asked residents which services they want to see come to Wayland and to what extent they would frequent them. The findings were meant to provide guidance on tailored business recruitment efforts. Responses demonstrate that restaurants/cafés would be the most highly visited: 73% said they would visit on a daily or weekly basis. More specifically, residents requested family-friendly restaurants (78%), cafes (69%), and farm-to-table establishments (56%). This comports with retail marketplace data produced by ESRI, which found that households living within a one-mile radius of the corner of Main and Superior—an area that includes most Wayland residents—have a higher-than-average spending index for family restaurants, visiting them four or more times per month for all three meals with a slight preference for weekends over weekdays. Breakfast establishments were particularly strong performers. Fast food establishments were also popular, with an above-average spending index for breakfast, lunch, and dinner and a less pronounced preference for weekends over weekdays. Home delivery and take-out/drive-through options outperformed eat-in or walk-in/take-out, indicating that a primary incentive is convenience.¹⁰ Overall spending on “food away from home” is expected to grow by over \$500,000 in Wayland between 2021 and 2026, from about \$4.5M to \$5.5M.¹¹

After restaurants, residents are interested in visiting recreation/public spaces (40%) and then bars/entertainment venues (30%) on a regular basis. Sports and leisure data from ESRI show that the most consistent activities that Wayland residents participated in were purchases of children’s toys and games, which could indicate families looking for things to do, such as visiting a local park. Strategic placement of retail opportunities for refreshment and convenience purchases in the vicinity of public recreation could strengthen the experience. The data also show that Wayland residents enjoy a number of activities upon which an entertainment venue could capitalize, such as archery, bowling, bingo, and card games. Spending on entertainment and recreation tickets, including theater, movies, parks, and museums was \$192,983 during the data collection period of 2018-2019.

In terms of retail, community survey respondents said they would regularly patronize “food and beverage,” “sporting goods,” and “general merchandise” stores. A finding from the ESRI Retail Market Potential that stands out is a significantly higher-than-average index of purchases over \$50 at convenience stores. This may indicate that more traditional grocery stores are not available or convenient. Indices were also above average for big-ticket household furnishings and large kitchen appliances, which is expected in a growing community. The largest increase in the Retail Demand Outlook is for apparel and related services: \$338K over the five-year forecast.

Figure 22: “What types of services/spaces would you like to see in Wayland and how often would you frequent them on average?”

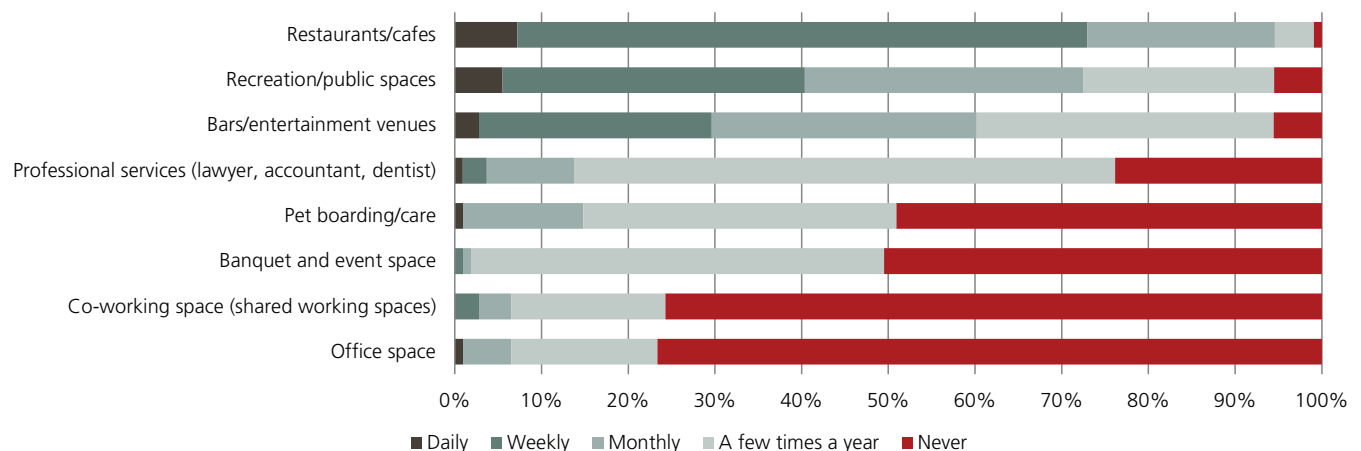
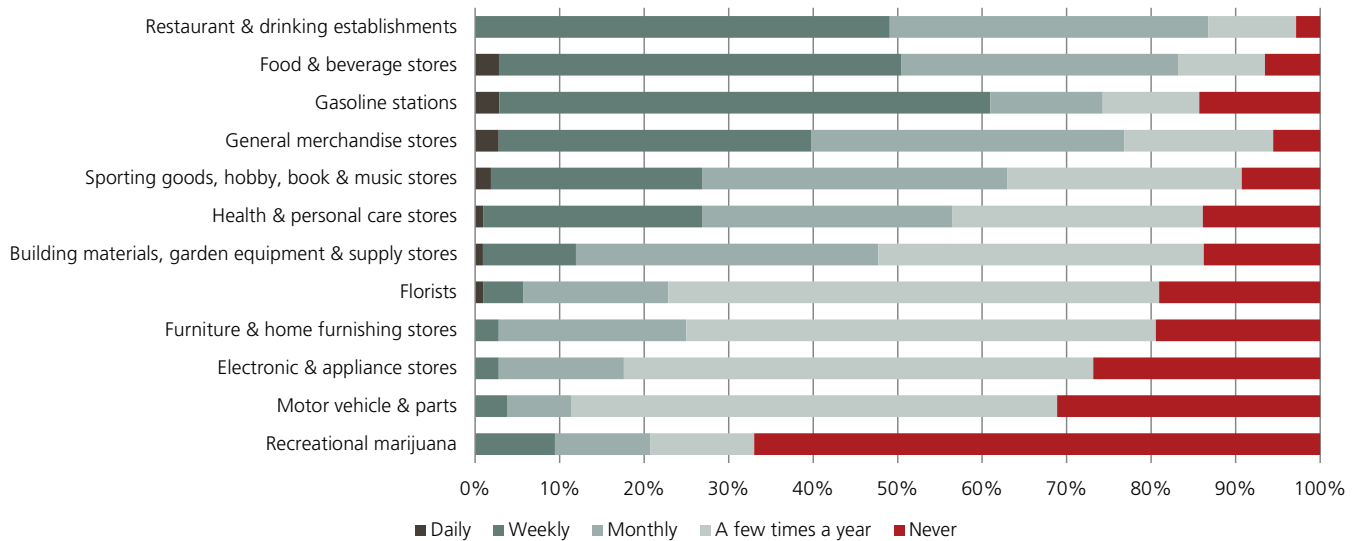


Figure 23: “What type of retail would you like to see come to Wayland and how often would you frequent each storefront on average?”



Across all business types, the impacts of COVID-19 have made it abundantly clear that an online presence is essential to a businesses’ livelihood. Almost half of survey respondents said that they would shop locally more frequently if Wayland businesses had an online inventory.

Downtown Area

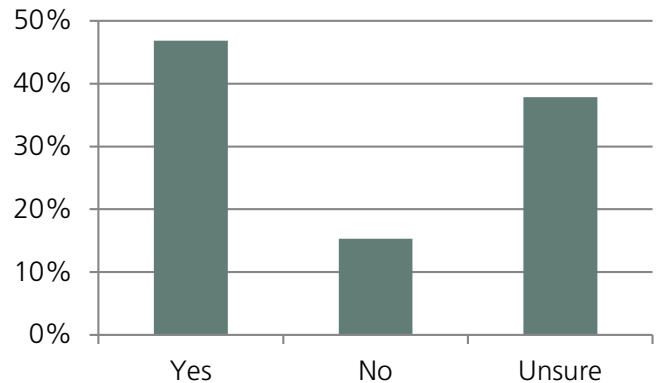
Downtown Wayland is centered around the intersection of Main and Superior Streets, extending for one to several blocks in all four directions. Its boundary is generally the same as the extent of the city’s Central Business District zoning classification. This differs from the boundary of the Downtown Development Authority, which includes the length of Superior Street extending to US-131 and does not include a few parcels with CBD zoning to the north of the downtown.

The CBD zoning generally requires all business establishments to deal directly with customers, permitting retail, foodservice, entertainment, business, and services excluding medical and dental. Residential uses are permitted as part of mixed-use establishments, and housing for the elderly is eligible for a special use permit. Existing single-household homes are permitted to remain, to be rebuilt, or to be converted into duplexes, triplexes, or mixed-use establishments.

Design

The downtown is quaint and attractive. Its 35 one- and two-story buildings present historic, well-

Figure 24: “If local Wayland businesses had their inventory online, I would shop from them more frequently.”



maintained storefront facades with windows and awnings to offer interest and shelter to pedestrians. Wayland’s Downtown Development Authority and Main Street organization have worked together over the past 12 years to support rehabilitation, restoration, and façade work on over 40 buildings, and their efforts have culminated in the addition of the Wayland Downtown Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places in 2021.¹² Property owners within the district, which is centered at Main and Superior Streets but smaller than the CBD, can now access historic preservation tax credits intended to help ensure that improvements are sensitively executed. The Main Street Design committee is scheduled to create a historic-themed walking tour of the downtown using QR codes in 2022-2023.

Street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting hung with planters and banners, and coordinated planters and benches line the downtown sidewalks, which are protected from passing traffic by on-street parking. The city’s 2014 Downtown Development and Tax Increment Finance Plan describes an extensive list of improvements to be accomplished over the life of the plan, including streetscaping, alley improvements, studies for sidewalk repair/expansion and sign regulations, façade improvements, a complete streets master plan, parking lot acquisition/improvement/identification, a connection between the downtown and City Park, and an interurban trailhead project. In addition to the façade successes mentioned above, the city has also installed new bike storage racks, and a sponsorship program supported some of the new benches. The community has noticed: in the survey conducted in conjunction with this master plan, most respondents (63%) said they have noticed an improvement in downtown in the last five years, particularly noting the streetscape and façades.

Business Mix

The survey-takers are visiting downtown on a daily or weekly basis, regardless of the season, primarily for dining and retail. A recent downtown inventory showed nine restaurants and seven retail establishments, with the remainder of the downtown businesses providing a variety of services. A 2012 market survey identified market gaps in specialty food, women’s fashion, home furnishings, and a brewery; since that time, establishments have been added to meet each of these needs. These gains represent progress toward a distinctive, experience-based retail experience that downtowns, and especially those with an attractive, well-maintained public realm

like Wayland’s, are uniquely situated to provide. The addition of more unique retail businesses will continue to support this goal.

When asked what elements of the downtown they would like to see attention directed toward, the top responses reflected experience concerns: business recruitment to include restaurants, entertainment, and events. The DDA has observed a desire in the community for a coffee shop or similar gathering space that would be open from early morning through late evening, and another interest observed by the DDA is for a “social district.” Social districts, which came into existence in Michigan over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, are public outdoor common areas adjacent to at least three alcohol-serving establishments, in which patrons may move freely throughout the common area.¹³ These districts must be established by the local unit of government and registered with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.

Of course, social districts are just one example of public space in the heart of a community. Other examples may serve the Wayland community equally well. Outdoor games may be programmed into improved alleys, for example. Another option that also supports business recruitment is the installation of a “micro-business” community using sheds or other small-format containers. These temporary formats offer an ever-changing experience to the visitor while giving entrepreneurs a way to pilot a potential business venture in a low-risk setting. Because they require some investment from the community, including site selection, utility management, and common area maintenance, they must be supported by a critical mass of active champions who are willing to both advocate and assist.

Figure 25: “What draws you to the downtown?”

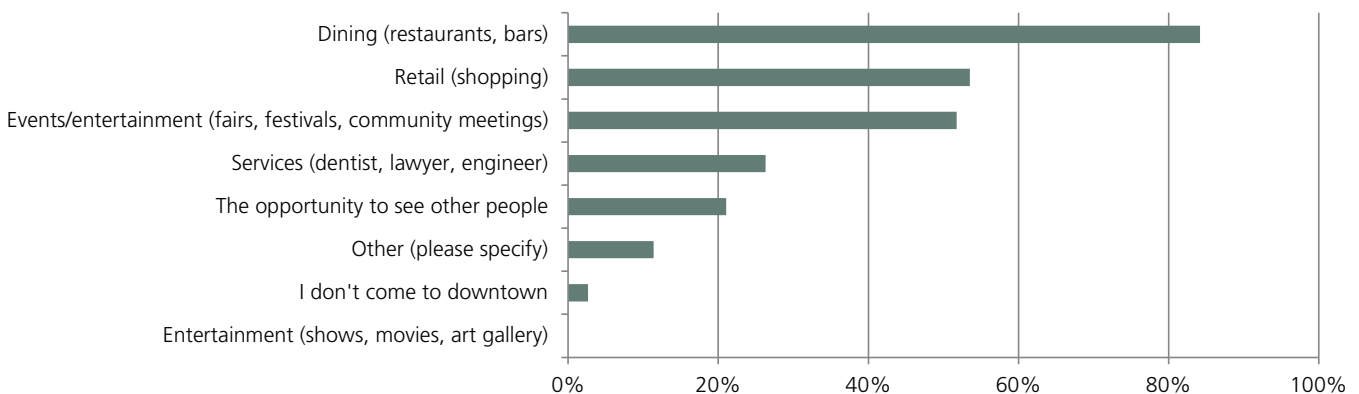
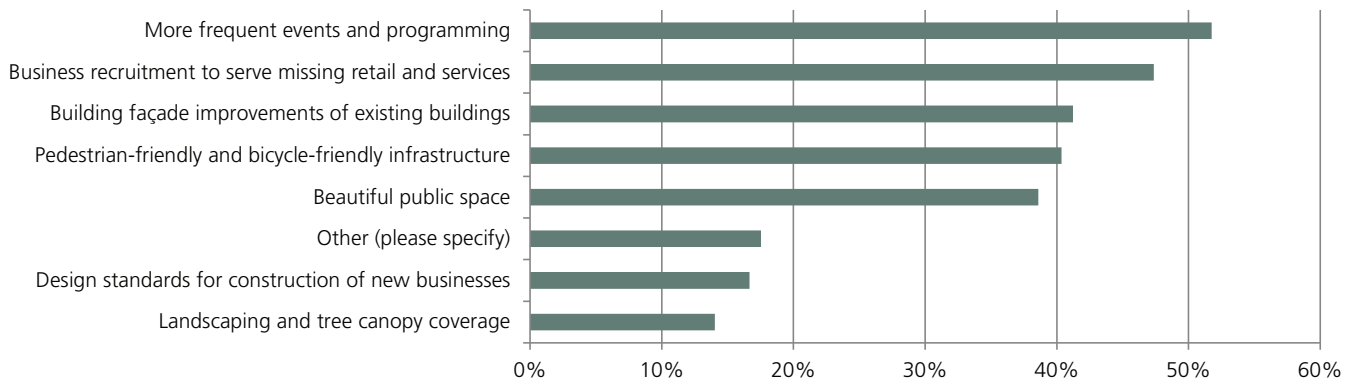


Figure 26: “What are the top three elements of downtown that you would like to see receive more attention?”



Parking

Downtowns have the job of balancing a walkable environment with the reality that a significant share of its visitors will arrive by personal vehicle. When done well, this means that parking is consolidated into key areas that are accessible to the walkable environment, and easy to identify both on foot and in a vehicle without dominating the visual landscape. A parking study of the Central Business District conducted in 2015 by Wightman Associates found that the amount of parking in downtown Wayland is generally adequate and well-dispersed geographically throughout the community. A high-level analysis using the general figure of 3.25 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area concluded that the number of existing spaces fell slightly short of the maximum potential parking demand. The report recommended securing a long-term, city-owned parking solution to serve the southwest quadrant of downtown, and a number

of design enhancements to improve the comfort and wayfinding of the existing parking areas. The city purchased a parking lot in 2016.

PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT SITES

A key element of an economic development strategy is prioritizing sites to market as redevelopment properties. Sites that are currently vacant or underutilized and located in premier locations in the city are prime redevelopment candidates. During a community engagement session held on March 16th, 2022, a group of invited stakeholders were presented with six potential redevelopment sites, as selected by city staff. Participants were asked to re-envision these sites in terms of land use, building orientation, and development type. After the conclusion of the re-envisioning exercises participants were asked to vote on their top three sites. The collected three priority sites are detailed on the following pages.



Vacant property.

1132 West Superior Street



One of the larger sites, 1134 West Superior is also the closest of the sites located to US-131. This site is also located directly off West Superior Street which is the highest trafficked road in the city. The site is zoned General Business District. Because of the size of the site, groups envisioned multiple uses on the site.

- » Pharmacy and mixed-used development (medical offices and apartments),
- » Two multi-story mixed-use buildings (retail/food service/residential),
- » Indoor event space, farm-to-table restaurant, and outdoor vendor space, and
- » Pharmacy and other general retail.

Despite a general consensus for mixed-use development on the site there was not a consensus on site layout. Half of the groups fronted their structures on Reno Drive on the eastern side of the site. The other groups located their structures in the middle or eastern edge of the site, not fronting a road.

159 North Main Street



Currently this site occupied by a used car sales business but the proximity to Wayland's downtown and larger size makes it an excellent candidate for redevelopment. The site is currently zoned Central Business District; redeveloping the property as an extension of downtown is aligned with the zoning scheme. Some business ideas that emerged from the redevelopment exercise were:

- » Micro-retail/pop-up establishments with seating, green space, and parking,
- » Movie theater, restaurant, or marijuana dispensary,
- » Mixed-use building with retail and housing, veterinary office, or senior/low-income apartments, and
- » Entertainment space with outdoor stages with a vision to create this site as a music destination.

Most of the groups envisioned building placement along Main Street to maximize the visibility of the property and uses.

1113 West Superior Street



This site is currently zoned General Business District which permits a range of commercial uses. Land use ideas that emerged from the exercise included:

- » Car wash (2 groups),
- » Marijuana dispensary, and
- » Hotel.

The preferred building orientation depended on the use with the groups that indicated a preference for a car was locating the building in the rear of the lot, away from Superior Street and the other two groups placing their building fronting Superior Street.

Sources

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9

Land Use



Bay Valley Foods facility.

Land use is at the core of community planning. The layout of a city has noticeable impacts on the daily lives of a residents, for example, the length of your commute and your access to parkland, to name a few. Land use planning when combined with demographic projections and community input can help a community synchronize development with community expectations. Land use analysis also helps determine land use changes that will advance sustainable growth and desirable development patterns in the city. Excluding a few vacant properties, Wayland is almost built out; therefore, evaluating existing land use, identifying opportunity sites, and strategizing for both new development and redevelopment is crucial. This section inventories the existing land use patterns, reviews, and analyzes existing and past land use patterns, and provides recommendations for the distribution, location, and intensity of various land uses in Wayland.

EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

Wayland’s layout follows a common pattern: a compact central business district, two main types of traditional residential neighborhoods, and larger commercial and industrial uses towards the peripheries. Each parcel in the city is classified by the City Assessor. This code is not to be confused with zoning districts; the Assessor’s land use codes are used to tax properties. Within that coding system, “improved” means a parcel with a structure on it, and “vacant” means a parcel without a structure (a parcel with a vacant structure is still “improved”) into one of the following categories and the table below outlines their corresponding subcategories:

- » Residential
- » Commercial
- » Industrial
- » Exempt

Residential

At 28%, residential is surprisingly not the predominant land use category, falling behind “exempt” uses (discussed later). The residential land uses situated closer to the downtown district fall on a tighter grid due to the existing street layout producing smaller and more walkable neighborhoods. In contrast, as you move outward from the grid, other residential neighborhoods, primarily in the southeast quadrant take on the subdivision style of curvilinear streets and larger lots. This development style, while beloved by many, is not the most efficient use of land. Unless natural features must be protected with curved streets, a grid should be the default design to allow for more housing units and greater access for vehicular and nonmotorized users. It also requires less asphalt for construction and therefore lowers maintenance costs. It is recommended that new housing developments return to the grid and are accompanied with design standards to maintain a high-quality aesthetic in the neighborhoods.

Only 4.4% of residential land is categorized as vacant. Because there are fewer infill opportunities available, the city’s new housing is proposed on larger tracts of land. For example, the city has recently approved a new multi dwelling unit housing project on the larger vacant southwest

Table 19: Existing Land Use Categories

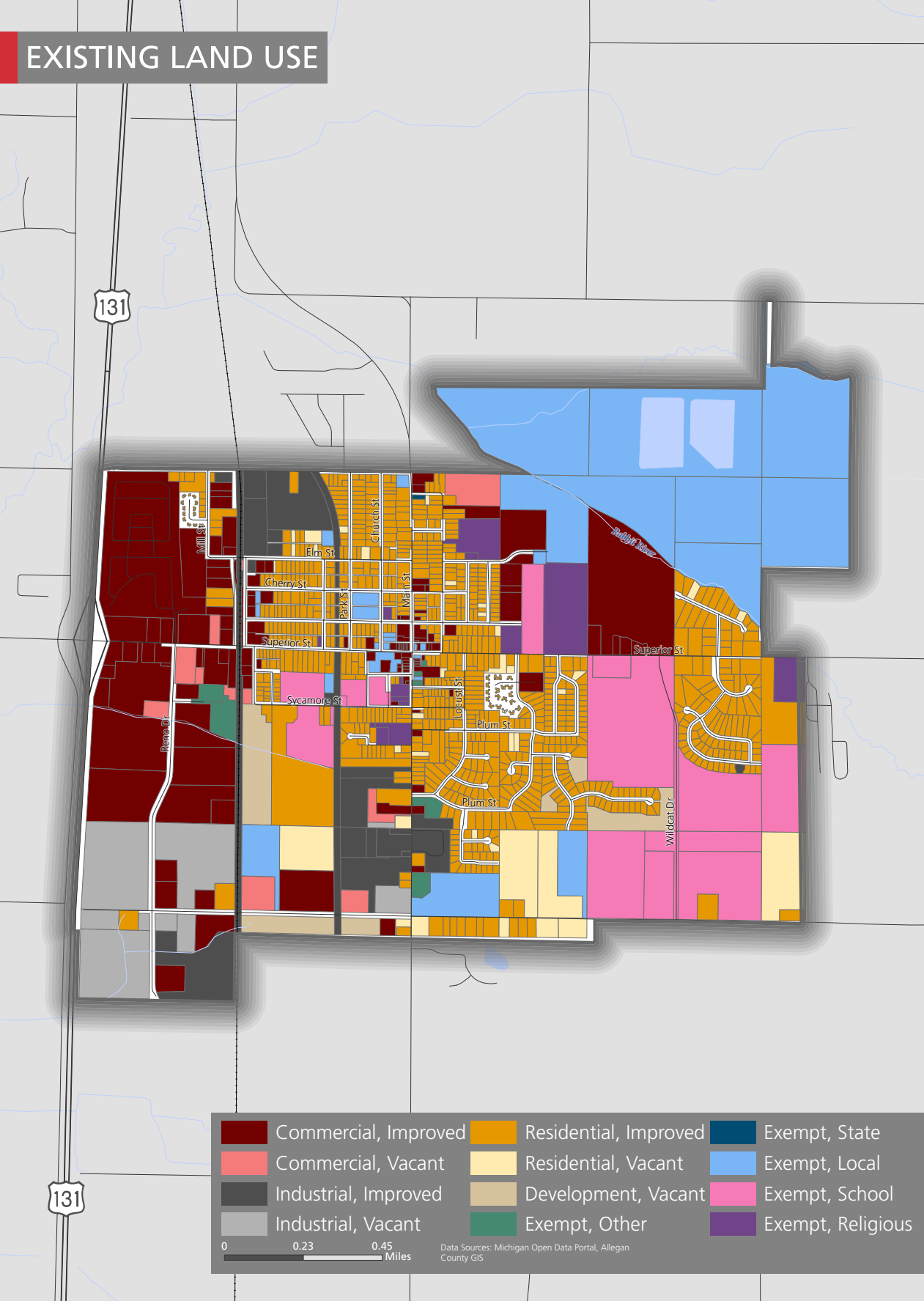
Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Commercial	372.4	20.9%
Improved	342.5	19.2%
Vacant	29.9	1.7%
Industrial	222.5	12.5%
Improved	126.7	7.1%
Vacant	95.8	5.4%
Residential	496.6	27.8%
Improved	418.1	23.4%
Vacant	78.6	4.4%
Exempt	663.2	37.2%
State	0.3	0.0%
Local	382.2	21.4%
Schools	220.8	12.4%
Other	12.7	0.7%
Religious	47.2	2.6%
Total	1,784	100.0%

parcel and is in the process of approving the development of single dwelling units on the parcel south of Plum Street.

Commercial

Commercial is the third largest land use and accounts for 21% of total acreage. This number is slightly inflated as it contains the mobile home park which is primarily a residential use that is sometimes considered commercial because tenants lease the land. As expected, a concentration of commercial parcels is located between the US-131 throughfare and Wayland’s railroad to make use of transportation networks. Few other larger commercial areas are clustered in the southwest periphery and to the northeast of Superior Street. The commercial properties with smaller building footprints are grouped around Superior Street along the central business district business district. These closely clustered smaller commercial parcels create a fabric for a traditional and walkable downtown and establishes a “sense of place” for the residents. These parcels, when developed to meet their “highest and best use,” have the potential to generate higher tax revenues for the city. Recently, commercial vacancy in the central business district has declined, contributing to its vibrancy and the tax base.

Map 14: Existing Land Use



Currently, there are 30 acres of vacant commercial properties in the city of various sizes, amounting to 1.7% of the total commercial land. The parcels present the opportunity to add new commercial developments in the city to keep up with the changing needs and preferences of all of Wayland's citizenry.

Industrial

The industrial land use in Wayland consumes about 12.5% of land and covers 223 acres of land. The city has two major industrial areas; one sited east of the railroad and north of Elm Street and the other located east of the railroad and south of Sycamore Street. These areas also take advantage of the railroad where recently installed spurs connect agricultural land and products to the city's industrial structures.

Additional "vacant" industrial area is located along the southwest periphery of city. While this area has received investment in water and sewer infrastructure to incentivize industrial growth, it is also located among emergent wetlands. This presents a land use conflict between economic development and natural features protection. The highest cost of draining the land may be cost prohibitive but furthermore is a degradation of an

ecosystem. The hope of extending infrastructure was that it could attract large-scale employers to bring jobs to Wayland and through their usage, repay back the high cost of the water and sewer installation. However, there is some concern that the demand for storage units is consuming quality real estate in industrial areas whose uses do not fulfill either of those goals.

Exempt

Exempt property is any property that does not have to pay property taxes. This is the largest land use category in the city (37%). This includes governmental property, public schools and colleges, religious institutions and charities, and non-profits. Although these public and quasi-public lands do not collect revenue for the city's general fund, it enables the city to provide essential services to its residences such as education, wastewater treatment, cemeteries, and rights-of-way. Unlike many communities, Wayland's school enrollment is growing, which means that exempt land could also potential expand . To balance the tax base, revenue-generating properties shall be thoughtfully constructed to compensate for the high level of exempt properties: this typically means building strategically in terms of density and commercial or industrial uses that serve in perpetuity.



Industrial agricultural establishment.

REDEVELOP, TRANSITION, & GROWTH

The map “Land Use Framework” is the basis for creating a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and an action plan in the next chapter, “Integration & Implementation.” Once areas of the city are classified based on the growth-transition-redevelopment spectrum, those broader categories can be converted into two essential components for planning: greater site-specific land use detail in the FLUM, and more comprehensive overarching strategies in the action plan.

Redevelop

The underlying fabric of the area is intact but there are instances of blight; vacant, abandoned, or poorly maintained properties; and visual degradation of public spaces. The focus is on reinvestment, targeted code enforcement,

redevelopment of deteriorated properties, and selective infill with new construction.

Transition

Transition calls for a large-scale shift in the appearance and function of an area with the intention of a dramatic change in use, design, and accessibility. This strategy could call for a strong public-private partnership and the use of available public financing tools, and capital improvements plans.

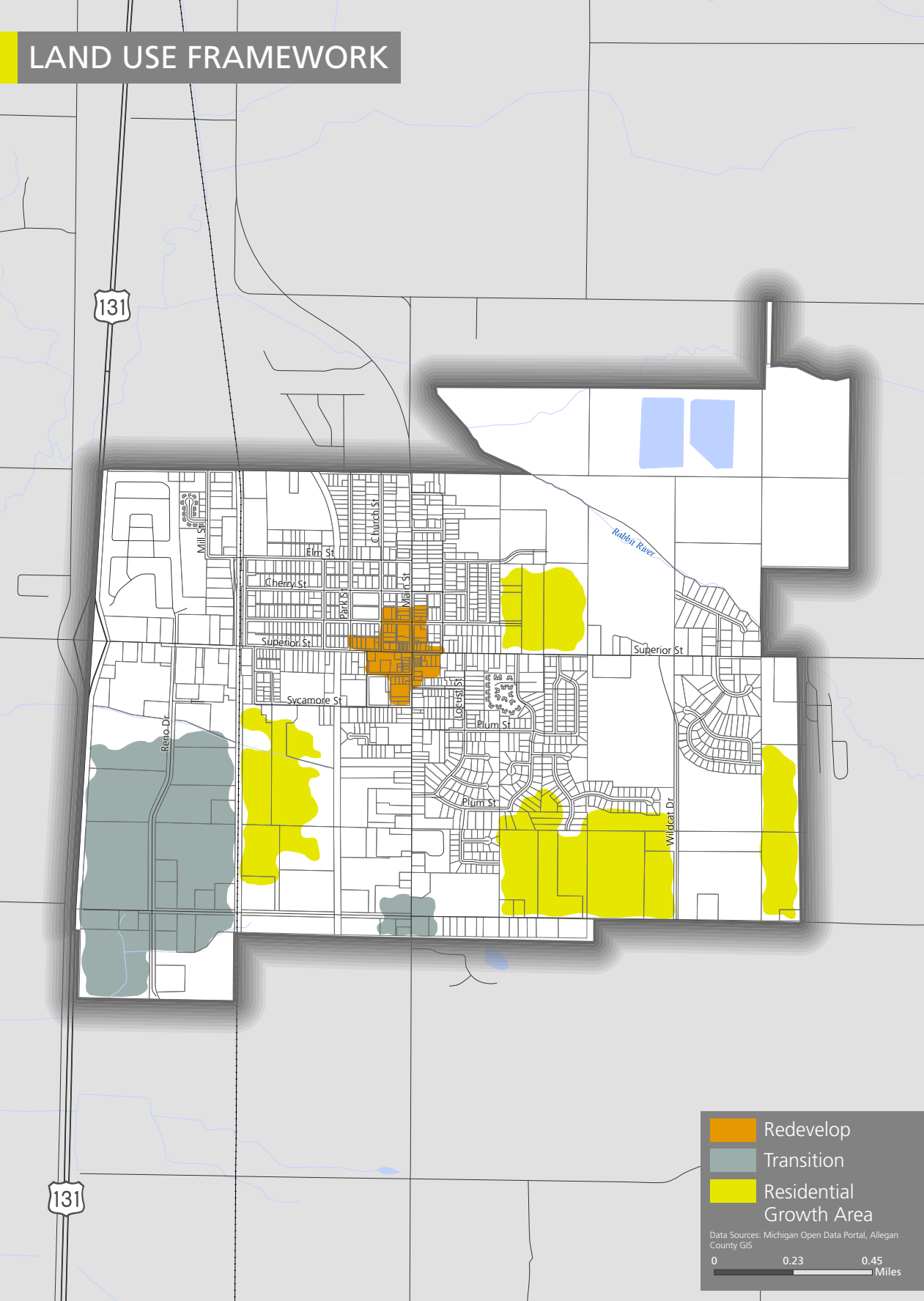
Growth

The type of development either falls out of step with the city’s vision, or its growth should be contained to specific boundaries, so it does not negatively affect other land uses. It is not necessarily harmful but should not be encouraged to sprawl beyond its current footprint.



Duplex residential land use.

Map 15: Land Use Framework



10

Integration & Implementation



Residence on the southside.

The local government has a responsibility to proactively plan for the physical landscape in accordance with demographic shifts and the evolving needs and preferences of the Wayland community. This final chapter of the Master Plan integrates all the findings from analysis and community visioning sessions to establish a framework for future land use and define goals and actions to guide long-range planning in Wayland.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, specifically gives Planning Commissions the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Future Land Use Plan—a general framework intended to guide land use and policy decisions within the city over the next 15-20 years. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies generalized preferred future land uses and strives to create compatible land arrangements which can preserve or enhance property values, advance economic development, guide capital improvement expenditures, and ultimately define the quality of life in Wayland. Combined with supporting tools of a practical and effective Zoning Ordinance, land division and subdivision regulations, utility plans, and other capital improvement plans, the FLUM serves as an important guide for planning officials. The FLUM should be referenced in decision-making processes about development coming to Wayland and maintained through periodic review and revision to reflect contemporary trends while maintaining continuity with community's overall vision and its long-range goals.

The Future Land Use Map retains the single-family character of the city while encouraging alternate housing typologies to meet the changing demographic and economic needs of the population. Adopting sustainable land use practices, the FLUM aims to contain urban sprawl by promoting walkable neighborhoods, encouraging residential density (where feasible), supporting mixed land uses, and emphasizing natural features and open space preservation.

The FLUM proposes a “flexible residential” land use category that would integrate housing types, contrary to typical zoning practices that segregate single-family housing from all other residential land uses. Development of this kind would increase density by coordinating “missing middle” housing typologies such as multi-family units like apartments, duplexes, senior housing, condominiums, and single-family houses. This district will advance housing diversity and weave density into the existing fabric of traditional neighborhoods between single-family housing and other uses. The proposed mixed residential land use areas are strategically located near the downtown and commercial corridors to build accessibility to services into future residential planning. The

“agriculture vacant” existing land use category is replaced with mostly with single-family residential.

The Wayland FLUM also implements a “Mixed Use” land use category to promote mixing of compatible land uses. Assigned predominantly to parcels along South Main Street, this category would permit residential, commercial, and office uses that are suitable for their context, as determined by the Planning Commission. In near-downtown neighborhoods, for example, this category would allow for a traditional development format that many cities have eliminated over time: residential units above local businesses, expanding housing variety, and increasing foot traffic for ground-floor business. Alternatively, buildings constituting different uses may be situated adjacent to each other.

The “General Commercial” land uses are concentrated in the western part of the city along Superior Street. This district may be comprised of local neighborhood businesses, offices, and larger national retail/restaurant chains on smaller lots. The “Regional Commercial” district on the other hand is concentrated on larger parcels toward the periphery of the city to accommodate larger-format commercial uses.

A major land use concern in Wayland was the proximity of industries to the wetlands, especially in the southeast quadrant of the city along Reno Drive. The FLUM implements the “Commercial-Light Industrial” district, which supports small-scale industries and commercial land uses that have lower environmental impact than a heavy industrial land use, with the aim of protecting the existing wetlands. This zone will also serve as a buffer between the “General Industrial” district and the other FLUM districts.

The future land uses recommended along the city boundaries are not meant to indicate an overt intent for future annexation, but rather a desire to cooperate with adjacent municipalities to mutually benefit by coordinating land uses along common boundaries.

Future Land Use Districts

The Future Land Use map proposes nine districts, and the table “Future Land Use Categories” provides a snapshot of these districts and their relationship with the current Zoning Ordinance (updated November 2021).

Map 16: Future Land Use

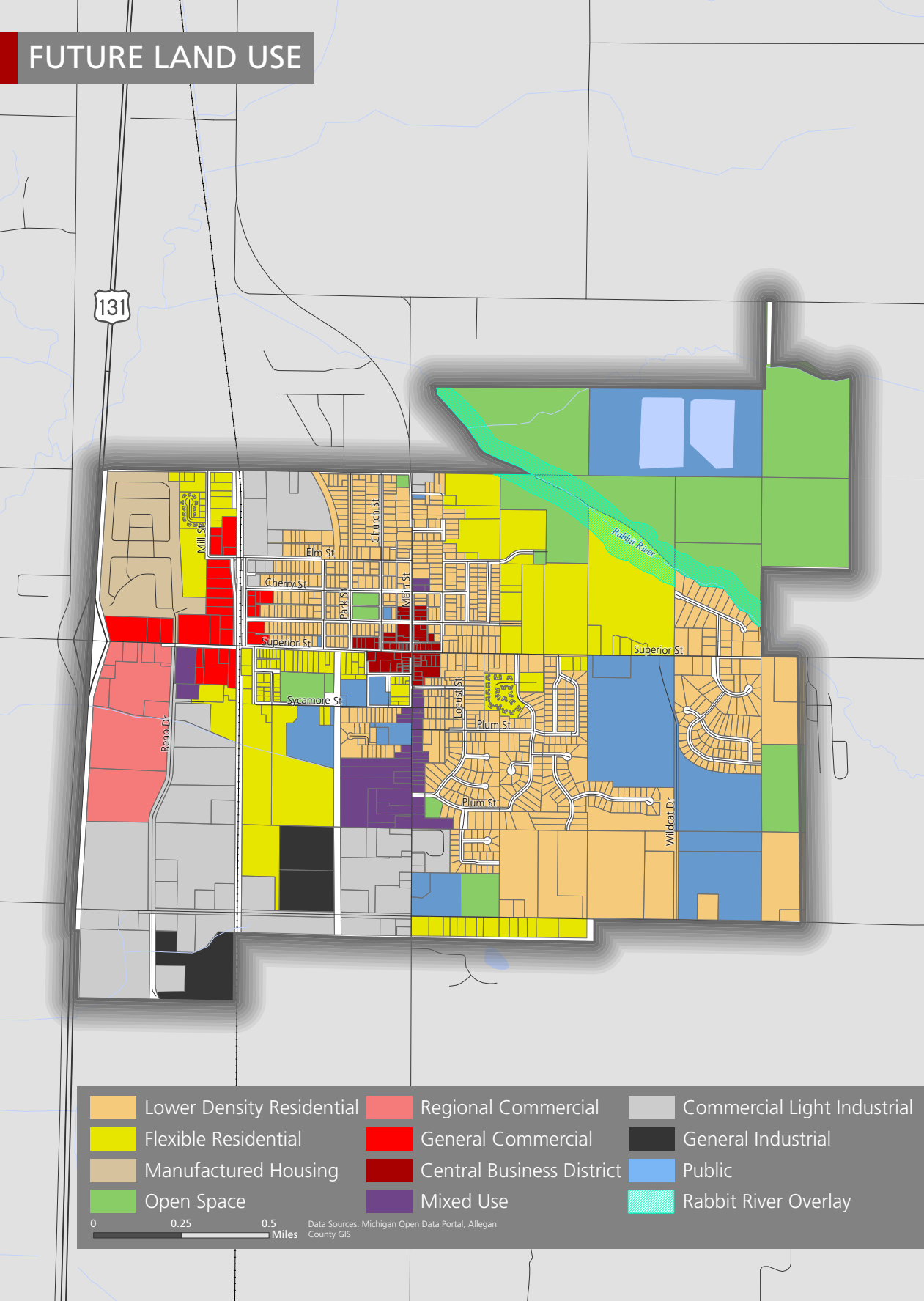


Table 20: Future Land Use Categories

Proposed FLU Category	Intent	Proposed Uses*	Zoning District(s)	2015 FLU Categories
Lower Density Residential	<p>Provides for low density suburban residential zoning that exist in the many parts of Wayland's traditional neighborhoods. Whether they are in a subdivision or an established gridded neighborhood, these neighborhoods will largely stay the same. Because smaller single-family homes are expected to become the most popular housing option over time, the recommendation is that smaller lots are permitted; for example with 50 or 60 ft lot widths.</p> <p>The conservation of natural features as elements in the design of housing developments, as well as street and pedestrian connectivity is highly encouraged in this district. New developments containing integrated open space and recreation amenities and taking advantage of available planned unit development (PUD) zoning options, may attain density bonuses.</p>	Single- and two-family housing units and complementary uses	LDR, R-1, R-2, R-3	Low Density Open Space Residential, Traditional Low Density Residential
Flexible Residential	To provide for flexible housing types but at higher densities than the traditional single family residential area and support a wide array of housing typologies. Higher density developments are suited to locations along thoroughfares and used as a "buffer" between commercial and lower density developments. The density in the district can range from 7-25 dwelling units/acre.	Single- and two-family housing units, triplex, quadplex, town-houses, garden apartments, multi-family housing development, senior housing, and complementary uses	R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, RM, PERC	Low Density Open Space Residential, Traditional Low Density Residential, Medium Density Attached Residential, High Density Residential
Manufactured Housing	To provide for mobile home parks located in the northwest corner of the city has been included within this classification. It is anticipated that the capacity of the existing park and that of an adjacent park at the city's east boundary in Wayland Township will be able satisfy the local demand for this type of housing. Therefore, no additional land areas have been allocated to support new development of this type.	Mobile homes and accessory uses	RMH	Medium Density Attached Residential
Central Business District (CBD)	To provide strong and vibrant commercial and service center for the community for shopping, personal services, and business offices. Allowance of multi-family residences on the fringe of CBD as well as residential units on second and third floor of retail and service buildings will bolster the demand for the local retail and service businesses. Mixing of residential and commercial land uses will also create a walkable downtown and create opportunities for small businesses that can cater to pedestrians.	Flexible mix of residential (upper story) and commercial uses	CBD	Central Business District

Table 21: Future Land Use Categories Continued

Proposed FLU Category	Intent	Proposed Uses*	Zoning District(s)	2015 FLU Categories
General Commercial	To serve as a transition area for commercial business with less density and walkability than the Central Business District but not as spaced out as the Regional Commercial District. Located along Superior Street, these uses are characterized by small parcels, on-site or curb parking, and are/or clustered as small neighborhood shopping areas.	Mix of commercial uses including convenience stores, restaurants, retail, office, and service businesses with some residential	B-1, B-2, R-O	Local Service Commercial, General Highway Commercial
Regional Commercial	To primarily serve convenience-style shopping accessed by automobile in high-travel areas and act as a transition between incompatible uses such as a residential and industrial. Sites in this district are characterized by having large land area needs, expansive parking lots, and high land area to building ratios.	Big box commercial, Gas stations, drive-thru, car-wash, strip malls, warehousing, storage, lumber yards, vehicle sales	B-3	Regional Commercial
Mixed Use	To preserve maximum flexibility in identifying redevelopment uses and projects by allowing mixing of residential, commercial, and office land uses along the South Main Street corridor; this district intends to permit mixed-uses in redevelopment project and shall not disrupt exiting land uses	Multi-family units, neighborhood services, mixed-use projects	Several zoning categories	General Highway Commercial
Commercial-Light Industrial	To serve as a district that is primarily used for light industrial uses, but also permits some portion of buildings to sell products produced there	Small manufacturers, laboratories, packaging, breweries, distilleries	I-1	General Light Industrial
General Industrial	This district provides an exclusive space for heavy industry with larger buffers from incompatible uses	Chemical processing, foundries, metal stamping	I-2	Planned Industrial
Rabbit River Overlay	This land use designation is created as a means of protecting the Rabbit River. It is created because if left unrestricted, development is likely to encroach within close proximity of the river. Land use restrictions, minimum building setbacks from the water's edge and the reservation of a natural vegetation strip along the water's edge are the types of developmental restrictions the overlay will implement.	Any use in the underlying district	RAP	Rabbit River Overlay Zone
Public	To maintain spaces that are owned and operated by a public entity	Civic center, city departments, library	Several zoning categories	Institutional / Community Service
Open Space	To preserve land for passive and active recreation	Parks, open space, greenways	Several zoning categories	Parks and Open Space

*not an exhaustive list of uses.

ZONING PLAN

The purpose of a zoning plan is to take note of areas where the Zoning Ordinance no longer matches the future land use map so that appropriate changes should be made to align the two. Wayland regulates by a traditional use-based Zoning Ordinance, but as can be seen on the FLUM, there is an interest to expand housing diversity and mixed-uses. The table “Future Land Use Categories” explains the intent of each future land use category and ties it to its current corresponding zoning district. The purpose of showing both in one table is to convey the type of change needed to move towards future land use patterns.

ZONING CHANGES

The proposed FLUM describes opportunities for mixed land uses and higher density along major thoroughfares which dissipates as it moves into the traditional residential neighborhoods. The Future Land Use categories embrace density for all of the advantages it brings such as higher tax revenue per acre to the city, a greater variety of building types and price points, greater accessibility to nonmotorized users (youth and the elderly), and enhanced vibrancy and foot traffic for business owners. With these benefits in mind, the land use categories propose some key changes to the current Zoning Ordinance:

- » Enabling smaller single-family units in the LDR and R-1 residential districts by reducing the minimum lot size requirements will prepare the city to capture the anticipated future demand for this housing typology.

- » Permitting additional “missing middle” housing typologies as “principal permitted uses” in the R-3, R-4, and RM districts will improve housing diversity which in turn will ensure housing is attainable for different demographic groups.
- » Given that Wayland’s population is aging, facilitating senior housing opportunities such as convalescent and nursing homes along with complimentary uses such as clinics and small health facilities in the R-3, R-4, and RM districts will ensure that the older population of Wayland can age in place.
- » The FLUM aims to capture the economic potential along the Main Street and Superior Street corridors by increasing the commercial land use area. The Zoning Ordinance can support this goal by incentivizing development on the parcels along these corridors.
- » Development around wetlands and other natural features should be regulated by adding minimum setbacks and buffers, especially for industrial land uses.
- » Create more cohesive land use patterns and design standards for South Main Street.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan synthesizes the community input, data collection, local knowledge from meetings with commission, boards, and staff, and knowledge of planning best practices to provide the city with the next steps in the form of goals, objectives, and strategies. The action statements are divided by theme, based on chapters in this plan, and each action is attached to a responsible party, partners, and a timeframe for completion.



Existing greenspace.

Housing

There is a need for diversified housing variety as a collective priority. The increase in number of households over the last decade coupled with shrinking household and family size in Wayland have important planning implications, especially with respect to housing; smaller households induce a demand for smaller housing units. Additionally, with an aging population, the city will need to provide a wide range of living options to serve both younger and older generations. Encouraging housing diversity while simultaneously improving housing quality will improve the overall housing affordability in Wayland.

Goal 1: Increase the housing supply and housing diversity to provide greater options for residents throughout the life cycle.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Permit smaller lot single-unit homes by reducing minimum lot sizes requirements in the lower density residential districts	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	High
Increase housing supply through the Zoning Ordinance with flexible standards that allow mixing of compatible housing typologies	Planning Commission	City Council	3-5 years	High
Promote the use of accessory dwelling units in residential neighborhoods	Planning Commission	City Council	Ongoing	Low
Expand senior housing opportunities in all multi-family residential districts	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Medium
Incentivize housing density bonuses along the city's major thoroughfares	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Inventory and convert upper-story units to housing in the downtown area	DDA	City Council	Ongoing	Low



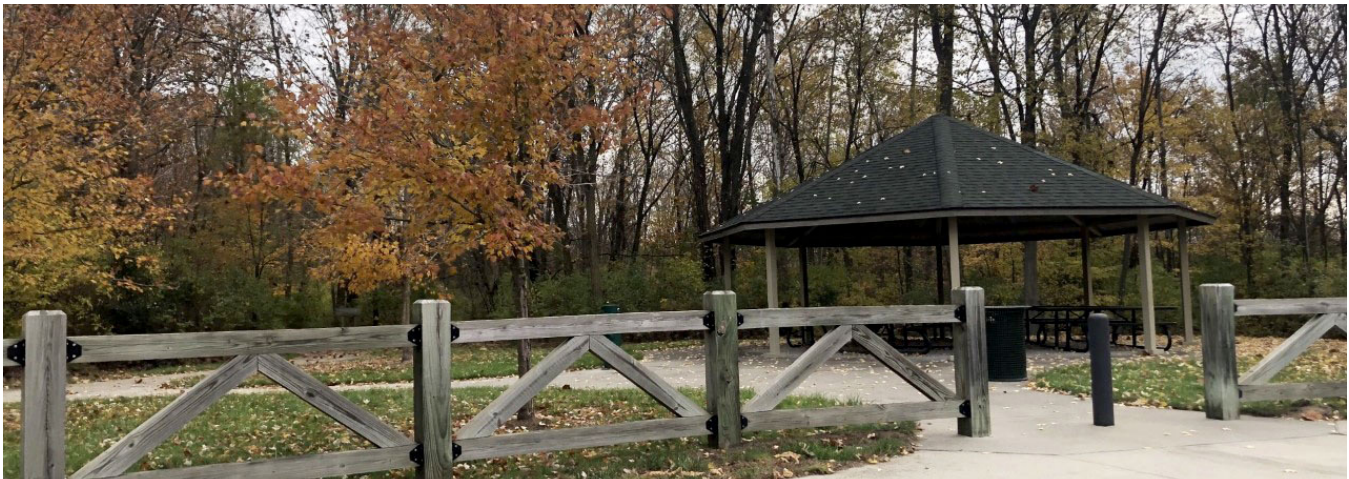
Existing multi-family housing.

Transportation & Corridor Development

Wayland should focus transportation improvements that diversify the range of travel options and improves the quality of roads and streetscape. Concerns about the road quality and safety along the major thoroughfares, Main Street and Superior Street, require attention. Improving sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure and expanding non-motorized connectivity between different areas of the city should also be a central consideration.

Goal 1: To maintain a safe and modern vehicular network that encourages mobility for all users.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to include maintenance costs in the capital improvements plan	DPW	City Council	Ongoing	High
Secure funding for traffic studies for problem intersections to find solutions to significantly increase road safety	DPW	City Council	1-2 years	Medium
Train the DPW to use Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating (PASER) ratings for roads and sidewalks and prioritize those in poor condition in the Capital Improvement Program	DPW	City Council	3-5 years	Low
Adopt a "Complete Streets" ordinance	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Implement a comprehensive plan for the completion of sidewalks and bicycle routes	DPW	City Council	1-2 years	High
Update the Zoning Ordinance to require new development to install paved sidewalks and bicycle parking	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Redesign downtown roads and intersections to accommodate the interaction of heavy semi-truck traffic and nonmotorized users	DPW	City Council	5-10 years	Low
Discuss eliminating parking minimums from the City ordinances with the City Council.	Planning Commission	City Council	5-10 years	Low



Existing nonmotorized infrastructure.

Natural Features & Open Space

Protecting the city’s natural features and open space is a vital step to ensure sustainable growth and development in Wayland. Most wetlands are forested and located along the Rabbit River and its tributaries, yet some are located on the western, more commercially developed side of the city that could be victim to encroachment if not protected locally. Adopting green infrastructure practices and increasing the tree cover are some simple yet effective solutions to help the city combat common and intensifying instances of flooding and heat.

Wayland’s open space and recreation system are import assets to the community. While the city offers varied park programming and recreational facilities, there was a community request to improve the quantity, quality, and accessibility of the open spaces.

Goal 1: Protect the city’s natural features and water bodies.

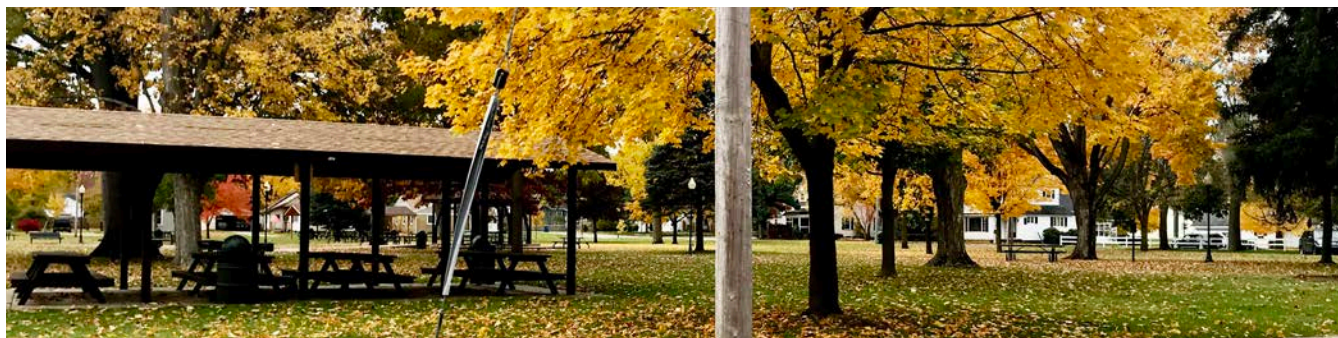
Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Join forces with the Watershed Council to ensure that land use practices do not impede on larger goals	City Council	Kalamazoo Watershed Council	1-2 years	Low
Regulate development along the Rabbit River Overlay Zone through the Zoning Ordinance to protect natural features and structures from high risk of damage	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Include wetland protection standards in the Zoning Ordinance that are consistent with best management practices outlined by the Rabbit River Watershed Management Plan	Planning Commission	City Council, Kalamazoo Watershed Council	1-2 years	Medium
Investigate potential areas and funding sources for wetland restoration near the Rabbit River with EGLE	Planning Commission	EGLE, Environmental Organization	3-5 years	Low
Work with EGLE to determine if the leaky underground storage tanks are an urgent danger to the water supply and then work with property owners to remediate the contamination	Planning Commission	EGLE, Property Owners	1-2 years	Low
Include green infrastructure in street and streetscape improvement projects	DPW	Road Department	Ongoing	Medium
Incentivize green infrastructure, i.e., credits towards landscaping requirements, or density bonuses if green infrastructure is included in the development	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Medium
Adapt vegetation requirements to the soil type to ensure that the vegetation and soil are suitable	Planning Commission	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Work with the county on enforcing such soil standards during the site plan review process	City Council	Allegan County, EGLE	3-5 years	Low
Create a tree ordinance that protects existing trees and requires new development to include new plantings.	Tree Board	Planning Commission, Tree Commission	1-2 years	Medium

Goal 2: Enhance existing parks and acquire new parks and open space sites to expand recreation opportunities for all age groups.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Write and submit a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to the Department of Natural Resources	Parks and Recreation	Planning Commission, City Council	1-2 years	High
Acquire parkland for neighborhood-scale parks and focus on equal distributed throughout the city	Parks and Recreation	City Council	3-5 years	Low
Expand facilities and programming to accommodate all age groups ranging from preschoolers to seniors	Parks and Recreation	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Increase waterfront access and year-round programming in public parks	Parks and Recreation	City Council	1-2 years	Low
Continue to sponsor successful events, such as concerts in the park, and evaluate the feasibility of new special events	Parks and Recreation	City Council	1-2 years	High

Goal 3: Create an integrated sidewalk and trail system connecting significant open space areas, parks, neighborhoods, schools, and business districts.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Implement a comprehensive plan for the completion of sidewalks and on-street bicycle routes	Parks and Recreation	DPW, Planning Commission	1-2 years	High
Pursue multi-purpose trail development along the inter-urban route	Parks and Recreation	Park Committee	3-5 years	Medium
Incorporate benches and other rest stop amenities along the trail system	Parks and Recreation	DPW	1-2 years	Medium
Incorporate ADA compliant design along major trail segments	Parks and Recreation	DPW	1-2 years	Medium
Plan for a pedestrian crossing of the Rabbit River that eventually links public lands north and south of the river	Parks and Recreation	Parks and Recreation of respective municipalities	1-2 years	Low



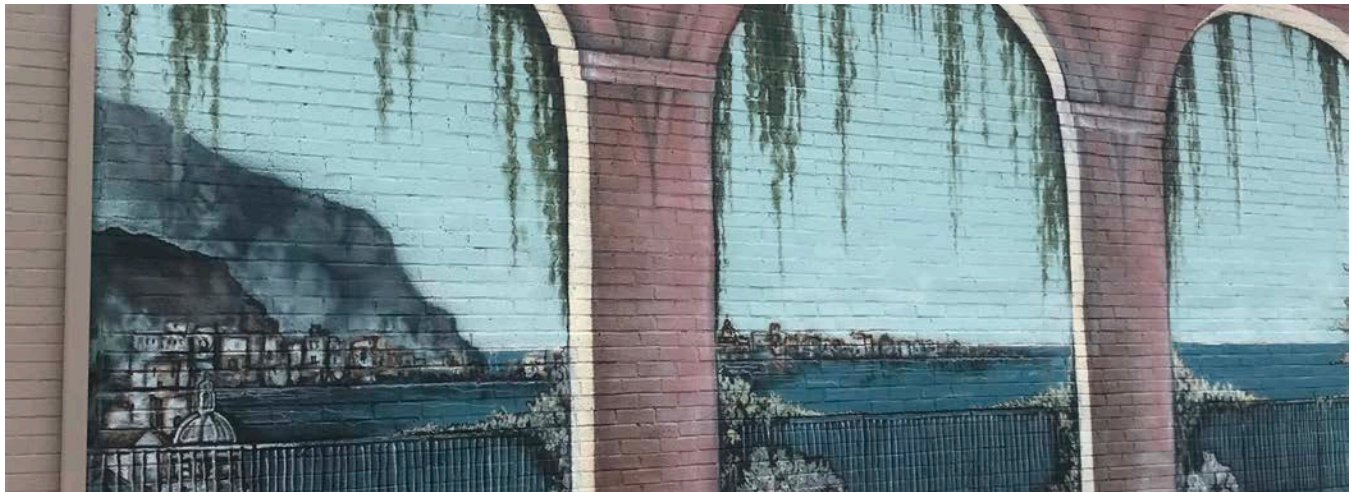
Existing tree canopy coverage.

Economic Development

Supporting local businesses while simultaneously attracting new businesses and industries is a major priority for Wayland. Manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction contribute significantly to the local economy and hence channeling efforts to hone these industries is essential. It is also critical to improve the vitality of the downtown area by incentivizing business owners to set up shop in the district.

Goal 1: To promote diverse local businesses and encourages new industries in Wayland.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe	Priority
Focus business recruitment efforts on emerging sectors of healthcare, retail, construction, and manufacturing	DDA	Chamber of Commerce, MEDC	Ongoing	High
Identify businesses and local investors and promote resources that will help them to start and expand local business	DDA	Chamber of Commerce, MEDC	3-5 years	Medium
Consider adaptive reuse of older structures and where viable and minimally disruptive to surrounding uses, enable their conversion with flexible zoning provisions	Planning Commission	City Council	3-5 years	Medium
Support a "micro-business" community by using permitting sheds or other small-format containers as incubating spaces for new businesses	Chamber of Commerce	MEDC	3-5 years	High
Inventory and prioritize vacant commercial and industrial properties and target marketing strategies to businesses that could fill a regional gap in goods or services	Planning Commission	City Council	3-5 years	Medium
Encourage industrial development where possible to cluster buildings and transportation amenities around these areas, leaving the wetlands as undisturbed visual assets or even trail amenities for employees	Planning Commission	City Council	3-5 years	Low



Existing mural.

PLAN EVALUATION

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, a community is required by law to review their adopted Master Plan every five years to determine if any revisions, edits, or updates must be amended to the Plan. This serves as an excellent opportunity to revisit the document if any drastic changes have occurred that would greatly impact the city, whether they be a major shift in demographics, a large-scale new development project, the construction of a regional trail with significant implications for travel, or any other noteworthy trends or projects that may occur and affect the city's outcome or future. Conditions

change and planning is dynamic, so it is critical to ensure this overarching document is always aligned with what is best (and current) for the city.

The city's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) provides a framework for the realization of community goals and objectives as envisioned in this Master Plan. All CIP projects, which are updated and derived from the items in this Master Plan, are listed on a priority basis and reflected by the fiscal year within the CIP. The CIP also includes an indication for providing the financial means for implementing the projects, ensuring that plan alignment and identified funding can achieve the overall vision of Wayland.



Downtown sidewalk.

APPENDIX

Community Engagement Summary

Master Plan – Community Engagement Summary

April 2021

As a community-driven document, representative engagement is essential for master planning. The community engagement program for this Master Plan was four-fold:

- Online survey
- Youth engagement at Wayland High School
- Youth engagement at Steeby Elementary School
- Community visioning session

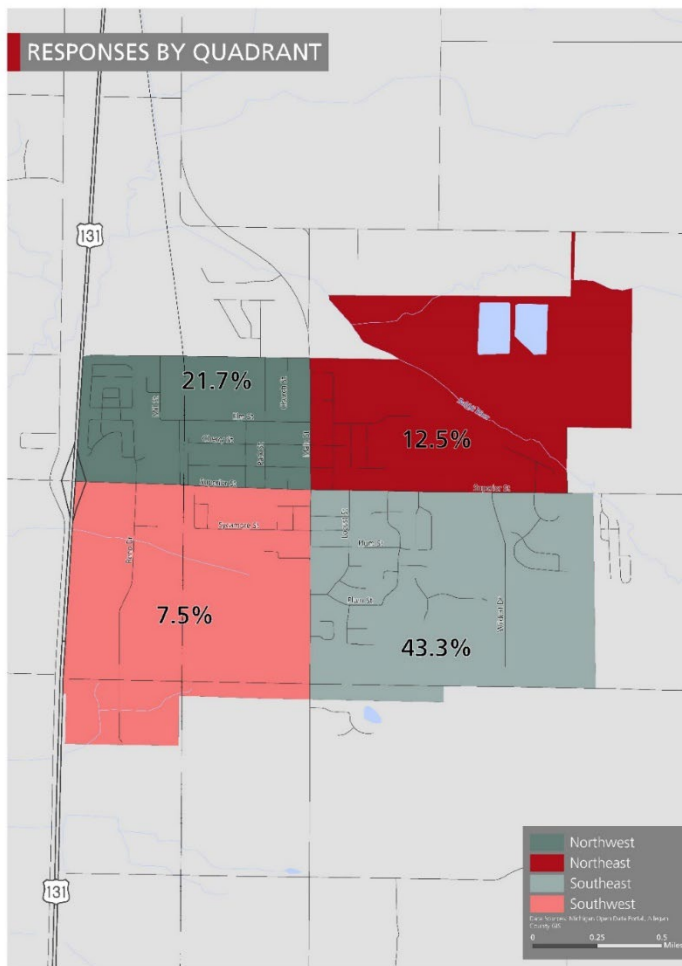
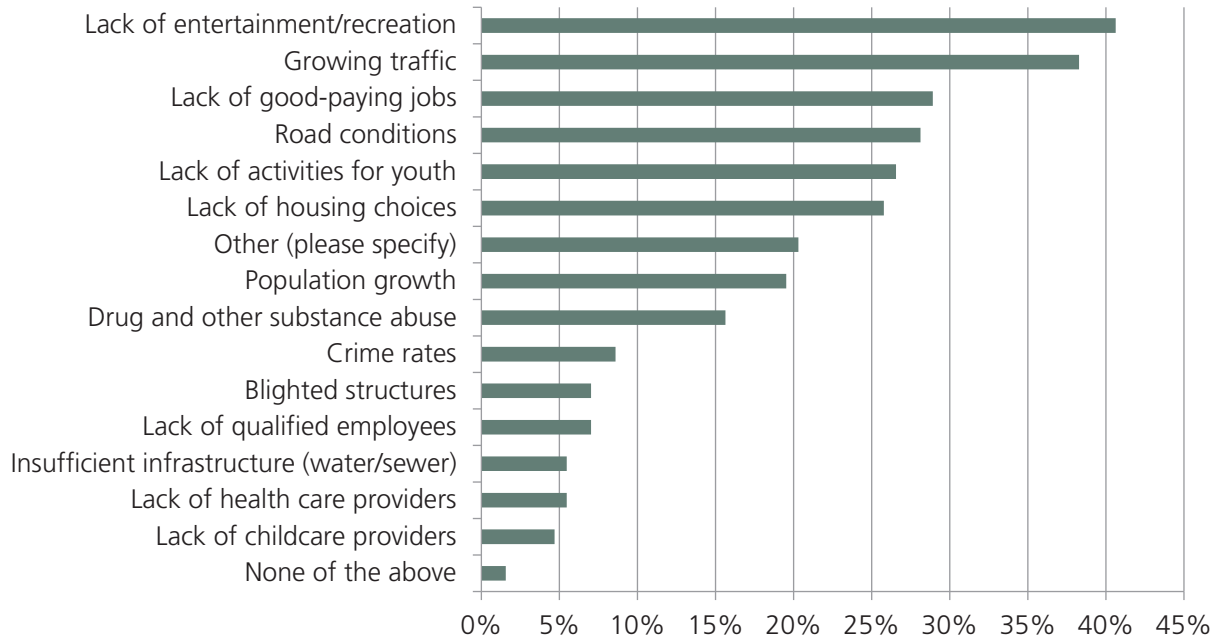
Below is a summary of the major findings from each engagement session.

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey and distributed to the community via the city’s social media platforms and the city website; 128 people responded between October 2021 and January 2022. A summary of their responses is below. Respondents were spread across the age cohorts with over half of the responses coming from age groups 25 to 44. Despite skewing younger, 92% of survey respondents are homeowners, overrepresenting homeowners by a vast margin when compared to census data (59%). Correspondingly, over half of the respondents reported having no children in the household. When asked what year they moved to the city, their answers demonstrated a good mix of newcomers and long-term residents. Close to 60% of survey participants plan to stay at least another 10 years, coinciding with this plan’s time horizon.

When given an open response to write in their favorite thing about Wayland, residents’ most popular responses were references to a “small town” atmosphere. While residents love how “close knit” the community is, an equal number of survey-takers like the city’s “proximity to bigger cities.” These top three responses indicate Wayland has many attributes of an idyllic suburb, close knit but also close to urbanity. The top concern for survey-takers was the lack of entertainment and recreation options in the city (40.6%). These responses did not change much when results were filtered by age group. Interestingly, residents are less concerned with the growing population than they are with the traffic congestion. Usually, the increase of one necessitates the other, but it could also be that as a hub in the area, it attracts vehicular visitors. Thirdly, residents recorded a concerning “lack of good paying jobs” in the city.

“In your opinion, what are the three most pressing issues facing Wayland?”



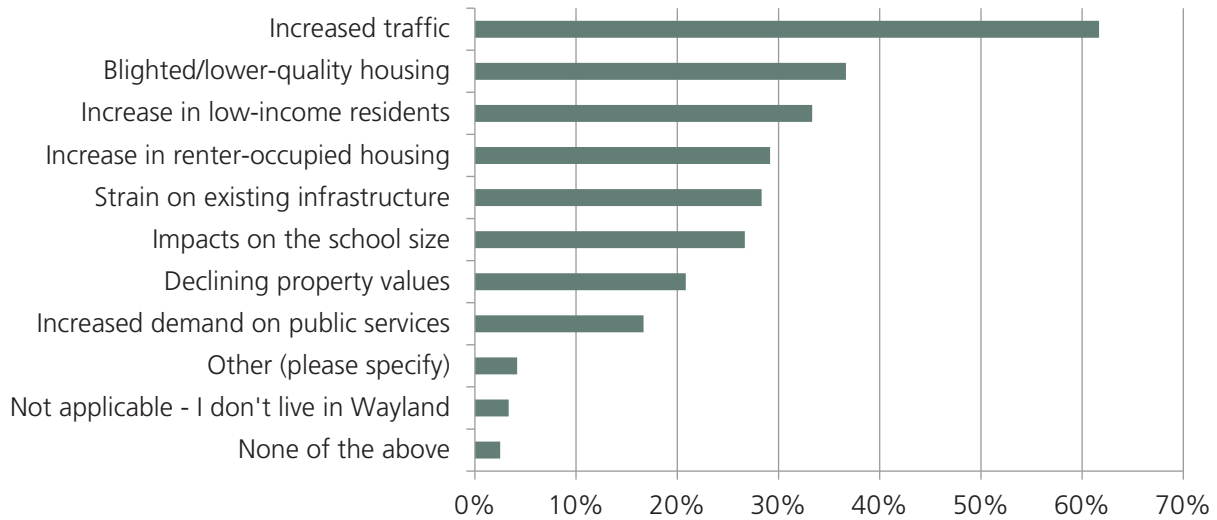
Housing

The highest portion of residents reported the southeast quadrant. The map titled “Responses by Quadrant” details the percentage of respondents by quadrant.

Corresponding to a previously recorded concern, residents worry about increasing residential density because it could cause more traffic (61.7%). Moreover, there is a concern over housing quality (36.7%) and an increase in low-income residents (33.3%) with denser housing types. Most residents are generally averse to living near high density housing. For example, the vast majority of participants are not willing to live next door to a duplex, townhome, triplex, or fourplex, although there is greater consensus to having such units in the neighborhood as opposed to direct neighbors. Interestingly, almost all respondents live in single-family housing now but when asked what type of housing they want to live in in 10 years, there was a substantial drop in selecting that housing type again. This finding

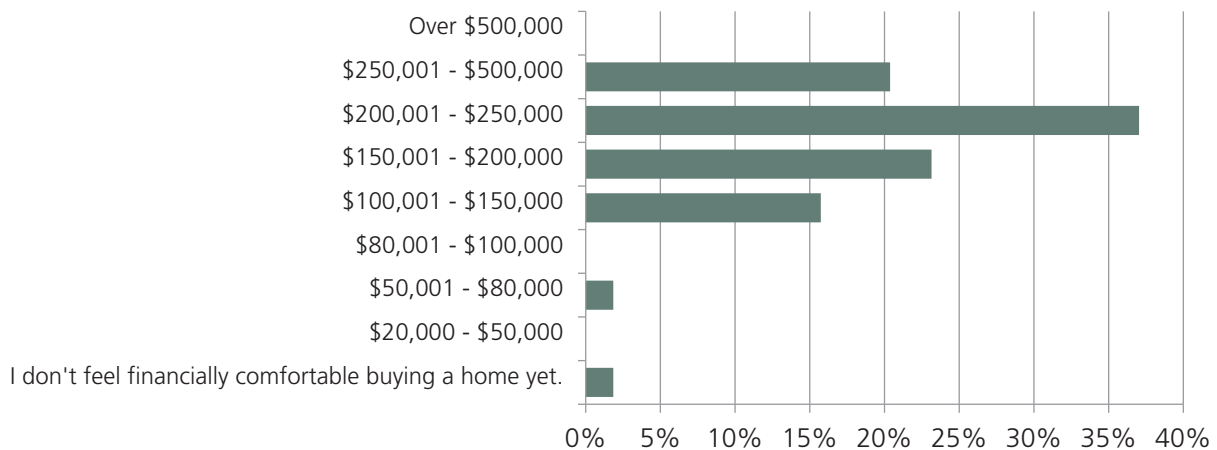
acknowledges that single-family housing is not necessarily the best option for every life stage, but there is little recognition of other options.

“What are your top three biggest concerns about boosting residential density in the city?”



A majority of survey-takers feel that with their household’s current budget, housing options in Wayland are financially attainable and that they were comfortable spending between \$150,000 to \$250,000 for a home (60%); however, the median sales prices of a new home in 2017 was \$273,414 in the region.¹ Homeowners would prefer to buy in an independent neighborhood (as opposed to a homeowner’s association) if given the option again. There were not enough renter replies to determine a comfortable price range for their monthly payments.

“In what price range do you feel financially comfortable buying a home?”



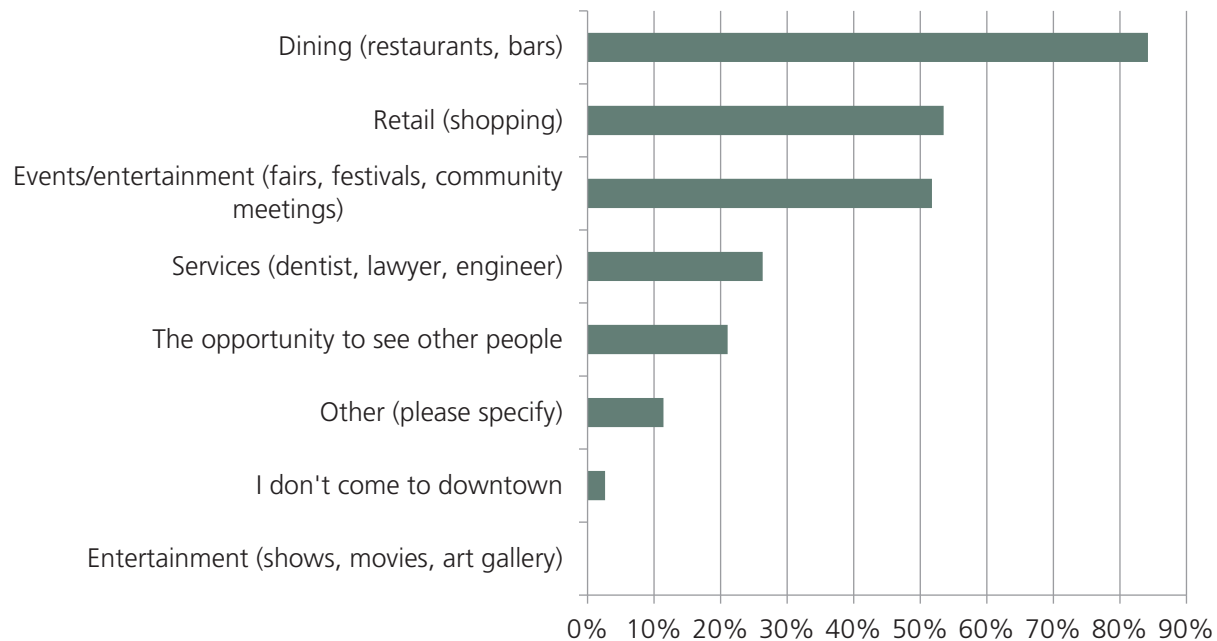
Downtown

In the last five years, most residents have noticed an improvement in downtown (63.2%). The survey-takers are visiting downtown on a daily or weekly basis, regardless of the season, primarily

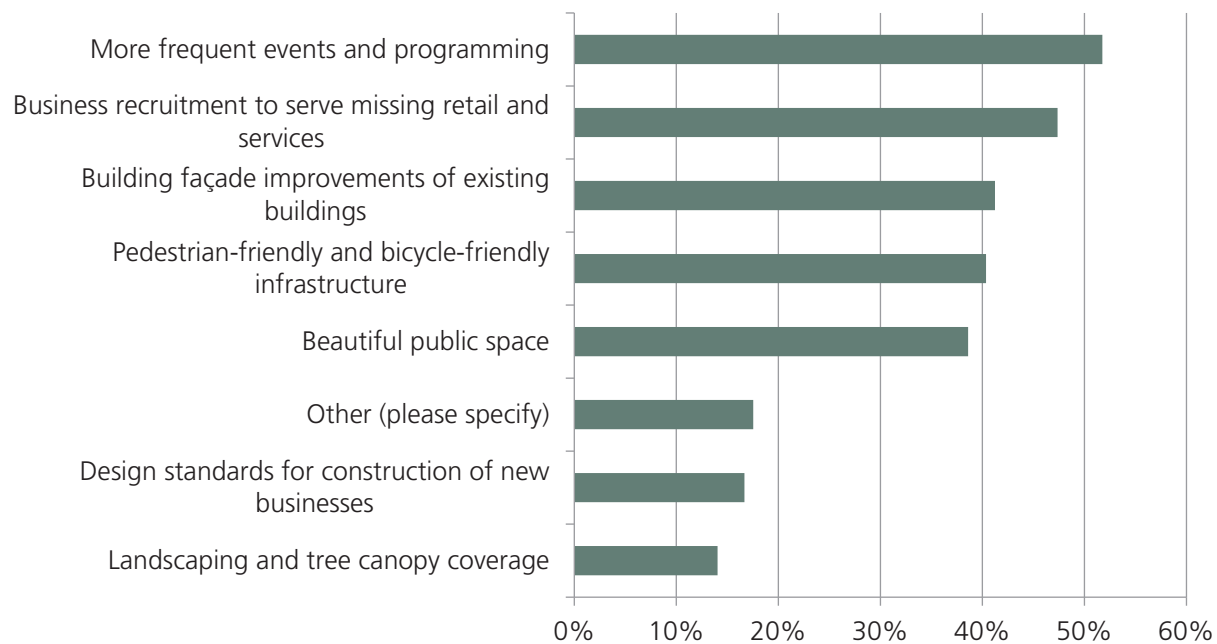
¹ MSHDA. “Michigan Homeownership Study: Understanding and Advancing Homeownership in Michigan.” March 2019. Page 191.

for dining and retail. Survey participants wrote that the downtown has done well with streetscaping, improving facades, and filling in with a variety of businesses. Their desired improvements are for continued façade and streetscape enhancements, business recruitment to include restaurants and entertainment, and events.

“What draws you to the downtown?”



“What are the top three elements of downtown that you would like to see receive more attention?”

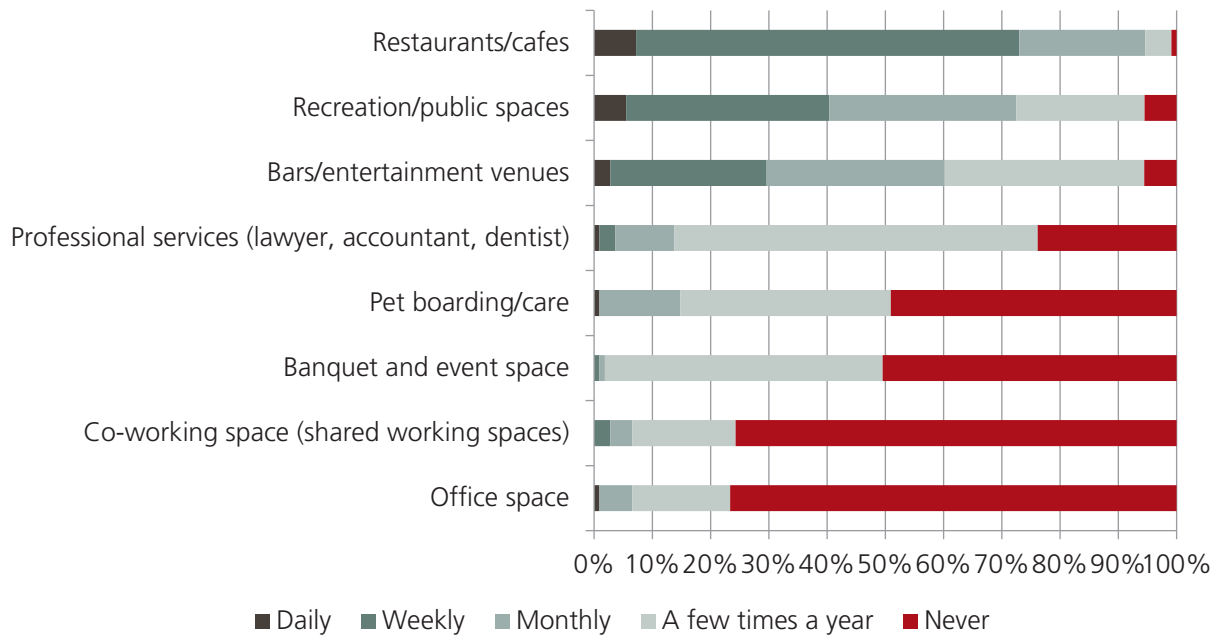


Local Economy

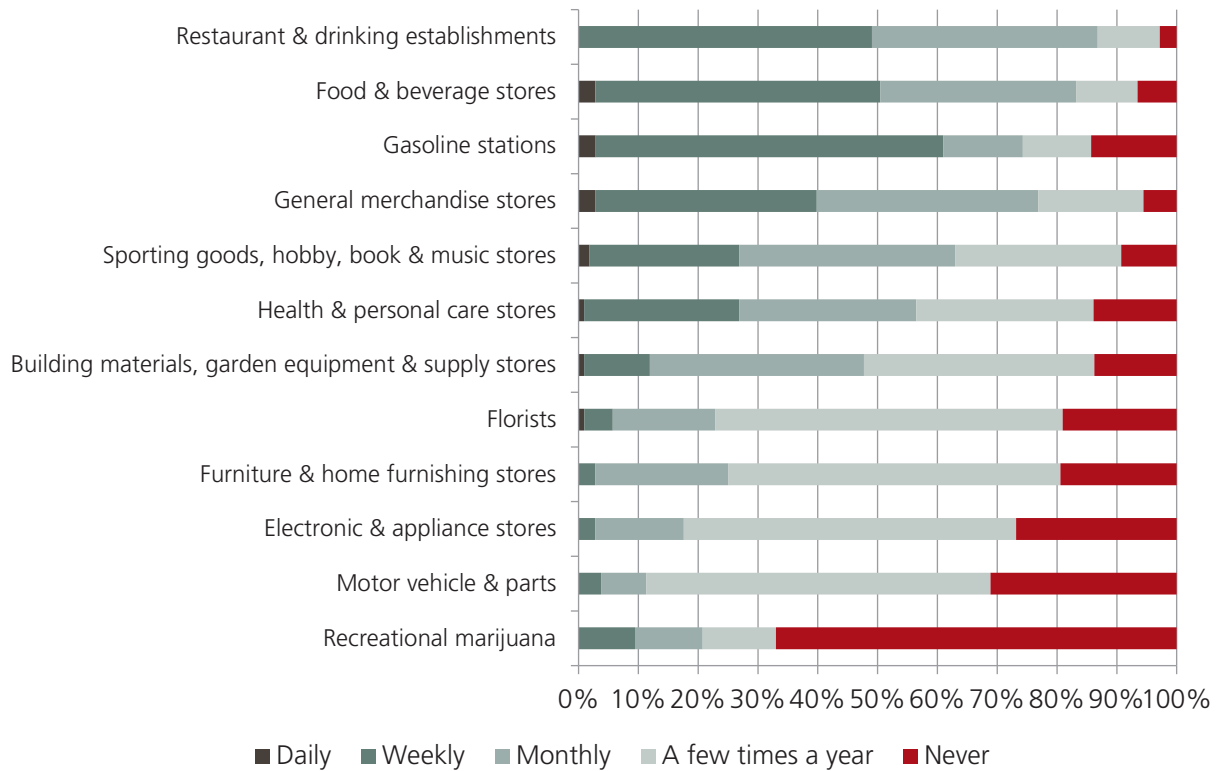
In broader economic development terms, residents were asked which services they want to see come to Wayland and to what extent they would frequent them. The findings were meant to provide guidance on tailored business recruitment efforts. Responses demonstrate that restaurants/cafés would be the most highly visited; 73% they would visit on a daily or weekly basis. More specifically, residents request family-friendly restaurants (77.5%), cafés (68.5%), and farm-to-table (55.9%). After restaurants, residents are interested in visiting recreation/public spaces (40.3%) and then bars/entertainment venues (29.6%) on a regular basis. In terms of retail, residents would regular patronize “food and beverage,” “sporting goods,” and “general merchandise” stores.

The impacts of COVID-19 have made it abundantly clear that an online presence is essential to a businesses’ livelihood. Almost half of survey respondents said that they would shop locally more frequently if Wayland businesses had an online inventory. Furthermore, 22 respondents expressed interest in starting or expanding a business in Wayland but were unaware of resources that could assist them. This is vital information for business retention and attraction as local investors are usually the most likely to keep money circulating in the city.

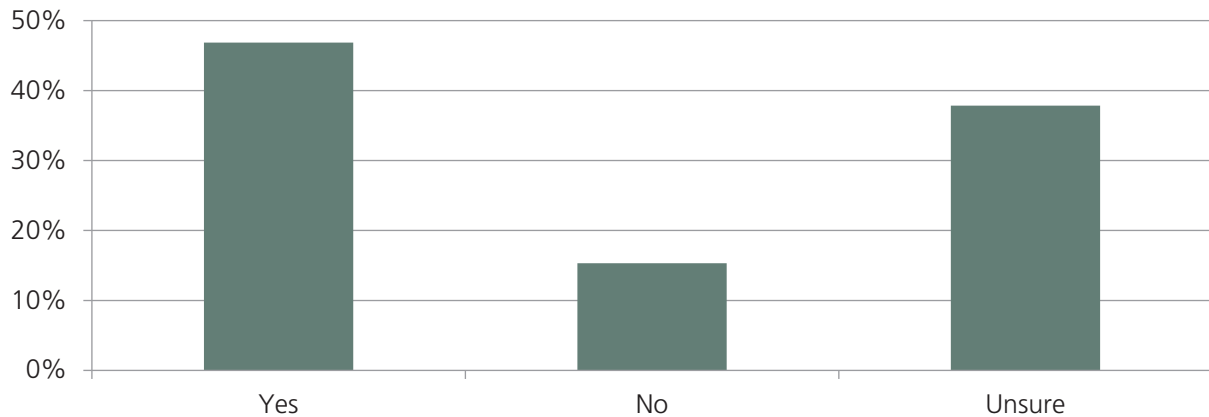
“What types of services/spaces would you like to see in Wayland and how often would you frequent them on average?”



“What type of retail would you like to see come to Wayland and how often would you frequent each storefront on average?”



“If local Wayland businesses had their inventory online, I would shop from them more frequently.”



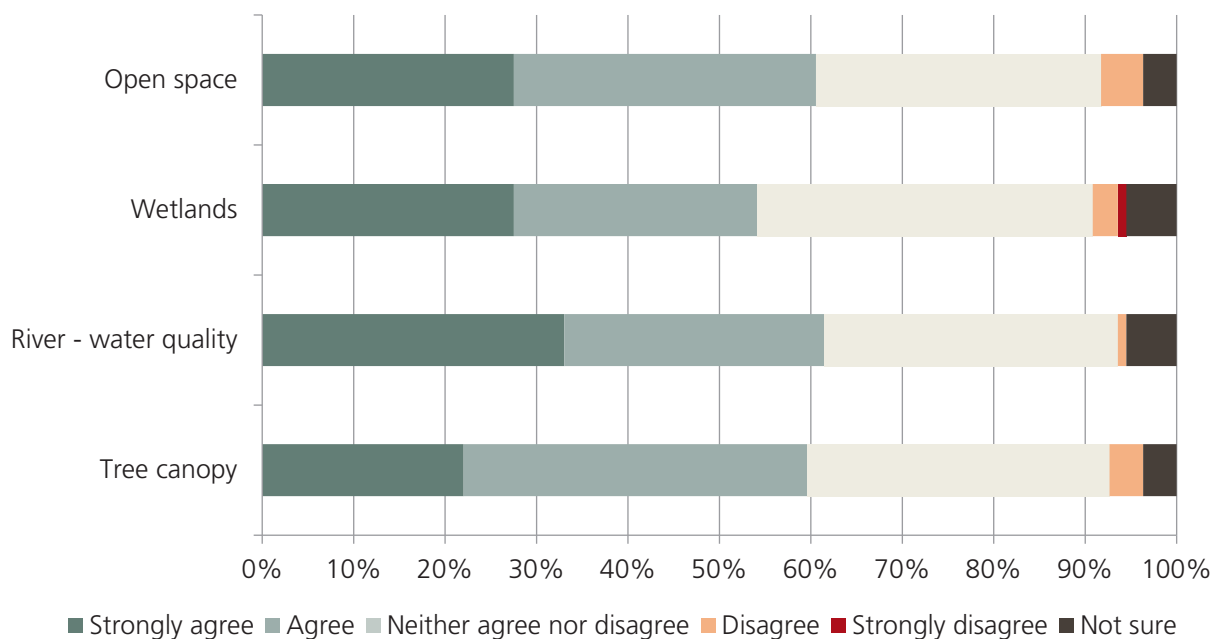
Parks, Recreation, and Nature

When asked separately about recreational trails, over two-thirds of respondents agree that they can be expanded. In the same vein, over two-thirds of residents believe that its natural features (tree canopy, river, wetlands) are an asset and that they can be better protected.

“How satisfied are you with the parks and other recreation offerings in Wayland?”

	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	Northwest	Live Outside Wayland	Total
Number of Parks						
Very Satisfied	15%	8%	33%	13%	27%	15%
Satisfied	69%	56%	11%	57%	13%	48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%	28%	44%	17%	47%	27%
Dissatisfied	8%	8%	11%	13%	13%	10%
Very dissatisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Size of parks						
Very Satisfied	15%	10%	22%	22%	20%	16%
Satisfied	69%	64%	33%	52%	20%	54%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%	18%	33%	17%	53%	23%
Dissatisfied	8%	8%	11%	9%	7%	8%
Very dissatisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Playground Equipment						
Very Satisfied	15%	12%	22%	13%	20%	15%
Satisfied	46%	50%	44%	52%	27%	46%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23%	32%	33%	26%	40%	31%
Dissatisfied	15%	6%	0%	9%	13%	8%
Very dissatisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

To what degree do you agree with the following statement: “Wayland’s natural features could be better protected/preserved.”



HIGH SCHOOL

Because the master plan is a long-range document that looks up to 20 years in the future, it is important to engage the community's youth as they will be likely "running the show" as this plan sunsets. On November 9, 2021, three Wayland High School classes participated in classroom sessions that started with a brief introduction to the master planning process, and how equity and planning intersect. The students participated in a scenario planning exercise to "design" their ideal city using a variety of colored blocks. Each color represented a land use type and students placed blocks according to their preferred land use orientation and composition. Then, they were presented with a set of constraints – specific numbers of residents and jobs were tied to each block (land use), and students had to adapt their ideal city to fit the constraints. The goal of the exercise was to mimic decisions that cities have to make in order to accommodate a growing region, and discern student preferences when faced with balancing population growth and its effects on land use (i.e. density, preservation, sprawl). Common land use themes and patterns included:

- Urban cores centered on public institutions or public spaces/parks
- Mix of land uses in the urban cores (residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use),
- Preserving contiguous open space
- Dense single-family neighborhoods located adjacent or near the urban core
- Larger low-density, single-family neighborhoods located on the fringes of the urbanized area (suburban development)
- Mix of park sizes that range from large regional parks to smaller neighborhood parks
- Dedicated park/public space in neighborhoods
- Industrial areas separated from neighborhoods by open space or other land uses.

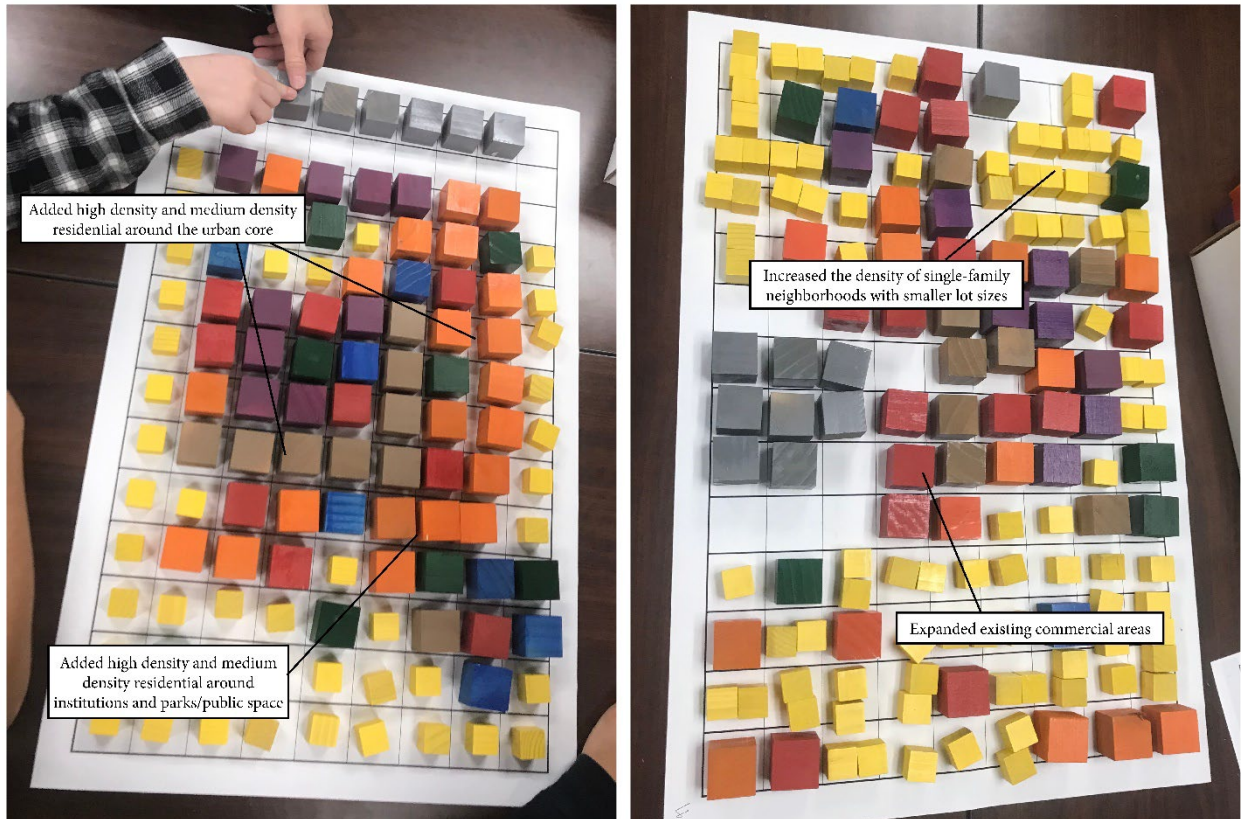


Block Color Key: Yellow – single family residential, Orange – medium density residential, Brown – high density residential, Blue – civic/institutional, Green – parks/public space, Purple – mixed-use, Red – commercial, Grey – industrial, Empty – open space.

When presented with constraints common strategies students used to adapt their cities included:

- Adding high density and medium density residential around the urban core, institutions, and parks/public space,

- Expanding existing commercial areas,
- Increasing the density of single-family neighborhoods with smaller lot sizes, and
- Developing available land but preserving contiguous open space where possible.



ELEMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

On November 9, 2021, three elementary classrooms from Steeby Elementary participated in youth engagement. Students were presented with a series of statements and asked to move to one side of the gymnasium if they agreed with the statement and the other side if they disagreed. The results from the exercise are detailed in the table below.

Elementary Engagement Results

Statement	Yes (Agree)	Unsure	No (Disagree)
I live in the City of Wayland.	44	0	20
I have lived in Wayland my entire life.	37	0	27
There are good parks and playground in Wayland.	57	0	7
There are stores and businesses I like to visit in Wayland.	34	11	19
There are restaurants I like to eat at in Wayland.	51	0	13
I feel safe when walking around Wayland.	33	0	31
I want more people to live in Wayland	38	0	26
I want to live in Wayland as an adult.	28	6	30

The major highlights from this exercise were that elementary students don't feel safe as pedestrians in Wayland, and that already most expressed that they don't want to live in Wayland as an adult. While many things can happen in their lifetime to change their minds, a snapshot in time shows that as young as 7 years old, students are considering elsewhere to live when they are older.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

On March 16, 2022, a group of stakeholders, including city leadership, planning commissioners, and economic development professionals, were invited to participate in a workshop. The workshop began with a presentation on the economic conditions of the region including growing and emerging industries and economic development best practices. Following the presentation, participants were asked to re-envision six selected redevelopment properties in the city, as determined by city staff. The purpose of these redevelopment exercises was to determine community preferences for land use, development type, and building placement. The information gathered during this session may be used to determine if existing land use regulations would allow the imagined redevelopment to occur and to begin to develop a strategy to achieve the vision.

159 North Main Street

Currently this site is occupied by a used car sales business, but the proximity to Wayland's downtown and larger size makes it an excellent candidate for redevelopment. The site is currently zoned Central Business District; redeveloping the property as an extension of downtown is aligned with the zoning scheme. Some business ideas that emerged from the redevelopment exercise were:

- Micro-retail/pop-up establishments with seating, green space, and parking
- Movie theater, restaurant, or marijuana dispensary
- Mixed-use building with retail and housing, veterinary office, or senior/low-income apartments
- Entertainment space with outdoor stages, and a vision to create this as a music destination.

Most of the groups envisioned building placement along Main Street to maximize the visibility of the property and uses.

322 South Main Street

This site is the smallest of all the sites at 0.25-acres. It is located on the southern side of downtown Wayland and is currently zoned Central Business District. The size of the site will likely be the determining factor for redevelopment. Ideas generated during the exercise included:

- Dog park with benches and green space
- Car wash
- Service or medical office business
- Art studio, community space, reception, or event space with an outdoor area.

Those who had a structure in their redevelopment concept located it fronting Main Street with parking in the rear of the lot.

738 South Main Street

This site, a former restaurant, is located on Main Street, south of downtown Wayland. The site is currently zoned General Business District. The site is surrounded by undeveloped land, residential, and industrial properties. Because the site is located on a major corridor in the city that leads

directly into downtown, commercial uses are likely most appropriate for the site. While participants were asked to design a 1.75-acre parcel, there are several other adjacent larger parcels under same ownership that could be included in a redevelopment concept. Land use ideas that were discussed during the exercise included:

- Green space with a food truck area and entertainment space
- Upscale restaurant with outdoor seating and green space
- Park with a dog run
- Upscale restaurant

All of the groups, in some capacity, wanted to utilize the existing natural setting of the site in their redevelopment concept. Even the groups that indicated a desire for a food service business indicated that the natural areas should be preserved where possible.

962 South Main Street

The largest of all of the sites, 962 Main Street is 5.01 acres in total. While the address is on Main Street, this site is a corner lot with frontage on Main Street and 133rd Ave. The site is currently zoned Planned Industrial. While given the opportunity to go beyond the existing zoning, participants imagined redevelopment that would be consistent with an industrial zone. Ideas generated by the groups included:

- Light manufacturing/warehouse building
- Office, marijuana/cannabis
- Municipal services center (police and fire)
- Space for small-scale manufacturing, flexible industrial space, potential to split lots

Common placement for redevelopment was in the interior of the lot with landscaping or access on the edges of the site. Groups that outlined circulation indicated a preference for access on both South Main Street and 133rd Ave.

1113 West Superior Street

This site is located directly off West Superior Street which is the highest trafficked road in the city. The site is currently zoned General Business District which permits a range of commercial uses. Land use ideas that emerged from the exercise included:

- Car wash (2 groups)
- Marijuana dispensary
- Hotel

The preferred building orientation depended on the use with the groups that indicated a preference for a car wash locating the building in the rear of the lot, away from Superior Street and the other two groups placing their building fronting Superior Street.

1134 West Superior Street

One of the larger sites, 1134 West Superior is also the closest of the sites located to US-131. The site is zoned General Business District. Because of the size of the site, groups envisioned multiple uses on the site.

- Pharmacy and mixed-used development (medical offices and apartments)
- Two multi-story mixed-use buildings (retail/food service/residential)
- Indoor event space, farm-to-table restaurant, and outdoor vendor space
- Pharmacy and other general retail

Despite a general consensus for mixed-use development on the site, there was not a consensus on site layout. Half of the groups fronted their structures on Reno Drive on the eastern side of the site. The other groups located their structures in the middle or eastern edge of the site, not fronting a road.

After the conclusion of the re-envisioning exercises participants were asked to vote on their top three sites. The collected three priority sites are discussed in detail in the economic development chapter of this Plan.



City Hall.

