



Plan

KALAMAZOO

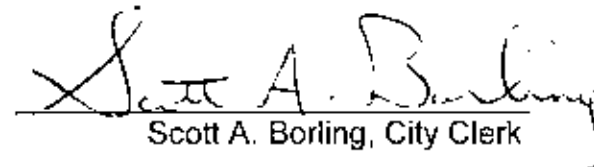
Preserve • Enhance • Transform

2010 Kalamazoo Master Plan



STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved the 2010 Master Land Use Plan for the City of Kalamazoo at a regular meeting held on Monday, June 21, 2010. Public notice was given and the meeting was conducted in full compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267, 1976). Minutes of the meeting will be available as required by the Act.


Scott A. Borling, City Clerk

Acknowledgments

This plan is the result of collaboration between the entire Kalamazoo community and would not have been possible without the dedication of those who participated. The City of Kalamazoo would like to thank all stakeholders, city officials, staff, and residents that participated in the planning process through the Steering Committee, Working Groups, Community Workshops, and online.

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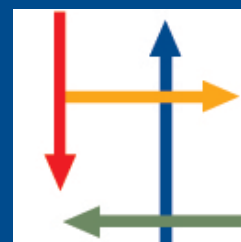
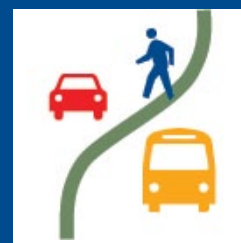
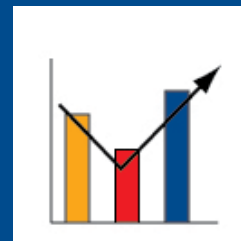


Sub-consultants:



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Following the introduction, this plan is organized into topical chapters, concluding with an Action Plan. Many of the subjects within the chapters overlap. For example, the importance of the city’s many educational and cultural institutions on the economy is discussed in the Marketplace chapter, but it covered in more detail in the Quality of Life chapter. The table below can be used as a guide to locate discussion about a particular topic. The action plan is similarly organized by the chapter topics. Some of the more detailed information on data, economic forecasts, housing, and the city’s infrastructure programs is located in a technical appendix, published separately.

- ✓ primarily referenced in this chapter
- ✓ secondarily referenced in this chapter

Topic

		Chapter				
						
		Marketplace	Neighborhoods	Transportation	Quality of Life	Appendix
Economics	Comparison with Similar Cities	✓				✓
	Economic Forecast	✓				✓
	Population Data and Forecasts	✓	✓			✓
	Green Technology	✓		✓	✓	
Land Use	Residential Neighborhoods		✓			
	Housing Data	✓	✓			✓
	Commercial Nodes	✓	✓			
	Downtown (see DKI plan)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Land Use Plan		✓			
	Industrial/Entrepreneurial Areas	✓	✓			
	Reuse of Vacant property	✓	✓			
	Mixed-use	✓	✓		✓	
Transportation	Citywide Transportation System			✓		
	Non-motorized transportation			✓	✓	
	Transit			✓		
	Infrastructure			✓		
Open Space	Cultural and Entertainment Resources	✓			✓	
	Education and Academic Institutions	✓			✓	
	Safety and Health		✓		✓	
	Parks		✓		✓	
	Natural Systems and Open Space		✓		✓	
	Local Food		✓		✓	
	Sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



A. An Introduction to Kalamazoo

Opportunities abound in the city of Kalamazoo, where small town charm meets international transportation and commerce. Located in the southwest corner of Michigan, approximately halfway between Detroit and Chicago, Kalamazoo maintains its character yet offers wonderful economic possibility.



What is a Master Plan?

The master plan is a document created by the City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission and adopted by the City Commission to guide the future growth and development of the city. A sound master plan helps ensure that Kalamazoo remains a highly desirable place to live, work, or visit. This can be accomplished by preserving and enhancing the qualities of the city that the residents, businesses, and property owners consider important.

The master plan identifies and analyzes the city's physical elements to create a set of goals, policies, and recommendations to direct decisions regarding future land use, neighborhood and transportation improvements, and special strategies for key areas in the city. Because

the plan offers a balance between the interests and rights of private property owners with those of the entire community, it effectively assists city leaders in making substantive, thoughtful decisions for the community while considering long-term implications.

The Differences between a Master Plan and a Zoning Ordinance

The master plan provides a general direction for future development, and while it does not change the zoning of or any zoning regulations applying to any property, implementation of the plan will be through zoning ordinance text and map amendments. Some of the other differences between the master plan and the zoning ordinance are listed below.

Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general policies, a guide	Provides specific regulations, the law
Describes what should happen in the future – recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups	Deals only with development-related issues under City control
Flexible to respond to changing conditions	Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change

Using the Master Plan

- Review development proposals against the goals and objectives of the master plan.
- Review rezoning requests for consistency with the city's rezoning criteria including existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, consistency with the goals and policies of the master plan, and potential impacts on the city.
- Provide a basis for amendments to the zoning ordinance and zoning map to help realize and enforce plan goals.
- Understand expectations for the future land use pattern and desired land use types in the community to guide new development and redevelopment.
- Identify and recommend physical improvements to important resources such as roadways, access management, streetscape and entryways, non-motorized pathways, parks, and public facilities.
- Provide specific design standards related to buildings, landscaping, and other site improvements for development and redevelopment throughout the city.

B. Process

Kalamazoo followed a comprehensive planning process in developing this master plan to ensure participation from the public, regional agencies, public officials, staff, and experts on the different subject areas. This planning effort builds upon the city's extensive history of planning efforts. This master plan considers the information gathered and recommendations of those plans and strives to develop a single set of prioritized recommendations for the city. More specifically, the following efforts were made when drafting the master plan.

Overview

This document was prepared primarily in cooperation with the Planning Division, the Community Planning and Development Department, the Planning Commission, and City Commission. In addition, early drafts of the plan were reviewed by a master plan Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the Planning Commission and City Commission, representatives from non-profit, for-profit, and local advocacy groups, and the consultant team. The following is an overview of the process that ensued:

Project Start Up. Early in the process, the City advertised their intent to begin updating their plan. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the City also distributed a 'Notice of intent' to the required agencies, surrounding communities, the county, local utility companies, and other jurisdictions that are involved in the city. The consultant team met with the Planning Commission and the

master plan Steering Committee and began data collection.

Listening and Learning. Once all relevant and updated data was collected, the City began to involve the public. A varied and widescale public involvement process was undertaken, including working groups, outreach with social media and local news sources, and extensive public and one-on-one meetings with the community. Efforts made to engage interested stakeholders through working groups and the general public as described in the Summary of Public Involvement are found later in this chapter.

Shared Community Vision. Based on comments received through the public involvement process, a draft vision and recommendations were developed and presented to the Steering Committee, working groups, and the general public.

Preparing the Plan. Upon agreement on the direction of the plan, the consulting team developed a draft plan which was reviewed by the Steering Committee and general public.

Plan Adoption. Once the city was satisfied with the draft plan, City Commission passed a resolution to initiate the required review period in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Upon completion of the review period, a public hearing was scheduled at a Planning Commission meeting. Following the hearing, both the Planning Commission and the City Commission adopted the Master Plan.

"I absolutely love Kalamazoo in the summer. The trees and flowers are in full bloom, students walking around Vine and Stuart Neighborhood, the parks always look great. Take anyone to Kalamazoo in the summer and they are sure to fall in love."

"I thought [the workshop] was great! I wish I could have brought the kids, because I would have loved to have engaged them in the planning process."

-- quotes from Plan Kalamazoo's Facebook page, one of many public input sources





Participants at the first community meeting



Mayor Bobby Hopewell introduces the project



The plan's Facebook page was a new source for input



Plan logo souvenirs distributed at meetings

C. Summary of Public Involvement

In keeping with Kalamazoo's long-standing practice of planning and community, the master plan effort sought out public input to engage the broader community in addition to intensive one-on-one work with stakeholder groups. While the process included traditional community meetings, it also included non-traditional outreach methods, including Facebook and Twitter. A summary of the public involvement process follows, and a summary of the results is found in Appendix A.

Working Group Meetings. Working group meetings were held where invitees were asked to discuss their thoughts on a particular subject. This personal format allowed participants to feel more comfortable speaking in smaller groups and required less background information since selected invitees were matched to the topic at hand. In total, approximately fifty people participated in the focus groups, which represented the following four topics:

- Quality of Life
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Regional Framework and Marketplace
- Neighborhoods and Land Use.

Community Meetings. A total of five community meetings were held throughout the process to gain input on key elements of the plan. The meetings were in the form of open houses, which allowed people to drop in at anytime. A brief presentation was given at each to

provide an overview of the process and participants visited stations, each allowing attendees to express their ideas either verbally, in writing, or through interactive exercises. The stations covered topics including Quality of Life, Transportation and Infrastructure, Regional Framework and Marketplace, and Neighborhoods and Land Use. There were over 400 attendees at the community meetings.

Internet. The City utilized its website to inform people about the process and to provide comment. The website even offered virtual meetings, where information from the community meetings was available for those who could not attend. In addition to the website, Kalamazoo developed a "Plan Kalamazoo" Facebook page that was tremendously successful. Over 600 people signed up to be a fan of the plan and received regular updates, meeting notices, and partook in discussions regarding the city.

Public Presentation. Once the complete plan was drafted, the consultant team presented the plan at a public presentation. The public was given the opportunity to ask questions and offer additional comments before the public hearing.

Public Hearing. Once a draft of the plan was completed and reviewed by outside agencies and the public, a public hearing was held to allow an additional opportunity for public comment. This was held at a Planning Commission meeting in June, 2010.

Kalamazoo Planning History

- 1918: City Manager Harry Freeman suggested the City look into establishing a planning board.
- 1920: A report prepared by St. Louis-based city plan engineer Harland Bartholomew indicated planning in Kalamazoo was at an impasse.
- 1929: Jacob Crane Jr. from Chicago prepared *A Report on the Basic Elements of a City Plan for Kalamazoo, Michigan*, which included a 50 year plan
- 1958: Victor Gruen and Associates proposed *Kalamazoo 1980*, which included a pedestrian-friendly downtown encircled by a ring road, surrounded by parking lots. His concept for an open-air pedestrian mall was realized in 1959.
- 1970s: The PUD ordinance was created in response to urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s to encourage orderly development

Source: "A History of the Planning Department" by Tony Wright

Other Related Plans

- Vine Village Revitalization Plan
- Parks and Recreation Plan
- Brownfield Redevelopment Plan
- Portage Street Streetscape
- I-94 Business Loop Gateway Plan

D. Building on the Past

While this plan creates a vision for the future, it is important to realize its place in Kalamazoo's history. This plan draws upon a rich planning history in the city, which stretches back to the beginning of the twentieth century, as described at left.

This plan replaces the 1998 Master Plan to respond to new challenges and opportunities and incorporates concepts and recommendations from recent neighborhood planning efforts. A number of recent separate planning documents are to be considered chapters of this master plan including the following and any subsequently adopted as plan amendments by the city:

The Downtown Kalamazoo Comprehensive Plan

This plan highlights and hopes to build upon the vibrancy and beauty that is downtown Kalamazoo. It emphasizes the need for connectivity to the five immediately adjacent neighborhoods (Vine, Stuart, Northside, Edison, and Eastside) and strives to make the vitality from the downtown easily accessible by residents in close proximity.



Riverfront Redevelopment Plan

The Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, which addresses parts of the Northside and Eastside Neighborhoods that border the Kalamazoo River, has two primary goals. The first is to bind the east and west sides of the city together, and the second is to make the river a focus for activity and an economic catalyst. It envisions a vibrant, 24-hour riverfront which adds market-rate housing with a mixed-use, urban character. The theme of the plan is "Work, Live, Play." The "Live" portion shows a mixed-use neighborhood focusing on the river, with multi- and single-family housing with a range of market rates. It promotes a mix of people with varying incomes and lifestyles, while encouraging pedestrian-scale development and high quality design.

City Timeline

- Earliest Native Americans occupied the area 12,000 years ago
- Early tribes built mounds. Many still exist, one reconstruction exists in Bronson Park
- Later tribes that occupied the area included the Miami, Mascouten, the Pottawatomi, and the Ottawa.
- European exploration led to a series of French and English trading posts in the area
- 1796: Northwest Territory becomes part of the U.S., leading to increased settlement
- 1829: Titus Bronson builds first cabin within modern city limits
- 1831: Town of Bronson established as county seat
- 1836: name changed to Kalamazoo
- 1836: first building erected on what would become Kalamazoo College's campus
- 1846: Michigan Central rail line links Kalamazoo to Detroit
- 1852: connected to Chicago via rail
- 1885: the roots of the modern Pfizer begin with a physician's invention of a pill-making machine

Source: <http://www.kalamazoomi.com/hisf.htm>

Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan

The Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan is primarily focused on the redevelopment of a large swath of the city that flows through the Edison and Milwood neighborhoods. The area contains more than 200 acres of environmentally challenged areas, including a 100 acre Superfund site. The plan envisions a large amount of clean, publicly-accessible open space that bolsters new mixed-use commercial, retail, and residential areas. It also envisions the surrounding single-family neighborhood strengthened through rehab and improved maintenance and homeownership.

Southside Neighborhood Plan

The Southside Neighborhood Plan identifies Burdick St. as the neighborhood's "main street." It calls for improved pedestrian and green access and retention of single-family housing.

Westside Area Plan

This plan has specific recommendations for land use and transportation related to growth near Western Michigan University. It recommends protecting the single family character of the Arcadia neighborhood and improving the Knollwood student neighborhood through infrastructure improvements that enhance non-motorized transportation.

Connecting the Dots Plans

While not formally adopted by City Commission, this series of neighborhood plans' concepts and ideas have been recognized and are incorporated into this plan. Please see *Chapter 3: Neighborhoods* for a detailed description of each:

- East Main Street Corridor Plan (2008)
- Edison Neighborhood Work Plan (2009)
- Northside Neighborhood Plan (2009)
- Douglas Avenue Corridor Study



E. Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

The following overarching principles provide the foundation for this Master Plan:

1. Ensure that Kalamazoo is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable in the long term in conjunction with the Kalamazoo Battle Creek Metropolitan Area Sustainability Covenant.
2. Reinforce Kalamazoo's position as a regional entertainment and cultural destination.
3. Protect established neighborhoods and enhance others with appropriate infill development, providing housing for all ages and incomes.
4. Continue to build on the synergy of downtown success as one major element of the city's and greater Kalamazoo area's sustainability.
5. Lead partnerships between Kalamazoo and its many educational and cultural institutions, organizations, other governmental units, and business community toward becoming a "world class" city and region that is inclusive regardless of ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic circumstance, physical and mental abilities and characteristics, and philosophy or religion.
6. Expand highly-paid, professional jobs that will indirectly create other jobs and entice those employees to live in the city.
7. Enhance the overall environmental quality and access to greenspace within the city.
8. Provide a safe and convenient transportation system that provides travel choices including walking, biking, automobiles, passenger rail and local transit along attractive routes that fit the context of their surroundings.
9. Provide fiscally sound, high-quality municipal facilities and services, sharing services with other entities where beneficial.
10. Transform distressed or excessive commercial and industrial areas into new vibrant mixed uses or hold for future use.



Overall Plan Vision

Kalamazoo will endure as a great place to live, work, learn, and visit. The bulk of what makes Kalamazoo great is already in place through its dynamic cultural and educational resources, businesses, neighborhoods, downtown, commitment to good planning, and rich diversity of citizens. The city needs to ensure its sustainability, preserve its assets, enhance existing spaces, and transform specific areas into more economically viable places. The strategies of this plan can be summarized by three words: *Preserve, Enhance, Transform*

Preserve

This Master Plan supports continued investment to preserve Kalamazoo's distinctive identity, cultural assets, character of established neighborhoods, traditional downtown environment, and commitment to promote the broad needs and inclusiveness of its diverse citizens.

Enhance

It supports a commitment to enhance community assets in need of investment to reach their full potential. Changes in these assets will build on existing strengths and positive features: Kalamazoo's role as a regional destination; its variety of jobs, businesses, and educational opportunities; and its irreplaceable natural environment.

Transform

Further, this Master Plan supports the development of strategies to transform elements such as distressed neighborhoods, underutilized properties, limited economic diversity and environmentally vulnerable areas, that do not positively contribute to Kalamazoo and are in need of more dramatic change or complete redevelopment.

Chapter 2

Regional Framework and

MARKETPLACE



A. Introduction

While there may be a tendency to see Kalamazoo as built-out and not likely to change, sustained prosperity not only requires change, but it must be advocated as the world economy continues to evolve. Past reliance on manufacturing as a major employer needs to be replaced with jobs in emerging sectors like medicine and research. Rather than a few large employers, new businesses need to be started and supported by policies that encourage entrepreneurship. With its institutions of higher education, growing health and science fields, and educated workforce, Kalamazoo is well positioned for success. But it will not occur without a unified vision and collaborative pursuit of opportunities. As the core city, Kalamazoo drives the region's economic success.

This chapter describes where the city is today and how its assets can be a foundation for a vibrant future. Economic conditions and predictions help identify the need for various types of land uses and which areas may need to be transformed into different uses.

At the time this plan was prepared in 2009-2010, the nation, Michigan, and Kalamazoo were facing difficult economic conditions and uncertainty about the future. Although Kalamazoo County overall has performed better than the rest of Michigan, it trails comparable areas nationwide. An overview of economic, social, and demographic indicators revealed projections for limited growth and several significant challenges.

This plan acknowledges economic realities, but that does not mean the status quo should be accepted. Strategies are provided to address the economic hurdles ahead. Guidance is also given to reflect different future alternative scenarios such as loss of population versus some re-population in certain parts of the city. In some cases, this means the city will need to accept, support, and even advocate change (sometimes dramatic change) so the city is well positioned for the future. Coordination of all the various groups involved, including public-private partnerships, is essential.

Strengths

Kalamazoo has many unique economic strengths upon which to build:

- **Strong and stable “base” employers** with good-paying professional jobs such as Bronson Methodist Hospital, Borgess Hospital, Parker Hannifin Stryker, Western Michigan University, and Kalamazoo College.
- **A diversified economic base**, which includes higher education, health care, research and development, and a variety of manufacturers from paper to aerospace.
- **Affordable and flexible space for entrepreneurs.** The Enterprise Center and the Park Trades Building offer unique environments for entrepreneurs to grow and network with fellow entrepreneurs. The Park Trades Building is not limited to artists, designers, and architects, however. It has grown into a dynamic center that is highly unique. Similar sites could be available elsewhere in the city's industrial areas for entrepreneurs.
- **A highly-educated potential workforce:** Over 35% of adult residents (age 25 and older) hold at least a bachelor's degree. The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo region in general are home to a high number of college-educated adults and both Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College produce many new graduates each year. These individuals could be attractive to businesses in the “New Knowledge Economy” for employees with specific education or advanced skills.

Marketplace Vision

Kalamazoo will be a productive and desirable location for both businesses and workers. The city will have a stable and educated population, representing the unique diversity of the region, and a globally competitive business sector.

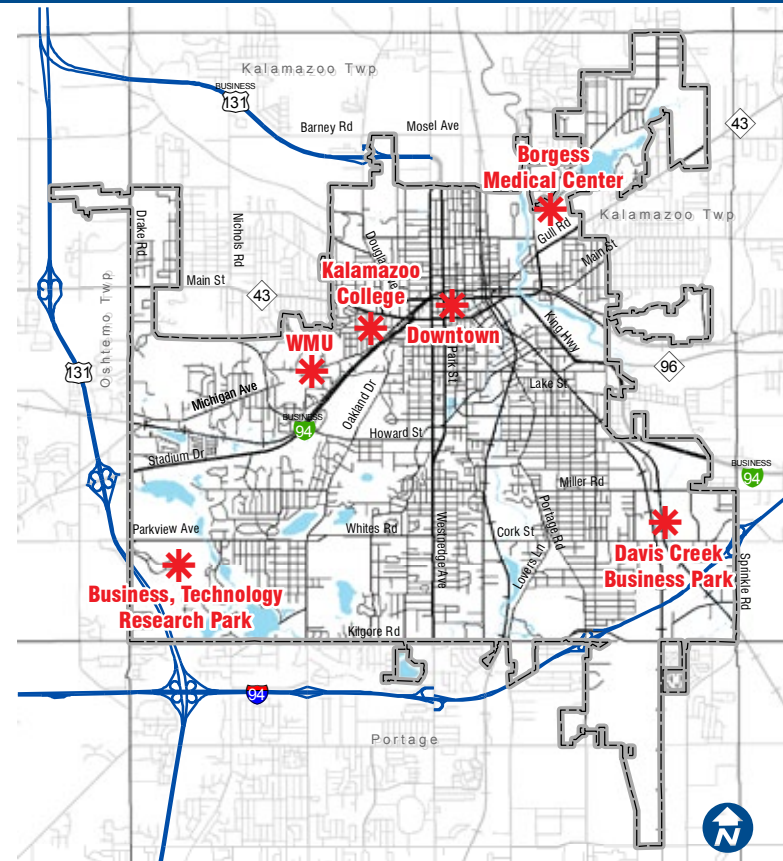
Key Sustainable Strategies

- Reuse former industrial and commercial buildings as incubator space for new businesses or high-tech industries.
- Promote “green” industries and new “green” products or services by existing firms.
- Appeal to eco-consciousness in marketing sites in the city as being more “green” than greenfield development.
- Use sustainable building practices and site design standards during expansion and redevelopment projects.

In This Chapter

- A. Introduction
- B. Comparison Cities
- C. 20-Year Forecast for the Metro Area
- D. Recommendations
- E. Actions

- **Research and technology.** Kalamazoo is home to many successful companies with several “site-ready” business parks such as the Western Michigan University Business, Technology, and Research Park with almost 30 life science and engineering technology companies. The new Davis Creek Business Park is a mixed-use project that integrates business development with sustainable, environmentally sensitive site design. On the site of a former petroleum refinery, the Davis Creek Business Park represents the City’s commitment to providing opportunities to the business community while taking full advantage of its available land.
- **Emerging demographic groups** The city can take advantage of growth in three demographic groups: seniors, Hispanics, and students.
 - » Like the population overall, Kalamazoo will experience an aging of the population. Older residents may find the city an attractive location due to its central location to the arts, educational opportunities, other cultural opportunities, and quality medical care facilities. Moreover, it is very likely that this population will stay more active than previous generations of seniors.
 - » The region’s Hispanic population is expected to grow at a greater-than-average rate. The Hispanic community brings diversity to the city’s retail base and adds significantly to the community’s cultural offerings.
 - » Large student populations at Western Michigan University (WMU), Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) help stabilize the overall population and add life and vitality to the city. This could lead to a fourth group—young professionals who may find downtown living to be inviting.
- Announced in November 2005, *the Kalamazoo Promise* guarantees full college tuition at any Michigan public university or college to eligible graduates of the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS).
- **Downtown Kalamazoo** and the surrounding neighborhoods provide the only urban environment in the region offering art, cultural, and recreation opportunities and events that add to the vitality of the city’s core.



Employment centers

Challenges

While the city has many economic assets, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed. Key marketplace issues are listed below. More detail can be found on the following pages that provide a quick snapshot of 2010, a comparison of that data with similar communities, and a summary of a 20 year economic forecast. More detail can be found in the appendix.

- The current economic environment in Kalamazoo is challenging, and the long-term economic outlook is modest.
- The city underperforms in several categories when compared to selected similar cities.
- There is excess property zoned for commercial and industrial uses. While some of those uses will return, many of the sites need to be designated for another type of use.
- A cooperative regional approach is needed to help retain and attract jobs to the area.



Related Plans and Programs

This chapter provides a long-range perspective on economic development in the city. Several organizations are involved in efforts to promote Kalamazoo and assist in the retention or attraction of businesses. Please refer to the following organizations for a more focused description of those programs and activities summarized below.

Southwest Michigan First

As a private, not-for-profit economic development organization, Southwest Michigan First is focused on growth of jobs and wealth across the Kalamazoo region to bridge the gap between business and government.

City of Kalamazoo Economic Development Division

The City's Economic Development Division has prepared and Economic Development Strategic Plan. The division offers a variety of services to help establish small businesses through assistance with small business loans, site selection, tax abatements, brownfield redevelopment, and special programs such as SmartZone and Renaissance Zones.

Through a partnership with WMU and Southwest Michigan First, the City supported creation of the Business, Technology, and Research Park, adjacent to WMU's new College of Engineering. The area is designated as a state "SmartZone," which is marketed as a cluster of new and emerging businesses focused on technology and life sciences.

Renaissance Zones in the city are areas where businesses, residents and property owners are virtually free of local and state taxes. Established in

2001, these Zones are designated for a 15 year period, after which they will return to taxable status.

Brownfield Authority Plan

Kalamazoo has a brownfield authority that can facilitate financing for clean-up and redevelopment of contaminated and obsolete sites.

Downtown Development Authority

A strategic priority from the 2009 Downtown plan was to "Leverage public/private partnerships to support economic development and job creation." The downtown plan calls for creation of a variety of jobs, from internships to full-time employment, which will increase the vibrancy of downtown and add diversity to the workforce.

Kalamazoo Promise

The Kalamazoo Promise is a privately-funded college scholarship available to all Kalamazoo Public School graduates who attend any public university or college in Michigan. The Promise is an economic development initiative that is meant to both develop and attract talent. In the short-term, it provides an effective incentive to current students and their parents to strive for academic success. In the long-term, it is the cornerstone of a community-wide effort to transform Kalamazoo into a national education community that will draw education-focused residents and talent-based businesses into the area.

Other Programs

- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Kalamazoo County BRA/EDC
- Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Economic Snapshot of 2010

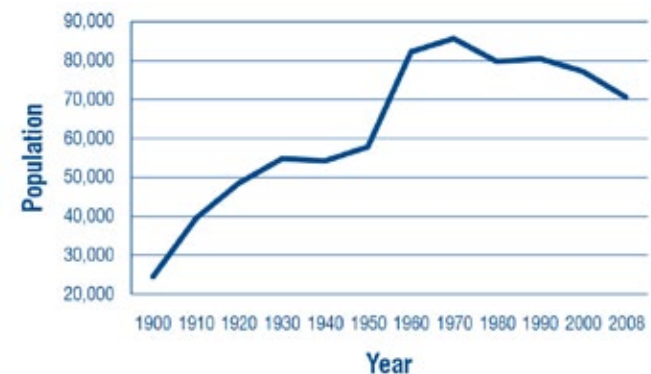
Demographic Trends

Kalamazoo lost population during the past eight years; although it appears to have stabilized in 2008 according to the U.S. Census estimates. Between 2000 and 2008, the city lost 4,966 residents—a 6.4% decline. Data from the U.S. Postal Service suggest that only five neighborhoods gained residents—Arcadia, Eastside, Hill N' Brook, Knollwood, and Westwood—while the city's 16 other neighborhoods lost population.

Data confirm the city struggles to retain young families and recent college graduates. Persons age 20-24 comprise a dominant portion of city population, 19.2% according to the 2007 American Community Survey estimates; however, many move away after graduating from college.

While many similar cities have lost population due to a reduction in the number of persons per household, Kalamazoo's population decline is mostly the result of a loss of households. The average number of persons per household in the city remains steady at 2.3 (U.S. Census estimates). Although supportive data are not available, some of the loss may be attributed to a number of new apartment complexes targeted toward college students and young adults built just west of the city that may have drawn away

Figure 1: City Population from 1900 to 2008



Source: U.S. Census, 2008 American Community Survey Estimate

some former city residents. If similar apartment complexes are built in the city closer to the WMU campus, it is reasonable to expect that the city would attract more student households.

Loss of Personal Income

Per capita income declined from 2005 to 2008. This reflects both the difficult economic times that the region faced and that the city housed a large share of the county's low-income residents: 57% of the county's residents living in poverty reside in the city. Approximately one-third of city residents lived below the poverty line in 2008 and poverty has been increasing (ACS 2007). However, median household income did improve slightly during the period (see Figure 2).

One reason for the relatively low average income in the city of Kalamazoo is the large student population. Students who live off campus are included in Census Bureau population statistics and many report very limited earnings from part-time jobs, which negatively skews overall income statistics.

Retail and Service Activity

In combination, the decline in population and incomes has taken a toll on the level of business activity in the city outside of the city's central business district. In several neighborhood-based locations, properties zoned for commercial or retail activity are underutilized. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's County Business Patterns data, the number of retailers located in the primary city zip codes fell by 8.5% (27 fewer retailers) between 2000 and 2006, and the number of other service providers shrank by 14.3% (229 firms). In the city's

downtown, the retail vacancy rate remained below 14 % from 2005 to 2009 despite the national recession, while it dropped down to nearly 10 percent in 2008.

Employment Trends

Recently, employment in the city declined at about double the rate of the drop in the Kalamazoo metropolitan region overall (down 7.9% from 2002 to 2008 in the city compared to 3% in the two-county region of Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties). Jobs in manufacturing and construction were the hardest hit with a 29% loss in the city, while retail employment dropped slightly (2.4%). Some of the employment loss in those sectors was offset by a healthy increase (almost 8%) in health, business and professional services. Those growing employment sectors include several of the city's economic engines: health care jobs related to the two hospitals and jobs associated with WMU. However, city residents employed in those fields are concentrated in the lower-wage occupations such as sales, food service, and administrative activities.

Manufacturing and Distribution Industry

Many industrial areas in the city are at a competitive disadvantage with other sites in the region, especially "greenfield" sites such as in Portage or the Fort Custer Industrial Park in Battle Creek. Many of the city's industrial areas are characterized by obsolete structures, inconvenient access to I-94 or U.S. 131, or are landlocked, limiting future growth.

The city's Brownfield Redevelopment Program can help reduce costs to make

Figure 2: Income

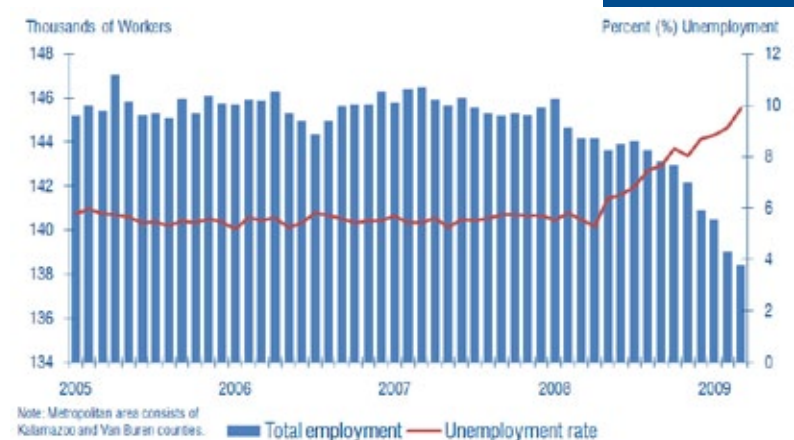
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Per Capita	\$20,088	\$18,451	\$17,189	\$18,859
Median Household	\$31,152	\$27,494	\$29,592	\$31,735

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

those sites more financially competitive, but major changes to improve expressway access are cost prohibitive and impractical. Therefore, Kalamazoo should target certain industrial sites for start-up businesses less dependent upon highway access. These include software development, internet marketing, product testing, including pharmaceuticals, and high value-added craft production.

The December 2009 unemployment rate for the city of Kalamazoo was 15.4%, compared to 11.3% for Kalamazoo County overall and 10% nationwide. During that month, 33,800 city residents were employed, but 4,400 residents were classified as unemployed while many had quit looking for work. Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, LAUS

Figure 3: Employment and Unemployment Rate Trends in the Greater Kalamazoo Metropolitan Area



B. Comparison Cities

To provide a comparative assessment of the economic, social, and demographic conditions in Kalamazoo, a group of similar cities were selected as a “peer” group for comparison purposes. The comparison process involved 22 social, demographic, and economic variables. A list of communities throughout the U.S. with similar populations was further narrowed to cities with characteristics most similar to Kalamazoo, e.g. manufacturing employment, racial diversity, and a significant collegiate population. Figure 4 below shows the nine cities considered to be most similar.

Findings and Lessons

Using those cities as a benchmark highlights several interesting trends:

- The most successful cities are well integrated into their region, house a population representative of the region, and serve as the center of business and entertainment activities for the larger region.
- Kalamazoo’s small size and inability to grow through annexation is a limitation not shared by most of the other cities. This heightens the need for partnerships that focus on the city’s assets in the overall region.
- Successful cities are a residency of choice for educated and professional workers in their region.
- Kalamazoo has a larger arts, entertainment, and recreation sector than the comparison cities, which reflects positively on its quality of life.
- A higher percentage of the city’s residents work in health care and social assistance than in the other comparison cities, on average. Health care has been one of the fastest growing sectors in the nation, and forecasts suggest that employment opportunities will only continue to increase as the general population grows older.

Figure 4: Comparison Cities

City	City Population	Population of County Containing City	Age 18-24 Enrolled in College	Black and Hispanic Population	Median Household Income	Manufacturing Share of Total Employment
Athens, GA	110,311	111,691	27.5%	34.5%	\$34,723	8.2%
Cedar Rapids, IA	124,515	202,949	6.1%	7.6%	\$46,480	16.4%
Columbia, SC	118,786	351,355	50.0%	44.6%	\$36,930	4.4%
Greeley, CO	90,913	235,328	15.8%	33.7%	\$39,438	9.8%
Green Bay, WI	98,476	240,801	5.1%	12.6%	\$42,088	18.4%
Lawrence, KS	89,968	112,522	24.4%	9.1%	\$40,366	7.9%
Murfreesboro, TN	90,358	230,760	14.7%	18.0%	\$44,528	14.9%
South Bend, IN	98,516	265,507	4.6%	35.2%	\$35,204	18.1%
Syracuse, NY	139,896	455,126	13.2%	32.5%	\$27,844	9.1%
Group Average	106,860	245,115	17.9%	25.3%	\$38,622	11.9%
Kalamazoo, MI	71,441	244,153	25.8%	25.4%	\$31,864	13.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2007

Please refer to the appendix for more information on demographic, economic, and social indicators.

C. 20-Year Forecast for the Metro Area

To assess how long-term economic and demographic trends could impact the city, a 20-year forecast for the larger Kalamazoo metropolitan area (Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties) was developed. This forecast provides an estimate of how the larger region could change. More detail on the following can be found in the appendix.

- Region-wide employment is forecast to grow at only around 0.2% over 20 years, which is roughly 6,900 new jobs.
- Population is expected to increase by 33,000 residents, about 0.5% annually. The fastest growing age cohort will be those over 65 years old. This means that the fastest growing segment of the region's population will be demanding long-term health services and accompanying social assistances associated with aging.
- Both employment and population are expected to grow slower than the national rate.
- WMU, Kalamazoo College, and KVCC will continue to attract a large college student population that provides positive effects on cultural offerings and the general environment.
- Alternate scenarios were tested—e.g. increased research and development activity, additional growth of student population—to see how the predictions might be affected, but had little impact. This implies that only major economic or demographic changes will impact the region's long-term

growth trajectory.

Underlying Changes in the Forecast

Despite a prediction of only modest overall growth for the region, the forecast does reveal some larger underlying shifts that could impact the city.

- Although modest overall, population growth is expected to be stronger among Hispanic and Latino residents. Currently, the city is home to a large share of the region's Hispanic and Latino population, which suggests the city could see a larger share of that growth in the future.
- Some of the increasing senior population may be attracted into the city due to its smaller homes—apartments, small houses and condos—and improved walkability.
- The health care industry is predicted to grow by 33.6%. The city could see a boost in that sector related to Bronson and Borgess hospitals and nearby medical offices.

REMI Model

This section illustrates the highlights from a 20-year employment and population forecast for the larger Kalamazoo metropolitan area, which consists of both Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. The forecast was developed by the Upjohn Institute using an economic impact and forecasting model developed by Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) and customized to the local region. More information on the REMI model findings, are available in the appendix.

Figure 5: Employment Change Forecast by Industry

Industry	Employment Change	
	2009-2029	
Forestry, Fishing, Related Activities	-22.4%	
Mining	-18.3%	
Utilities	-15.7%	
Construction	-8.3%	
Manufacturing	-15.4%	
Wholesale Trade	-29.0%	
Retail Trade	-5.8%	
Transportation and Warehousing	33.8%	
Information	-10.3%	
Finance and Insurance	-18.2%	
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	23.6%	
Professional and Technical Services	10.1%	
Management of Companies and Enterprises	5.1%	
Administrative and Waste Services	7.8%	
Educational Services	29.7%	
Healthcare and Social Assistance	33.6%	
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	27.2%	
Accommodation and Food Services	-0.4%	
Other Services	17.5%	
Government	-2.6%	

Source: REMI Model



D. Recommendations

The Economic Climate

Business activity has slowed and the unemployment rate is high. Additionally, many city residents face high poverty and work in occupations with low wages. Even prior to the recent recession, Kalamazoo lost population, employment, and business activity while the remainder of Kalamazoo County remained relatively stable. The property values per capita are significantly lower in the city than the county overall. The city's regional economic role has and will continue to change due to both demographic and structural forces.

Kalamazoo can improve its economic conditions by building on its strengths with the understanding that the greater region is expected to experience modest growth.

Promote the Kalamazoo Promise

The Promise has strong economic development implications. First, it enhances the attractiveness of the city for young families who are concerned about the academic

success of their children. Second, it provides a strong incentive for families to stay in the city as their children get older, instead of moving out of the city. Although the economic downturn at the time this plan was written has severely dampened its potential impact, the Promise should provide an upward boost to housing prices and property values in years to come.

The Promise also makes the community more attractive for businesses seeking to invest, expand, or relocate. Not only will their employees' children have access to free college tuition, but the businesses themselves will be able to tap an increasingly well-trained workforce (provided that college graduates or newly skilled workers opt to stay in the region).

Respond to a changing face of commerce

Retail in the city is struggling with both declining population and wealth. Much of the land zoned commercial in the city dates to when the population was greater and there was little competition in the surrounding suburbs. The amount of land allocated for commercial use in 2010 is greater than what is needed, leading to vacancies and underutilized centers. Limited sufficiently-sized property on major arterials makes it difficult to meet the market need for "big boxes" or "mid boxes" and other retailers that serve a broader regional sales market.

Revolutionary changes in logistics and information technologies give "big box" national retailers an aggressive advantage in pricing

and selection that cannot be met by smaller independent stores typical to Kalamazoo. Second, households are using the internet for more of their shopping needs, utilizing local shops less frequently. To respond to these factors, retail venues should be strategically located at neighborhood centers.

One advantage city neighborhoods can have over more suburban environments is the potential for residents to walk to places, such as restaurants, grocery stores, hair salons, and personal services. Convenient shopping and services can be an attraction for residents. Because of reduced demand, some of the neighborhood centers may need to be retrofitted to mixed-use neighborhood centers that allow a wide array of uses, including residential, that may be mixed within a building. Neighboring mixed-use activities must be compatible, and the facilities should be well kept and well designed.

Market to "niche" industries and employers

The city has an array of unique sites and amenities for corporate and industrial employers and even new greenfield-like industrial parks. Because some employers will prefer the campus-like setting available in Portage and at the Fort Custer Industrial Park in Battle Creek, the city and its neighbors should be mutually supportive of each other's regional economic development efforts.

Success in the region can also create synergy for business development in the city. There are a number of programs and sites available for

Strategy

Continue to support the Kalamazoo Promise to attract and retain residents in the city.

Strategy

Encourage redevelopment of underutilized and vacant retail sites with mixed uses.

target industries most attracted to the city's assets.

Brownfields

Many industrial parcels in the city are blighted, and the supply of industrial land exceeds the anticipated need for the next 20 years. The issue of the city's limited developable land and blighted sites is addressed by the City's brownfield redevelopment program and a new countywide land bank program. Since its inception in the 1990s, the City has successfully helped redevelop nearly 30 brownfield sites, with new projects currently underway.

Land Bank

A county-wide land bank will allow acquisition of property, assembly of larger parcels from smaller plots of land, and the ability to hold land for future redevelopment. Although funds for acquiring real estate on the open market are limited, the land bank will be able to assemble properties acquired through donation and tax foreclosure.

Business Incubators

Entrepreneurial-driven innovation can occur in any industry and can be the catalyst for future economic growth in the area. The development of low-cost incubator space for entrepreneurs, regardless of their trade or product, has been a successful strategy for Kalamazoo and it should be continued.

Downtown Kalamazoo Inc.'s (DKI) Retail Incubator Program is an innovative program that assists retail entrepreneurs seeking to establish a store in the central business district. Retail entrepreneurs who enter the program select the downtown location that best meets their needs and, upon the approval of the property's owner, are eligible for

rent subsidies of up to \$10,000 for as long as 18 months. In addition, the entrepreneurs participate in a training program which provides assistance in marketing, financial management, customer service, and other disciplines that are key to the success of their endeavors.

The Enterprise Center in the Northside Neighborhood and the Park Trades Building located in the central business district are excellent examples of the reuse of historic, existing industrial buildings to foster entrepreneurship and economic diversity. The Enterprise Center houses several such firms including guitar makers, drug testing labs, high-value woodworkers, and an internet distribution center. The four stories of the Park Trades Building provide a highly unique environment for artists and designers.

In addition, WMU's Haworth College of Business has recently opened its Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation which may offer another pathway for future entrepreneurs interested in exploring the opportunities of setting up their new businesses in an incubator space in the city. The key is to build upon the region's talent base to offset the physical and logistical limitations that many of the city's older industrial buildings may have.

Growth from within, "Economic Gardening"

Given its strengths, the City is considering an "economic gardening" approach to economic development. Economic gardening focuses on helping existing businesses grow. While some advocates of economic gardening encourage identifying and helping

"high growth" firms, a more comprehensive approach can create opportunities to help mature firms explore new markets and new products and assist entrepreneurs in the development of their products or services with a special focus on helping those who are selling to or planning to develop a customer base outside the region.

Small Business Loans

The City of Kalamazoo has several unique loan programs to help small businesses. Its Small Business Revolving Loan Fund offers a maximum of \$40,000 in gap financing in situations where private investors and banks are simply unable to finance the entire project. In addition, the City can facilitate U.S. Small Business Administration

Strategy

Support efforts to bring more base jobs to the city.

Strategy

Promote economic development partnerships between medical and technology business with university, college, and school district curriculum and actions.

Strategy

Promote new approaches, such as green industries, the land bank, "economic gardening," and entrepreneurial support as catalysts for job retention and creation.



(SBA) 504 loans, tax-exempt financing, and small business loans through local commercial banks.

However, existing programs cannot meet all the financial needs for small business start-ups. This is why efforts should be ongoing to establish privately-financed micro-loans funds for new businesses. To be successful, these programs should be integrated with a business assistance/mentoring program. Evidence increasingly shows that most entrepreneurs are very good at their trade but lack experience in financial management and strategic marketing.

Green Industry and Jobs

Green technology is in a state of flux at this time with many technologies competing for market share. Many technologies remain untested, and it is impossible to know at this point which ones will fail and which ones will remain viable in the long-run. Additionally, the major emerging green energy sources—solar and wind power—are not currently viable with the weather and geography of Kalamazoo. As such, the City should stay open and flexible to adopting new technologies that do arise, as well ongoing improvements, such as green building techniques, that can result in substantial energy savings now. As the green technology sector grows, efforts should be focused on job training for the new skill set required.

Healthcare and Technology

Healthcare, WMU's Business Technology and Research Park, Downtown's entertainment and recreation activities, as well as a large professional services sector, are all strong possibilities for

employment growth in the future. Economic development of these sectors can relate to the research and activities of the universities.

In late 2009, the WMU Board of Trustees endorsed pursuit of a new medical school as a collaborative effort with the two area hospitals, Bronson and Borgess. This provides an exciting opportunity for the city to increase employment in both the educational and healthcare fields. Potentially, additional medical research-related industries could be attracted by the synergy of that effort.

The presence of WMU, Kalamazoo College, and KVCC not only brings young people and educated workers into the community, but also helps support a diversity of entertainment and art offerings.

E. Actions

The following actions are reorganized with actions from other chapters in the Action Table in Chapter 6. The letter and number in parentheses following each action indicates its location in the Action Table.

Encourage green businesses, which includes allowing renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power equipment. (R1)

Encourage neighborhood reinvestment by offering development incentives. (R7)

Encourage conversion of retail to other appropriate uses in areas where retail use is no longer viable. (R8)

Allow more mixing of compatible residential and office, retail, and commercial uses, especially near downtown. This includes review and fine-tunes to development regulations and parking standards for commercial, mixed-use, and infill developments. (R9)

Offer incentives to encourage green development (density, tax incentives, reduced parking requirements, etc). (R11)

Review, assess, and adjust city ordinances to support entrepreneurship (such as live/work, business incubators). (R15)

Gradually adjust (reduce) the amount of commercially zoned land based on location, character, market demand and other factors. (R26)

Improve right-of-way access aesthetics along routes to and through industrial districts to support business attraction efforts. (C12)

Encourage event planners, businesses associations, and venue operators to coordinate their activities within the city to mutually support a climate of culture and entertainment. (P1)

Offer low-cost incubator space for student/professor entrepreneurs in older vacant industrial buildings. (P7)

Partner with WMU Haworth College of Business to provide business/marketing assistance to entrepreneurs and create additional incubators. (P8)

Integrate appropriate scale entertainment and event venues into redeveloping neighborhood commercial nodes. (P12)

Continue to support and promote the clean up and reuse of contaminated properties/facilities. (PR1)

Support rehabilitation and reinvestment in challenged areas, especially in the Northside, Edison, and Eastside neighborhoods. (PR3)

Promote Kalamazoo as a city that offers a range of lifestyle choices. (PR6)

Actively promote Kalamazoo as an arts and culture destination. (PR7)

Encourage local services and retail within neighborhood walking distance. (PR13)

Develop a commercial business owner's Reuse Guide that focuses cost effective ideas, techniques and guidelines for renovation and reuse of historic commercial assets. (PR23)

Promote new residential development to attract individuals already working, but not living, in the city. (PR29)

Collaborate, such as with WMU's School of Engineering, on the development of more "incubator" or low-cost facilities for start-up companies that complement existing centers such as the Enterprise Center or the Park Trades Building. (PR33)

Concentrate mixed-use developments near campus aimed at college students. (PR35)

Chapter 3

NEIGHBORHOODS

and Land Use



A. Introduction

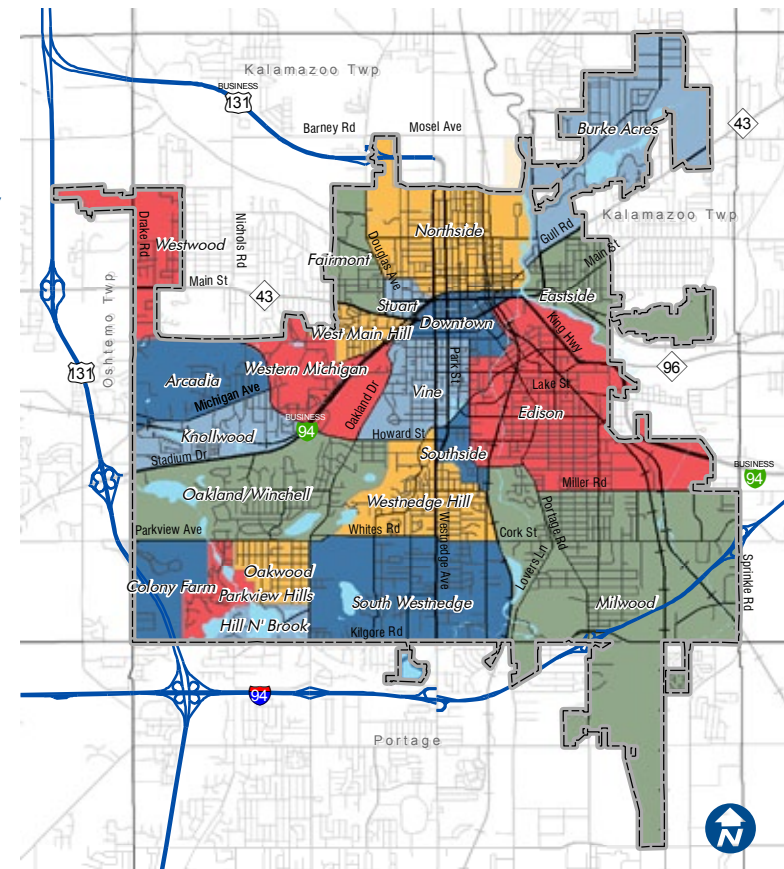
Neighborhoods are the heart and soul of Kalamazoo. They are diverse and dynamic places with unique characteristics, recognized by both residents and the community at large. Their strong identities help define Kalamazoo as a desirable place to live. A healthy and sustainable neighborhood is one that has the physical form, economic strength, environmental sensitivity and social diversity to meet today's needs without compromising future opportunities.

Healthy neighborhoods do not come about by accident; maintaining healthy sustainable neighborhoods takes conscious, proactive decisions by non-profit organizations, community leaders, government, private sector partners, institutions, and the public. By examining current trends and character patterns, we can plan for a Kalamazoo that builds upon neighborhood strengths and enhances them for future generations.

Kalamazoo neighborhoods have some important things to celebrate

Kalamazoo's neighborhoods are not homogenous: each one is special, with a character that its residents wish to protect and enhance. Having this diversity is important because a resident can choose to live in Kalamazoo, yet move from one neighborhood to another as their or their family's needs change over time. Public workshop participants overwhelmingly supported Kalamazoo's strong neighborhood identities and broad consensus was reached to preserve and enhance Kalamazoo's quality of life and livability through a vision for its neighborhoods, highlighted at left.

The differences between Kalamazoo's neighborhoods are a unique strength; however, to remain vital they must continue to accommodate residents at varying stages of life and income levels. Some neighborhoods must realize that in order to prosper, they must adapt to remain appealing places to live. This chapter addresses the challenges Kalamazoo's neighborhoods face and what can be done to support their unique character and ensure long-term viability.



Kalamazoo's Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Vision

"Kalamazoo's strong neighborhoods are distinct and have unique identities that residents are proud of; therefore, Kalamazoo will continue to support its neighborhoods so they are diverse yet interconnected, safe, friendly, green, walkable, open, and engaging for people of all ages."

Key Sustainable Strategies

- Encourage green building strategies.
- Rehabilitate existing buildings.
- Use deconstruction methods instead of demolition when possible.
- Strengthen walkable neighborhood centers.
- Convert vacant properties to greenspace or community gardens.

In This Chapter

- A. Introduction
- B. Issues
- C. Retaining and Attracting Residents
- D. Managing Downsizing
- E. Land Use and Character
- F. Actions

Related Neighborhood Plans

Many Kalamazoo neighborhoods, including downtown, have already taken the initiative to prepare more detailed plans that target specific issues or opportunities. This plan does not seek to override those, but rather it provides a supportive framework that looks beyond narrow boundaries and views the city as a whole, placing neighborhoods in the context of a broader view.

Vine Village Revitalization Plan (2010)
The goals of the Vine neighborhood plan are to improve the housing stock, provide opportunities for new housing affordable to a broad range of people, and accommodate businesses and cultural institutions that are both family and student-friendly.

Kalamazoo Downtown Plan (2009)
This plan highlights and hopes to build upon the vibrancy and beauty that is downtown Kalamazoo. It emphasizes the need for connectivity to the five immediately adjacent neighborhoods (Vine, Stuart, Northside, Edison, and Eastside) and advocates connections and easy access from the downtown to neighborhoods in close proximity.

Connecting the Dots Neighborhood Plans

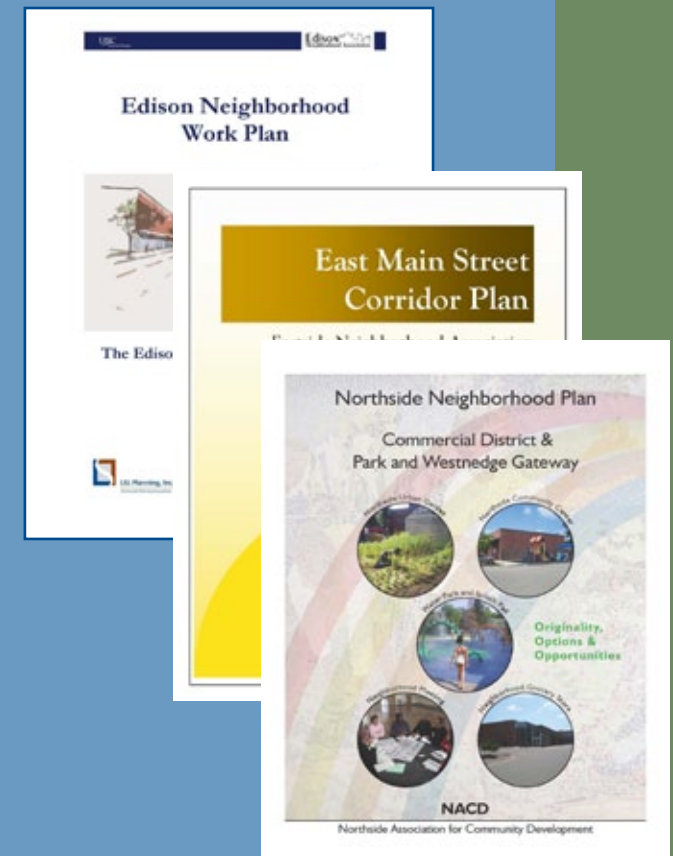
While not formally adopted by City Commission, this Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) sponsored series of neighborhood plans' concepts and ideas have been recognized and are incorporated into this plan.

East Main Street Corridor Plan (2008)
The East Main Corridor Plan addresses the redevelopment of the major thoroughfare/gateway running through the Eastside Neighborhood. Although commercial development through investment in infrastructure and concentrated community serving retail was the plan's primary focus, a section is devoted to residential improvement. Three of the plan's key recommendations are to renovate existing homes, build context sensitive and appropriate infill housing, and to prevent foreclosures.

Northside Neighborhood Plan (2009)
The Northside Neighborhood Plan built on several years of planning. The plan calls for a dedicated commercial district and updated streetscaping to provide an attractive gateway and retail options for neighborhood residents. It also plans for a community center, job training facility, and urban gardens to foster a sense of community.

Edison Neighborhood Work Plan (2009)
This is a comprehensive documentation of neighborhood needs outlining the connection between commercial aspirations, the potential for a residential renaissance, and implementation strategies. Critical to the neighborhood's success, the plan states, is the rehabilitation of existing homes and the development of new homes on the near-downtown Marketplace plat. The plan also connects the dots for all envisioned neighborhood enhancements and redevelopment projects.

The Douglas Avenue Corridor Study
This plan concentrates on the commercial character of an important part of Kalamazoo's urban core. The Douglas Avenue corridor separates the Fairmont Neighborhood and the historic Stuart Neighborhood, and is seen as a major gateway into both. The Land Use and Built Environment subgroup that served as one of the conduits for public input recommended that future land use focus on residential. As part of the overall recommendations for corridor linkages, the plan seeks to improve residential properties and develop vacant properties in both neighborhoods.

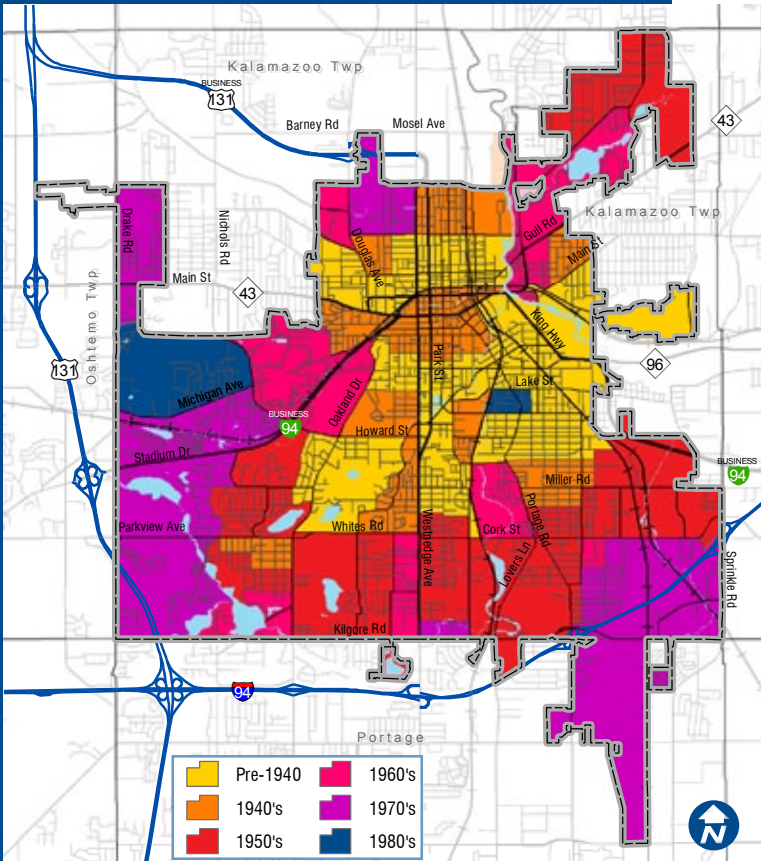




Housing Snapshot of 2010

At the time this plan was prepared in 2010, there was a national housing crisis that impacted nearly all neighborhoods across the city. Homes lost value, and a significant number of mortgage foreclosures could have serious, negative spin-off effects on the neighborhoods' quality of life especially if houses are abandoned or ill-kept. The City received Neighborhood Stabilization funds to help purchase then demolish or rehabilitate affected homes.

Median Year Housing Built by 2000 Census Block Group



B. Issues

While many Kalamazoo neighborhoods remain strong, there are nevertheless issues that impact the entire community and threaten long-term neighborhood stability:

- **The city's population is shrinking.** As discussed in *Chapter 2: Marketplace*, Kalamazoo and its households are getting smaller, which directly impacts neighborhoods. A declining population, coupled with the current economic climate, has resulted in many vacant or underutilized homes and buildings.
- **Kalamazoo's housing stock is aging.** One-third of Kalamazoo's housing units were built before 1939 and over half before 1960. Many are wood construction and unless well cared for will deteriorate over time and impact neighborhood quality and character.
- **The market cannot support the number and size of neighborhood commercial areas.** Historically, small commercial areas defined the heart of a neighborhood, yet today many of Kalamazoo's neighborhood centers are facing stiff competition from auto-oriented commercial districts throughout the region and internet shopping. A shrinking population also affects the demand for goods and services. This makes it more difficult for all the existing neighborhood commercial centers to thrive or even survive. Based on citywide economic assessments, the areas currently planned and zoned for commercial exceed that which the market can sustain today and in the future.

Those issues should be viewed as opportunities to improve residential and commercial areas and reinvent former industrial areas, embracing entrepreneurship and going beyond traditional manufacturing. In general, solutions to those challenges fall under two broad objectives discussed on the following pages:

- Strategies to retain and attract residents that in turn retain and support expansion of employers and businesses
- Strategies to manage loss of population

Year Housing Built

More than half of the City's housing units were built prior to 1960.

Built 1939 or earlier	10,448	33.0%
Built 1940 to 1949	2,285	40.2%
Built 1950 to 1959	5,010	56.0%
Built 1960 to 1969	3,044	65.6%
Built 1970 to 1979	5,096	81.7%
Built 1980 to 1989	2,396	89.3%
Built 1990 to 1999	1,662	94.6%
Built 2000 to 2007	1,724	100.0%
Total Housing Units	31,665	

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2005-2007

C. Retaining and Attracting Residents

Efforts must focus on keeping existing city neighborhoods attractive for current and future residents, suggesting a targeted approach to enhancing urban-living amenities and reinvesting in Kalamazoo's diverse neighborhoods.

Promoting City Living

Downtown

The city can fill a niche for those seeking a unique urban living experience in Kalamazoo County and an alternative to its neighboring suburban townships. Kalamazoo is attractive, and will become even more so, for those wishing to live closer to work, thereby reducing their environmental footprint and avoiding a long commute. Downtown is also appealing to working professionals who are looking for a home in proximity to work, entertainment, and shopping. Consistent with its previous planning efforts, Kalamazoo can and must market its downtown to those seeking an urban lifestyle and experiences.

Mixed-Use Nodes

Kalamazoo's mixed-use neighborhood centers should be strengthened. Building on the assets that make them unique, they may better serve nearby residents and be more attractive to visitors. The experience of walking to work, school, services, shopping, and places to relax must be made safe, pleasant and memorable. Because Kalamazoo currently has more retail space than can be supported by its current and projected population, alternate uses and enhancements may be explored for many neighborhood centers in an effort to support overall community vitality. Ultimately, a more flexible and market responsive approach to commercial development, such as live-work and retail incubators, must be considered, especially where buildings sit either vacant or underutilized.

Diverse Housing Options for all Generations

Like many other communities, Kalamazoo is growing older and its population is shrinking due in part to changing family size and

makeup. Nuclear families are no longer the norm, and therefore housing options must accommodate a variety of family types. The housing needs of special groups, like the elderly, must also be an important part of the Kalamazoo's commitment to provide appropriate housing choices for all of its residents. Viable senior housing options that include remaining at home as long as possible, to special facilities, such as senior independent living, are especially important to residents who want to stay in the neighborhoods they are most familiar with and be near family and friends. Other options that help create a sense of community, such as cohousing, where residents share resources and common facilities, may also need to be explored.

Rental housing for lower income residents or supportive housing must be integrated with support services and its design and construction should consider both long-term durability and security. Options for the younger sector of the population are just as important. Smaller families and couples may desire alternatives to single-family detached, owner-occupied housing, such as townhomes, flats, and apartments above storefronts.

Neighborhood Reinvestment

Traditional Neighborhood Design and Infill

Since the city is relatively built out, anyone seeking a brand new house often looks to Kalamazoo's neighboring communities. However, Kalamazoo can build on its previously discussed strengths for "city living" and provide greater choices and opportunities for new homes within the existing urban fabric. Prospects for infill housing, either a single lot or a small redevelopment cluster of several new houses, built to fit the character of its surroundings, could have a positive impact on the neighborhood as a whole. The Marketplace at Washington Square, a new development

Strategy

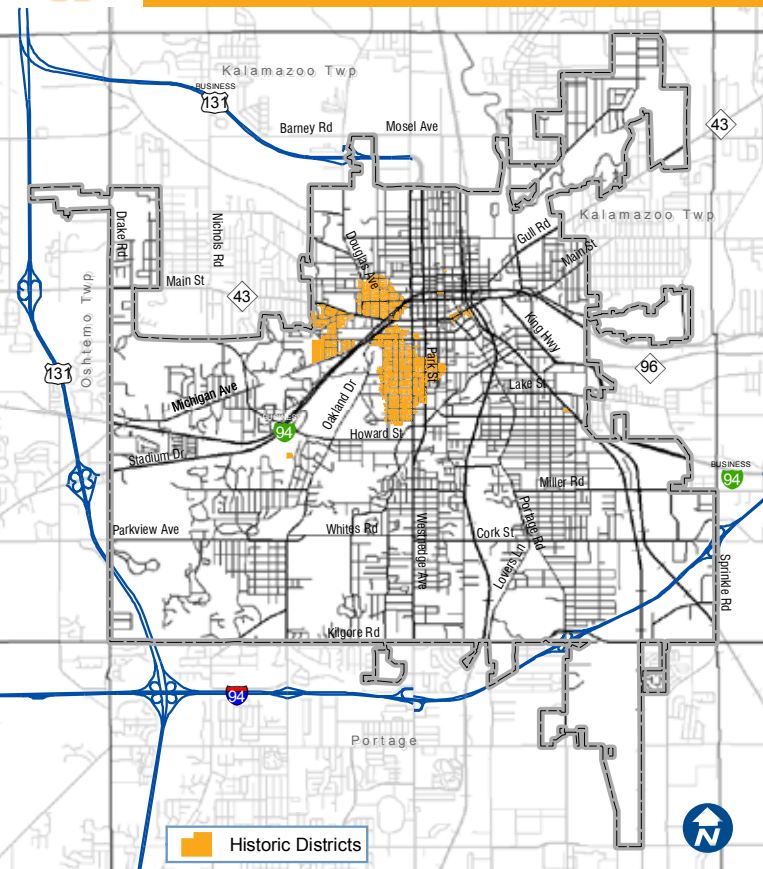
Promote great neighborhoods near downtown for individuals and families wishing to live within walking distance of downtown and jobs.

Strategy

Provide a broad mix of housing types to accommodate people with varied incomes and in different stages of life.

Community Development Credit Union

The proposed Kalamazoo Community Development Federal Credit Union would provide fair and affordable financial services and education for members, particularly those not typically served by traditional financial institutions. In the future this credit union may be very instrumental in assisting with affordable housing finance in Kalamazoo.



Kalamazoo's Historic Districts are located largely near the downtown core

Strategy

Increase density in select areas close to downtown and neighborhood commercial areas.

planned near the Farmer's Market, is a good example of infill housing. To support such opportunities, the city should develop standards for infill development that define and are consistent with desired neighborhood character, described later in this chapter.

Currently, to encourage infill housing, the City waives water and sewer hookup fees for new single-family construction. Neighborhood Enterprise Zones reduce the property tax burden for new construction in the Edison neighborhood and new home buyers in Vine neighborhood.

Appropriate Density

For Kalamazoo, increasing density and population in select areas is vital to help offset the loss of population in other areas and the increasing tax burden on its remaining residents and businesses. It will also provide the population concentration needed to support neighborhood stores and businesses. Density is frequently perceived as a "bad" word because it connotes a wide array of ill-conceived and designed buildings and developments. These include past attempts at public housing, overcrowded and out-of-scale apartment complexes, and the conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit boarding houses.

Well-planned and designed medium- to higher-density housing strategies could help transform and reenergize certain areas. Depending on the neighborhood, the least intrusive of these may be to infill vacant lots with compatible single-family homes. More substantial options include redeveloping an area to accommodate mixed land uses that offer a variety of residential

options. However, the primary focus for high-density development should remain downtown.

A review and evaluation of Kalamazoo's zoning regulations and processes should determine if changes are needed to support creative design solutions, such as assessing whether residential choices such as live-work units and cohousing (where residents share common facilities) are adequately addressed, or whether regulations are an impediment. The key for Kalamazoo is to provide opportunities for flexible living arrangements that fit the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Historic Home Preservation

Many of Kalamazoo's historically significant buildings are protected through its five historic districts. While they were established to safeguard historic resources and character, many neighborhoods neither qualify for that status, nor desire the associated regulations. Such historic neighborhoods and buildings, while not officially designated, are just as important to maintain Kalamazoo's character.

Following the City's lead to be more sustainable, the "greenest" form of construction is retrofitting existing buildings. Therefore, a key tool is to promote the rehabilitation of older homes, historic or otherwise. Deconstruction, where buildings are disassembled and components are salvaged, should be utilized rather than demolition when rehabilitation is not feasible.

Coexistence of Students and Long-term Residents

Kalamazoo is a college town and it has and will continue to have more rental units than many other communities. While a younger, well-educated population helps support community vitality and strength, lower ownership rates and an older housing stock create the potential for deterioration, even with current homeownership programs.

The key will be to balance rental housing, so that it fits the context of a neighborhood in a way that does not overwhelm, overburden or oversaturate it and that provides quality, secure, and affordable housing.

Taking a step forward to involve the public in the planning and design of higher density residential

infill projects will go a long way toward establishing better working relationships with the development community and providing opportunities to educate neighbors about techniques that can result in better community design. Therefore, it is important to create and nurture partnerships between the City, its neighborhoods and the for-profit and not-for-profit development community. The colleges and university must also recognize their important role in supporting a Kalamazoo that is more sustainable. Therefore, any expansion of the campuses, student housing or community education or health programs must be done in a way to reinforce links with the downtown and reenergize and help anchor surrounding neighborhoods and their commercial districts.

D. Managing Downsizing

Like most Michigan cities, Kalamazoo's loss of population results not only from decreasing household sizes and outmigration, but the inability to annex land. While retaining existing residents will be key to Kalamazoo's future, the city must also understand the implications of a continued decline. Public services like police, fire, schools, and utilities that previously served a much larger population must now be supported by fewer people. Furthermore, aging infrastructure requires continued and costly maintenance. The overall impacts result in increased per-capita municipal costs. To help stabilize the impacts of population loss, Kalamazoo needs clear strategies for the maintenance and the reuse of vacant homes, businesses, and properties.

Home Stewardship

Aggressive Code Enforcement and Blight Removal

To curb neighborhood deterioration, Kalamazoo must remain vigilant in its inspection and code enforcement efforts. The city can target enforcement and reinvestment through its Anti-Blight Team, utilizing the database of known code violations, vacant properties, and problems with absentee landlords.

The targeted use of housing funds to stabilize neighborhoods in transition or at the tipping point can also have a tremendous impact. Recent Neighborhood Stabilization Programs available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have provided the funding needed to help address stabilization efforts in such areas.

Residential Infill

Dense infill housing can respect the character and rhythm of existing residential structures:



Duplexes, approximately 12 units/acre



Townhouses, 18-24 units/acre

Strategy

Continue to enforce existing housing, rental, and maintenance codes to ensure neighborhoods remain strong and vital.



Home maintenance programs

Residents who take pride in their dwellings, whether rented or owned, can contribute positively to a neighborhood's image and reinvestment opportunities. Therefore, home stewardship should be supported broadly, beyond owner-occupied residences to include rental home and apartment maintenance. Such a broad definition also begins to address issues associated with landlord accountability.

Efforts to support home stewardship should focus on community training in home repair skills, providing needed resources, such as tools and materials, and assistance with understanding mortgages. Kalamazoo should continue its partnerships with neighborhood associations in support of such programs, but efforts should be expanded so that a coordinated and integrated community-wide approach can be realized.

Strategy

Support and partner with non-profits to strengthen and expand current programs that provide hands-on education and training for home maintenance and repairs.

Strategy

Adopt reuse strategies for vacant and underutilized properties and buildings.

Use of Vacant Properties

Land banking for future use

The Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority has authority to manage and sell houses and businesses that have fallen into tax foreclosure. As this program develops, the city should work in concert, looking for ways to acquire properties and hold them for future use or redevelopment. A key strategy should be to assemble key properties providing unified sites for regeneration projects, trails, open space and parks, and inter-connected streets and infrastructure.

Urban Agriculture

With national attention focused on health, food safety, and the importance of local food sources, opportunities abound to reuse vacant properties for community gardens and farms. Kalamazoo's current pattern of decline lends itself well to small-scale community gardens at the neighborhood level and larger scale farming operations on vacant, former industrial sites.

Side lot programs

Kalamazoo should explore options to address the costs and responsibilities associated with vacant residential lots. Under this program a neighbor can purchase an adjacent vacant property for a nominal fee, thereby shifting the lot costs and maintenance responsibilities from the City to the homeowner.

Where Decline is Inevitable...

Some areas and neighborhoods will have a declining population regardless of intervention. The City must proactively confront decline with strategies to protect its image and to avoid broad negative overall impacts.

Rather than haphazard abandonment and decline, Kalamazoo must control and plan for careful downsizing. The realities of buildings and sites no longer used for their original purpose must be addressed through a careful blend of the following strategies:

- code enforcement,
- demolition,
- mothballing buildings,
- adaptive reuse,
- promoting occupancy to non-profits,
- replacing unused space with greenspace.



E. Land Use and Character

This section draws from the other chapters and results in a plan that builds on Kalamazoo's existing framework, recognizes economic realities, and emphasizes residents' strong appreciation of existing neighborhood character. The analysis of existing land use in conjunction with public participation has helped shape this plan; describing where land use and character relationships can be strengthened and where conflicts exist that need to be corrected.

Land Use Planning

Communities employ land use planning as the primary tool to define sustainable and supportive land use arrangements and to avoid or correct conflicts. Land use conflicts occur when incompatible uses are co-located, resulting in various short and long term problems. In time, the resulting nuisances can depreciate the desirability and value of all affected properties.

Conversely, future development that is a potential community asset can be identified during this same process. Potentially conflicting land uses can benefit the neighborhoods in which they are located, and the community at-large, if appropriately arranged. The relationship between industrial uses and residential neighborhoods is a good example; when properly sited, industrial land uses can provide nearby jobs for residents and support area retail.

Kalamazoo's Land Use Pattern

As a relatively built out city, Kalamazoo's land use patterns are largely established. The community's historic core has been its downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and the industrial districts flanking its rivers and streams. Later development emerged along key road corridors

and began infilling with residential neighborhoods throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. While most of Kalamazoo was designed for the last century, its configuration helps support principles for more sustainable development:

- Streets are interconnected.
- Neighborhoods have the density and character to support a more urban development pattern.
- Kalamazoo has a healthy downtown and several vital neighborhood commercial centers.
- In keeping with principles of sustainability, renovating the existing housing stock and even neighborhoods will not require the same commitment of resources and energy needed for all-new construction.

Preserve, Enhance, Transform

While Kalamazoo's land use patterns are well established, certain adjustments and improvements are needed. However, these actions must be considered within the context of neighborhood and district character. To that end, Kalamazoo's character was analyzed using such indicators as street configuration, block size, building location and form, parking, and lot size.

That process helped identify features that shape a positive image of Kalamazoo, not only for residents, but also visitors. These are the features that must be preserved or enhanced to make Kalamazoo an even more desirable place. Other less desirable characteristics were also identified and have a much different impact on community perceptions. These are the areas or area characteristics that must be either significantly changed or completely transformed.

Kalamazoo's Acreage by Land Use

	Acreage	Percent
Residential	4,778.56	29.85%
Commercial	1,356.33	8.47%
Industrial	991.38	6.19%
Institutional	2,880.63	18.00%
Vacant	1,037.01	6.48%
Other	4,963.42	31.01%
Total	16,007.33	

Source: 2008 Kalamazoo City Assessment
Transformation areas are identified in this chapter as "Employment Centers" on page 36. They are primarily former industrial sites that may have some viable industries, but also many vacant and underutilized properties. With the shift from heavy industrial to more sophisticated manufacturing technologies and light industrial, these districts require new types of development. They can become the hub of future activity and help market Kalamazoo as a home to entrepreneurs offering incubator space for health and science-related businesses. These creative, emerging businesses, and industries will require flexible, dynamic spaces that must transcend the original definition for "industrial" land uses.

Linking Land Use to Character

While previous master plans have focused on ways to classify use, density, and land use arrangements, this plan adds character as a key consideration. Character impacts how residents and visitors feel about a place and influences their decisions on where to live and visit. Therefore, first impressions about a place go well beyond just land use and include design. Blending land use and character is a new way for Kalamazoo to guide future development that best fits the goals of this master plan. Key strategies include the following:



Special Districts

In addition to the residential, commercial, and employment character districts outlined on the following pages, a number of unique areas are planned outside the scope of this master plan:

Downtown

The 2009 Downtown Kalamazoo Plan, described earlier, addresses the character, land use, and form of downtown. This master plan supports that plan's recommendations to ensure that downtown remains the vital core of the city.

Universities

The collegiate character of Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University is defined by their respective governing boards. For more information on how this plan relates to these institutions, see Chapter 6: *Quality of Life*.

Airport

While the character of the airport is determined by its use, nearby properties can be used as support services to the airport. These include such uses as office and employment that benefit from being in close proximity to both the airport and interstate.

- increasing population in proximity to downtown,
- developing mixed-use centers that conform to recent neighborhood planning efforts,
- strengthening neighborhood commercial areas, and
- minimizing land use conflicts, such as buffering employment uses from nearby homes.

Recognizing and Respecting Neighborhood Character

To understand what Kalamazoo and its neighborhoods should be like tomorrow, it helps to remember what makes Kalamazoo unique today. This section looks at the characteristics that make the city special, and identifies the key features that should be reviewed when making decisions about future development and redevelopment.

Residents celebrate the fact that Kalamazoo's neighborhoods are varied and those characteristics help define areas to preserve, enhance, or transform. Whether historic, urban, or more suburban in character, the public has expressed a desire to retain the character of Kalamazoo's neighborhoods. However, even the most stable and vital neighborhoods were recognized as needing some level of intervention to make them more

sustainable.

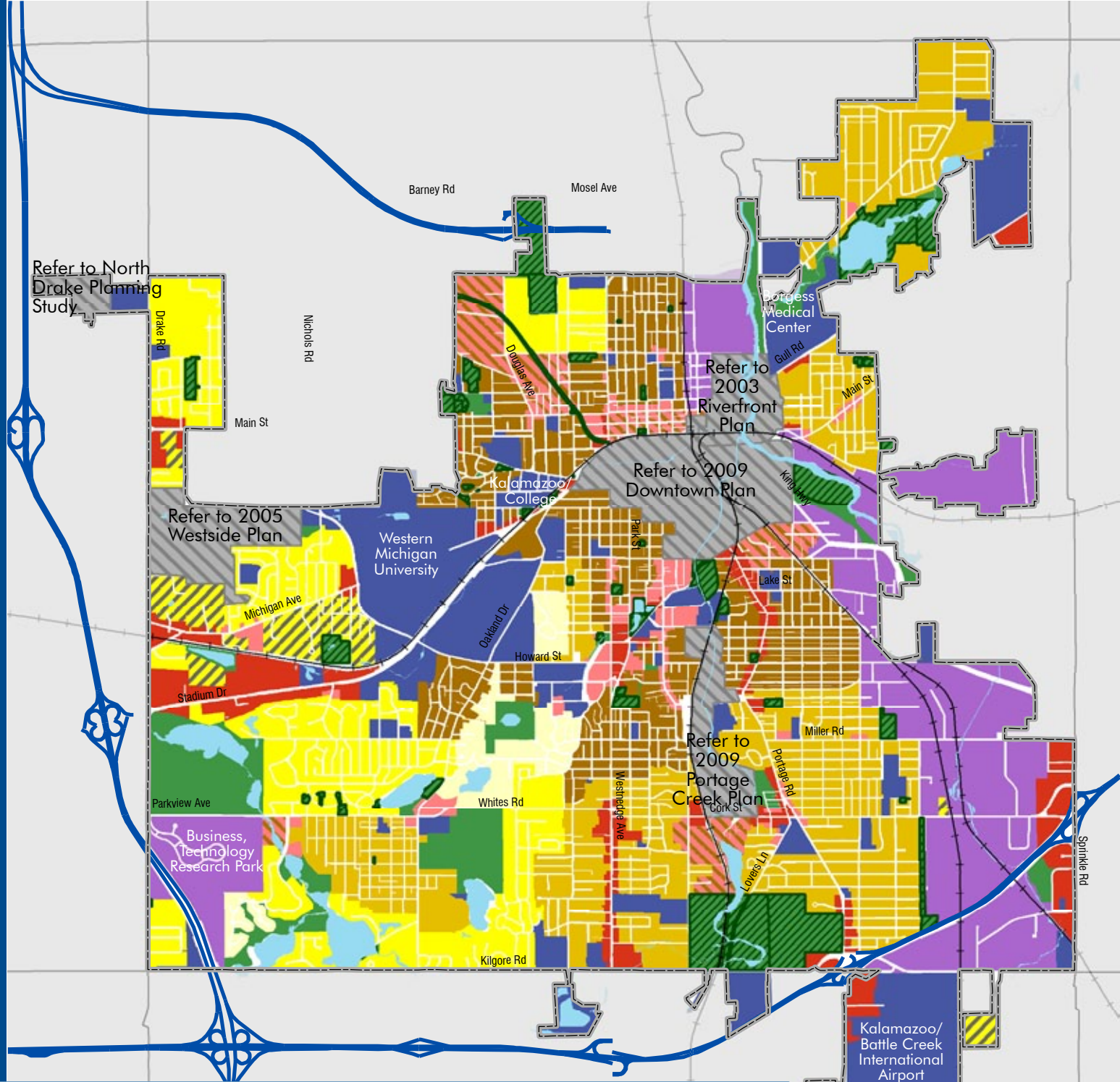
By clearly articulating distinct character differences and communicating them in advance, property owners, developers, and investors will have a much better understanding about the kind of community Kalamazoo wants to be. This will facilitate the review and approval of future redevelopment projects, removing much of the guess work. In addition, a character-based approach to planning begins to establish a foundation to review and potentially modify development regulations so they better reflect the desired character of a particular neighborhood, business area, or district.

Based on character, investment in neighborhoods located at the core of the city will improve quality of life by promoting a more efficient use of land and infrastructure and by reabsorbing growth back into Kalamazoo. This can serve to reduce reliance on the automobile, minimize environmental impacts, and lessen the strain on public services. Further from the core, neighborhoods can be enhanced with strategic investments: improving streetscapes and lighting, connecting sidewalks and paths, and interconnecting open spaces.

Character of Neighborhood Streets

The design of streets can affect the quality and character of neighborhoods and their livability. Streets provide access to homes, neighborhood destinations, and commercial areas for pedestrians and a variety of vehicles, from bicycles and automobiles to emergency responders. They also are a place for people to interact: a place where children play, neighbors meet, and residents go for walks and bicycle rides. The design of streets, together with the volume and

speed of traffic they carry, can contribute or significantly detract from a sense of community, neighborhood, and perceptions of safety and comfort. Therefore, Kalamazoo must carefully evaluate its network of streets and make modifications to their design based on a comprehensive assessment of not only their function but their character and the character of the districts they intersect.

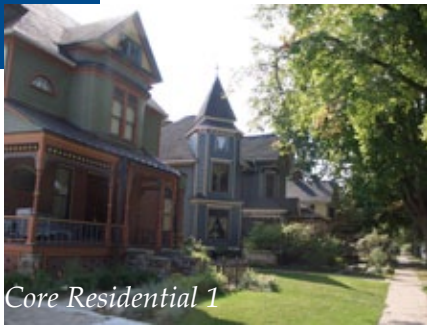


<p>Core Residential 1 Small lot sizes; Queen Anne, Four Square, vernacular housing types; gridded streets; small setbacks; front gable or hip roof typical; 2 stories</p> <p>Core Residential 2 Small to medium lot sizes; Cape Cod, Minimal Traditional, bungalow homes; gridded streets; small setbacks; side-gable, dormers typical; 1-1.5 stories</p> <p>Modern Residential 3 Medium lot sizes; Ranch and Neocolonial housing types, curvilinear streets; medium setbacks; simple rooflines, often side-facing</p> <p>Multiple-Family Subtype Apartment buildings in the character of Modern Residential 3</p> <p>Modern Residential 4 Large lot sizes; large building footprint; curvilinear streets; deep setbacks; complex rooflines</p>	<p>Neighborhood Commercial Smaller scale businesses that serve neighborhoods, limited parking</p> <p>Community Commercial Business uses that serve the greater community; chains or large scale commercial; shared parking lots</p> <p>Employment Centers Research and development, industrial, supporting land uses</p> <p>Institutional Schools, cemeteries, universities, airport</p> <p>Mixed-Use Office; neighborhood commercial; dense residential development; adaptively reused industrial</p>	<p>Recreation/Greenspace Golf courses, parks, preserved open space</p> <p>City-owned</p> <p>Mixed-Use Existing Plans Use and character defined in Kalamazoo Downtown, Riverfront, Westside, and Portage Creek plans</p> <p>Water</p>
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Map 1: Future Land Use and Character



Core Residential Character



Core Residential 1



Core Residential 1



Core Residential 2



Core Residential 2

These neighborhoods are generally located near Kalamazoo's historic core and were built between the latter part of the nineteenth century up to the 1940s. Blocks are defined by a grid of streets with sidewalks and street trees, lots are relatively small and have shallow front yard setbacks. The quality of housing stock and maintenance varies by neighborhood. Some neighborhoods are well preserved and designated as historic districts while others need to be stabilized and improved. To prevent further deterioration, core neighborhoods should be enhanced, and pedestrian links to the downtown core should be strengthened.

Strategies

- Sustain the character of existing homes.
- Maintain housing quality.
- Infill vacant lots with homes that fit neighborhood context.
- Convert some vacant lots to small neighborhood parks.
- On some vacant lots, accommodate shared community gardens.
- Maintain/enhance community infrastructure – sidewalks, street trees, lighting and utilities.

Core Residential 1

- Small Lots
- Gridded streets
- Sidewalks
- Four-square, Queen Anne vernacular
- 2-story

Approximate Neighborhoods:

Stuart, Northside, West Main Hill, Vine (parts), Southside, Fairmont, Edison, Westnedge Hill (parts)

Core Residential 2

- Small to medium lots
- Gridded streets
- Sidewalks
- Cape Cod, Neo-Colonial
- Generally 1.5-story

Approximate Neighborhoods:

Milwood, Eastside, Burke Acres, South Westnedge, Oakwood, Westnedge Hill (parts), Vine (parts)



Future Core Residential Character

Modern Residential Character

These neighborhoods are located away from the downtown core and generally developed during the 1950s to 1970s. Homes are located on larger lots and accommodate larger building footprints and deeper setbacks. These neighborhoods are generally stable, largely because the housing stock is newer than their core counterparts. While the homes are generally well maintained, sidewalks, street trees and targeted traffic calming measures will contribute to make them more walkable.

Strategies

- Sustain the character of existing homes.
- Maintain housing quality.
- Maintain/enhance appropriate community infrastructure – sidewalks, street trees, lighting and utilities.
- Enhance connectivity to nearby amenities (schools, retail, workplaces).

Modern Residential 3

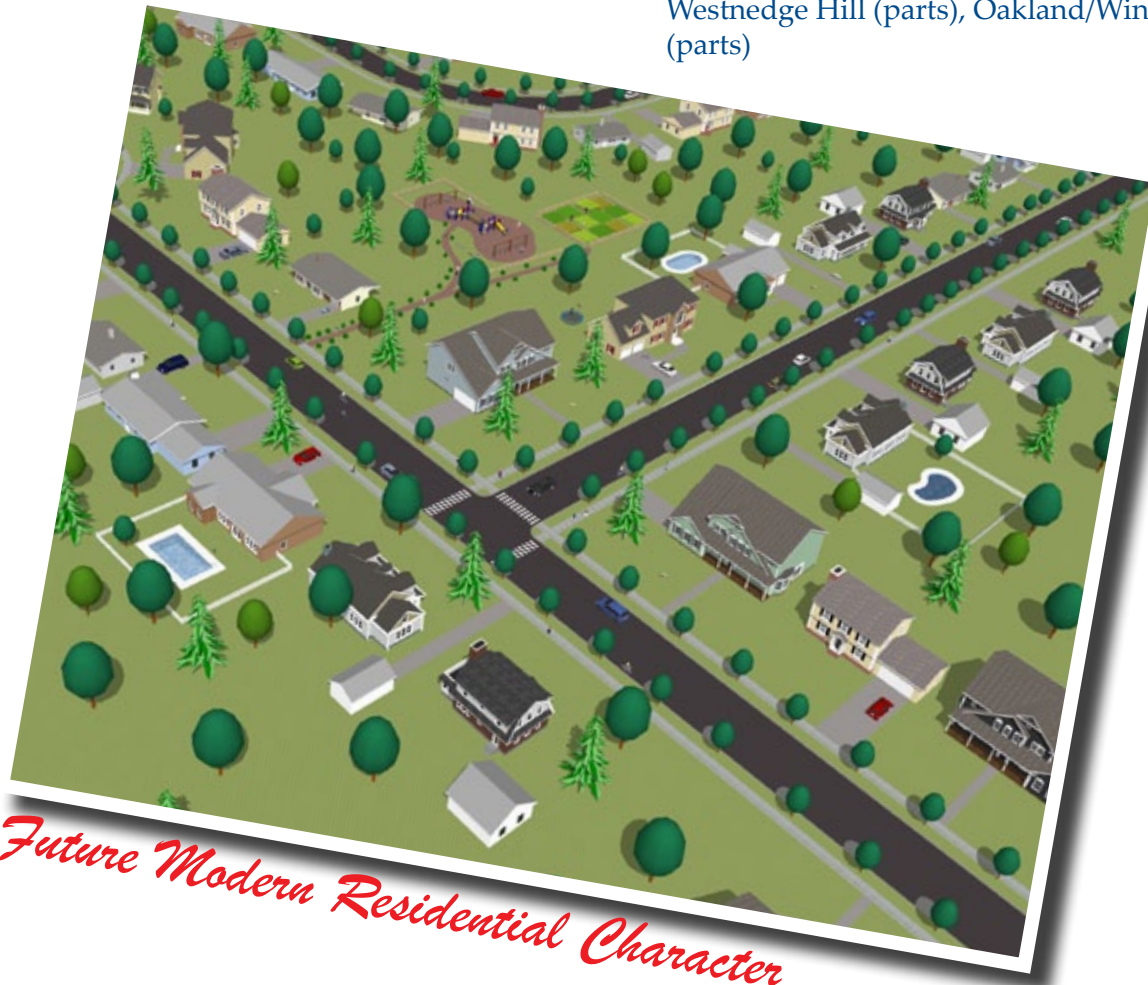
- Medium lots
- Curvilinear streets
- Sidewalks Inconsistent
- Ranch, Split-level, Contemporary
- 1- and 2-story

Approximate Neighborhoods:
Oakland/Winchell (parts), Knollwood, Arcadia, Westwood, Parkview Hills, Hill N' Brook, Westnedge Hill (parts)

Modern Residential 4

- Large Lots
- Curvilinear streets
- Sidewalks Inconsistent
- Rich architectural design details
- Generally 2-story

Approximate Neighborhoods:
Westnedge Hill (parts), Oakland/Winchell (parts)



Future Modern Residential Character



Modern Residential 3



Modern Residential 3



Modern Residential 4



Modern Residential 4



Neighborhood Commercial Character

These are existing commercial centers that were developed to serve the immediate surrounding neighborhood. Generally, they predate World War II and follow traditional development patterns with limited off street parking, traditional small scale buildings that are built to the sidewalk, and contain a mix of land uses. Some of these commercial areas are thriving while others require enhancements to the public realm and need to be prepped to make them ready for regeneration. To provide more urban neighborhoods with a “heart”, they should be strategically located on streets with higher traffic volumes, within close proximity to residential neighborhoods, contain a mix of residential, commercial, and employment land uses, and should support pedestrian-friendly development with traditional storefronts and buildings that orient to the street.



The Vine Neighborhood’s center is a good example of a walkable, traditional center

Strategies

- Accommodate a mix of different land uses – residential, office, retail, entertainment and public.
- Enhance the public realm – streets and public spaces.
- Control building heights with minimums and maximums.
- Establish build-to-lines: locate buildings near the sidewalk and place parking to the side or in the rear of a lot.
- Accommodate a broad range of housing – above stores, flats, and attached homes, and single family homes on smaller urban-scale lots.
- Create an environment that promotes walking.



Future Neighborhood Commercial Character

Community Commercial Character

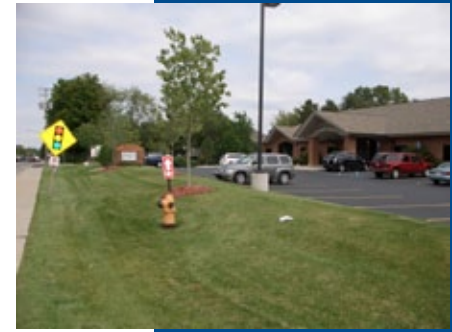
It is unreasonable to expect that all commercial areas in Kalamazoo will be transformed to fit a more urban development pattern. For one, these areas represent almost sixty years of suburban development and given the continued slowdown in new development and expansion, change will be incremental in these corridors. Therefore, the focus should be on building the best suburban development possible. This means improving public streetscapes, providing sidewalks, street trees, managing traffic flow and site access, and focusing on quality private reinvestment.

Strategies

- Improve building material quality.
- Focus on landscaping.
- Reduce the scale of signs.
- Minimize the amount and scale of parking in front of a building.
- Provide and interconnect sidewalks.
- Provide a parkway and street trees along streets.
- Place buildings so their front doors face the street.
- Enhance access management, space driveways appropriately and share between uses, and require properties to inter-connect.
- Employ medians where appropriate to green streets.
- Provide appropriate lighting and light levels in both the public and private realms.
- Preserve or provide a landscaped buffer area when adjacent to residential neighborhood.



Future Community Commercial Character



These examples of suburban commercial development along Drake Road and Stadium Drive have a wide landscaped greenway that screens the parking from the arterial road.



Vacant land ripe for redevelopment north of downtown



This former factory has been adaptively reused for a number of different uses on Fulford



The Metals Studio just north of downtown is an excellent example of creative uses for former industrial buildings in Employment and Mixed-Use areas

Employment Centers

As the world’s economy has shifted, industrial uses have evolved from heavy manufacturing to ones that require more sophisticated technologies and workers. While many viable industrial uses remain, the shells of former factories and vacant sites beg for new uses. As a result, many former industrial areas are ripe for redevelopment.

The creative reuse of the city’s more vulnerable structures could be significantly advanced by establishing new partnerships between educational institutions and economic development organizations. Business and engineering assistance from Western Michigan University in combination with the economic development know-how of Southwest Michigan First could make the difference for the successful start up of new businesses in these structures. Through the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce, business-to-business networks can be enhanced for further assistance. Such efforts would not necessarily require additional resources, only an enhanced willingness among stakeholders to support innovation and new business opportunities.

While industry is still a use that is allowed and encouraged in this character area, the definition has been expanded to include

a range of compatible uses that can lead to dynamic new “Entrepreneurial Target Areas” that Kalamazoo can actively market (see *Chapter 2: Marketplace* for more discussion about creative employment opportunities).

Creative New Uses

Live/work units, either in new or infill buildings or in reused industrial buildings, will give artists, small businesses, and start-ups the flexible space they need to undertake creative endeavors. Studios and incubators can blend seamlessly with residences, especially in former industrial areas just north of downtown.

Buffer Zones

The relationship between industrial and residential land uses must be considered in a sensitive manner, especially in the Edison and Milwood neighborhoods. Where redevelopment occurs on the edge of former industrial areas, building design and use must complement adjacent residential character. Acceptable buffer zone uses include homes, artist studios and colonies, and less intense employment activities. Greenspace and right-of-way enhancements, in the manner of Emerald Park, would be appropriate buffers between industrial and residential uses.

Mixed-Use Areas

Often adjacent to recently planned areas, Mixed-Use character areas extend the character from those plan boundaries. While similar to Employment Centers, these areas no longer have any industrial uses, therefore redevelopment should include a mix of office, neighborhood commercial, dense residential, adaptively-reused industrial buildings, and low intensity research and development-style industrial uses. Mixed-Use areas should be targeted for priority redevelopment.

F. Actions

The following actions are reorganized with actions from other chapters in the Action Table in Chapter 6. The letter and number in parentheses following each action indicates its location in the Action Table.

Continue vigilant enforcement of housing, rental, and maintenance codes. (R2)

Allow home occupations, but limit the conversion of homes to business uses that erode neighborhood character. (R3)

Ensure compliance with property maintenance standards so landlords are accountable. (R4)

Craft single-family neighborhood infill design standards and a procedure for administrative review. (R5)

Encourage neighborhood reinvestment by offering development incentives. (R7)

Allow more mixing of compatible residential and office, retail, and commercial uses, especially near downtown. This includes review and fine-tunes to development regulations and parking standards for commercial, mixed-use, and infill developments. (R9)

Revise landscape standards to increase buffers and preserve woodlands/slopes where community commercial uses abut established single-family neighborhoods. (R10)

Offer incentives to encourage green development (density, tax incentives, reduced parking requirements, etc). (R11)

Accommodate higher density and student housing as a bridge between campuses and the downtown. (R18)

Increase pedestrian connectivity standards for private development to ensure safe and pedestrian routes and walks are provided for new construction and expansion efforts. (R25)

Gradually adjust (reduce) the amount of commercially zoned land based on location,

character, market demand and other factors. (R26)

Develop a comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program. (C3)

Prepare a more detailed non-motorized plan with priorities for connections between neighborhoods, employment areas, schools, businesses districts, and bus stops. (C9)

Improve right-of-way access aesthetics along routes to and through industrial districts to support business attraction efforts. (C12)

Offer low-cost incubator space for student/professor entrepreneurs in older vacant industrial buildings. (P7)

Integrate appropriate scale entertainment and event venues into redeveloping neighborhood commercial nodes. (P12)

Support and partner with non-profits to strengthen and expand current programs that provide hands-on education and training for home maintenance and repairs. (P13)

Continue to support and promote the clean up and reuse of contaminated properties/facilities. (PR1)

Support rehabilitation and reinvestment in challenged areas, especially in the Northside, Edison, and Eastside neighborhoods. (PR3)

Continue programs that encourage responsible homeownership while providing affordable, but quality rental options. (PR4)

Support programs that address homelessness. (PR5)

Promote Kalamazoo as a city that offers a range of lifestyle choices. (PR6)

Build public awareness of the city's historic resources. (PR8)

Coordinate neighborhood safety initiatives with volunteer organizations. (PR9)



Ensure a mix of housing types across neighborhoods to accommodate various income levels so residents can remain in the city or their neighborhood as needs change. (PR11)

Streamline the decision-making process for blighted properties that leave private ownership to promote conversion to reuse or hold as green space until an appropriate use is found in the future. (PR12)

Encourage local services and retail within neighborhood walking distance. (PR13)

Explore alternate uses for vacant residential property such as infill development, community gardens, neighborhood open space, and use of the land bank for parcels where redevelopment is more likely long-term. (PR16)

Develop a commercial business owner's Reuse Guide that focuses cost effective ideas, techniques and guidelines for renovation and reuse of historic commercial

assets. (PR23)

Promote WMU's service learning program to neighborhood associations and non-profits to engage young adult volunteers. (PR27)

Partner with neighborhood associations to provide homeowner programs focused on renovation skills and techniques. (PR28)

Promote new residential development to attract individuals already working, but not living, in the city. (PR29)

Explore alternative short- and mid- term strategies for brownfield remediation for sites that lack redevelopment projects. (PR31)

Increase the effectiveness of the land bank by inventorying available land, matching parcels with potential buyers and future developers, and identifying additional strategies to incentivize and publicize the program. (PR32)

Concentrate mixed-use developments near campus aimed at college students. (PR35)

Chapter 4

TRANSPORTATION *and Infrastructure*



Transportation Vision

“Kalamazoo will boast an attractive transportation network that balances the needs for all users (motorists, commercial trucks, walkers, bicyclists, and transit users) with a design that fits with the character or context of particular districts.”

Key Sustainable Strategies

- Use coordinated signals and information technology to reduce congestion and emissions.
- Reduce the number of auto trips generated with mixed-use nodes, pedestrian connections, and transportation demand management.
- Promote walking, biking, and transit as an alternative to the automobile.
- Accommodate or provide parking preferences for higher occupancy vehicles, hybrids, and electric cars.
- Use pervious pavement for parts of parking lots and limits on the amount of parking permitted.
- Encourage low impact development design approaches for stormwater management.

In This Chapter

- A. Introduction
- B. Issues
- C. Transportation System
- D. Transportation Management and Safety
- E. Non-Motorized
- F. Transit
- G. Infrastructure
- I. Actions

A. Introduction

Streets are among the most important public infrastructure and place-making elements of the city because they can define how a visitor, resident, or worker perceives a neighborhood, downtown, or the city as a whole. While it is important that streets foster safe travel for all modes of transportation and are easy to navigate, they must also look good, be inviting, and create the right impression. A well-designed system of interconnected sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit routes gives travel options that decrease the number of automobile trips, elevating the concept of environmental sustainability.

Similarly, a quality infrastructure system supports activities in the city. While not as visible as transportation or most other municipal functions, they are no less important. Kalamazoo is fortunate to have a solid network of infrastructure with ample capacity, few problems, and funded by user fees. As the city moves forward, the trend will continue toward more “green” infrastructure, particularly for stormwater. A committed funding source for stormwater management may be needed, as described later in this chapter.

Infrastructure includes:

- Public water system—protection of the wellhead zones
- Sanitary sewer system
- Stormwater—rainwater runoff and flood control

Strengths

- *Sustainability.* City policies that promote a more sustainable Kalamazoo will help reduce emissions and improve potential for special funding.
- *Grid Street Pattern.* Kalamazoo is fortunate to have an established “grid” system of streets that provide convenient access through the city.
- *Highway access.* There are also several interchanges with the US 131 and I-94 expressways, though most are outside the city limits.
- *Traffic innovations.* Kalamazoo is recognized as a leader with many technology innovations such as coordinated countdown signals and audible pedestrian signals.
- *Non-motorized travel.* The City and region’s efforts to develop a regional bike lane and trail network was enthusiastically supported at public workshops.
- *Residents appreciate their neighborhood streets,* and frequently responded that their favorites streets to walk or bike are those in their own neighborhood.
- *Safe Streets.* Kalamazoo generally has lower crash rates than found at similarly sized cities in the Midwest.
- *Little congestion.* Compared to similar cities, there is relatively little congestion in Kalamazoo.
- *Kalamazoo has sufficient infrastructure.* The city has no major deficiencies in its water and sewer facilities. The City has also been successful in receipt of various infrastructure improvement-related grants.
- *Wellhead Protection.* A wellhead protection ordinance, recommended in the last plan, is part of a state recognized comprehensive program that has helped minimize risk to the City’s Public Water Supply System.
- *Stormwater.* The City’s stormwater management program has effectively moved forward to reduce the amount and improve the quality of rainwater runoff.

Relationship to Previous Plans

While elements of the various Kalamazoo master plans have changed with the times, all the plans have had a focus on transportation. Previous plans reflect the approach to transportation associated with their era. In 1929, the plan called for the need to widen and pave streets, reduce the 100 rail crossings and upgrades to the street car system. This plan also identified locations for future heliports throughout the city. Plans in the 1950s and 1960s focused on expressway improvements and moving autos through town efficiently.

The 1998 plan began to look at alternatives to street widening to better move traffic and began to discuss improvements for a group past plans ignored: the pedestrian. Other plans prepared since then, including the Downtown Plan and several neighborhood or subarea plans, have usually addressed all modes – autos, trucks, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Recent transportation-related plans are listed below.

Kalamazoo Downtown Plan (2009)
Adopted in 2009, this plan contains recommendations to make it easier to navigate downtown and to slow vehicle speeds to improve the pedestrian environment. Key recommendations include conversion of certain one-way streets to two-way, additional on-street parking, and other design amenities that support a vibrant pedestrian street life.

West Side Plan (2005)
This plan has specific recommendations for land use and transportation related to growth

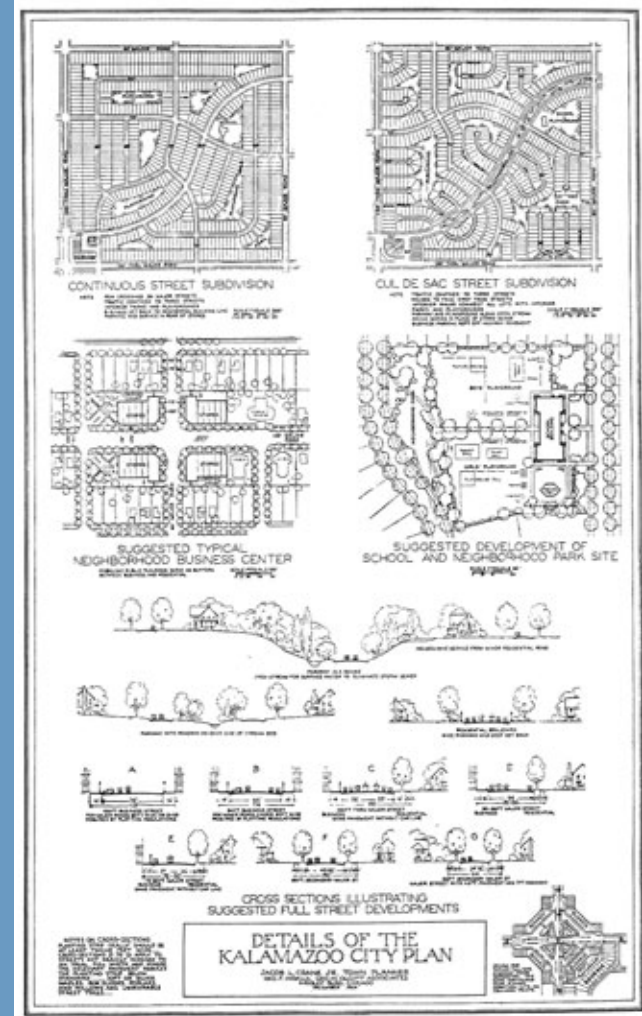
near Western Michigan University. It calls for protecting the single-family character of the Arcadia neighborhood and improving the Knollwood student neighborhood through infrastructure improvements to enhance non-motorized transportation options.

I-94 Business Loop Gateway Plan
This plan found that road capacities and conditions were sufficient for current transportation needs. Recommendations included improved directional signage, access management, aesthetics, and enhanced non-motorized connections.

Portage Street Streetscape Plan (2005)
This plan's study area was the two-mile stretch of Portage Street between Michigan Avenue downtown and Alcott Street to the south. Streetscape features were reviewed and the plan's goals include enhanced pedestrian access, reduced speeds at intersections, improved traffic flow, continuity of design and identity, and improved parking efficiency.

Other Transportation Agencies
Kalamazoo's transportation system includes several major streets under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), such as the Business I-94 routes (Stadium and Kings Highway), Michigan and Kalamazoo downtown, and M-43 (Gull Road). Improvements along those routes require collaboration with MDOT.

In addition, there is a Metropolitan Planning Agency, the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS), responsible for coordination and funding for improvements to the major street network and other



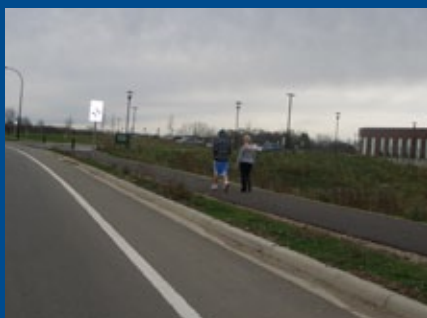
A page from the 1929 plan depicts street patterns

projects using state or federal transportation funding. KATS has a separate Long Range Transportation Plan that identifies projects planned or programmed for state and federal funding.

Finally, there are separate agencies for transit and the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. Both the transit agency and airport were in the process of evaluating their specific needs as this plan was completed.



Transportation Modes and Facilities



Bike lane and walking/bike path



Automobile



Metro Bus



Amtrak Train

Issues and Opportunities

Through a review of previous plans, data, observations, and input, the master plan process identified the following issues, trends, and opportunities related to transportation (see also existing conditions in the appendix).

- *Periodic congestion* along some street segments and at certain intersections
- *Mandates to reduce emissions* and fossil fuel consumption related to automobile use is expected to be a focus of federal transportation legislation. The city's emphasis on non-motorized travel forms a strong foundation to respond to the issue.
- *Excessive access.* An abundance of driveways along some commercial corridors adds to confusion, congestion, crash potential, and poor aesthetics.
- *Disruption due to rail crossings* are a common complaint, especially from downtown motorists.
- *Several main arterials are viewed as too wide and unattractive.* Similarly, there are few visual clues to announce entrance at city limits.
- *Excess parking* is visible at several larger commercial lots along corridors. These may provide opportunities for infill development or more greenspace.
- *Perceived or relatively high auto speeds* along some one-way streets are seen by some as being contrary to the character of the area and not pedestrian friendly.
- *Most streets are auto oriented,* which makes driving convenient but the trend is toward making the streets more accommodating to bicyclists and pedestrians.
- *Most streets in the city have sidewalks on at least one side, but there are gaps.* Gaps also exist in the regional trail system and non-motorized access to them.
- *More frequent bus service* and amenities like more bus shelters were requested by many residents that participated in the plan process.
- *There are three transit systems in the metro area* – Metro Transit (fixed route), Metro County Connect (demand/response service operated by Metro Transit), and a separate privately operated system at Western Michigan University. Many residents expressed a preference for a more unified transit system.
- *The northern US 131 interchange does not allow full movement.* This impairs accessibility on the Northside and results in more disruptive truck traffic through the downtown.
- *High speed rail* between Detroit and Chicago, with a stop in Kalamazoo, has been discussed for many years with little progress.
- *Kalamazoo has sufficient infrastructure* and programming for maintenance but lacks the resources to proactively or routinely maintain the stormwater collection system (sewer).
- *Technology upgrades* need to be continuously explored so the city can meet the desires of residents and businesses.

10 Busiest Streets, based on traffic counts

Street	Count	Street	Count
W. Main St.	35,700	Oakland Dr.	23,756
Stadium Dr.	28,700	Gull Rd.	23,400
Drake Rd.	28,346	Portage St	20,529
E. Michigan Ave. (two-way)	25,700	Howard St	19,920
S. Westnedge Ave.	23,900	W. Michigan Ave.	17,767

Source: 2008 KATS, MDOT ADT

B. Transportation System

New Approach Linking Land Use and Transportation

Throughout its history, transportation has had a major influence on the pattern of land uses in Kalamazoo, from initial settlements along the Kalamazoo River, to uses related to the city's many railroads, to an extensive system of streets and expressways. For many decades, most employees walked to work or used public transit. In the 1950s and 1960s, development of the US 131 and I-94 expressways improved accessibility to and from the city, and also supported auto-dependent growth outside the city limits.

Corridors with the highest traffic volumes, like Westnedge and Stadium Drive, attracted larger scale commercial uses. Today, some businesses along those corridors in the city are no longer thriving.

Historically, locations of industrial land uses in the city have been related to transportation. Industries once desired locations along the river, later along rail lines, and now access to the interstate system. Most of the industrial sites in the city are not near expressway interchanges.

Transportation is no longer just a way to serve the needs of shoppers, commuters and existing development. Transportation investments can act as a catalyst for desired redevelopment in underutilized areas. Reconstruction of a roadway with elements such as medians, lane reductions, or enhanced streetscape can help attract redevelopment, causing a resurgence in activity and investment.

Sustainable Transportation, A Complete Streets Approach

For the next 20 years, improvements to the transportation system will be as much about complementing the desired character of the surroundings and moving all types of users as they will about moving autos. Recommendations in this plan build upon the city's recent efforts to reconstruct streets to fit the context of the adjacent land uses – safe for motorists, but including design details, streetscape, and needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Some call this a “complete streets” approach, harmonizing streets with their surroundings while interlacing transportation networks to meet the mobility needs of all users – motorists, commerce, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. This blends traditional street functional classification with additional factors that value the character of the area and the needs for the types of travel along a particular route.

Previous master plans include a map of the “functional classification” of the street system based on a nationally used approach. Generally this designates certain streets, called arterials, that are intended to move higher volumes at relatively higher speeds to major destinations in the city. Local streets include the neighborhood streets that form most of the city's network, designed for low volumes and low speeds. In between are streets defined as “collectors,” streets that move traffic from the local streets to the arterials, generally at moderate speeds and volumes.

This plan reinforces the city's philosophy that not all arterials or collectors are the same; design can and should have a certain degree of flexibility to harmonize with the surroundings. This may mean a street design changes as it traverses different character zones – a five-lane road through a commercial zone that transitions to three lanes through a more residential area, or an emphasis on pedestrian design elements for certain streets.

This type of flexible road design standard considers traditional factors like traffic volumes and role as part of the overall system, but also considers target speeds, varying function, street width, character, land use, amenities, and needs for all modes of travel. This approach can help to create streets that are better integrated with the surroundings. Not every street accommodates all users equally – the network of street typologies prioritizes certain types of users for certain streets.

For example, some streets defined in this plan as “workhorse arterials” are designed to move high volumes of autos to and from downtown and trucks to industrial uses on the city's east side. That environment is not well suited for pedestrians and bicyclists. But there are other arterials that are an important link for pedestrians and bicyclists to destinations, not only in the downtown but in other districts as well. In those cases, the needs of the pedestrian and bicyclists should be balanced with the desire for moving traffic. (See side bar on following page).



Street Categories

- *Expressways* – the I-94 and US 131 freeways
- *Workhorse Arterials* – The workhorse term highlights the role of these streets as higher volume, higher speed routes to move commuter traffic and local trucks to major destinations within the city. The design of workhorse streets can vary as their functions changes. This classification includes the I-94 Business Route of King Highway and Stadium Drive, M-43 including West Main to Gull Road, and the major north-south streets, Park and Westnedge Streets.
- *Prime Collectors* – These collectors serve both neighborhoods and businesses or major institutions along them like larger schools. These roads should typically be designed for target speeds of 30-35 mph, with provision for bikes and pedestrians. Traffic volumes and speeds may be higher than the Neighborhood Collectors but lower than arterials. Trucks with destinations in or near the area are appropriate but through trucks should be discouraged.
- *Neighborhood Collectors* – These run through primarily residential areas. Volumes and speeds are relatively low, with a target speed of 25-30 mph. These streets should be equally accommodating to pedestrians and bicyclists as autos. Only trucks with destinations in the immediate area should be permitted.
- *Local Streets* – Make up the majority of streets in Kalamazoo. Speeds should be low (25 mph or less). Bikes should be able to use the street easily without the need for bike lanes. In some cases where local streets are parallel to an arterial or collector that does not have bike lanes, local streets could be signed as bike routes.

The Kalamazoo Street Network shown on Map 2: Transportation Plan is intended to promote the following:

- a network for autos including higher volume and higher speeds for commuters along a series of commuter routes.
- workhorse routes for trucks that connect the interstates with industrial areas and employment centers.
- a connected series of bike lanes and routes to connect with key destinations and link to non-motorized trails that provides access throughout the city.
- transit routes where ridership is the highest. Additional ridership could be encouraged by more compact and higher density development. These corridors also could be considered for transit-supportive improvements that give precedence to buses over autos, such as at signalized intersections.
- pedestrian-preferred corridors where sidewalks should be wider with additional amenities to separate pedestrians from autos and ease street crossings where pedestrian volumes are highest, such as in the downtown, near the university, college and schools, and where businesses with front entrances abut sidewalks.

Preserve, Enhance, Transform Corridors

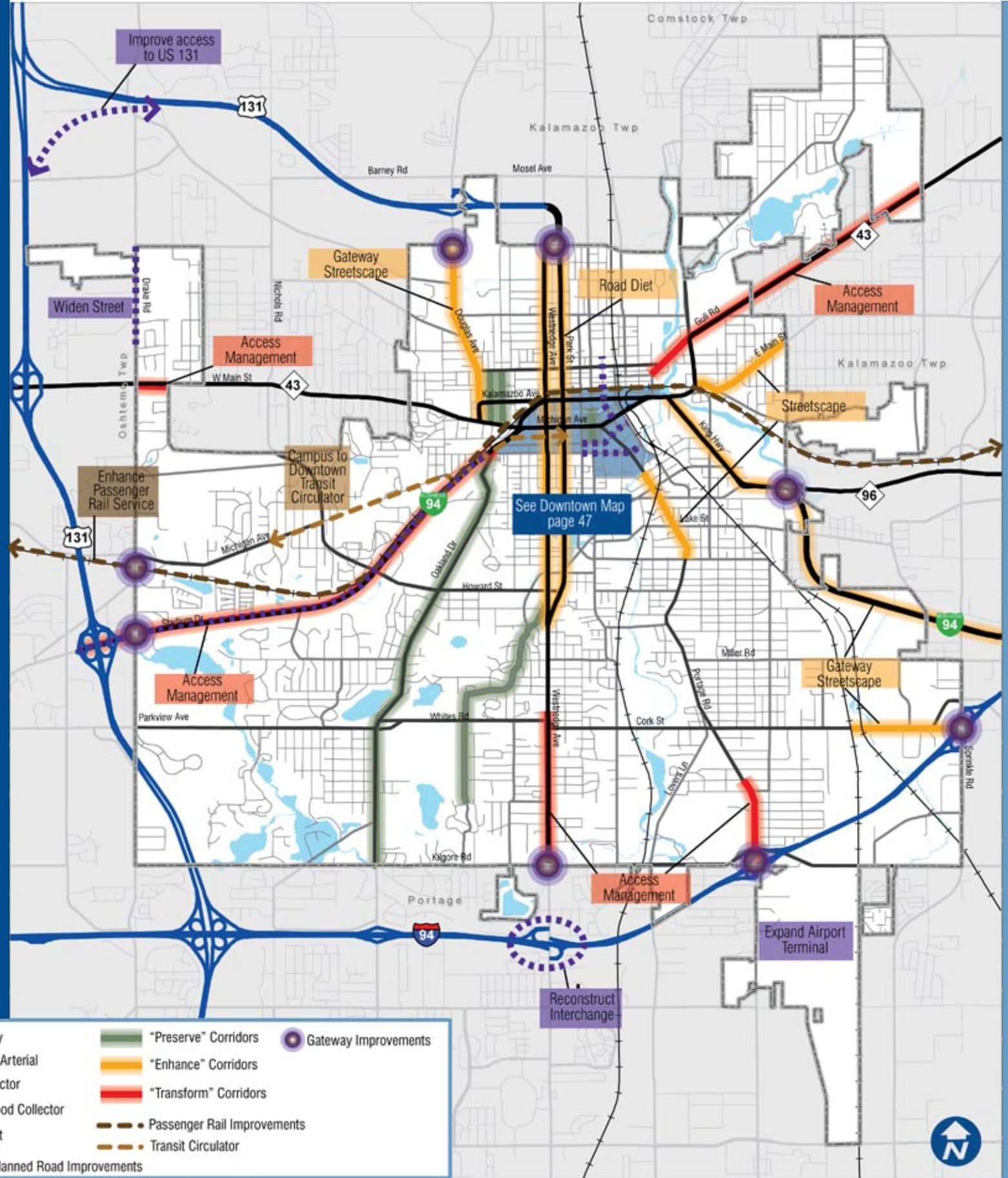
Design strategies for select streets are identified on Map 2 as noted below:

- *“Preserve” Corridors*: streets like Oakland, which pass through areas with important historic or natural features. Development should retain deep natural buffers along the corridors. Native vegetation in the right-of-way and natural stormwater systems can complement the natural setting.
- *“Enhance” Corridors*: segments where the city can continue its streetscape improvement program. This may include non-motorized amenities, street trees, decorative lighting, and other design treatments. In some cases, this could include a reduction in the number or width of travel lanes.
- *“Transform” Corridors*: In some cases, the workhorse arterials are lined by businesses with many driveways that provide important access but detract from the streets primary function to move traffic safely and efficiently. Corrective actions to reduce potential for crashes and restore capacity include consolidation of access points where separation does not meet “best practice” spacing standards, removal of access points in the operational area of intersections, or installation of a median.

Parking Management and Design

The city’s ordinances have generally followed the nationwide trend to reduce the amount of parking required rather than demand parking be designed to meet the needs of a “worst-day scenario.” A cap on the maximum parking allowed could be used where the city wants to encourage travel by other modes besides autos. Opportunities should be used to encourage shared use of parking lots by uses with different peak periods.

Parking lots can also be designed to be more sustainable, including use of pervious pavement, low energy lighting, innovative stormwater management, and priority parking for green vehicles or carpools.



	Expressway		"Preserve" Corridors		Gateway Improvements
	Workhorse Arterial		"Enhance" Corridors		
	Prime Collector		"Transform" Corridors		
	Neighborhood Collector		Passenger Rail Improvements		
	Local Street		Transit Circulator		
	Currently Planned Road Improvements				

Map 2: Transportation Plan

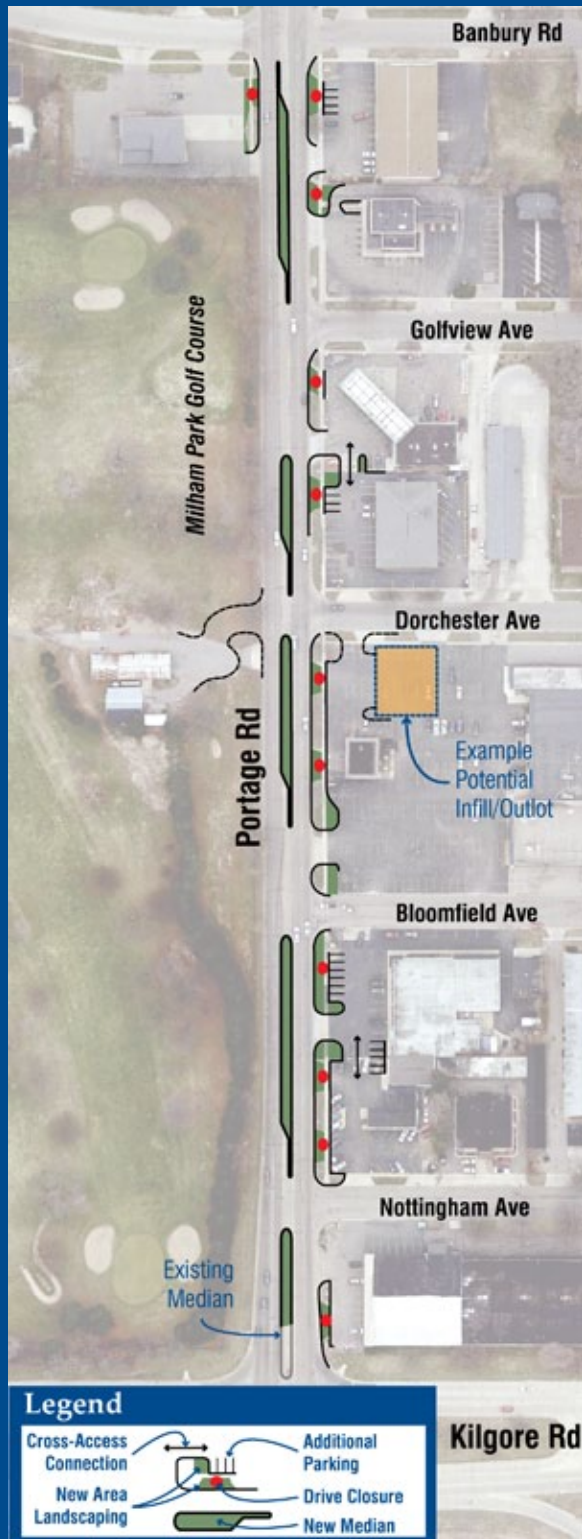


Sources: City of Kalamazoo, MCGI, KATS, Kalamazoo County, LSL Planning



C. Transportation Management and Safety

Example Correction Zone: South Portage Rd.



Compared to other similar cities, Kalamazoo is very safe for motorists and pedestrians. This is not by chance, but related to investment and innovative solutions implemented by the City, such as coordinated traffic signal systems and audible pedestrian crossings. This plan promotes a continued focus on actions to improve the safety and efficiency of the existing system, such as access management to reduce crash potential along streets with too many driveways, advanced traffic signal technology, and roundabouts, where appropriate.

Ways to optimize existing transportation systems and improve safety:

- *Access management:* preserving capacity and reducing crash potential through spacing and design of access points (driveways and intersections), and use of medians.
- *Improved technology:* the City is a leader in synchronization of traffic signals to improve traffic flow. It was also one of the first cities to install audible countdown pedestrian signals. Kalamazoo strives to remain at the forefront of technology.
- *Transportation Demand Management:* improving the city's transportation system requires maximizing the existing automobile facilities while directing more investment to alternate modes. Traveler choices strategies are critical to running an efficient multi-modal transportation system.
- *Roundabouts:* can be an alternative to stop control or traffic signals. A number of residents at public workshops indicated an interest in roundabouts. In some situations, roundabouts can remove congestion and decrease crash rates, though significantly more right-of-way is required at the intersection which

limits practical application in much of the city.

- *Medians:* studies have shown that medians can reduce crashes by up to 50% compared to a five-lane street, along with some improved capacity. In addition, medians can improve aesthetics and pedestrian crossings. Medians are most effective where there is sufficient right-of-way to accommodate truck turning movements and provide reasonable access to businesses.

Access Management

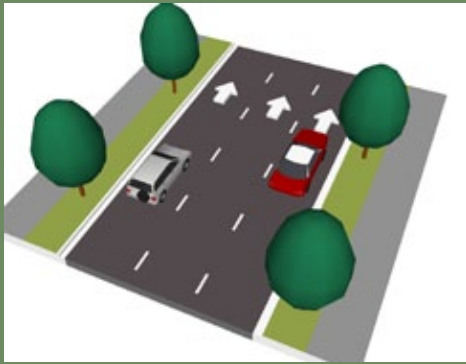
Numerous studies in Michigan and nationwide have shown that a proliferation of driveways or an uncontrolled driveway environment can significantly increase the number or severity of crashes (i.e. injuries and fatalities), reduce capacity of the street, and may create a need for more costly improvements in the future. Excessive access points also make streets less safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists. Kalamazoo has several streets where the number and location of access points have a noticeable influence on traffic flow, such as Westnedge and Stadium Drive.

One aspect of access management is to limit the number of driveways in the "operation area" of a signalized intersection (the area where autos are frequently stacked waiting at a traffic signal). Another focus is to promote good driveway spacing. This helps motorists locate access more easily and reduces the impact of turning vehicles on the flow of other vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. A third component is to reduce conflicts of turning vehicles by either aligning access points or ensuring they are adequately spaced (offset) from access on the other sides of the street.

Access management standards should be incorporated into the city's code. The

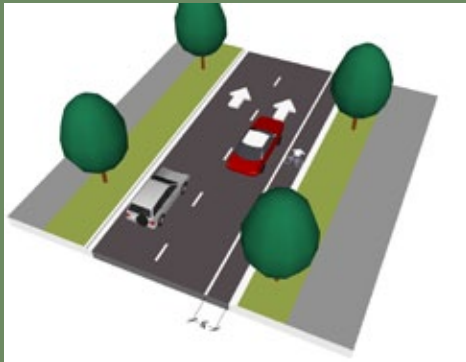
One-way Alternatives

Existing: One-way



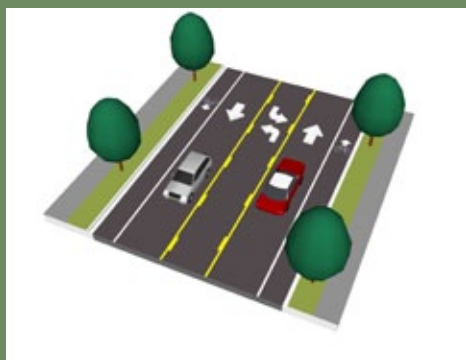
- Processes highest traffic volumes

One-way Road Diet



- “Diet” frees up space for a bike lane, wider sidewalks or on-street parking
- Fewer lanes calms traffic
- Easier pedestrian crossing
- Cost-effective
- Delay at intersections
- Reduced capacity

Two-way Conversion



- Eases wayfinding
- Slows traffic
- Improved business recruitment, access, and visibility
- Less capacity = more congestion
- More accidents
- Most costly to implement

MDOT standards could be applied, or regulations tailored to the typical situations in the city. This plan promotes access management implementation generally in two ways: as part of street reconstruction or improvement projects or interpretive application of access management standards as sites are developed or redeveloped. While this approach should be used along all major streets, it should be particularly focused on the street segments illustrated as transform corridors.

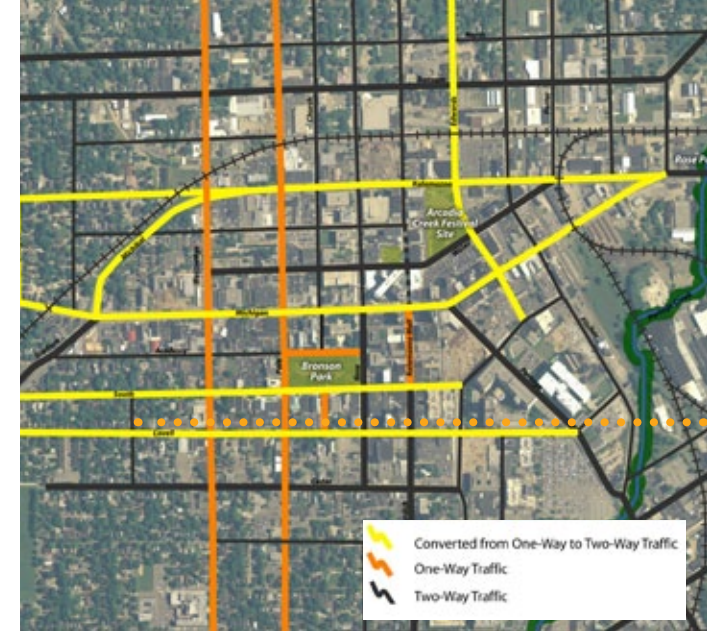
One-way Streets

The main north-south routes leading into the downtown, Westnedge and Park from I-94 to the south and that connect with BR US 131 from the north, and east-west Michigan and Kalamazoo, are one-way streets. In addition, several of the major streets in the downtown are one way. The city’s Downtown Master Plan recommends a conversion of the one-way streets to two-way. Edwards, S. Burdick, and Rose streets have already been converted.

In addition to streets downtown, the one-way pairs leading to downtown are arguably designed to move autos but detract from the quality of the adjacent land uses. A number of residents at workshops complained about blight and high speeds along these corridors.

The low volumes for the number of lanes may contribute to this perception. A conversion of those streets to two-way may not be practical nor desirable. But speeds could be reduced by removing a travel lane and replacing that lane with on-street parking, bike lanes, wider sidewalks, or additional greenspace.

Many other cities have evaluated conversion of their one-way streets



Recommendations for one-way conversions from the Downtown Plan

to two-way. Some have found the result would be unacceptable due to cost, increased congestion, and likely increase in crash rates. Others have found the benefits of improved wayfinding, and typically reduced vehicle speeds more than offset those impacts. Participants in this master plan process expressed both support and opposition to conversion of one-way streets to two-way, though most supported conversion of at least some streets. Some of the considerations are listed at left.

Strategy

Enhance safety and reduce traffic congestion along major streets by investing in technology and design changes.

D. Non-Motorized Transportation

Kalamazoo's network of non-motorized facilities includes the streets, pathways, sidewalks, and other facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized travel. The goal is a safe and attractive non-motorized network for walking and bicycling, as an alternative to the automobile. Benefits include reduced congestion, fewer emissions,

Strategy

Make it comfortable and easy for people to walk and bicycle throughout the city.

Elements of a comprehensive non-motorized network

- Roads: Roads shared by cyclists and pedestrians
- Bike lanes: Portions of road dedicated for bicyclists, by striping, pavement markings and signage
- Bike routes: Roads given a preferred designation for cyclists through wayfinding signs
- Walkways: Pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks and paths
- Shared Use Paths or Trails: Facilities physically separated from the road by a buffer or physical barrier - may be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, runners, etc.

and a healthier population. Expanding non-motorized connections is a high priority for residents and city leaders.

When complete, Kalamazoo's non-motorized network will be accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities, although not every facility will serve the various users equally. For example, while a skilled cyclist may feel very comfortable and safe using a bike lane on a major road with high traffic volumes, a less-skilled cyclist or a novice cyclist may need a separate bike path or shared bike/pedestrian path along such a road to feel the same level of comfort.

This goal to serve different user needs makes implementation more complicated. Generally in-road bike lanes or designated bike paths are safer than separate pathways because motorists are more aware of riders at intersections. But the more casual user usually prefers riding on local neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes. The non-motorized approach in this plan acknowledges the needs of both user categories.

The success and benefit of a non-motorized system hinges on the degree to which it connects existing non-motorized facilities inside the city to trails and linkages outside the city.



A citywide non-motorized network should seek to connect neighborhoods to commercial nodes, open space and recreation destinations, cultural and educational amenities, and job centers. A separate, more detailed, street-by-street recommendation could further assist decisionmakers.

Construction of non-motorized facilities should be coordinated with other projects to save time and resources whenever possible. Areas for bike parking should be provided on site plans, in parking lots, and at prime parking structure locations. The bike racks could have a distinct, Kalamazoo-related design.

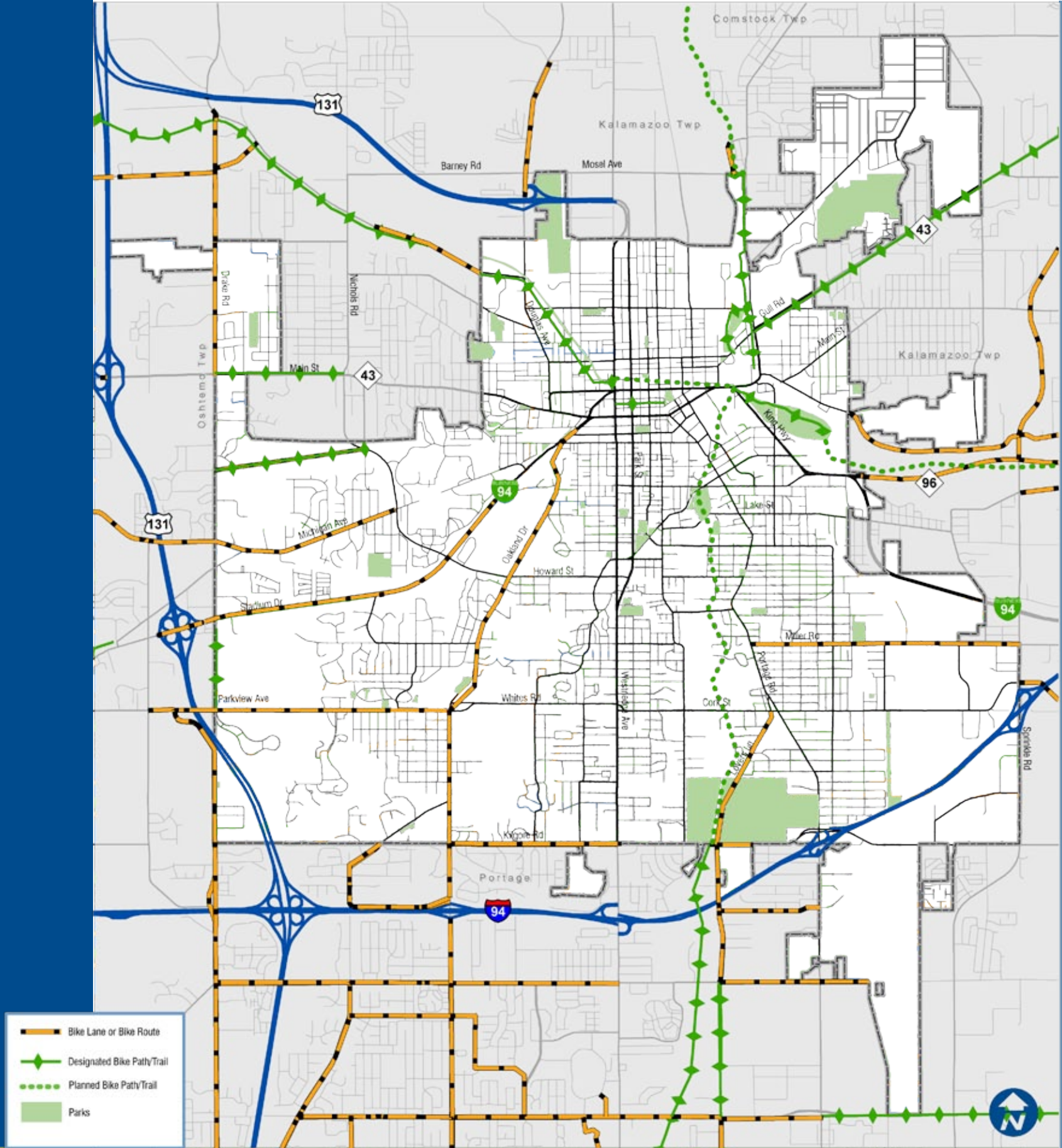
A number of organizations and agencies are involved in development of the region's non-motorized network, including the Friends of the River Valley Trail, Southwest Michigan Area Recreational Trails Group, KATS, the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County, and KCRC. One example is the planned connection of the Kal-Haven Trail to WMU and Kalamazoo College.

Bike Lane on Oakland Dr.



Benefits of Non-motorized Transportation

- Provides connections between homes, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.
- Improves pedestrian and cyclist safety by reducing potential crashes between motorized and non-motorized users.
- Encourages walking and bicycling, with corresponding health and fitness benefits.
- Can help ease transportation problems by increasing the transportation network's overall capacity and reducing congestion.
- Provides options to make fewer driving trips, resulting in savings on operation and maintenance of motor vehicles.
- Pedestrian and bike-friendly downtowns have enhanced economic vitality.
- Supports sustainability goals and objectives by advocating a reduction in fuel use and a corresponding reduction in air pollution and carbon emissions.



Map 3: Non-motorized Connections



Sources: City of Kalamazoo, MCGI, KATS, Kalamazoo County, LSL Planning



Strategy

Enhance/expand Kalamazoo's transit system to support viable alternatives to driving.

Strategy

Improve regional transportation by enhancing passenger rail and/or providing high speed rail service between Detroit and Chicago.



The Intermodal Transfer Center was constructed in 2006 outside the historic train station

E. Transit

The Kalamazoo Metro Transit System (Metro Transit), established in 1967 provides inter and intra-city bus services within the Kalamazoo urbanized area. The public transportation system in the Kalamazoo metro area includes fixed route services in the city and more urbanized surrounding areas, ADA demand response service complementary to the fixed route system, and countywide demand response service offering curb-to-curb transportation on a shared ride basis.

Metro County Connect service specializes in service for seniors and individuals with physical, mental, emotional, and economic challenges. In the past, service was also provided through Western Michigan University, but at the time this plan was prepared, the university contracted with a private operator for service through the campus.

Generally, scheduled bus headways (the time between buses) are 30 to 60 minutes. A number of residents that participated in public workshops expressed a desire for more frequent service. Transit operations are expected to continue with funding from passenger fares, federal and state grants, a countywide millage, and service



contracts in the service area.

Opportunity to increase bus frequency and add routes is dependent upon ridership levels and funding available. As currently financed, the vast majority of capital funding comes from federal and state grants and programs, with operating costs split between passenger fares, special local property tax levies, and state and federal operating assistance. Ridership can be increased through arrangement of higher density residential along main transit corridors designed to be transit friendly. Transit-friendly features include buildings close to the street, building entrances convenient to bus stops, and pedestrian amenities along the street, such as shelters, benches, and shade trees.

New technology may provide real time information on bus arrivals either at stations or via mobile phones to make transit a more convenient choice. Other possible improvements identified through the master plan process included a more seamless connection with the county-wide service, a dedicated transit circulator between Western Michigan University and the downtown, and a unified system that also services the campus.

Amtrak Service

Kalamazoo is on the Amtrak passenger train route that connects Detroit with Chicago. Ridership has generally been modest with fluctuations of higher use, particularly when gas prices soar. Frequent delays, due in part to the priority given to freight trains, likely impact ridership. Service along the route is spotty, with a high percentage of trains off-schedule. A higher speed, more reliable service would be a tremendous asset for the city's residents and businesses. After many years of discussion, in 2010 federal funding was earmarked to study improvements and begin some upgrades toward a much needed higher-speed service.

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport

The Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, located on Portage Road south of I-94 provides both commercial and general aviation services to the southwestern Michigan area. The airport facilities are owned and operated by Kalamazoo County. These facilities support other services including instructional flight schools, corporate aircraft facilities, flying clubs, the Kalamazoo Air Zoo, military operations and charter and air ambulance services. At the time this plan was prepared, the airport had just initiated an update of its own master plan. Anticipated improvements included construction of a new aircraft rescue and fire fighting/snow removal equipment building, development of additional general aviation service and storage areas, parking lot improvements, and removal of outdated buildings and infrastructure.

F. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is an important, though almost invisible, part of the city's foundation. Infrastructure includes the underground utilities (water, sanitary and storm sewer system), and energy resources (publically franchised electric and gas service). Electronic infrastructure, like WIFI technology, will become an important part of the city's utility system in the future. This section provides an overview of the city's infrastructure system. More detailed information is in the appendix and in a number of separately published studies.

Water and Sanitary Sewer

Kalamazoo's water reclamation plant is located on the Kalamazoo River. The plant treats wastewater from other nearby areas. With aging sewers, there will be a continuing need to maintain and improve facilities, especially within the city.

The City of Kalamazoo Public Water Supply System is the second largest groundwater based system in Michigan, averaging 20 million gallons per day, and serves as the primary source of drinking water in the region, contracting with 10 units of government. Currently, it operates 98 wells in 17 wellfields and water pumping stations across the region, and has eight water storage facilities. This system is classified as a "limited treatment" system, adding chlorine as a disinfectant, fluoride for dental health, and a phosphate to help sequester the iron contained in the groundwater and reduce potential for pipe corrosion.

A "Kalamazoo Area Water Strategic Plan" is the general planning tool for capital projects, water related programs, and water quality improvement efforts. The City owns property in Ross Township and Oshtemo Township for

future wellfield sites if needed.

Many recommendations in the 1998 Master Plan to help ensure the quality of drinking water, called wellhead protection, have been implemented. The City completed delineations of where wellhead protection areas, defined as "time-of-travel capture zones," where contaminants could move toward and eventually impact the wellfields. A Wellhead Protection Zoning Overlay Ordinance used through site plan review was adopted along with "Performance Standards for Groundwater Quality within Wellhead Protection Capture Zones and Stormwater Quality Management." Those efforts, along with continuing public education and outreach campaign, have led to recognition of the city by the Groundwater Foundation as a Groundwater Guardian Community annually since 1998.

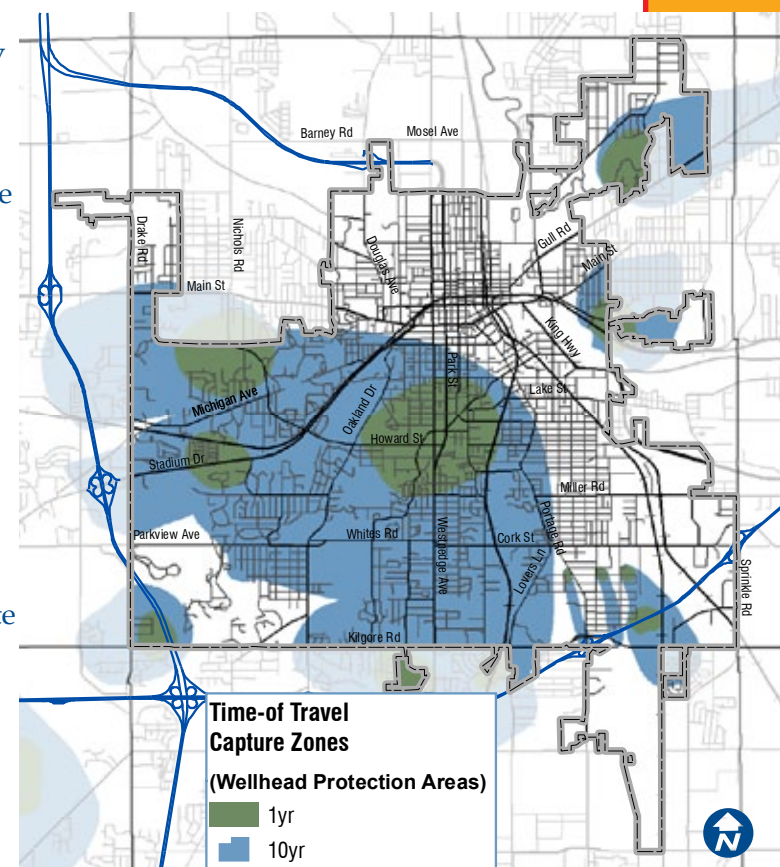
Since more than half of the wellhead protection areas are located outside city limits, it is imperative that the other jurisdictions adopt either the City's or similar wellhead protection ordinances and performance standards to minimize risk from chemical releases, spills, or leaks. Ongoing intergovernmental coordination continues to work toward that regional approach.

Stormwater

Federal requirements in the last few years have expanded stormwater regulations to include not just controls over the amount of stormwater runoff, but also the quality. Unlike many Michigan cities, Kalamazoo has separate sanitary and storm sewer systems, so federally mandated improvements are focused on management and prevention, rather than construction of costly infrastructure reconstruction.

The City's programs to prevent pollution associated with stormwater runoff and illicit discharge into storm sewers are noted in the appendix. The city has also been a partner in the development and implementation of the watershed managements plans for the Portage and Arcadia Creeks and the Kalamazoo River Mainstem.

One major challenge of the stormwater program is the lack of funding available for proactive and routine maintenance of its stormwater collection system, such as cleaning and routine maintenance. Most City staff activity responds to trouble spots, due to limited resources. In response to these challenges, the City is exploring the feasibility of a stormwater utility and other means to more effectively address the needs of its stormwater collection system. Fees could be based on several



Wellhead Protection Zones

components. For instance, the amount of impervious surface could be reduced if owners reduce their stormwater contributions using best management practices, such as incorporating naturalized infiltration where possible and appropriate.

Low Impact Development

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to development aimed at conserving natural resources and protecting the environment by strategically managing rainfall close to its source, minimizing impervious coverage, using native plant species, and conserving and restoring natural areas during site development or redevelopment. Design techniques are focused on the use of applications that are modeled after nature, rather than building costly infrastructure and water quality restoration systems. LID can be applied to open spaces, rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians.

The monetary cost of implementing LID varies by location and the extent of application. On a community-wide scale, long-term capital savings are captured by reducing the need for costly storm sewer systems and hardscape detention areas.

Electronic Infrastructure

In the past, most discussions about municipal infrastructure were related to water, sewer, and energy utilities. More recently, stormwater management has become an important part of infrastructure planning. But in the last decade, electronic infrastructure has become increasingly important. Technology is viewed as an important service to attract and retain both residents and businesses. It is particularly

important in Kalamazoo with its focus on education, health care and knowledge-based industries.

A municipal wireless (WiFi) or fiber optic network can provide relatively affordable internet access to citizens and schools. Such technology can also support economic development efforts by making Kalamazoo more attractive to tourists and businesses. WiFi networks can entice businesses to locate downtown and make convention centers more desirable. However, WiFi is a large-scale undertaking that requires capital investment and a commitment of personnel. Kalamazoo must explore ways to build a wireless network that makes economic sense while addressing the current and future needs of the broadest range of public access, public works, and public safety applications.

There are also many technology opportunities related to transportation, including in-vehicle information, signs, and web-based information. The city currently has a fairly sophisticated system to synchronize traffic signals to smooth traffic flow. Emerging technology includes items such as detectors, which determine the presence of pedestrians and vehicles every cycle and adjusts signal time accordingly. Information sharing can be improved to help motorists avoid incidents or construction zones.

Information on available parking downtown can be provided through signs on the number of spaces available and up-to-date information made available to motorists. This could reduce travel and emissions for motorists searching for parking places. If alternative fuel vehicles, like electric vehicles or personal

Kalamazoo must continue to keep up with emerging technology infrastructure, allowing its businesses, schools, educational institutions, hospitals, and governmental agencies to remain competitive in an ever changing economic environment.

travel pods, become a mode of choice in the future, the city's electronic grid may need to be upgraded. For example, charging stations could be provided at key locations in parking lots. The level of technology advancement will be influenced by fuel costs and the level of concern or funding associated with greenhouse gas emissions. If gas prices soar, or alternative travel is promoted through federal funding, technology will play an important part in how the city is able to respond.

G. Actions

The following actions are reorganized with actions from other chapters in the Action Table in Chapter 6. The letter and number in parentheses following each action indicates its location in the Action Table.

Non-Motorized

Require bike racks for certain new, non-single family developments and promote installation of bike racks at key locations. (R6)

Continue to offer and refine flexible road design standards that support walking, biking, and are designed to promote driving at speeds appropriate for the setting rather than the typical design for higher speeds than intended. (R16)

Increase pedestrian connectivity standards for private development to ensure safe and pedestrian routes and walks are provided for new construction and expansion efforts. (R25)

Continue to install sidewalks, bike lanes, bike paths, and greenway trails to complete the citywide and regional system. (C2)

Prioritize civic investment on those projects that do the most to support pedestrian mobility (trails, walks, bike lanes). (C8)

Prepare a more detailed non-motorized plan with priorities for connections between neighborhoods, employment areas, schools, businesses districts, and bus stops. (C9)

Complete upgrade of traffic signals and pedestrian crossings to current ADA standards. (C15)

Improve the walking and biking routes to school to create a safer environment for children (funding possibilities through Safe Routes to School). (PR24)

Identify key non-motorized routes for bike lanes so there is a complete network comprised of dedicated bike lanes along certain streets, signed bike routes along neighborhood connectors and the off-road bike trails. (PR25)

Infrastructure

Continue to implement stormwater management improvements recommended in the Watershed Management Plans. (R13)

Advocate for a regional wellhead protection ordinance and performance standards. (R14)

Develop and implement Low Impact Development (LID) guidelines for both private development and public infrastructure projects that minimize impacts on soil and water resources, sensitive ecological features, and wildlife. (R21)

Develop storm water management guidelines that exceed national clean water requirements. (R22)

Continue to apply a wellhead protection program around the city's water wells including improvements when opportunities arise and prevention of potentially harmful land uses and activities in sensitive areas. (C5)

Transportation Management and Safety

Add access management regulations to close or consolidate closely spaced business driveways as opportunities arise, particularly in correction corridors, to reduce crash potential, improve traffic flow, and reduce conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists. (R17)

Explore and pursue opportunities for using alternative fuels and hybrid or electric vehicles in city fleets. (C7)

Seek revisions to the KATS Long Range Transportation Plan to include new recommendations of this Master Plan update. (P4)

Street Improvements

Offer incentives to encourage green development (density, tax incentives, reduced parking requirements, etc). (R11)

Integrate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (i.e. natural surveillance, natural access control and natural territorial reinforcement) into site development standards and public infrastructure projects. (R12)

Refine city ordinances to ensure that private property – commercial businesses, housing complexes, etc. provide appropriate levels of lighting for user safety and comfort, including maintenance. Use of energy efficient lighting could also be promoted. (R19)

Enhance the comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program. (C3)

Explore lighting technologies, such as induction and LED lighting (new and retrofits) and timing systems for municipal energy, cost and labor savings. (C4)

Increase lighting for cars and pedestrians including maintenance and repair of existing lights and installation of new lights along streets and in public areas currently below light level guidelines. (C6)

Create gateway treatments at key entrance points into the city. (C10)

Supplement existing wayfinding signs to help direct travelers to major destinations. (C11)

Improve right-of-way access aesthetics along routes to and through industrial districts to support business attraction efforts. (C12)

Employ on-street parking and elements like curb bump outs to help control traffic speeds. (C13)

Evaluate installation of a narrow median along Westnedge Avenue similar to the median installed in the City of Portage just south of the city limits. (C14)

Evaluate installation of a narrow median along South Portage Street to improve this entrance to the city. (C16)

Begin process to design a median for part of Stadium Drive to improve aesthetics and traffic conditions. (C17)

Coordinate school expansions and improvements with city zoning and infrastructure improvements. (P11)

Work with MDOT and adjacent communities to upgrade the appearance along corridors that connect the city with interchanges. (P14)

Transit

Collaborate with other Michigan cities, MDOT, and interest groups on potential high-speed upgrades to Amtrak Service through southern Michigan along the Chicago to Ann Arbor/Detroit line. (P15)

Provide zoning incentives for compact or mixed-use developments that locate along major bus routes, and have financial programs to encourage employees to use transit. (PR37)

Chapter 5

QUALITY OF LIFE
and Sustainability



A. Introduction

Quality of life can be described as how satisfied an individual is with their community, and how well it fits their “happiness needs.” Several national publications annually review and rate the best (and worst) places to live. Rankings include a range of factors, such as access to a clean and healthy environment, quality education, financial security, ample and accessible employment opportunities, a diversity of entertainment, cultural, and recreational amenities, and availability of quality health care. Cities perceived to have a good quality of life are typically safe, have available jobs and good schools, plenty of access to parks, a clean environment, and abundant cultural and entertainment opportunities.

Those types of quality of life indicators are important to the future and stability of Kalamazoo. A high quality of life in Kalamazoo will help attract businesses and potential residents to sustain the vitality and diversity of its economy. People living or growing up in a Kalamazoo that they see as being a great place to live are more likely to stay in the city throughout their lives and give back to the community, further enriching it.

Quality of life relates to nearly every aspect of a city’s master plan. This chapter focuses on five topics: culture and entertainment, education and academic institutions, safety and health, parks and natural systems, and sustainable initiatives. Each of those topics is featured on the following pages.

Key Issues, Trends, and Opportunities

- Continued population and employment decline, as noted in the Marketplace chapter, not only impact the vitality of the city but also increase the financial burden on current residents and business to pay for facilities and services created for a larger city.
- Existing parks and open spaces are a valued resource in Kalamazoo that need to be maintained and protected.
- Stream and river corridors provide an opportunity to connect disjointed open space and improve non-motorized transportation in the city and region.
- Environmental clean-up of the city’s contaminated industrial sites is ongoing; however continued efforts to improve soil and water quality will ensure the city’s environmental health.
- Kalamazoo and its downtown are the economic and cultural center of the metro area, but there is a need for more indoor and outdoor programmed facilities to attract a broader diversity of users.
- The Kalamazoo Promise helps retain and attract students to help stabilize school enrollment, but more collaboration between the school district and the City is needed.
- Consistent with national and statewide trends, obesity rates are rising.
- Participants in the public workshops indicated concern and dissatisfaction with “security” in the city.
- Momentum and interest for increased local food production and additional farmers markets calls for a coordinated strategy of programs, activities, and facilities.

Overall, a more coordinated, regional approach is needed to address those issues and take full advantage of these opportunities to achieve the Quality of Life Vision. Some of the recommendations in this chapter are within the purview of the City, but most require an expansion of partnerships with non-profit organizations, educational institutions, private sector leaders, and community officials.

Quality of Life Vision

Quality of life in Kalamazoo is upheld and enhanced by exceptional access to parks, natural areas, daily needs, culture and leisure activities, connections to major institutions, and a healthy and safe environment that brings people together.

Key Sustainable Strategies

- Minimize energy consumption.
- Promote green development practices.
- Expand local food opportunities.
- Encourage community gardening.
- Support Farmer’s Markets.
- Enhance waste management
- Pursue brownfield remediation.
- Strengthen access to greenspace.

In This Chapter

- A. Introduction
- B. Cultural and Entertainment Resources
- C. Education and Academic Institutions
- D. Safety and Health
- E. Parks and Natural Systems
- F. Sustainable Initiatives

B. Cultural and Entertainment Resources

Culture and entertainment is an important part of a community's quality of life. Cultural amenities include museums, historic resources, a wealth of ethnic influences, and access to the arts. Cultural resources shape the character of the city, and a shared understanding of the past and future reinforces a sense of community. Entertainment resources, like performance venues, restaurants, night-life, and other attractions help bring people together, contribute to vibrant and successful city districts, and attract outside visitors and investment. Cultural and entertainment resources also attract a diverse population to the city.

Most participants of master plan workshops indicated they were very satisfied with culture and entertainment opportunities in the city. But there was also great interest to improve the range of cultural and entertainment resources and to provide better access to these resources for all residents.

Expanding Cultural and Entertainment Options

Residents desire additional venues for arts, entertainment, and events. Expansion of cultural and entertainment resources will help attract a broader demographic of new residents and businesses to Kalamazoo.

Downtown's role as the city's primary cultural destination, as outlined in the 2009 Downtown Plan, would be supported through the development of a new entertainment venue in downtown accessible to college students, nearby residents, and neighborhoods. The Arcadia Commons West Project and possible event center is an example of a comprehensive community development proposal that could benefit the region but also needs to minimize negative impacts on the nearby neighborhoods.

New venues that draw from a citywide or regional market should be directed downtown; smaller venues that draw primarily from the nearby neighborhoods should be directed to commercial nodes and park spaces within

walking distance. Locations in or adjacent to parks create a focal point for community or neighborhood gatherings.

Historic Preservation and Heritage Programs

Historic preservation connects people to the city's local history and protects important landmarks, culturally historic, and exceptional built features. Historic preservation in Kalamazoo improves property values and enhances the experience of living and working in the city. Kalamazoo's unique history and quality historical structures and districts is further enhanced by educational and entertaining tours and activities sponsored by city and regional agencies and associations (i.e. Historic Home Tours, Ghost Tour of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo River Heritage Water Trail, Celery Flats Interpretive Program). In addition to continuing to protect historic assets, increased efforts should be made to raise the public's awareness of historic resources and encourage potential tourist opportunities.

Promoting a Regional Destination

Already known in the region as a lively, unique, and interesting destination, increased organization, coordination, and promotion of current and expanded cultural, entertainment and heritage opportunities will further strengthen Kalamazoo's position as a destination for visitors, residents, and businesses.

One way to accomplish this is to promote a "chain" of destinations for visitors to Kalamazoo College, Western Michigan University, the arena, the Air Zoo, and downtown conferences. From a physical design standpoint, upgrades to the appearance along entry routes will help entice visitors to return.

Strategy

Reinforce Kalamazoo's position as a regional entertainment and cultural destination.

During the master plan workshops, the majority of participants indicated they were very satisfied with culture and entertainment opportunities in the city.





C. Education and Academic Institutions

“K through Grey” Lifelong Learning

Preschool

K-8

High School

Higher
Education

Adult Ed

Senior
Programs

Quality of education has a strong bearing on a community's quality of life. A strong and successful school system is a significant consideration when attracting new residents and businesses. A well-educated public helps grow the economy by starting new businesses and entrepreneurial efforts. Similarly, the city's numerous academic institutions provide a stable source of jobs, help attract research and technology businesses, increase cultural events, welcome visitors, and attract students to the city who may stay after graduation.

The Kalamazoo Promise, along with the State of Michigan's challenging economy, has raised community awareness of the importance of educating Kalamazoo's residents. During the master plan workshops, fewer than half of the participants indicated that they were satisfied with the current education system in Kalamazoo. Increased collaboration, support and promotion of Kalamazoo's “K through Grey” lifelong learning systems will strengthen the city's academic performance, improve work force skills, enhance quality of life, and help Kalamazoo attain its goal of becoming the “Education Community.”

Public input during the master planning process indicated that there is a sense of disconnect between the city and universities

Many noted Kalamazoo did not “feel like a college town” since student activities are separated from downtown and the city does not appear to benefit fully from the student population.

Higher Education Collaboration

Administrations of major academic institutions and city leaders have collaborated on a variety of “high level” efforts over the years. However, communication at the next level could be improved with a more formal group focused on opportunities to better connect university students and faculty to the city, downtown, and its many resources. Increased collaboration is recommended through the creation of a formal organized task force, comprised of higher education representatives and city leaders that will provide a setting for proactive joint planning and encourage shared land use strategies, improved pedestrian and vehicular connectivity and optimized resource sharing.

The 2009 Kalamazoo Downtown Plan promotes a stronger transit connection between student centers and the downtown to help support local business and connect students with the city.

K-12 Schools

Continuing to support the school district and K-12 education in the region will be vital for Kalamazoo's long-term success. In addition to strong post-secondary institutions, innovative programs like the Kalamazoo Promise (see *Chapter 2: Marketplace*), encourage K-12 students to continue their education, attracting new residents and businesses. As results of the

Kalamazoo Promise are evaluated, there may be opportunities to include a pre-school element or incentives for local internships, community service, or enrollment at Western Michigan University.

Beyond the Traditional Classroom

Strong educational programs go beyond classroom learning to creatively impact the community. Programs that increase graduation rates and academic performance, provide apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses, and improve vocational and lifelong learning opportunities should be supported and expanded. In addition, opportunities to enhance school building and property use outside of school hours for events or as public open space may be explored.

Creating a culture of education is more than just supporting formal education. Incorporating interpretative signage or hands-on exhibits into the public realm can raise people's awareness or understanding of aspects of their community and can encourage greater stewardship. Partnerships with non-profits, nature centers, foundations, and other agencies should be sought to support educational programs and activities for all ages. Kalamazoo already boosts these types of programs like the Kalamazoo Public Library's Reading Together program. These programs can have wide appeal across jurisdictional boundaries, appeal to a broad audience, and increase a shared sense of community in the Kalamazoo area.

Strategy

Refine partnerships between the city, its academic institutions, and employment leaders to promote a skilled workforce and build the “education community.”

D. Safety and Health

Public safety and security is important for a vibrant Kalamazoo future and high quality of life. Public safety includes having adequate police and fire protection, minimizing the appearance and effects of blight, and ensuring that the physical design of the public realm does not pose an additional risk to residents. While there is sufficient fire and police service, security was among the most important topics and had among the highest level of concern by master plan workshop participants, suggesting that additional security related improvements are necessary.

Outdoor Safety

According to some residents, poor public lighting along streets and in public spaces poses a safety and comfort risk in certain areas of the city. Lighting improvements should be focused along major corridors, especially those with higher levels of non-motorized traffic and off-street trails. Street lighting should be designed to adequately light pedestrian zones as well as provide lighting for motorized traffic.

New lighting systems should prioritize options that reduce light pollution effects (i.e. projects light downwards) and that are more energy efficient, in order to save the city money and contribute towards sustainability objectives.

There is a perceived connection between vacant and abandoned property and safety risks (see *Chapter 3: Neighborhoods and Land Use* for vacant property strategies). Neighborhood Watch and other programs can help

encourage safety and increase the sense of stewardship and commitment residents have for their neighborhoods.

Healthy Lifestyles

Health and wellbeing are essential characteristics of a high quality of life. Health typically refers to the physical and mental health of the community and is influenced by access to sufficient levels of medical care and services, a clean environmental setting, and active lifestyles. Wellbeing includes additional factors, such as access to the outdoors, opportunities to connect with other residents, and access to recreational amenities.

Currently, residents in Kalamazoo are well served by existing health care facilities, including Borgess and Bronson hospitals, which provide excellent medical service to the community. The hospitals, health-related organizations, and private fitness centers all contribute toward improved community health, but there is a need to promote more active lifestyles. The City can support this through physical improvements (i.e. sidewalks, shared use paths, bikelanes, see *Chapter 4: Transportation*) that make it easier to walk and bike and through land use arrangements that create convenient destinations and places to go. Coordinated educational efforts and programming are just as important as physical improvements, such as promoting safe walking to school and expanding opportunities to partner with the Kalamazoo Nature Center's "No Child Left Inside" program.



A neighborhood-led initiative to install a spray park in the Northside Neighborhood encourages active youth lifestyles

Strategy

Promote healthy and active lifestyles and ensure that neighborhoods and districts within the city are safe and comfortable for residents and visitors.



E. Parks and Natural Systems

Parks and natural systems, such as river corridors, forests, and wetlands, play a vital role in defining the city’s quality of life. Public parks and other open spaces provide access to the outdoors for passive or active recreation. These recreational amenities encourage the healthy lifestyles described on the previous page and help retain and attract residents. High quality and healthy natural systems also help protect public health with clean water, uncontaminated soils, and diverse wildlife and plant communities.

Strategy

Actively pursue the preservation, conservation and restoration of Kalamazoo’s natural areas.



Recreational Enhancements

Kalamazoo boasts a number of significant parks and natural areas. Shrinking financial resources have created challenges for needed maintenance, improvements and expansion of these facilities and spaces (identified in the Kalamazoo 2009 Parks and Recreation Plan). Increased coordination between local and county parks agencies and the City of Kalamazoo will help prioritize and optimize park enhancements that best meet the residents’ needs.

Open Space and Natural Systems Stewardship

Open spaces in Kalamazoo include city parks as well as other privately owned lands that contain natural systems such as woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains. Regardless of ownership, the protection and restoration of these open spaces and systems provide environmental benefits and contribute to the city’s overall quality of life.

[Click here to View the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.](#)



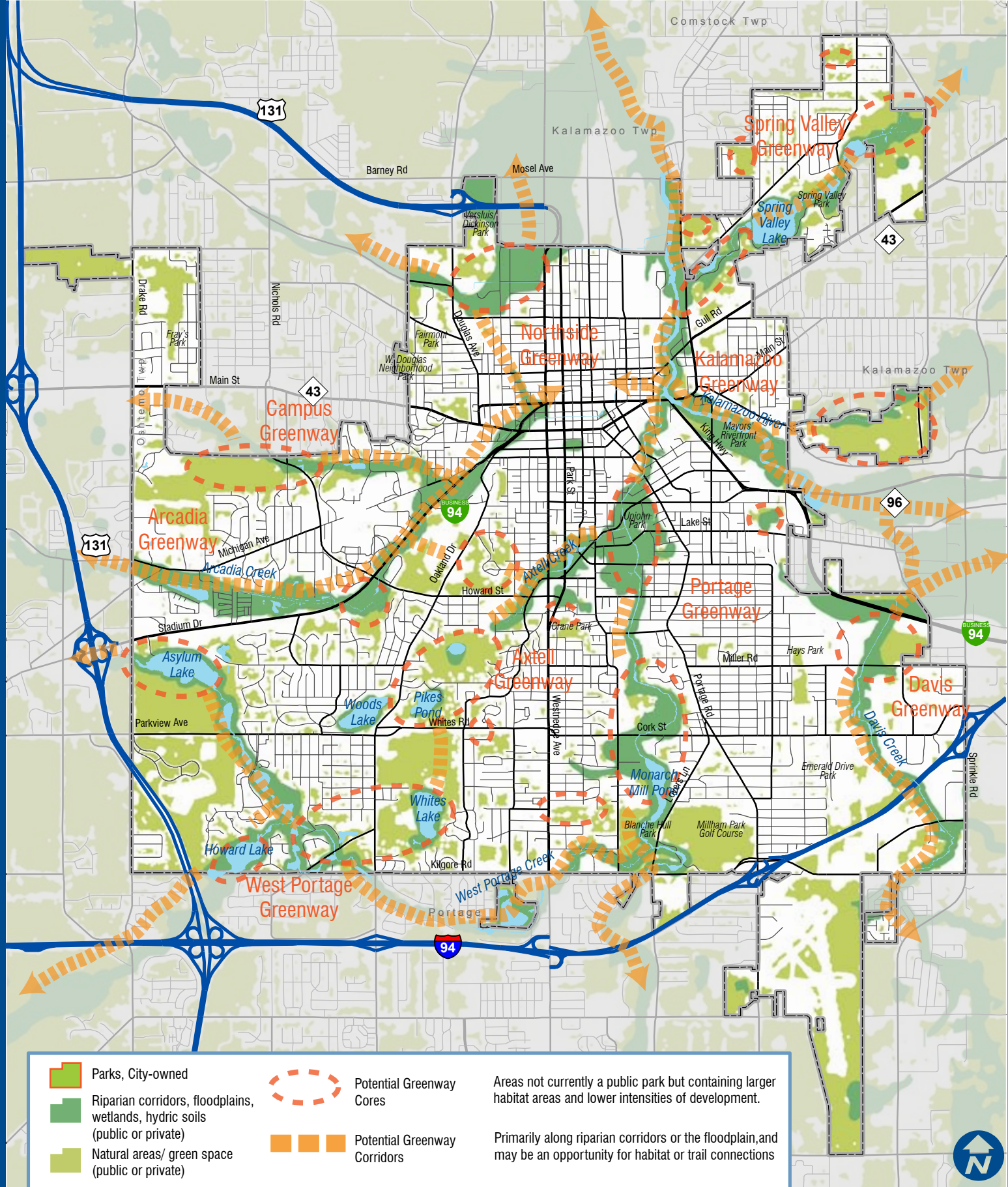
Greenway Development

Kalamazoo’s most significant natural feature, the Kalamazoo River, along with its tributary stream and creeks, provide the framework for a comprehensive greenway system that will increase recreational opportunities, expand non-motorized options, and increase access and visibility to the city’s water resources. The development of a greenway system will also provide opportunities to connect habitat, restore natural buffers, and protect and/or improve water quality. Map 4 shows many existing natural areas, major creeks (i.e. Portage, Axtell, Davis) and tributaries, and areas of floodplain that might be included as part of a citywide greenway plan. Data for the map is based on high level aerial photo analysis done by the state and depicts generalized areas. The boundaries are not exact and are used to identify large-scale landscape patterns

Elements of an Open Space and Greenway Plan

While the City maintains a park and recreation master plan, there is no overall plan for open space and greenways. The general plan depicted could be the foundation for a more detailed evaluation. If embraced by the community, this could not only help guide decisions, but may encourage benefactors to contribute toward implementation.

- Identifies and prioritizes ecological habitats and sensitive areas
- Establishes links to on-street, non-motorized routes
- Recommends riparian buffers with greenway trails
- Connects to open space, major cultural and recreational resources, downtown, and regional trail systems
- Benchmarks coordination activities of agencies, institutions, the public and business
- Classifies sites for major preservation, conservation and restoration
- Prioritizes construction of greenway improvements
- Stimulates potential funding through grants, private sector, and foundations



Map 4: Open Space Framework Plan



Sources: City of Kalamazoo, MCGI, MI GDL 2006
Land Cover, Kalamazoo County, JJR



F. Sustainable Initiatives

A sustainable city is one that addresses the "triple bottom line" of environmental health, economic vitality, and social equity. These issues are interrelated with the success of one hinging on the success of the others to ensure that Kalamazoo remains a vibrant city for current and future generations. Individual sustainability initiatives help improve the environment locally and globally, provide expanded opportunities for community stewardship and collaboration, and make the economy more resilient and self-sufficient.

Minimize Energy Consumption

Energy is used in a number of ways, including electricity for powering homes, businesses, and street lighting; electricity, gas, or steam for heating; fuel for transportation vehicles and other equipment; and power for municipal services. Increasingly, communities are becoming aware of the global and local environmental impacts of using energy derived from fossil fuels. In response, many are pursuing ways to better utilize alternative energy technologies and greener fuel sources. Measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce consumption can benefit the economy by reducing energy expenses and shifting reliance on resources in other countries to

The People's Food Co-op will be relocating to a new facility in the Riverfront Redevelopment Area

renewable resources closer to home.

Kalamazoo has signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and has pledged to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets (7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2012). It is also part of the Southwest Michigan Regional Sustainability Covenant and has formed a "Sustainability Team" to organize and promote initiatives. A number of opportunities exist for the City to continue to work towards a more sustainable Kalamazoo and "lead by example" to encourage residents and businesses to improve their energy efficiency even further.

Promote Green Development Practices

Green development practices contribute towards sustainability by ensuring that site and building projects minimize environmental impacts, resource consumption, and energy use, while simultaneously providing healthier living and working environments for people. Healthier environments not only attract residents and businesses, but have been shown to increase worker productivity, encourage healthy lifestyles that reduce medical costs, and build community stewardship. Kalamazoo can promote a green philosophy through education and incentive programs to encourage their use across the city.

Expand Local Food Opportunities

Communities across the country are rediscovering the health, financial, and environmental benefits of local food production and consumption.



Consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. "Local food" includes food grown in community gardens, sold at farmers markets, or grown in close proximity to the community, as well as animal sources such as meat, dairy, and honey production. Kalamazoo's two farmer's markets, a food co-op, and a number of community gardens are helping meet that objective (see map on facing page).

While the local food movement is strong in Kalamazoo, there is an interest among residents to continue expanding opportunities for local food production. This includes removing barriers to food production such as ordinance restrictions and improving the City's process to identify potential sites for new community gardens and supporting their development.

Increased coordination and cooperation between local food advocacy organizations, the City, and other non-profit groups is one option. This could start with a task force or non-profit organization to address and support the range of local food issues including production, transportation, labor, land use policies, distribution, education and marketing. This group could also help promote and

Strategy

Continue to make Kalamazoo a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable city for current and future generations.

support community gardening and coordinate activities at the farmer's markets.

Encourage Community Gardening

Community gardening in Kalamazoo is a growing initiative that brings residents together to produce food in or near their neighborhoods. Community gardening helps connect people to the land and to the source of their food. They can help "green" neighborhoods by growing vegetation and enhancing neighborhood aesthetics.

While community gardening efforts in Kalamazoo are strong, there are opportunities for expansion. A system is needed to identify vacant properties, particularly in residential areas, that are most appropriate for a garden. This could include areas near senior housing, neighborhoods with smaller lots, and where interest is strongly demonstrated. Tips on how to start and maintain these gardens could help propel the program.

Support Farmer's Markets

Kalamazoo's farmer's markets provide a focal point for local food activities, allowing growers from the region to sell their produce and other goods. Farmer's markets should be readily accessible to residents. Additional farmer's markets should be considered for places that improve access in under-served areas to strengthen the "market share" of local farmers markets overall.

Enhance Waste Management

Sustainable waste management is essential for the health of a city. This includes efficient and sufficient recycling programs to turn waste flows into usable resources for others. It includes initiatives to improve wastewater treatment, reduce the quantity of materials entering landfills, and encourage material reuse across the city. Better managing waste means less money is spent on landfill operations, reused or recycled materials in turn reduce operational costs, and environmental health is better protected. Kalamazoo has a strong recycling program that should continue to be supported and expanded in the future and should explore a citywide composting program.

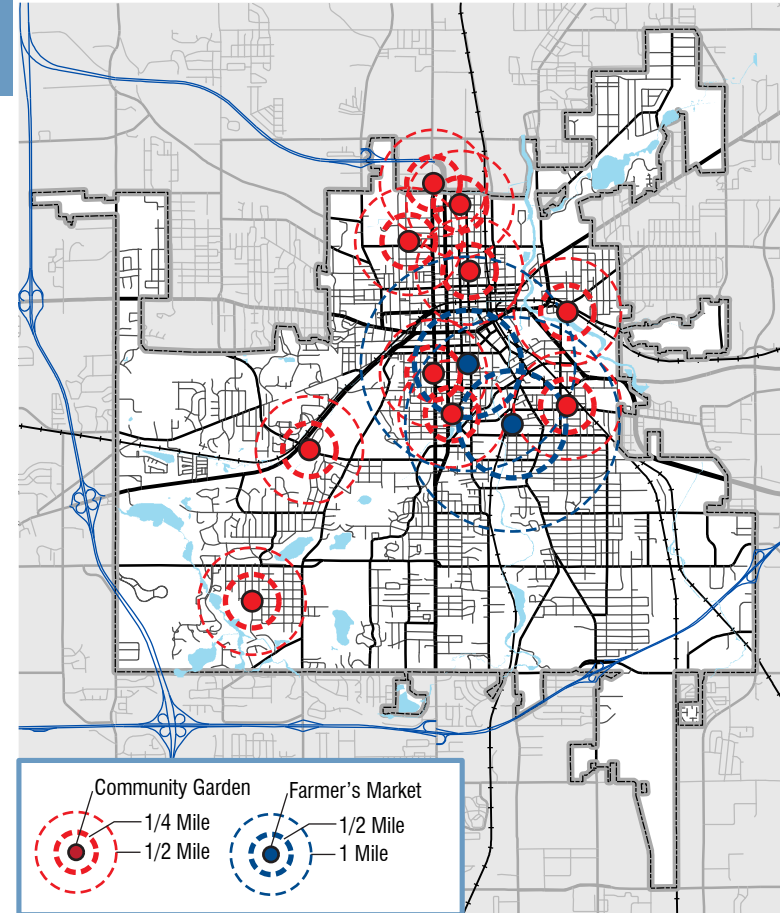
Pursue Brownfield Remediation

Remediating brownfields by removing contaminants or pollutants to make lands safer for human use is critical for protecting ecological health and making a sustainable city. Kalamazoo has a number of significant brownfield sites, including vacant industrial and commercial properties, that raise public safety concerns. Many of these brownfields are also located along important transportation corridors, river and stream corridors, or close to homes and neighborhoods. Cleaning up brownfield sites creates an opportunity for development projects to leverage brownfield funding to assist with cleanup and construction, as well as opportunities for habitat restoration and open space enhancement that further benefits Kalamazoo's quality of life.

Kalamazoo has taken a number of aggressive steps towards addressing brownfield remediation, including establishing the Brownfield Redevelopment Initiative and the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. These efforts should continue to be supported and expanded.

Celebrating Success

Becoming a sustainable city requires residents, businesses, public officials, and others to collaborate and work together to achieve success. Tracking successes and progress towards sustainability is important for maintaining positive momentum, keeping the public informed, and staying up-to-date with innovative trends, ideas, and solutions. Kalamazoo can help maintain momentum for sustainability by reporting on accomplishments, hosting community events that bring together people and ideas, and monitoring progress. These types of activities allow sustainability goals to evolve over time to be most effective and allows for periodic input and public discussion of broader sustainability goals.



Local Food Initiatives

QUALITY OF LIFE



Bank St. Farmer's Market

G. Actions

The following actions are reorganized with actions from other chapters in the Action Table in Chapter 6. The letter and number in parentheses following each action indicates its location in the Action Table.

Cultural and Entertainment Resources

Create gateway treatments at key entrance points into the city. (C10)

Supplement existing wayfinding signs to help direct travelers to major destinations. (C11)

Encourage event planners, businesses associations, and venue operators to coordinate their activities within the city to mutually support a climate of culture and entertainment. (P1)

Integrate appropriate scale entertainment and event venues into redeveloping neighborhood commercial nodes. (P12)

Use the city web page, media relations, and publicity materials to showcase sustainability accomplishments across the city. (PR2)

Actively promote Kalamazoo as an arts and culture destination. (PR7)

Build public awareness of the city's historic resources. (PR8)

Encourage local services and retail within neighborhood walking distance. (PR13)

Develop a commercial business owner's Reuse Guide that focuses cost effective ideas, techniques and guidelines for renovation and reuse of historic commercial assets. (PR23)

Conduct a citywide cultural resources survey to assess unmet demand of

cultural and entertainment activities. (PR30)

Increase programming of outdoor spaces to promote civic life and to support the health of nearby services and businesses. (PR34)

Education and Academic Institutions

Accommodate higher density and student housing as a bridge between campuses and the downtown. (R18)

Form a city/university/colleges Joint Task Force to develop and implement shared initiatives, coordinate event planning and help facilitate joint ventures between the city and the area's academic and cultural institutions. (P2)

Establish a regular communication channel between the City, the Kalamazoo Public School District and private schools to coordinate initiatives and leverage resources (such as use outside of school hours for public events and recreational opportunities). (P3)

Encourage collaboration and consensus building between stakeholders for the reuse of WMU's historic East Campus (i.e. City, WMU, Friends of the Historic East Campus). (P5)

Use local food sources in schools and other institutions. (P9)

Explore the possibility of a coordinating group for enhancing pre-school educational opportunities. (P10)

Coordinate school expansions and improvements with city zoning and infrastructure improvements. (P11)

Improve the walking and biking routes to school to create a safer environment for children (funding possibilities through Safe Routes to School). (PR24)

Promote WMU's service learning program to neighborhood associations

and non-profits to engage young adult volunteers. (PR27)

Safety and Health

Require bike racks for certain new, non-single family developments and promote installation of bike racks at key locations. (R6)

Integrate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (i.e. natural surveillance, natural access control and natural territorial reinforcement) into site development standards and public infrastructure projects. (R12)

Refine city ordinances to ensure that private property – commercial businesses, housing complexes, etc. provide appropriate levels of lighting for user safety and comfort, including maintenance. Use of energy efficient lighting could also be promoted. (R19)

Increase pedestrian connectivity standards for private development to ensure safe and pedestrian routes and walks are provided for new construction and expansion efforts. (R25)

Explore lighting technologies, such as induction and LED lighting (new and retrofits) and timing systems for municipal energy, cost and labor savings. (C4)

Increase lighting for cars and pedestrians, including maintenance and repair of existing lights and installation of new lights, along streets and in public areas currently below light level guidelines. (C6)

Coordinate neighborhood safety initiatives with volunteer organizations. (PR9)

Support and promote fitness and nutrition programs to decrease obesity rates, especially with Kalamazoo's children. (PR10)

Parks and Natural Systems

Offer incentives to encourage green development (density, tax incentives, reduced parking requirements, etc). (R11)

Continue to implement stormwater management improvements recommended in the Watershed Management Plans. (R13)

Develop and implement Low Impact Development (LID) guidelines for both private development and public infrastructure projects that minimize impacts on soil and water resources, sensitive ecological features, and wildlife. (R21)

Develop stormwater management guidelines that exceed national clean water requirements. (R22)

Prepare guidelines (stabilization, buffers, revegetation) and incentives for areas where need for restoration is identified. (R23)

Expand existing conservation guidelines to further manage the development of sensitive or important environmental areas (floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands etc). (R24)

Continue to install sidewalks, bike lanes, bike paths, and greenway trails to complete the citywide and regional system. (C2)

Enhance the comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program. (C3)

Continue to apply a wellhead protection program around the city's water wells including improvements when opportunities arise and prevention of potentially harmful land uses and activities in sensitive areas. (C5)

Prioritize civic investment on those projects that do the most to support pedestrian mobility (trails, walks, bike lanes). (C8)

Strengthen relationships between local and regional natural resource agencies and advocacy groups to leverage resources and coordinate initiatives. (P4)

Continue to support and promote the clean up and reuse of contaminated properties/facilities. (PR1)

Develop a Natural Features Inventory and Open Space/Greenways Framework Plan to classify priority areas and unify existing neighborhood greenways plans (i.e. Portage Creek Open Space Plan). (PR14)

Market "best practices" for individual conservation efforts. (PR15)

Explore alternate uses for vacant residential property such as infill development, community gardens, neighborhood open space, and use of the land bank for parcels where redevelopment is more likely long-term. (PR16)

Create an Environmental Interpretive Signage Program with public/private partners to showcase the city's progress in environmental cleanup and raises community awareness. (PR18)

Explore the feasibility of new funding mechanisms, such as establishing special assessment "Parks Improvement Districts" and increasing existing park endowment funds. (PR26)

Explore alternative short- and mid- term strategies for brownfield remediation for sites that lack redevelopment projects. (PR31)

Pursue the acquisition or protection of sensitive environmental areas through a range of techniques, such as conservation easements, deed restrictions, transfer of development rights, land conservancy donations, acquisition by foundations or public bodies, or developer incentives. (PR36)

Sustainable Initiatives

Support efforts to reduce waste through education programs and incentives to encourage waste reducing behavior. (R20)

Strive for city building and renovation projects to meet green buildings standards (such as LEED) that provide long term payback on investment. (C1)

Explore and pursue opportunities for using alternative fuels and hybrid or electric vehicles in city fleets. (C7)

Promote municipal composting sources. (PR17)

Develop, adopt, and maintain a sustainability action plan that tracks progress toward objectives. (PR19)

Develop, adopt, and maintain an energy conservation program with reduction targets and progress monitoring. This program should use public buildings and facilities as a model for energy reduction practices. (PR20)

Pursue opportunities for generating renewable energy within the city and promote the purchase of electricity originating from renewable sources. (PR21)

Create informational and incentive programs to encourage green buildings (i.e. LEED). (PR22)

Chapter 6

ACTION PLAN



In this Chapter

- A. Implementation
- B. Zoning Plan
- C. Action Table

Vision



Strategy



Action



Monitor



Refine

A. Implementation

Kalamazoo's master plan was developed over the course of a year and a half, through a highly interactive process that engaged the community in defining a preferred future. Through this collaborative effort, the City, community leaders, and the public have contributed both finances and time to formulate a useful, exciting, and visionary blueprint for the future. This level and breadth of participation signals Kalamazoo's commitment as a community to seek creative solutions to its many challenges. The plan will position Kalamazoo to manage future development, redevelopment, and infill on a solid foundation of fiscal, social, and environmental sustainability.

With the commitment of substantial resources to this planning effort comes the high expectations that the recommendations will be implemented. Therefore, the plan must serve as the policy guide for moving Kalamazoo forward, guiding decisions about future physical and economic development.

This plan includes a lot of ideas that need to be translated into action. What should the city do to ensure the vitality in the future--what comes next? The Action Plan details those next steps and priorities.

Transforming the plan's lofty goals into reality will require a long-term commitment and political consensus. The plan is designed to be a road map for action, incorporating strategies, specific projects, and programs that will achieve the desired results.

This chapter synthesizes the many plan recommendations and identifies the actions and timing needed to transform the plan's vision into reality.

Tenets of Successful Implementation

While the input received through the master plan process provided a foundation to help achieve the city's vision, community support, commitment, and involvement must continue.

Commitment

Successful plan implementation will be directly related to a committed city leadership. While elected and appointed officials - the Mayor, City Commission, and Planning Commission - will have a strong leadership role, many others - city department directors, staff, and leaders from the community's many institutions and organizations - will also be instrumental in supporting the plan.

However, commitment reaches beyond just these individuals and includes the array of stakeholders. Citizens, landowners, developers, and business owners interested in how Kalamazoo develops must unite toward the plan's common vision. Momentum and enthusiasm from the large constituency engaged in the planning process must be sustained to guarantee the plan will remain the important policy guide it was intended to be.

In and of itself, the plan is capable of accomplishing very little. Rather, community leaders, businesses, organizations, and citizens must assume ownership of the plan to see that it is successfully implemented.

Integrate with Project Design

City officials and departments must embrace the plan, applying its recommendations to help shape annual budgets, work programs, and the design of capital improvements. For example, the City's engineering division can support implementation through infrastructure improvements, streets, and storm systems designed consistent with plan policies and recommendations. Each department, staff person, and elected official should find it a benefit, if not an obligation, to reference the plan when making decisions and setting priorities.

Foundation for Future Efforts

Any future planning efforts must be consistent with the overall vision and basic framework of this plan. For example, neighborhood plans should be consistent with this plan as the framework for more in-depth analysis and recommendations for a particular area.

Continued Community Involvement

Citizen involvement was the cornerstone of this planning process, and continued involvement by the public is even more essential to ensure the plan's success. Adoption of the plan marks the end of the initial phase of the process, but only the beginning of the evolutionary process of implementing the plan. A continued effort to focus

attention on the plan's vision and recommendations and to further promote community participation in making the plan a reality will be essential activities.

One tactic for sustained public involvement is continued extensive use of electronic media. Successful use of the web page, social networks, and e-mail blasts can be continued to regularly distribute information on hot topics, publicity for upcoming events, identify where input is desired and where volunteers are needed. Regular progress reports on master plan implementation could be featured, and online surveys could help confirm or adjust priorities. Partnerships with the university may provide a technology resource so the City is a leader in electronic communication.

Guidance for Development Decisions

This plan is designed for routine use and should be consistently employed during any process affecting the community's future. Private investment decisions by developers, corporations, and land owners should consider the plan's direction. Other planning efforts for neighborhoods, corridors, and community facilities should be in harmony with the master plan. Finally, the plan should be used when reviewing development proposals and referenced in related reports and studies.

Partnerships

While the City is in a position to coordinate many of the plan's implementation tasks, responsibility should not solely rest on the government. Instead, the vast array of stakeholders having key roles in either the city or region must all participate. Ideally, this plan will be endorsed by the many organizations

in the city as a "shared vision," the foundation of future efforts.

Entities such as DKI, EDC, Brownfield Authority, neighborhood associations, KATS, Southwest Michigan Regional Planning Commission, Kalamazoo Public Schools, MDOT, and many others should have something to contribute relative to their role in Kalamazoo's future. Partnerships with the public and private sector, including Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, the hospitals, major employers, and business will also lead to success implementing the plan's initiatives.

Partnerships may range from sharing information to funding and shared promotions or services. While Kalamazoo has a strong history of civic involvement, given the challenges noted in this plan, the spirit of cooperation must be refreshed with a renewed commitment by each organization so that alliances and partnerships can be formed and sustained to benefit everyone in the region.

Government cannot and should not do it all. Only through public/private collaboration can the plan's vision be realized. What can these partnerships do that the City cannot do alone?

- *Solve Larger Issues.* Many issues are beyond the control of individual jurisdictions and require cooperation, including major infrastructure improvements, non-motorized and other transit options, economic development, and social issues, such as homelessness.
- *Improve the Vitality of Each Entity* Working together, community leaders can become more acquainted with Kalamazoo's

vision and the role each has to offer, working toward more cooperative, rather than competitive, relationships. A vibrant urban core and unified, attractive corridors will benefit not only Kalamazoo, but its suburbs and the region as a whole.

- *Meeting Expectations for Public Services.* Economic conditions make it more difficult for individual communities to meet residents' needs and expectations. More sharing of resources and eliminating duplicated efforts may result in more cost effective ways of providing essential community services.
- *Maximize Investments.* The City, its many organizations and academic institutions have all made significant investments in Kalamazoo. Ongoing relationships can help ensure those contributions continue to attain a high rate of return in terms of financial and social capital.

Evaluation and Monitoring

This plan has been developed with a degree of flexibility, allowing nimble responses to emerging conditions, challenges, and opportunities. To help ensure the plan stays fresh and useful, periodic reviews and amendments are required. This will ensure plan goals, objectives, and recommendations reflect changing community needs, expectations, and financial realities.

Any more detailed subarea plans should be adopted as master plan amendments. Finally, Michigan law stipulates the plan be reviewed at least every five years. Updates should reflect changing conditions, unanticipated opportunities, and acknowledge the implementation to date.

Organizational Structure

Roles of the Mayor and City Commission

The Mayor and City Commission must be solidly engaged in the process to implement the plan. Their responsibilities will be to prioritize various action items and establish timeframes by which each action must be initiated and completed. They must also consider and weigh the funding commitments necessary to realize the city's vision, whether involving capital improvements, facility design, municipal services, targeted studies, or changes to development regulations, such as municipal codes, the zoning ordinance and procedures.

Planning Commission as Facilitators.

The Planning Commission is charged with overseeing

B. Zoning Plan

While there are many programs and activities important to the overall implementation of this plan, zoning is the single most significant mechanism for achieving the desired land use pattern and quality of development advocated in the plan. This section provides a useful guide relative to the inconsistencies between current zoning patterns and proposed future land use designations. In addition, the Regulatory section of the Action Table identifies elements in the current regulations that could be refined to more strongly support master plan recommendations.

Review of the Existing Land Use map in comparison to the Future Land Use Plan reveals a gradual transition to the planned land use pattern. Achievement of this goal will take many years due to the challenge of dealing with established businesses and homes located in areas intended for other types of uses in the long term.

Because the future land use map is a long range vision of how land uses should evolve over time, it should not be confused with the City's zoning map, which is a current (short term) mechanism for regulating development. Therefore not all properties should be immediately rezoned to correspond with the plan. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions over a longer period of time (5 to 15 years).

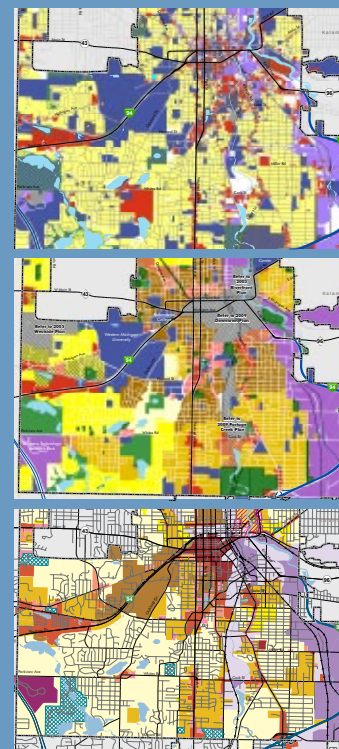
In addition, the future land use map (Map 1) is generalized. More detailed evaluation would be required as part of any rezoning consideration. In

plan implementation and is empowered to make ongoing land use decisions. As such, it has a great influence on how sustainable Kalamazoo will be. Therefore, several tasks in the Action Plan are the responsibility of the Planning Commission and its staff.

As an example, the Planning Commission is charged with preparing studies, ordinances, and certain programmatic initiatives before they are submitted to the City Commission. In other instances, the Planning Commission plays a strong role as a "Plan Facilitator" overseeing the process and monitoring its progress and results. Together, City staff and the Planning Commission must be held accountable, ensuring the city's master plan impacts daily decisions and actions by its many stakeholders.

particular, the future land use map depicts larger existing schools, churches as "institutional" and private recreation (such as golf clubs) as "recreation/greenspace." If those sites are considered for a new use in the future, the use should be compatible with the adjacent land areas and their overall character."

The plan categories correspond to zoning districts, but there is some generalization. The following table



Existing Land Use

Use today based on 2008 assessment records

Future Land Use and Character

Generalized use, area, and density in 20 years

Zoning Map

Legal uses permitted today

provides a zoning plan indicating how the future land use categories in this master plan relate to the zoning districts in the zoning ordinance. In certain instances, more than one zoning district may be applicable to a future land use category. Notes are provided to guide the Planning Commission in determining the appropriate zoning district based upon the context of the surrounding area.

Zoning changes in accordance with the plan should be made gradually so that change can be managed. The Future Land Use Map as well as the plan’s goals, objectives, and development recommendations should be consulted to judge the merits of a rezoning request. In review of rezoning and development proposals, the City should consider the following sequencing standards:

- Any rezoning or development proposal must be compatible with the master plan as a whole and be able to stand and function on its own without harm to the quality of surrounding land uses.
- There must be sufficient public infrastructure to

accommodate any proposed development or the types of uses that would be allowed under the requested zoning change. This must include sufficient sewer and water capacity, transportation improvements as determined by a traffic impact study, and all other necessary infrastructure improvements provided concurrent with the development.

- The environmental conditions of the site should be capable of accommodating the types of development or potential uses allowed with a zoning change. The impact to natural features should be minimized to the maximum extent practical with the most important resources preserved.
- Rezoning needs to be linked as closely as possible to the timing of development and land use change. Premature rezoning without a specific development proposal and site plan should be avoided to minimize land use conflicts, property value decline, and maintenance and safety problems.
- Sites proposed for rezoning to accommodate change in land use need to have sufficient width and area to facilitate development that satisfies the design guidelines of this plan, requirements of the zoning ordinance, and not create odd parcel configurations.

Zoning Plan	Single Family			Two Family		Multiple Family						Commercial						Industrial		Special Purpose Districts				
	RS-4 Res., Single-Dwelling	RS-5 Res., Single-Dwelling	RS-7 Res., Single-Dwelling	RD-8 Res., Duplex	RD-19 Res., Duplex	RM-15 Res., Multi-Dwelling	RM-15C Res., Multi-Dwelling Campus	RM-24 Res., Multi-Dwelling	RM-36 Res., Multi-Dwelling	RMHP Res., Mobile Home Park	RMU Res., Mixed Use	CMTU Comm., Mixed Use	CNO Comm. Neighborhood Office	CN-1 Comm., (Local) Neighborhood	CO Comm., Office	CN-2 Comm., Neighborhood	CC Comm., Community	CCBD Comm., Central Business	CBTR Comm., BTR	M-1 Manufacturing, Limited	M-2 Manufacturing, General	P Public	IC Institutional Campus	
Future Land Use Categories																								
Core Residential 1																								
Core Residential 2																								
Modern Residential 3																								
Modern Residential 4																								
Mixed-Use																								
Neighborhood Commercial																								
Community Commercial																								
Mixed-Use Existing Plans																								
Employment Centers																								
Institutional																								
Recreation/ Greenspace																								



C. Action Table

The Action Plan table summarizes the recommendations from throughout the plan into specific categories, outlining individual tasks to be accomplished within the 20-year planning period. This format serves as a useful checklist to track accomplishments and reassess priorities. It also serves as a checklist to facilitate annual reviews of the plan.

Priorities are established based on the following timeframes:

Immediate	1-2 years
Short-term	by 2015
Mid-term	by 2020
Long-term	by 2030

impact on others. Increasingly, the public and local officials are becoming more aware of the widespread, rather than localized, ramifications of individual community decisions on finances, service delivery, and quality of life. Watersheds and ecosystems, economic development efforts, housing, infrastructure, and transportation improvements all cross community borders, impacting not only Kalamazoo, but the county and surrounding region. Kalamazoo's economic health and that of its metropolitan area are also inherently connected, meaning the success of one is largely dependent on, and responsible for, the success of all.

Promotion/Programmatic:

- *Economic Incentives.* Based on the plan, economic development initiatives can be developed or refined to achieve specific implementation goals. For example, incentives could encourage employers or businesses to locate on targeted redevelopment sites. Preferred infill and redevelopment sites should include areas that can be most efficiently served by existing infrastructure and have the greatest potential to stimulate investment on nearby properties.
- *Funding.* Plan implementation will require adequate funding from current revenue sources, a new dedicated funding source, state and federal grants, or public/private sector partnerships. Annual appropriations and capital improvement funds should use plan recommendations as a factor in setting priorities.

Regulatory:

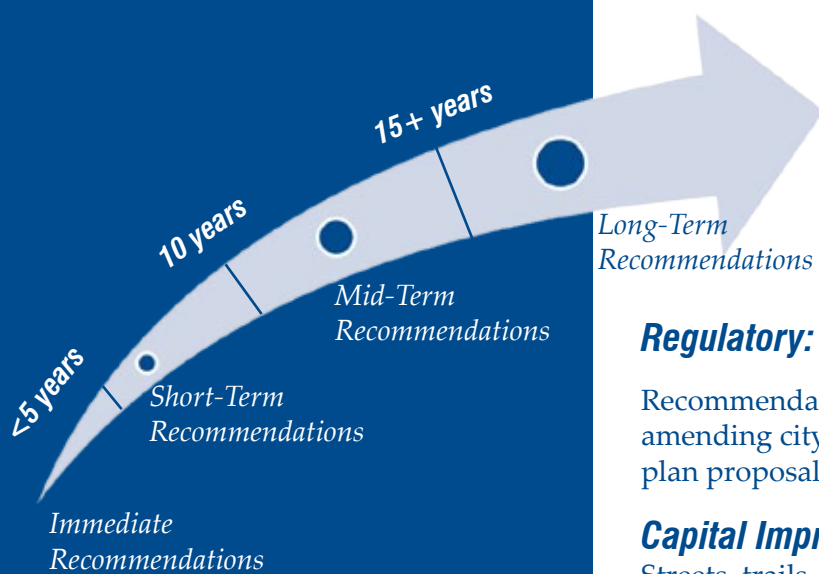
Recommendations are provided for amending city ordinances to better support plan proposals.

Capital Improvements:

Streets, trails, utilities, parks, and municipal buildings are the integral framework that supports quality development. Two key objectives are that 1) design must complement the context of the surrounding area and 2) sustainable materials and practices should be employed to the degree practical.





Partnerships:





Intergovernmental cooperation has become more important as each jurisdiction struggles with increased service demands and limited resources. Shared concerns cut across jurisdictional boundaries and affect many communities and the metro area overall. Frequently, the actions, or inactions, of one jurisdiction can have a tremendous



For more information on an action, see the chapter marked as indicated below:





- ✓ primarily referenced in this chapter
- ✓ secondarily referenced in this chapter

		Action		Priority Term	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
#	Topic	Regulatory						
R1	Green	Encourage green businesses, which includes allowing renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power equipment.	Immed.	✓				
R2	Housing	Continue vigilant enforcement of housing, rental, and maintenance codes.	Immed.		✓			
R3	Housing	Allow home occupations, but limit the conversion of homes to business uses that erode neighborhood character.	Immed.		✓			
R4	Housing	Ensure compliance with property maintenance standards so landlords are accountable.	Immed.		✓			
R5	Housing	Craft single-family neighborhood infill design standards and a procedure for administrative review.	Immed.		✓			
R6	Non-motorized	Require bike racks for certain new, non-single family developments and promote installation of bike racks at key locations.	Immed.				✓	✓
R7	Housing	Encourage neighborhood reinvestment by offering development incentives.	Short	✓	✓			
R8	Land Use	Encourage conversion of retail to other appropriate uses in areas where retail use is no longer viable.	Short	✓				
R9	Land Use	Allow more mixing of compatible residential, office, retail, and commercial uses, especially near downtown. This includes review and fine-tunes to development regulations and parking standards for commercial, mixed-use, and infill developments.	Short	✓	✓			
R10	Land Use	Revise landscape standards to increase buffers and preserve woodlands/slopes where community commercial uses abut established single-family neighborhoods.	Short		✓			
R11	Green	Offer incentives to encourage green development (density, tax incentives, reduced parking requirements, etc).	Short	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R12	Safety	Integrate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (i.e. natural surveillance, natural access control and natural territorial reinforcement) into site development standards and public infrastructure projects.	Short			✓	✓	
R13	Economic	Continue to implement stormwater management improvements recommended in the Watershed Management Plans.	Short			✓	✓	
R14	Infrastructure	Advocate for a regional wellhead protection ordinance and performance standards.	Short			✓		
R15	Economic	Review, assess, and adjust city ordinances to support entrepreneurship (such as live/work, business incubators).	Short	✓				

		Action		Priority Term	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
#	Topic	Regulatory						
R16	Streets	Continue to offer and refine flexible road design standards that support walking and biking, and are designed to promote driving at speeds appropriate for the setting rather than the typical design for higher speeds than intended.	Mid				✓	
R17	Streets	Add access management regulations to close or consolidate closely spaced business driveways as opportunities arise, particularly in correction corridors, to reduce crash potential, improve traffic flow, and reduce conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.	Mid				✓	
R18	Land Use	Accommodate higher density and student housing as a bridge between campuses and the downtown.	Mid		✓			✓
R19	Lighting	Refine city ordinances to ensure that private property – commercial businesses, housing complexes, etc. provide appropriate levels of lighting for user safety and comfort, including maintenance. Use of energy efficient lighting could also be promoted.	Mid				✓	✓
R20	Waste	Support efforts to reduce waste through education programs and incentives to encourage waste reducing behavior.	Mid					✓
R21	Stormwater	Develop and implement Low Impact Development (LID) guidelines for both private development and public infrastructure projects that minimize impacts on soil and water resources, sensitive ecological features, and wildlife.	Mid				✓	✓
R22	Stormwater	Develop storm water management guidelines that exceed national clean water requirements.	Mid				✓	✓
R23	Environment	Prepare guidelines (stabilization, buffers, revegetation) and incentives for areas where need for restoration is identified.	Mid					✓
R24	Environment	Expand existing conservation guidelines to further manage the development of sensitive or important environmental areas (floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands etc).	Mid					✓
R25	Non-motorized	Increase pedestrian connectivity standards for private development to ensure safe and pedestrian routes and walks are provided for new construction and expansion efforts.	Mid			✓	✓	✓
R26	Land Use	Gradually adjust (reduce) the amount of commercially zoned land based on location, character, market demand and other factors.	Long	✓	✓			





							
		Action	Priority Term	Marketplace	Neighborhoods/ Land Use	Transportation/ Infrastructure	Quality of Life
#	Topic	Capital Improvements					
C1	Green	Strive for city building and renovation projects to meet green buildings standards (such as LEED) that provide long term payback on investment.	Immed.				✓
C2	Non-motorized	Continue to install sidewalks, bike lanes, bike paths, and greenway trails to complete the citywide and regional system.	Immed.			✓	✓
C3	Streets	Enhance the comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program.	Immed.		✓	✓	✓
C4	Lighting	Explore lighting technologies, such as induction and LED lighting (new and retrofits), and timing systems for municipal energy, cost and labor savings.	Immed.			✓	✓
C5	Drinking water	Continue to apply a well head protection program around the city's water wells including improvements when opportunities arise and prevention of potentially harmful land uses and activities in sensitive areas.	Immed.			✓	✓
C6	Lighting	Increase lighting for cars and pedestrians including maintenance and repair of existing lights and installation of new lights along streets and in public areas currently below light level guidelines.	Short			✓	✓
C7	Green	Explore and pursue opportunities for using alternative fuels and hybrid or electric vehicles in city fleets.	Short			✓	✓
C8	Non-motorized	Prioritize civic investment on those projects that do the most to support pedestrian mobility (trails, walks, bike lanes).	Short			✓	✓
C9	Non-motorized	Prepare a more detailed non-motorized plan with priorities for connections between neighborhoods, employment areas, schools, businesses districts, and bus stops.	Mid		✓	✓	
C10	Streets	Create gateway treatments at key entrance points into the city.	Mid			✓	✓
C11	Streets	Supplement existing wayfinding signs to help direct travelers to major destinations.	Mid			✓	✓
C12	Streets	Improve right-of-way access aesthetics along routes to and through industrial districts to support business attraction efforts.	Mid	✓	✓	✓	
C13	Streets	Employ on-street parking and elements like curb bump outs to help control traffic speeds.	Mid			✓	
C14	Streets	Evaluate installation of a narrow median along Westnedge Avenue similar to the median installed in the City of Portage just south of the city limits.	Long			✓	
C15	Streets	Complete upgrade of traffic signals and pedestrian crossings to current ADA standards.	Long			✓	
C16	Streets	Evaluate installation of a narrow median along South Portage Street to improve this entrance to the city.	Long			✓	
C17	Streets	Begin process to design a median for part of Stadium Drive to improve aesthetics and traffic conditions.	Long			✓	



		Action	Priority Term	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
#	Topic	Partnerships					
P1	Tourism	Encourage event planners, businesses associations, and venue operators to coordinate their activities within the city to mutually support a climate of culture and entertainment.	Immed.	✓			✓
P2	University	Form a city/university/colleges Joint Task Force to develop and implement shared initiatives, coordinate event planning and help facilitate joint ventures between the city and the area's academic and cultural institutions.	Short				✓
P3	Schools	Establish a regular communication channel between the City, the Kalamazoo Public School District and private schools to coordinate initiatives and leverage resources (such as use outside of school hours for public events and recreational opportunities).	Short				✓
P4	Streets	Seek revisions to the KATS Long Range Transportation Plan to include new recommendations of this Master Plan update.	Short			✓	
P5	Environment	Strengthen relationships between local and regional natural resource agencies and advocacy groups to leverage resources and coordinate initiatives.	Short				✓
P6	Historic	Encourage collaboration and consensus building between stakeholders for the reuse of WMU's historic East Campus (i.e. City, WMU, Friends of the Historic East Campus).	Short				✓
P7	Economic	Offer low-cost incubator space for student/professor entrepreneurs in older vacant industrial buildings.	Mid	✓	✓		
P8	Economic	Partner with WMU Haworth College of Business to provide business/marketing assistance to entrepreneurs and create additional incubators.	Mid	✓			
P9	Green	Use local food sources in schools and other institutions.	Mid				✓
P10	Schools	Explore the possibility of a coordinating group for enhancing pre-school educational opportunities.	Mid				✓
P11	Schools	Coordinate school expansions and improvements with city zoning and infrastructure improvements.	Mid			✓	✓
P12	Land Use	Integrate appropriate scale entertainment and event venues into redeveloping neighborhood commercial nodes.	Mid	✓	✓		✓
P13	Housing	Support and partner with non-profits to strengthen and expand current programs that provide hands-on education and training for home maintenance and repairs.	Mid		✓		
P14	Streets	Work with MDOT and adjacent communities to upgrade the appearance along corridors that connect the city with interchanges.	Long			✓	
P15	Rail	Collaborate with other Michigan cities, MDOT, and interest groups on potential high-speed upgrades to Amtrak Service through southern Michigan along the Chicago to Ann Arbor/Detroit line.	Long			✓	

		<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority Term</i>	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
<i>#</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Promotion/Programmatic</i>					
PR1	Land Use	Continue to support and promote the clean up and reuse of contaminated properties/facilities.	Immed.	✓	✓		✓
PR2	Green	Use the city web page, media relations, and publicity materials to showcase sustainability accomplishments across the city.	Immed.				✓
PR3	Housing	Support rehabilitation and reinvestment in challenged areas, especially in the Northside, Edison, and Eastside neighborhoods.	Immed.	✓	✓		
PR4	Housing	Continue programs that encourage responsible homeownership while providing affordable, but quality rental options.	Immed.		✓		
PR5	Housing	Support programs that address homelessness.	Immed.		✓		
PR6	Economic	Promote Kalamazoo as a city that offers a range of lifestyle choices.	Immed.	✓	✓		
PR7	Economic	Actively promote Kalamazoo as an arts and culture destination.	Short	✓			✓
PR8	Economic	Build public awareness of the city's historic resources.	Short		✓		✓
PR9	Safety	Coordinate neighborhood safety initiatives with volunteer organizations.	Short		✓		✓
PR10	Health	Support and promote fitness and nutrition programs to decrease obesity rates, especially with Kalamazoo's children.	Short				✓
PR11	Housing	Ensure a mix of housing types across neighborhoods to accommodate various income levels so residents can remain in the city or their neighborhood as needs change.	Short		✓		
PR12	Land Use	Streamline the decision-making process for blighted properties that leave private ownership to promote conversion to reuse or hold as green space until an appropriate use is found in the future.	Short		✓		
PR13	Land Use	Encourage local services and retail within neighborhood walking distance.	Short	✓	✓		✓
PR14	Green	Develop a Natural Features Inventory and Open Space/Greenways Framework Plan to classify priority areas and unify existing neighborhood greenways plans (i.e. Portage Creek Open Space Plan).	Short				✓
PR15	Green	Market "best practices" for individual conservation efforts.	Short				✓
PR16	Green	Explore alternate uses for vacant residential property such as infill development, community gardens, neighborhood open space, and use of the land bank for parcels where redevelopment is more likely long-term.	Short		✓		✓

		Action	Priority Term	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
#	Topic	Promotion/Programmatic					
PR17	Green	Promote municipal composting sources.	Short				✓
PR18	Green	Create an Environmental Interpretive Signage Program with public/private partners to showcase the city's progress in environmental cleanup and raises community awareness.	Mid				✓
PR19	Green	Develop, adopt, and maintain a sustainability action plan that tracks progress toward objectives.	Mid				✓
PR20	Green	Develop, adopt, and maintain an energy conservation program with reduction targets and progress monitoring. This program should use public buildings and facilities as a model for energy reduction practices.	Mid				✓
PR21	Green	Pursue opportunities for generating renewable energy within the city and promote the purchase of electricity originating from renewable sources.	Mid				✓
PR22	Green	Create informational and incentive programs to encourage green buildings (i.e. LEED).	Mid				✓
PR23	Historic	Develop a commercial business owner's Reuse Guide that focuses cost effective ideas, techniques and guidelines for renovation and reuse of historic commercial assets.	Mid	✓	✓		✓
PR24	Schools	Improve the walking and biking routes to school to create a safer environment for children (funding possibilities through Safe Routes to School).	Mid			✓	✓
PR25	Non-motorized	Identify key non-motorized routes for bike lanes so there is a complete network comprised of dedicated bike lanes along certain streets, signed bike routes along neighborhood connectors and the off-road bike trails.	Mid			✓	
PR26	Parks	Explore the feasibility of new funding mechanisms, such as establishing special assessment "Parks Improvement Districts" and increasing existing park endowment funds.	Mid				✓
PR27	Housing	Promote WMU's service learning program to neighborhood associations and non-profits to engage young adult volunteers.	Mid		✓		✓
PR28	Housing	Partner with neighborhood associations to provide homeowner programs focused on renovation skills and techniques.	Mid		✓		
PR29	Housing	Promote new residential development to attract individuals already working, but not living, in the city.	Mid	✓	✓		
PR30	Economic	Conduct a citywide cultural resources survey to assess unmet demand of cultural and entertainment activities.	Mid				✓
PR31	Economic	Explore alternative short- and mid- term strategies for brownfield remediation for sites that lack redevelopment projects.	Mid		✓		✓

		Action	Priority Term	 Marketplace	 Neighborhoods/ Land Use	 Transportation/ Infrastructure	 Quality of Life
#	Topic	Promotion/Programmatic					
PR32	Economic	Increase the effectiveness of the land bank by inventorying available land, matching parcels with potential buyers and future developers, and identifying additional strategies to incentivize and publicize the program.	Mid	✓	✓		
PR33	Economic	Collaborate, such as with WMU's School of Engineering, on the development of more "incubator" or low-cost facilities for start-up companies that complement existing centers such as the Enterprise Center or the Park Trades Building.	Long	✓			
PR34	Parks	Increase programming of outdoor spaces to promote civic life and to support the health of nearby services and businesses.	Long				✓
PR35	Land Use	Concentrate mixed-use developments near campus aimed at college students.	Long	✓	✓		
PR36	Green	Pursue the acquisition or protection of sensitive environmental areas through a range of techniques, such as conservation easements, deed restrictions, transfer of development rights, land conservancy donations, acquisition by foundations or public bodies, or developer incentives.	Long				✓
PR37	Transit	Provide zoning incentives for compact or mixed-use developments that locate along major bus routes, and have financial programs to encourage employees to use transit.	Long			✓	

