



# City of Owosso

Shiawassee County, Michigan

# MASTER PLAN

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Thank you to the representatives from**  
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Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership  
Shiawassee Regional Chamber  
Owosso Historical Commission  
Downtown Historic District Commission

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION



# WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A master plan is the official document used to guide the future growth and development of a community. The master plan should serve as a roadmap and foundation for future decision making, as well as the official policy guide for physical development. This master plan is intended to be a usable reference document, easily readable and accessible to all residents.

## MASTER PLAN INTENT?

The intent of the City of Owosso Master Plan is to:

- Unify the community behind a common vision and set of goals and policies.
- Address the desires and needs of the residents, businesses, and property owners to preserve and enhance relevant qualities of the community and natural aesthetics.
- Provide a land use pattern which will result in a sustainable community with a diversified tax base and to support the desired facilities and services with reasonable tax rates.
- Present an urban framework and future land use map that illustrates how the city desires future development, redevelopment, and other land-based changes to occur.
- Ensure that the city remains a highly desirable community in which to live, work, and visit.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations for the type, intensity, and timing of development.
- Address the status and needs of infrastructure, recreational amenities, and public services.

## REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES

This master plan update implements the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities best practices to create a strong vision for redevelopment in the City of Owosso.



The master plan is intended to take a long-term view of the community, guiding growth and development for the next 20 years and beyond, while providing flexibility to respond to changing conditions, innovations, and new information. Thus, planning is a process that involves the conscious selection of policies relating to land use and development in a community. Through the process of land use planning, it is intended that a community can preserve, promote, protect, and improve the public health, safety, and general welfare. By state law, the master plan must be reviewed every five years.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Public Act 33 of 2008, requires that the planning commission approve a master plan as a guide for development and review the plan at least once every five years after adoption. The master plan should serve as a roadmap and foundation for future decision making, as well as the official policy guide for community development.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MASTER PLAN AND A ZONING ORDINANCE?

The Master Plan is intended to guide land use and zoning decisions. The future land use map should be used in conjunction with the plan goals where reviewing rezoning applications. A Plan is a guide to development, but it is not a legally enforceable document.

TABLE 1. MASTER PLAN VS. ZONING ORDINANCE	
Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general policies, a guide	Provides specific regulations, the law
Describes what should happen in the future, recommends land use for the next 10 to 20 years	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions
Adopted under the Municipal Planning Act, Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended	Adopted under the Zoning Enabling Act of 2006, as amended
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

# SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Planning is an iterative process; arriving at a land use and policy document by repeating rounds of analysis and engagement. Each planning effort builds on previous plans.

## ZONING PLAN

In 1970, Owosso developed a zoning plan in collaboration with the other entities in the mid- county area (Caledonia Township, Owosso Township, and the City of Corunna). This document provided the historical backdrop for land use decisions and zoning in the city. However, this plan was not comprehensive in nature.

## BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE REPORT

In May of 2008, the City Council appointed the Blue Ribbon Committee for the purpose of “creating a cohesive forward vision for the City of Owosso.” This committee was not only created to set forth a vision but to offer “a distinct pathway to successfully spring over the bar.” This document contains many categorized statements that express the vision and goals for the community.

## CITY OF OWOSSO MASTER PLAN

The city’s first comprehensive master plan was adopted in November 2012. The city was assisted by Michigan State University students in the development of the plan.

The master plan process identified and examined a wide range of existing conditions including population, housing, natural resources, traffic, utilities, public services, and land use. The planning commission was then able to analyze and translate the implications of each into a series of goals and policies for the city. Action steps were then identified to implement change in the city.

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The City of Owosso established its Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in 1977. The original Downtown Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan were completed in 1984. The Development Plan and TIF Plan were amended in 1988 and again in 2003 following an extensive, multi-year DDA Master Planning process beginning in 1995. The DDA District boundaries were amended in 1983, 1989, and 2002.

## OWOSSO MAIN STREET

The City of Owosso has been a designated Michigan Main Street community since 2009. Owosso Main Street (OMS) is a nationally accredited Main Street community. The Owosso Main Street Board and Executive Director are responsible for developing annual work plans to meet downtown goals and objectives.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City of Owosso developed and adopted the City’s first capital improvement plan (CIP) in early 2019.





# PLANNING CONTEXT

An important prerequisite to preparing an update to the City of Owosso's Master Plan is to develop a common understanding of the current state of the community as well as anticipated trends.

Owosso is rich with history, architectural character, and natural beauty. It features a vibrant downtown district with shopping, dining and entertainment establishments; one-of-a-kind home-grown businesses; residential neighborhoods featuring mixed architecture, incomes and uses; a grid system of tree-lined streets; a comprehensive network of sidewalks to encourage walking; businesses offering a wide range of service and manufacturing employment; neighborhood elementary schools; and an extensive park system. All of these features combine to provide an excellent quality of life for the city's nearly 16,000 residents.

The current plan is an update and reorganization of the 2012 master plan. This plan reflects the changes that the city has experienced over the last 20 years. These include, but are not limited to:

- Continued expansion of adjacent urban regions that have impacted Owosso, such as the greater Flint and Lansing regions.
- Significant decrease in industrial production and employment in Owosso and across the state since the 1970s.
- Development and expansion of the Baker College Campus.
- Continued preference towards the automobile as the primary form of transportation and as the primary customer for businesses, leading to a new pattern of business growth away from downtown and onto M-21.
- Increase in poverty and unemployment related to the economic activity decrease.
- Aging of neighborhoods, buildings, and infrastructure in the city.
- Strong downtown revitalization resulting from combination of programming, grants, and entrepreneurial activity.

This master plan will reflect these changes and position the City of Owosso for the type and amount of change that is anticipated during the next 10 to 20 years.

# SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City's ultimate goal is to preserve and enhance quality of life within the community which requires a careful analysis of the existing conditions and trends, as well as the dynamic economic, social, and environmental forces in effect. This qualitative and quantitative data provides a solid footing for the formulation of goals, policies, and strategies designed to help the community move forward.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Owosso population is 14,738. The city is experiencing population decline.
- Owosso has a younger population (median age 33.7 years old) compared to county and state trends.
- Owosso has seen an increase in the number of residents 25-34 years old.
- Owosso's high school graduation rate is increasing (89.4%) but still lower than county and state averages.
- Owosso's housing stock is primarily single family detached (68.5%).
- Most of the residential units were built before 1939.
- Home ownership rates in Owosso are lower than county and state averages (53.9% Owner, 37.1% Renter).
- Most homes in Owosso are valued at \$50,000 to \$150,000, with a median value of \$77,000.
- Household incomes are low (\$36,723 median) and have not kept up with inflation.
- Owosso has a high poverty rate (24.3%), particularly for female-headed households with children.
- Owosso's largest industries are education, health and social services (23%), manufacturing (18%) and retail trade (17%).
- Manufacturing fell significantly between 2000 and 2010.
- Owosso has higher unemployment (6.6%) than the county and state.

# SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The city identified a master plan steering committee consisting of core city staff and planning commission representatives. The project kick-off was held in October 2018. This meeting included a driving tour of the community and a discussion of the existing master plan. The consultant led the city staff and planning commission members through a Preserve-Enhance-Transform exercise to identify assets and opportunities within the community.

Stakeholder meetings were held in March 2019. This included meeting with members of city staff, council, planning commission, parks and recreation, economic development, Main Street Owosso, historical society, historic district commission, Westown Business Association, property and business owners, and local developers. The economic development meeting included a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities- Threats (SWOT) analysis.

# HOW TO USE THE PLAN

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

The master plan is divided into five chapters:

- Ch 1. Introduction - Provides an overview and introduction to the Master Plan document.
- Ch 2. Neighborhoods - Focuses on the importance of Owosso's neighborhoods and provides strategies for preserving the aspects that make the city a great place to live.
- Ch. 3 Economic Development Strategy - Focuses on the City's strengths and opportunities related to the local economy and redevelopment, including strategies to strengthen existing assets and attract and retain talent. Includes specific strategies for the Westown Commercial District.
- Ch. 4 Downtown Plan - Focuses on the heart of the City: Downtown Owosso. Discusses opportunities for preservation, placemaking, open space amenities, small business support, and the redevelopment of key sites.
- Ch. 5 Future Land Use - Provides a framework for the City's physical land use and development character.

- Ch. 6 Implementation - Identifies planning and policy tools to support the implementation of the Master Plan. Also includes a detail Action Plan to guide the work of the City and also identifies opportunities for collaboration.
- Appendix A. Community Profile - Provides an overview of the City's historic, physical, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics.

The following Master Plan Goals and District Framework are woven into the Neighborhoods, Economic Development, and Downtown Plan chapters. The Future Land Use Plan and Implementation bring everything together and provide the tools for implementation.

## FRAMEWORK MAP

The following framework map provides a set of framework elements that depict the types of "places" the city has and speaks to the character of the built environment. The framework elements provide a basis for the the future land use plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

For this plan to serve as an effective tool in guiding new development within the City of Owosso, it must be implemented. Primarily this responsibility resides with the City Council, Planning Commission, and city staff. Following are those steps which should be undertaken to assist in the successful implementation of this Master Plan

- Capacity building
- Public participation plan
- Capital improvement plan

More detailed information on implementation may be found in Chapter 6.

## REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

The Master Plan guides the work of the Planning Commission. It should be incorporated into the City's annual action plans and reviewed every 5 years.

# MASTER PLAN GOALS

*The City of Owosso is the cultural center and economic hub of Shiawassee County. It is a destination and a place to call home. The following goals guide the policies and actions encompassed in the Master Plan.*

## **GOAL 1. PROTECT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY**

The Master Plan provides a framework for protecting the health, safety, and general wellbeing of the community. Land use, public services, and local leadership are some of the key components that impact quality of life for local residents.

## **GOAL 2. PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND INVESTORS**

The City of Owosso is committed to being a Redevelopment Ready Community. This mentality extends beyond “business-friendly” and influences the way the city engages the public regarding public services, community planning, and new private development.

## **GOAL 3. MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The City of Owosso is committed to keeping the cost of living low while providing high-quality public services to residents and property owners. This means coordinated long-term planning and proactive communication between departments, boards, and commissions, and transparency of local government.

## **GOAL 4. IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY’S CHARACTER AND HERITAGE**

The City of Owosso is committed to preserving the history and character of the community and celebrating what makes Owosso unique. The City continues to build on it’s successful adaptive reuse and facade improvement projects as well as it’s rich tradition of arts and culture.

## **GOAL 5. INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE**

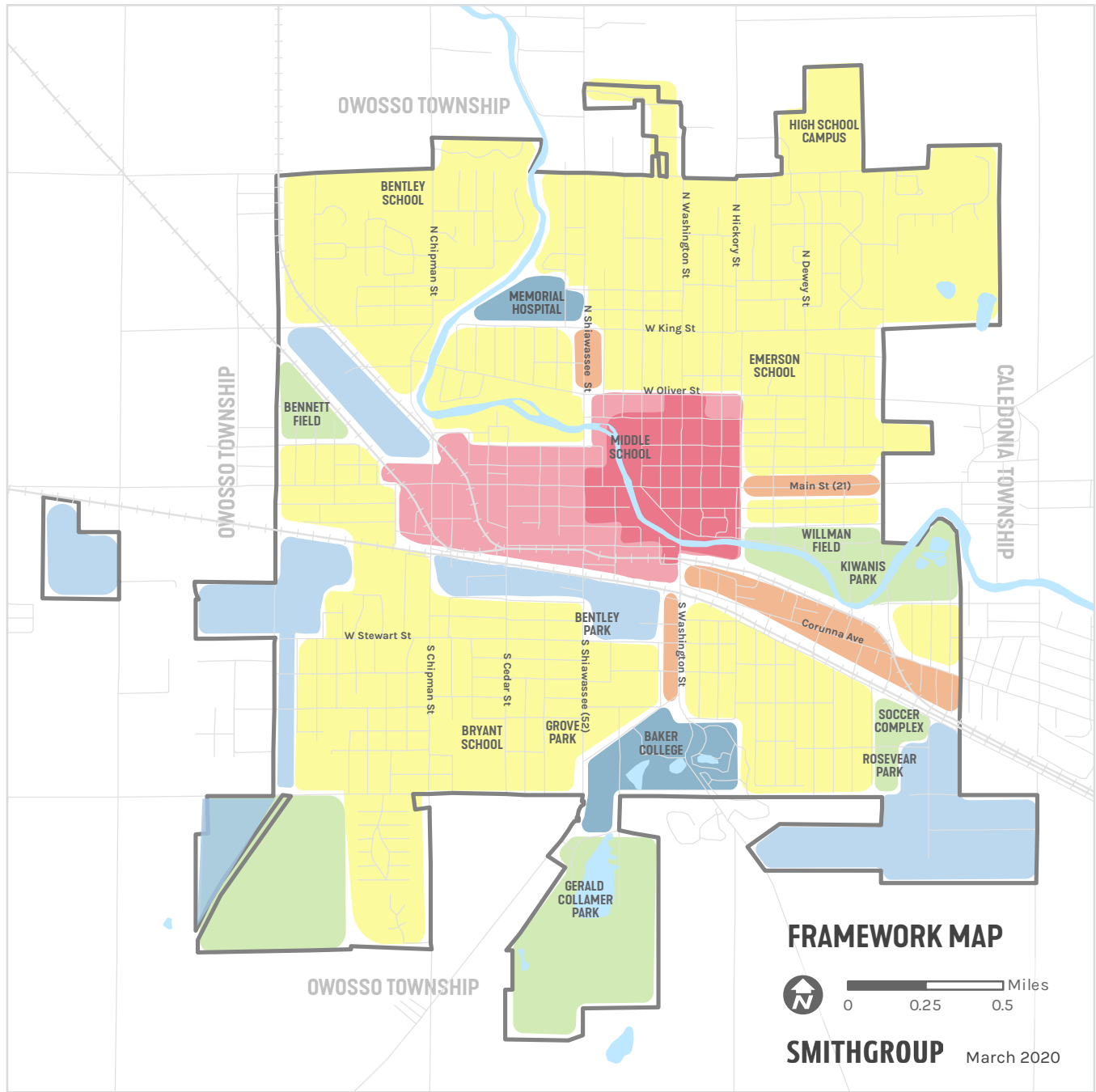
The City of Owosso is committed to providing welcoming, safe, and high-quality neighborhoods. This means investing in place and ensuring residents have the resources and tools to be a good neighbor.

## **GOAL 6. BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY**

The City of Owosso is committed to supporting small business and attracting new development that is consistent with the community’s long-term vision.

## **GOAL 7. STRENGTHEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

Regional collaboration works to eliminate overlapping responsibilities and competing visions of economic priorities, and address redundancies and gaps in services.



LEGEND

- Neighborhoods
- Centers
- Corridors
- Districts
- Open Space

**FRAMEWORK MAP**



**SMITHGROUP** March 2020

# FRAMEWORK

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are where homes are clustered together along with other small-scale uses that serve the people that live there. Neighborhoods can include a variety of housing types, along with other uses such as schools, churches, parks, and small-scale businesses. Each of the neighborhoods in Owosso has its own character, influenced by the size, age, and architecture of the buildings, the density of homes, the layout of the streets, as well as the access to parks and public spaces.

## CENTERS

Centers are the heart beats of the City – the places where people walk, gather, shop, and meet. In Owosso the centers include the historic Downtown Owosso and the Westtown business district. Each area has a distinct character, but they are similar in that they were developed with a mix of uses in mind. Residences and businesses are integrated by streets and sidewalks.

## CORRIDORS

Corridors are the streets that connect the City together, and sometimes divide it. They are the arteries of transportation into, around and through the City and are home to most of the commercial areas. Historic Corridors connect the centers of the City with other corridors and the surrounding neighborhoods. They are dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways –office, retail, bed and breakfast and residences (single and multi-family).

## DISTRICTS

Districts are parts of the city dedicated to a single type of activity, such as employment centers or educational campuses. Some districts encompass challenging sites and require more detailed study to inform future regulation. Districts are different from the corridors, centers and neighborhoods in that they generally do not involve a mixture of uses. The challenge for regulating any district is to ensure that they serve their intended purpose without compromising the quality of life in the surrounding areas. The City must assure that workers, products and visitors can reach their destinations easily and safely.

## OPEN SPACE

The final framework element is open space. This includes large natural areas, neighborhood parks, and non-motorized trail systems. Open space is an important contributor to quality of life and enhances all the other elements, particularly neighborhoods, centers and districts.

# REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

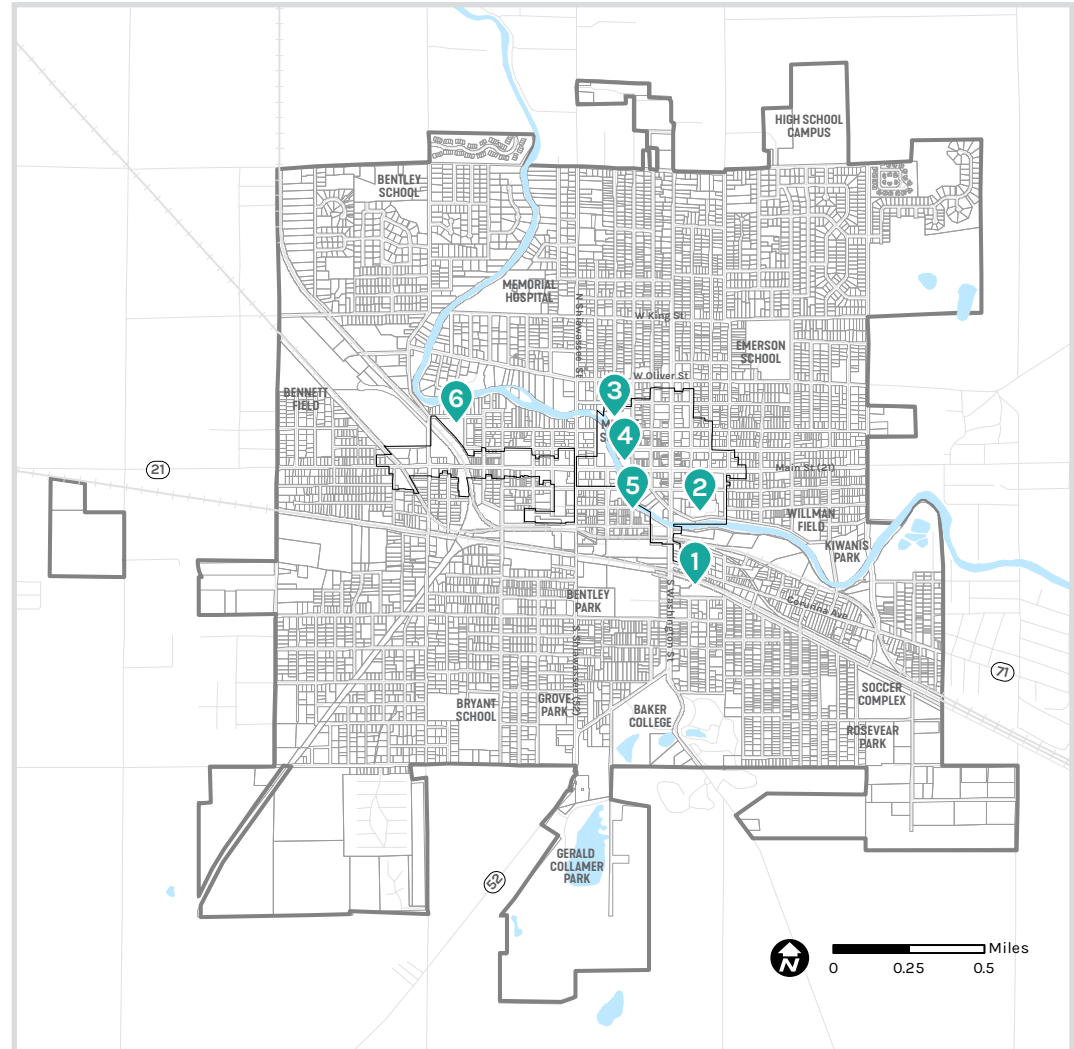
Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) is a certification program supporting community revitalization and the attraction and retention of businesses, entrepreneurs and talent throughout

Michigan. RRC promotes communities to be development ready and competitive in today’s economy by actively engaging stakeholders and proactively planning for the future—making them more attractive for projects that create places where people want to live, work and invest.

## REDEVELOPMENT READY SITES

Owosso has very little vacant land available in the city (1.7 percent of the total land as of 2012) and therefore is a community primed for redevelopment. Communities must think strategically about the redevelopment of properties and investments and should be targeted in areas that can catalyze further development around it. The current master plan focuses redevelopment efforts in two key areas: centers and center-adjacent neighborhoods.

TABLE 2. REDEVELOPMENT READY SITES		
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**CHAPTER 2**

**NEIGHBORHOODS**

# WHAT DO WE ENVISION FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOODS?

*We envision our neighborhoods as safe, walkable places; welcoming to residents of all ages and backgrounds. Our neighborhoods will be "complete neighborhoods" with access to quality schools, connected open space, and day-to-day goods and services. We take pride in our historic neighborhoods and variety of housing options including new infill development.*

It is important to protect the social and physical aspects of the community that give Owosso its identity. This chapter focuses on these elements that contribute to quality of life including the local culture and character, community gathering spaces, stable neighborhoods, quality housing stock and diverse housing types, good public services, and well-maintained infrastructure.

Residents of Owosso know the city to be a great community to live, to grow, and to raise a family. Residents and leaders also recognize the need for change and growth to enhance local quality of life. Investing in these elements that contribute to quality of life will benefit existing residents as well as provide opportunities to welcome new residents and businesses into the community.

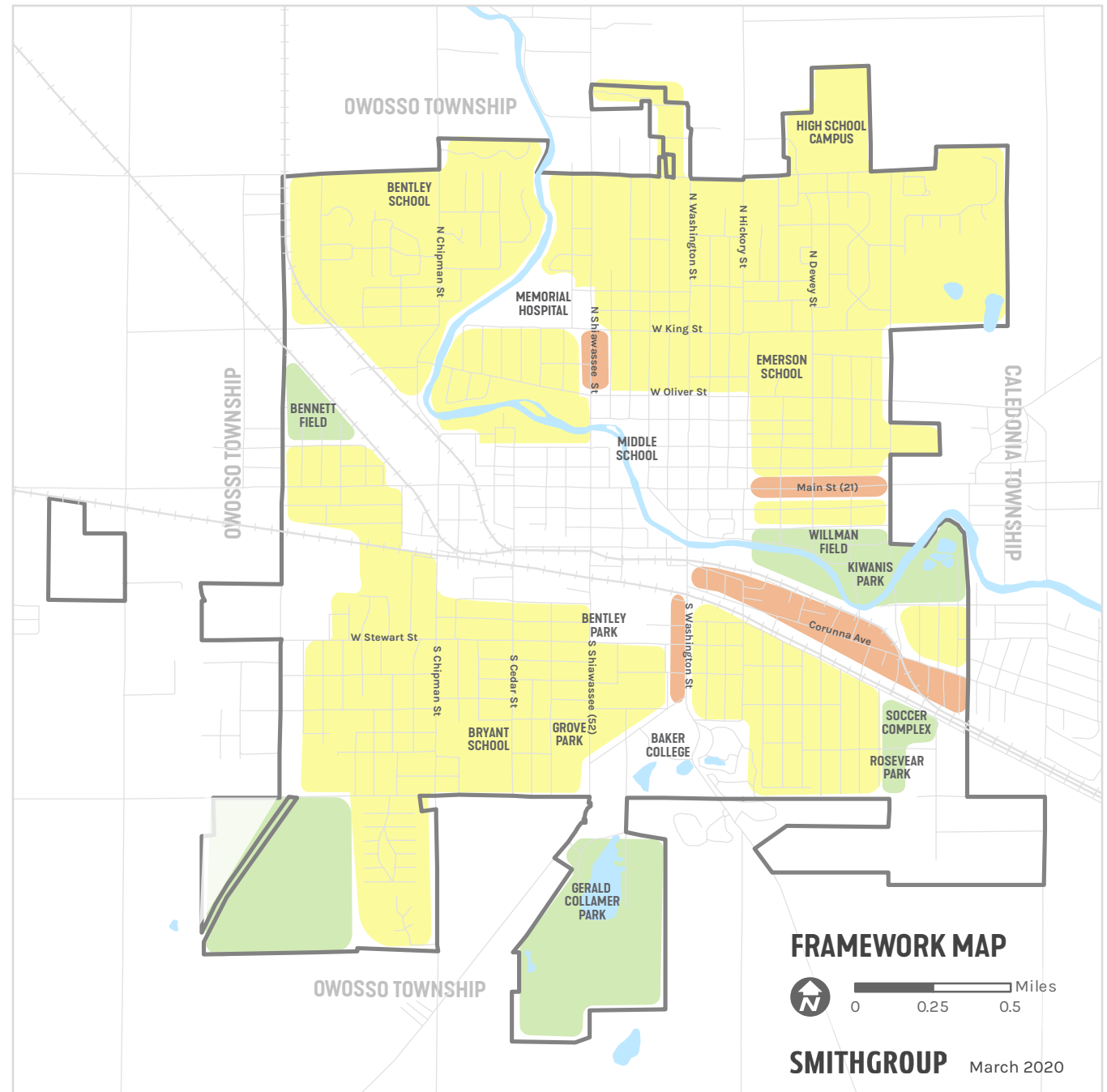


# FRAMEWORK

The Neighborhoods Chapter largely impacts the city’s neighborhoods and open space place types. Small open spaces such as neighborhood parks and school fields are included within the neighborhood element. Corridors serve as a link and also an edge between neighborhoods. Corridors provide access to goods and services. While most of the city’s housing is located within the neighborhoods place type, centers and corridors provide for higher density residential uses.

## LEGEND

- Neighborhoods
- Corridors
- Open Space



# ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

## WHAT MAKES US GREAT?

Owosso's neighborhoods have a great foundation, they offer:

- Safe, walkable streets
- Mature street trees and green areas
- Neighborhood schools with playgrounds and recreation fields
- Affordable single family housing
- Architectural character in older neighborhoods
- Strong road improvement program



## WHAT CAN WE IMPROVE?

Owosso's neighborhoods have a great foundation but challenges include:

- Desire for more housing options
- Residential construction costs outweigh home sale prices thus making new residential construction difficult
- Residential rental inspections are on a 5-year cycle due to lack of capacity and should be closer to early 2-3 years.
- Single family housing suffered an obvious impact of 2005-09 economic recession



# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

The following goals, policies, and actions help translate the city's assets and challenges into tools to strengthen residential neighborhoods and related land uses.

## GOAL 1. PROTECT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY

### MAINTAIN STRONG RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

- Plan for attached single-family and multi-family along corridors and as transitional uses between neighborhoods and commercial or employment areas.
- Amend zoning standards to reduce the conversion of single-family homes to multi-unit apartments and minimize impacts.

### IMPROVE HOUSING QUALITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY

- Improve the residential rental inspection program for more regular inspections (2-3 year cycle).
- Develop an educational code enforcement program to help connect residents to the resources and tools they need to maintain their homes.

- Strongly pursue code enforcement on hazardous, unsafe, and ill-kept housing.
- Pursue implementation of city-wide, public recycling and waste management.

### EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings such as schools, churches, or former warehouse buildings for multi-family residential.
- Encourage single-family attached housing on vacant and redevelopment sites, particularly as a transition between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Plan for attached single-family and multi-family along corridors and as transitional uses between neighborhoods and commercial or employment areas.



## LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Owosso's population is younger than the statewide average; therefore, the policies and recommendations of Age-Friendly Communities may not seem relevant but when we plan for older adults we plan for people of all ages and abilities. AARP's Livability Index provides a baseline for assessing local services and amenities that contribute to quality of life. The Livability Index includes the following categories:

- Housing: Affordability and Access
- Neighborhoods: Access to live/work/play
- Transportation: Safe and convenient options
- Environment: Clean air and water
- Health: Prevention, access, and quality
- Engagement: Civic and social involvement
- Opportunity: Inclusion and possibilities

Source: [www.livabilityindex.aarp.org](http://www.livabilityindex.aarp.org)



## ENCOURAGING NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Small communities will have to find creative ways to generate new housing development, on both the construction and land development ends of the market.

1. The community should develop an “elevator speech” that promotes the assets of the community and why someone would want to invest there.
2. Acquire land.
3. Obtain zoning approvals.
4. Extend infrastructure to the site.
5. Partner with local banks to establish a risk loan guarantee.
6. Make sure that the development review process is quick and efficient to avoid unnecessary delays.

Source: Region 6 Housing Development and Implementation Strategy

### REDUCE STORMWATER ISSUES

- Plan for capital projects to provide for better stormwater management, particularly within the neighborhoods.
- Develop a detailed plan for the Jerome Street corridor that would expand recreational options and eliminate flood risk to the neighborhood.
- Require higher on-site stormwater detention/retention.

### PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Protect the city’s six wellheads and other drainage features.
- Encourage Brownfield redevelopment.
- Continue to support the Friends of the Shiawassee River in their attempts to protect and enhance the water quality.

## GOAL 2. PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND INVESTORS

### IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

- Develop permit checklists for homeowners.

### FOSTER A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT AROUND CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Prioritize education over fines when dealing with code enforcement issues.
- Explore educational opportunities available for education of home owner associations, neighborhood associations/groups, landlord associations, and builder associations.

## GOAL 3. MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### INVEST IN PUBLIC SAFETY

- Proactively plan for essential resources and upgrades for police, fire, and code enforcement.
- Coordinate with county departments regarding regional issues such as safety, public health, hazard mitigation, economic development, education, and transportation.

**INVEST IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

- Maintain high-quality public water, sewer, and infrastructure. Consider a organized waste collection and recycling program. May require regional collaboration.
- Ensure proactive communication to residents about any potential changes in service. Includes temporary and long-term changes.

**SUPPORT LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Allocate resources for regular training for city staff as well as elected and appointed leadership and committee volunteers.
- Coordinate with Owosso Public School District to develop a citizen academy for residents of all ages.
- Develop neighborhood identities and service groups that can perform activities and events related to home improvements and networking.

**PROACTIVE CAPITAL PLANNING**

- Continue to improve annual the capital improvement program (CIP) planning process.
- Seek grant funding opportunities for infrastructure projects, particularly water, stormwater, and non-motorized systems.

**GOAL 4. IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER AND HERITAGE****PRESERVE HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER**

- Continue to support neighborhood events that highlight local history, historic homes, and beautiful gardens.
- Host home repair workshops facilitated by local trades persons and historic preservation experts to address common issues such as window repair, damp basements, electrical issues, and abatement of hazardous materials such as lead and asbestos.

**RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT STANDARDS**

- Establish new setbacks and site design standards that respect the existing nature of the community and promote developments that are high quality and complementary.

**EXPAND GREENWAY DEVELOPMENT**

- Utilize public-private partnerships to enhance and expand the greenway along the Shiawassee River.

**GOAL 5. INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE****SUPPORT THE CITY'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

- Support and promote arts & culture, in partnership with Shiawassee Arts Council, Lebowsky Center for Owosso Public School District, and others.

**ENHANCE WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS**

- Pursue "safe routes to schools" improvements in partnership with the Owosso Public Schools.
- Improve connections between neighborhoods and key destinations, activity centers throughout the city, including the riverfront, schools, and parks.

**PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

- Utilize public-private partnerships to enhance and expand the greenway along the Shiawassee River.
- Seek grant funding opportunities to increase parks and recreation facilities.
- Develop an adopt a park program.
- Study the cost and feasibility of potential kayak launch sites along the Shiawassee River.



## WHAT IS MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING?

Missing Middle Housing is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types—compatible in scale with detached single-family homes—that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living. These missing middle housing types include duplex, triplex/fourplex, courtyard apartment, townhouse, multiplex, and live/work. They are great for transitional areas between Neighborhoods and Centers.



Source: Optics Design

- Partner with community groups and citizens to get maximum programming out of parks and other areas.
- Develop an implementation plan to create an integrated trail system for non-motorized transportation and recreation at the regional level.
- Develop an implementation plan to create an integrated trail system for non-motorized transportation and recreation.

### IMPROVE SAFETY OF STREETS FOR ALL USERS

- Incorporate distinctive and clearly marked crosswalks at road crossings that align with existing sidewalks and pathways.
- Continue to prioritize safety and trip hazards for sidewalk replacement
- Pursue “Bicycle Friendly City” designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

## GOAL 6. BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY

### ENCOURAGE RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT

- Utilize redevelopment ready sites process to market potential sites. (RRC Best Practice)
- Promote infill housing in older neighborhoods and on established corridors to help rejuvenate such areas.
- Consider future development of Osburn Lakes for larger lot residential/recreation.

### SUPPORT REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

- Connect the riverwalk to the CIS rail-trail to the west.



# REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## WASHINGTON AND MONROE STREET

Located south of Downtown and Corunna Avenue, this 5.5-acre site is located in a transitional zone between commercial and industrial uses and a residential neighborhood to the south. The site includes multiple parcels including a city-owned property along the railroad corridor and the Former Grace Church, 715 S. Washington (built in 1950). The site is connected to public water/sewer. In the near term, the site provides an opportunity for infill residential. The adaptive reuse of church building for condominium development may be considered, however, the building does not have architectural or historical significance and could be demolished as part of the redevelopment. A desirable future use for the site is single-family attached residential. Infill development should be compatible with the existing neighborhood incorporating front porches/stoops, alley access, parking in the rear, and building heights between 2-3 stories. Existing street trees should be preserved.



## GREENING JEROME AVENUE

The residential area between Downtown and Willman Field is located in the floodplain. As homes become available there is an opportunity to consolidate properties for future open space development. While there is an existing shared use path along the north side of the river, there is an opportunity to improve the connection between Downtown and other open space amenities to the east. The design should integrate stormwater management, native landscaping, seating area, and play features.



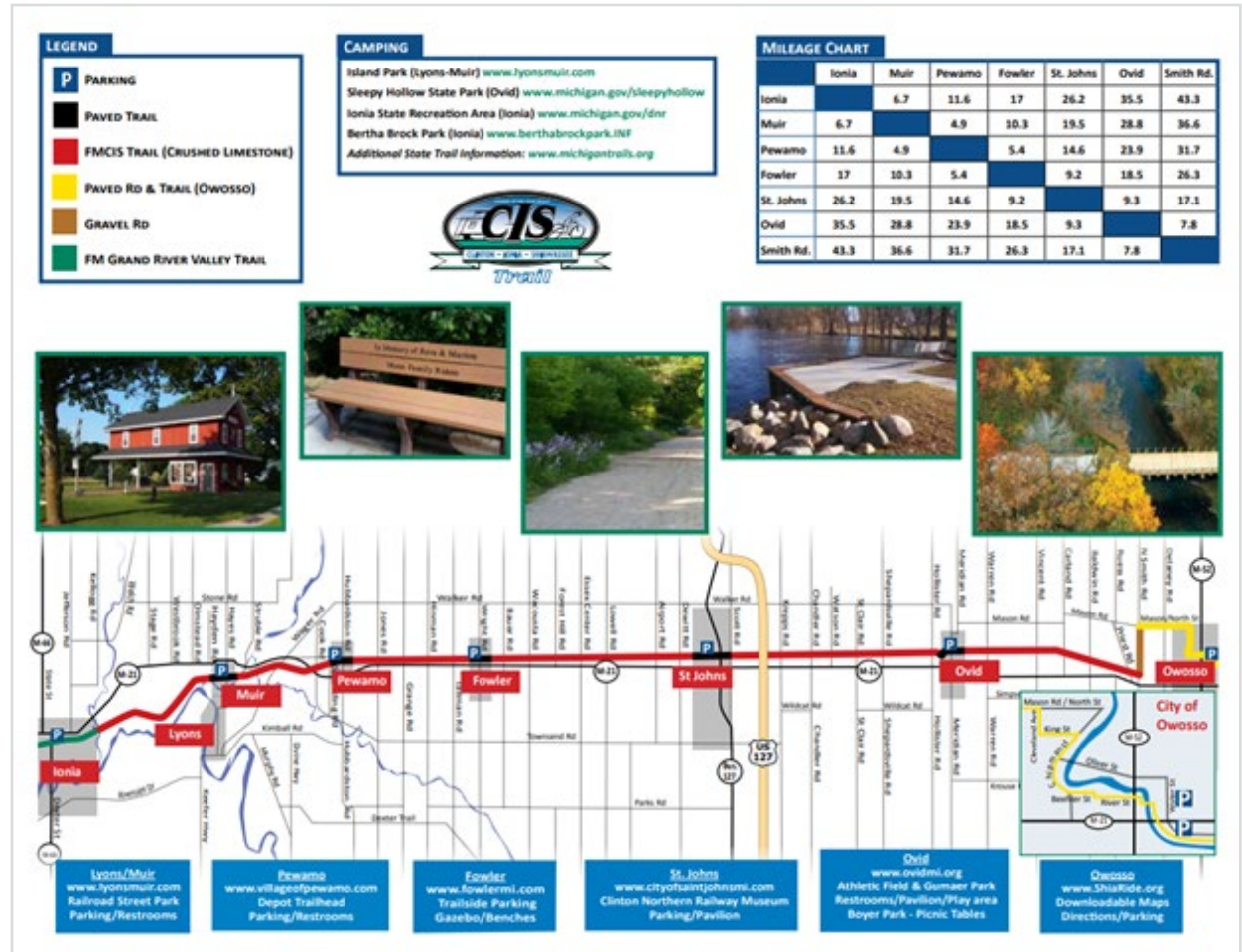
### LEGEND

- Proposed Stormwater Improvements
- Existing Riverfront Trail
- Proposed Trail Connections

# OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

The Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee (CIS) Trail is a 41.3-mile non-motorized trail located in mid-Michigan in the counties of Clinton, Ionia and Shiawassee. It connects the communities of Owosso, Ovid, St. Johns, Fowler, Pewamo and Muir/Lyons utilizing a former railroad. The trail is 12 ft wide, packed crushed limestone, with 10 ft wide asphalt surface in towns for a total of 8 miles of asphalt.

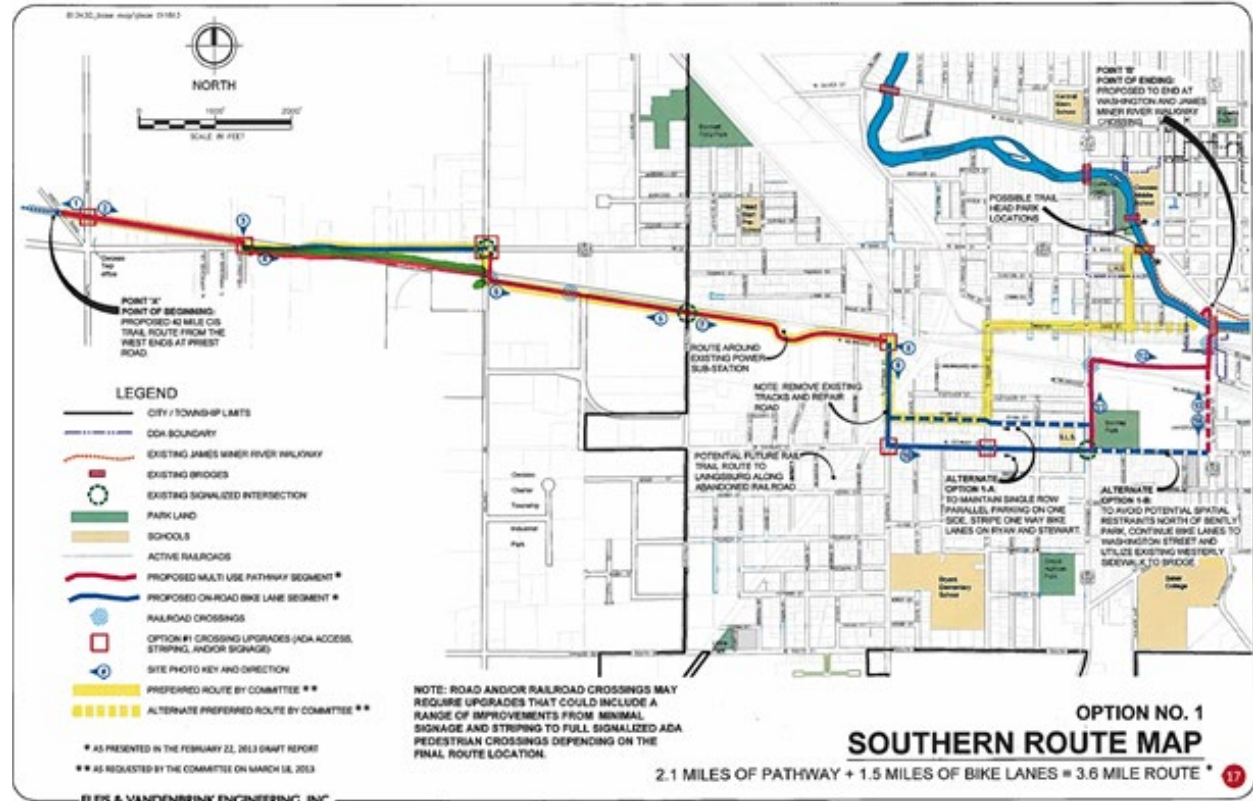
The trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and is managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) with the Mid-West Michigan Trail Authority and maintained by volunteers of the Friends of the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail.





## NEW NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL ROUTE

Since the railroad corridor is still active in the City of Owosso, the current trail turns north at Smith and detours approximately 4-miles, dropping back down on the west side of the Shiawassee River, connecting to the Riverwalk at Curwood Castle. The city is currently looking to fund a new route that would connect the trail more directly into the downtown.





**CHAPTER 3**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

*Economic development means supporting and growing locally-grown business. It means attracting and retaining talented workers and investing in our residents.*

The economic development strategy drives investment and growth strategies, and it helps to define the way a community will interact with the local business community. It can guide business attraction and retention, determine which types of projects warrant public incentive support, identify an economic development vision and create an implementation strategy for the completion of projects which will enhance the economy within the community.

Economic development cannot just be about projects and amenities alone, it must be a comprehensive strategy. One that focuses on growing the local tax base, developing the workforce of today and tomorrow, investing in infrastructure that can support the needs of both residents and businesses, creating capacity to support, grow and retain existing businesses within the community and developing a marketing and branding strategy that can help attract new businesses to the community.

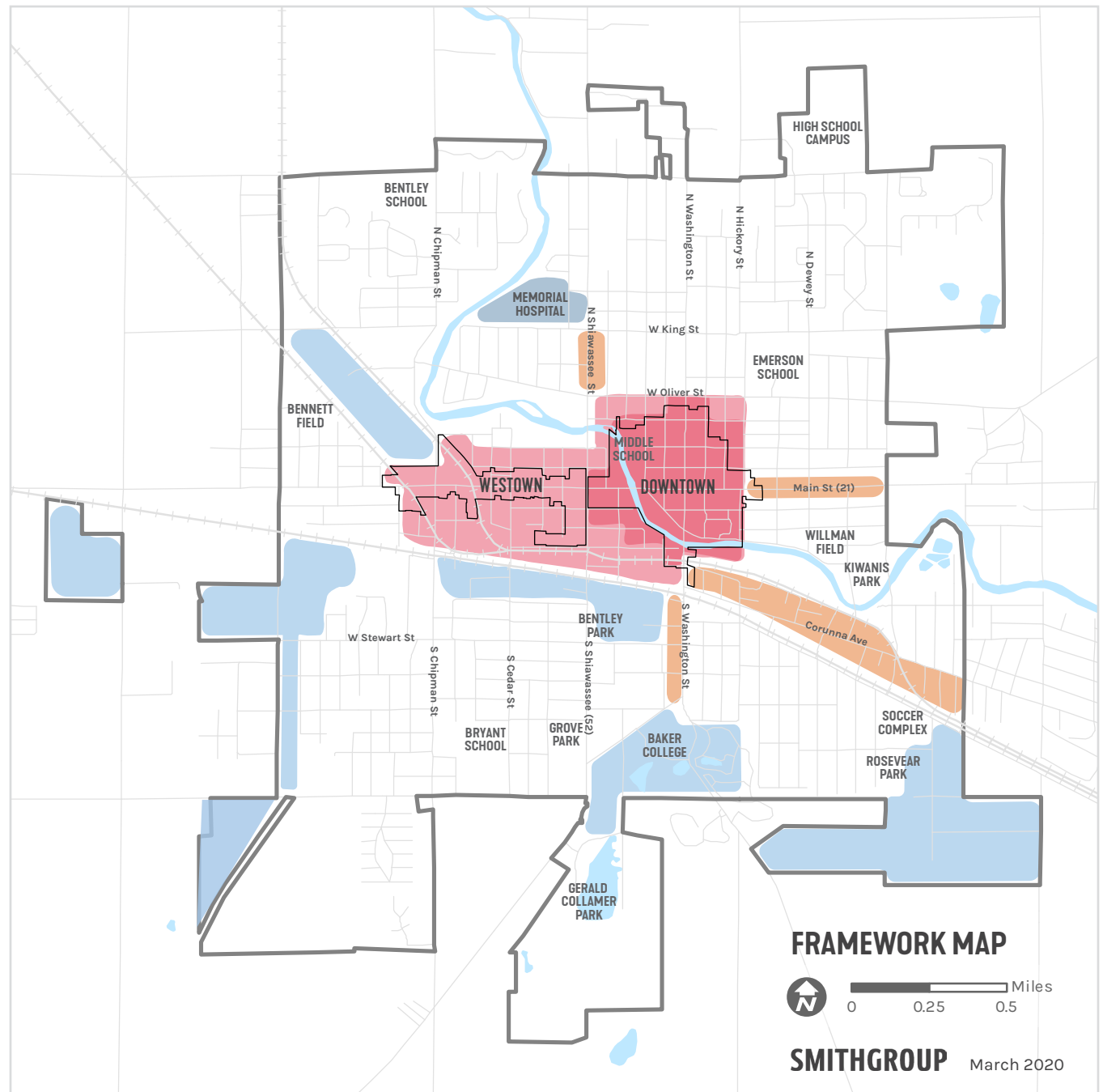


# FRAMEWORK

The Economic Development Strategy deals with the city's centers, corridors, and district place types. This is where people work and where they go for goods and services. These are the areas where revitalization is taking place.

## LEGEND

- Centers
- Corridors
- Districts



# ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

## WHAT MAKES US GREAT?

In terms of economic development assets, Owosso offers:

- Regional location and proximity to three large metropolitan areas: Detroit, Flint, and Lansing
- Stable government with minimal debt and good infrastructure
- Good cooperation with adjacent municipalities
- Quality school district
- Water and sewer
- Low cost of living and competitive taxes
- Diversity of businesses
- Michigan Main Street community
- Cook Family Foundation
- High speed internet
- Art and culture
- Baker College
- Partnerships with MEDC include Michigan Main Street (MMS) and Community Assistance Team (CAT)

## WHAT CAN WE IMPROVE?

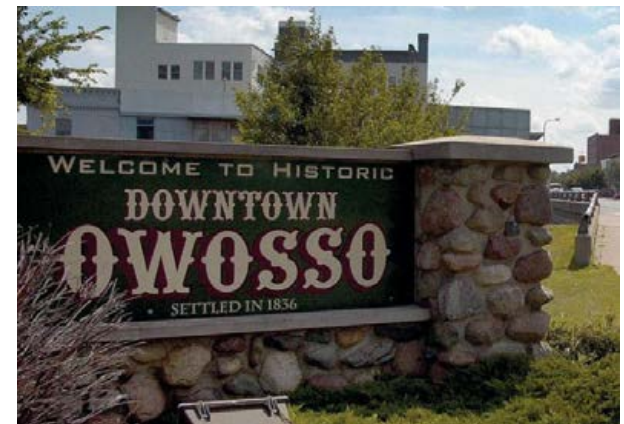
Owosso struggles with:

- Lack of housing options
- Perception and lack of marketing assets
- Lower educational attainment
- Skills training for underemployed
- Limited land for development
- Few entertainment venues
- Lack of hotels and accommodations
- Access to capital

## WHERE CAN WE START?

Opportunities for Owosso include:

- Transformational Brownfield
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Certification
- Need to sell success stories - incubator at Farmers' Market become small businesses
- Accelerate the timeline for putting together financing packages





# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

The following goals, policies, and actions help translate the city's assets and challenges into tools to strengthen economic development and related place types in the city:

## GOAL 1: PROTECT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY

### MAINTAIN STRONG COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

- Ongoing planning for Downtown and Westown.
- Support existing businesses.
- Encourage nonconforming sites to gradually upgrade and be brought more into conformance with the intent of the zoning ordinance.
- Prioritize code enforcement and blight control efforts on Westown, East M-21, South M-52, and M-71.

### PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Encourage sustainable design and aesthetic upgrades that will enhance the use and exchange value of property.

- Utilize the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that development will minimize disruption to valuable natural feature areas.
- Consider zoning changes that encourage rain gardens, permeable paving materials, LEED certification, and other sustainable development goals.

## GOAL 2: PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND INVESTORS

### IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

- Create a Guide to Development.
- Develop a documented policy to guide the internal review process including tasks, times, responsible parties, etc.
- Develop potential incentive packages.

### ENSURE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IS INCLUSIVE

- Promote and support a regional approach to economic development that is business friendly and easily accessible by businesses.
- Continue to follow and revise the public participation plan as needed.

- Develop an outreach strategy for potentially controversial development projects.

## GOAL 3: MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### INVEST IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- Proactively address capital needs and time projects in parallel with redevelopment.
- Coordinate an infrastructure improvement plan for streets and underground utilities, with design standards.

### SUPPORT LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Support training for local elected officials.

### PROMOTE FINANCING TOOLS FOR DEVELOPERS

- Educate building owners regarding potential financial benefits of upper floor rehabilitation, including state and federal tax credits for historic rehabilitation.

### PROACTIVE CAPITAL PLANNING

- Consider redevelopment opportunities for current municipal properties, specifically City Hall and the public safety building.



## GOAL 4. IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

### PROMOTE REDEVELOPMENT

- Modify zoning to permit a flexible mixture of uses along corridors but with strengthened emphasis on design and character.
- Recognize and assess Redevelopment Ready Sites in order to prepare for packaging and marketing.

### PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

- Develop standards for new and infill development in order to ensure high quality, durable materials that are in compatibility with the city's historic character.
- Move the sign ordinance into the zoning code and update it so that it adequately serves businesses but promotes more subtle materials, lighting, color, size, positioning, and landscaping that complements the building and neighborhood.
- Require landscaping that enhances the development site along the street and within the parking lot.



### BUILD ON EXISTING ASSETS

- Create marketing materials to attract developers to Owosso.
- Promote tourism. Advance and expand Downtown's Day-Tripper Transformation Strategy.
- Preserve the unique identity of Westown while pursuing mixed-use and traditional building projects.

### CONTINUE LOCAL EVENTS AND PLACEMAKING

- Facilitate regular and frequent events in the downtown and Westown business districts in conjunction with the evolution and improvement of existing events such as the North Pole Express.
- Encourage and facilitate historical preservation.

## GOAL 5: INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE

### SUPPORT MIXED-USE AND WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Encourage home-based businesses, live-work space, mixed uses, and flexible commercial spaces to accommodate the new economy worker and business.

- Prioritize neighborhood-serving mixed-use nodes to provide walkable access to daily retail and service needs.
- Provide safe pedestrian circulation when designing access and circulation for vehicles.
- Require all new commercial construction to provide pedestrian pathways along the roadway and require linkages from the building to parking areas and the pathway.

#### **SUPPORT COMPLETE STREETS**

- Finalize a non-motorized plan map and implementation strategy that links to other regional trail efforts.
- Build a student culture in the community between Baker College and downtown by encouraging strong pedestrian connections between campus, dorms, and downtown.
- Connect Westtown to the proposed trail system and consider additional wayfinding and street furniture, including waste receptacles.
- Consider implementation of the “complete streets” and “road diet” design concepts for all major streets and state highways.

## **GOAL 6: BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY**

### **BUILD ON THE LOCAL BUSINESSES**

- Business attraction.
- Identify and invest in programs that promote Owosso as the best entrepreneurial climate to live, work, learn, and play.

### **SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT**

- Continue to hold events to facilitate business support, training, and networking (Social media marketing, small business resources).
- Consider a coordinated study and plan effort that could drive tourism by increasing the draw to the Steam Railroading Institute, the Lebowsky Center, etc.

### **DEVELOP A MARKETING STRATEGY FOR NEW BUSINESS**

- Conduct a market study to understand the needs of the community that are currently unmet and identify potential targets for business recruitment.
- Develop a business recruitment strategy and action plan, including a business recruitment package. Target a mix of specialty and anchor businesses for downtown, and a broader mix of general commercial for the corridors.

- Redevelopment Ready Sites marketing via signage in public areas, info packets and status updates in print/online/social, stakeholder facilitation, pre-project and post-project awareness efforts.

### **ATTRACT NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- Partner with MEDC (RRC staff) and technical assistant consultants to identify and facilitate developer introductions and site tours.
- Promote the Shiawassee River as an environmental, economic, and recreational asset for Owosso.
- Develop a process to share successes, events, promotions, and development opportunities across partner communication channels (e.g., newsletters, press releases with partners like Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, etc.).
- Increase investment in regional marketing.
- Develop and utilize Request for Qualifications (RFQs) and Business Development Packets.

## **GOAL 7: STRENGTHEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

- Develop a tax increment financing plan for the Westtown Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) and expand the boundary to capture key redevelopment sites.
- Consider the establishment of a Principal Shopping District (PSD) for Downtown Owosso.
- Continue to support the efforts of the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership.
- Create an easily sharable, living spreadsheet to align partners with ongoing planning efforts and initiatives.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The economic development strategy drives investment and growth strategies, and it helps to define the way a community will interact with the local business community. It can guide business attraction and retention, determine which types of projects warrant public incentive support, identify an economic development vision and create an implementation strategy for the completion of projects which will enhance the economy within the community.

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## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2013, the I-69 Thumb Region, also known as Prosperity Region 6 completed a 7-county economic development strategy called “Accelerate”. This plan is intended to find and promote economic development opportunities across the region as well as promoting the region for outside investment.

Each year, the I-69 Thumb Region offers grants and other support programs assisting local communities within the region to compete for investment opportunities.

## AREAS FOR GROWTH

An overall assessment of Owosso points to two primary areas for growth throughout the community as follows;

1. **Industry** – This classification focuses on retail, service and manufacturing
2. **Housing** – The primary focus on housing will be to increase new housing units of all types that can primarily serve the working community and industries of Owosso.

## INDUSTRY

The City of Owosso has a number of thriving industry sectors from retail to industrial to medical with Memorial Healthcare which employs over 1,000 workers within the city. Importantly, for future industry growth within the City of Owosso, is the labor participation rate. Owosso has a labor participation rate of nearly 64%, which is currently higher than the State of Michigan based on 2017 U.S. Census estimates. Equally important, educational attainment for the City of Owosso shows that at least 54% of the community has of some level of higher education attainment. While this is still a little below the State of Michigan, Owosso can demonstrate that they do have a trained workforce, especially when specifically trying to attract new manufacturers to the community.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/ RETENTION PROGRAM**

Develop a program to take and keep the pulse of the local business community. Regular touches, or retention visits will begin to engage the business community beyond traditional networking opportunities. Typical discussions during retention visits include business growth plans, marketing, employment and obstacles that can hinder growth. There are many resources available to the business community for finding, hiring and retaining employees, obtaining financial support, learning about import and export programs and government contracting opportunities. Having a strong business retention program can be one of the most successful tools for supporting the local business community. The Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership (SEDP) can be a resource to the City of Owosso since it brings collaborative partnerships together around development, business growth and support, entrepreneurialism, workforce development, infrastructure and beyond.

### **KEY METRICS FOR A RETENTION PROGRAM**

1. Coordinate retention efforts with the SEDP. When able, join SEDP for retention visits to companies within the city.
2. Coordinate a bi-annual retention review with SEDP and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to get updates on retention efforts throughout the year and to learn about key themes arising from discussions with local base businesses.
3. Develop a tracking method to follow and assist companies through the expansion process.
4. Create a small business information and support kiosk at City Hall in the Main Street/DDA office with promotional material for support programs or agencies that are available to assist local small businesses such as MEDC, MI Small Business Development Center, SEDP, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, lending institutions and other support organizations.
5. Celebrate business growth wins in the city online and through other forms of communications to let residents and other businesses know about economic successes.
6. Promote and enhance DDA/Main Street programs that can support local business growth and development such as TIF or Brownfield.

## **MARKETING/BRAND STRATEGY**

Upon completion of the Master Plan, the City should focus efforts on marketing and branding to reintroduce the downtown mixed-use corridor and become a tool to highlight investment opportunities within the city. Marketing and branding have been used in many instances to create logos and taglines for municipalities, but for economic growth, the strategy needs to do much more. The strategy should identify sites, but also why those sites are a good investment. Are utilities in place and what capacity can they support? What potential incentives, such as opportunity zones might apply? What types of investment is the community trying to attract and what demographics support that investment? These are some of the questions to be addressed in a good brand strategy.

The table at right provides the framework for a marketing strategy for the City of Owosso

## MARKETING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Segment	Primary Interests	Outreach Tools	Suggested Message to Segment
<b>Location advisors/ Site selectors &amp; Corporate Executives (with site influence)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reducing risk, credible and trustworthy sources</li> <li>■ Available and skilled workforce</li> <li>■ Accessibility and location</li> <li>■ Incentives and taxes</li> <li>■ Predictable permitting process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Meetings at industry events</li> <li>■ Website/online media</li> <li>■ Partnerships and industry networks</li> <li>■ Industry press</li> <li>■ Briefings/tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plenty of available land and vacant facilities</li> <li>■ We offer fast approvals</li> <li>■ Incentives available</li> <li>■ Easy access to larger markets</li> <li>■ Forward thinking leadership</li> <li>■ Low utility costs</li> </ul>
<b>Developers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reducing risk</li> <li>■ Quality/style of development</li> <li>■ Return on investment</li> <li>■ Quick tenant placement</li> <li>■ Predictable permitting process</li> <li>■ Zoning and land use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Engagement in community building vision</li> <li>■ Trade media and press</li> <li>■ Briefings/tours</li> <li>■ Website/online media</li> <li>■ Area business reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Untapped market potential</li> <li>■ Desirable location</li> <li>■ Fast approvals</li> <li>■ Incentives available</li> <li>■ Progressive city leadership</li> <li>■ Small-town charm with forward thinking leadership</li> <li>■ Low utility costs</li> </ul>
<b>Regional &amp; Intermediary Organizations, Public- Private Partnerships (MEDC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promoting and expanding economic development in the region</li> <li>■ Growing the organization's reputation and credibility</li> <li>■ Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Brochures/Fact sheets</li> <li>■ Briefings</li> <li>■ Engagement in community building vision</li> <li>■ Community educational forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Changes will offer major economic opportunities for local community</li> <li>■ Together we can make Owosso a great place to do business and development projects</li> <li>■ We are leveraging your investment</li> </ul>

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Upon completion of the brand strategy, it will be important to engage fully with the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership as well as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to implement a business attraction strategy that works for the community based on the outcome of the Master Plan, land available for growth and target sectors the city is looking to attract.

### KEY ATTRACTION METRICS

1. Determine which industry sectors are most likely to thrive in Owosso and implement a targeted marketing effort to those industries.
2. Work with SEDP to engage site selection professionals and consider hosting a Familiarization Tour within the community.
3. Highlight strong institutions such as Memorial Healthcare, Baker College, The Cook Family Foundation, Chemical Bank and others to demonstrate Owosso's great industry core and industry diversity.
4. Complete a workforce study to highlight the city's workforce potential.
5. Attend regional site selection forums such as Mid-American Economic Development Council, Michigan Economic Developers Association and Site Selectors Guild.

## HOUSING

A common theme from the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis is that there is not enough housing in the marketplace for new residents coming to Owosso, and that the existing housing stock is not supporting the existing residents of the city. Specifically, the housing market for middle income individuals is virtually nonexistent. Adding new housing stock is a very important piece of the economic development puzzle.

Opportunities to accommodate new housing marketed to middle income individuals are found throughout the city. At right are a few strategies to assist with attracting potential housing builders to the City of Owosso.

## UNDERSTAND THE MARKET

The first step in moving projects forward in smaller communities across the regions is to identify areas in the community that would be appropriate for new housing construction, both renter- and owner-occupied. For many builders, cost is the driving factor for determining when and where to build. Market information needs to be gathered indicating what the potential sales price or rent structure would be for new units. It would also be helpful to identify where potential buyers and renters will come from. A focus group meeting with area realtors and lenders would help with this.

Further, a survey of existing residents (mailed and/or online) in the community would also help asking the following questions, at a minimum, for example:

1. If newly constructed, for-sale houses were available in the community would you consider selling your existing house and moving?
2. Are you currently renting and if newly constructed, for-sale houses were available would you consider buying?
3. If you did move to a different house, what are some of the key things you would be looking for? (less maintenance, more bedrooms, etc.)
4. Do you know of, or is anyone in your household, currently looking for alternate housing but have been unable to find any?



## ENCOURAGING NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Developers are not likely to be interested in small, outlying communities because the incomes and housing values are lower. Instead, they will tend to focus on larger markets with higher values and the potential for greater profit margins. Small communities will have to find creative ways to generate new housing development, on both the construction and land development ends of the market.

This can come in the form of building capacity with local investors/builders (“home grown”) and eliminating some of the hurdles that make housing development challenging. This can also be accomplished by creating Public/Private Partnerships (P3’s) with local municipalities or non-profit entities. Either the community, the P3 or a regional consortium, must look for ways to encourage new housing construction including but not limited to:

1. **Acquiring land.** Since both lenders and developers are shying away from new developments, the community can acquire land for that purpose and eliminate one of the required steps. This land can be sold raw or if possible, with the necessary infrastructure indicated below. If land can be obtained at a reduced price through tax foreclosure, the savings can be passed on to the developer as an added incentive. If the community is acting as the developer, this will help lower development costs and the savings can be passed on to the individual builders.
2. **Obtaining zoning approvals.** The community can rezone and even site plan the project so a developer only has to install the infrastructure and then obtain building permits for the construction. Prior zoning approval would also help with alternate housing types, like townhouses, condominiums, apartments, etc., where residents in some communities oppose any type of housing that is not large lot, single-family.
3. **Extending infrastructure to the site.** This is one of the costliest parts of development so if the community can install utilities to the property already purchased, typically at a lower financing rate, this will greatly improve the ability to attract builders. With roads, sewer and water already installed, the community will then have the ability to sell individual lots to builders and eliminate the risk that comes with developing an entire subdivision. This also gives the community flexibility with the builder and ability to ensure high-quality construction; and coordinate capital projects.
4. Establish a risk loan guarantee that will encourage banks to lend for speculative housing development, like subdivisions. The builders we spoke to said that even if they wanted to develop a subdivision, the risk would be too great, and the lenders would be hesitant to participate. It would therefore be beneficial to create some form of loan risk guarantee pool that would protect the lenders from loss if the project failed. As a loan guarantee, funding would not have to be committed to each project; only for those projects that fail and the bank has to foreclose on the property. In those cases, the loan fund would cover an agreed upon percentage of the loan and then have the ability to sell the property to a new developer. Such a fund could be undertaken at the community level but would most likely be more effective at the regional level as part of a consortium of communities or economic development agencies.

With many of the successful projects noted previously, builders have stated that they were able to offer lower-priced options because they could get higher densities creating an economy of scale. Others were able to acquire the land for development at a very low cost, generally purchasing the land from a municipal entity that obtained the land through the foreclosure process during the last recession. As noted earlier in this strategy, nearly 30% of the costs of new construction projects are regulatory, so finding ways to reduce those costs is critical.

## ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

1. The community should develop an “elevator speech” that promotes the assets of the community and why someone would want to invest there.
2. An inventory of available land should be prepared including ownership, tax and zoning information. The availability and location of public utilities should also be included.
3. It is critical that the community obtain ownership of tax foreclosure properties that have development/redevelopment potential for mixed-use or housing.
4. Where needed, properties that are targeted for development can be re-zoned in advance by the community, making it easier for prospective developers/builders to move forward.
5. Make sure that the zoning and building review process is quick and efficient to avoid unnecessary delays.
6. A strategy should be prepared for the development of residential properties, falling into four categories: (1) Land suitable for subdivision into multiple lots; (2) Individual, developable lots for sale to builders; (3) Land suitable for multiple-family development; and (4) Mixed-use and urban housing types, like townhouses, flats, etc.
7. Local companies and banks should be recruited as partners in housing development, including financially, since they depend upon the ability to attract quality employees and customers.
8. Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units and smaller housing unit types to increase density in downtown and adjacent areas.

# IMPLEMENTATION

This plan serves as the policy guide for moving Owosso forward, guiding decisions about future physical and economic development. Transforming the plan's 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

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 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 Owosso develops must unite toward the plan's common vision.

### 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 practices 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.

### 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 landowners should consider the plan's direction as it is the guide for economic growth and stability of the community and supports the goals and objectives of the overall master plan.

### 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 may be required. This will ensure plan goals, objectives, and recommendations reflect changing community needs, expectations, and financial realities.

# ATTRACTING DEVELOPMENT

It is up to the City, DDA, business leaders, and civic associations to work together to assemble developer information and then actively recruit developers and businesses.

## WHY OWOSSO?

Since developers look for strong or emerging markets, Owosso must prove that it fits into this classification and may have just been overlooked. What are the positives with Owosso that have created unmet demand for housing, commercial, office or industrial uses? This is information that must be gathered and uncovered to create the “elevator speech” for developers: meaning why invest in Owosso as opposed to all the other communities that contact you? Also, what has changed in recent years causing the private sector to overlook the city as a place to develop? A one-page handout summarizing this key information will be a good start. After that, a separate sheet can be created for each marketing item like housing, retail, office, hospitality, etc.

## UNDERSTAND THE MARKET

Developers may not take the time to fully understand the dynamics of the local market and especially not unmet demand. The city can prepare a fact sheet for different market segments, working with local real estate professionals and companies. For example, some compelling information might be increased housing prices and vacancy rates; potential demand for certain types of housing using the Target Market Analysis; voids in the retail market that could be served by local businesses, etc.



## DEVELOPER MATCHMAKING

Once the above information is collected and organized, invite developers to come in and learn about available sites and why they should consider Owosso for their next project. It would be best to invite them individually and be concise, enthusiastic, and to the point with what you would like them to consider. Be sure to share success stories from other companies and developments so they can see that others have already tested the market. It is equally important to have as much information available regarding property availability, price, rental rates, recent purchase prices, traffic volumes, etc. This will provide a positive impression regarding the recruitment effort and limit the number of items that need follow-up.



## DDA/CITY PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Property acquisition will be a necessary part of implementing the development projects contained herein, particularly for site development and redevelopment. By purchasing property in an area identified for new development, the DDA or the city will have an added tool to attract developers and build the desired project. For example, to develop new housing, the DDA or city can acquire several of the vacant lots and can contribute them to the project. This will provide an incentive to lower the cost, and minimize the risk, for the developer. Should the first phase be successful, the developer will more than likely undertake construction of additional units without any form of subsidy. The goal is to use tax increment financing to attract developers by minimizing risk, leverage private investment and eventually eliminate the need for financial assistance.



## GAP FUNDING

Some projects may need financial assistance to kick-start the development. The city may, at its own discretion, commit project-specific future tax increment capture back to private projects for a specified period of time. The goal is to provide funding to close the “gap” that prevents the project from becoming a reality due to financial feasibility. There are many additional incentives that can also be utilized to support “gap” funding.



## INCENTIVE PACKAGE

The following programs are a sampling of incentives available to both local communities and developers to assist with redevelopment projects.

- Business Development Program (MiBDP)
- PA 198 Industrial Facilities Exemption
- Commercial Rehabilitation Abatement
- Community Revitalization Program (CRP)
- New Market Tax Credits
- Brownfield
- Michigan Transportation Economic Development Fund
- Opportunity Zones
- Façade Improvement Program



# REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## OWOSSO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Located on the northwest side of Downtown, along the Shiawassee River, the Owosso Middle School is currently active. There are plans to construct a new middle school on the high school campus. The 6-acre site includes a parking lot and amphitheater with a large lawn. Built in 1928, the 120,000 sq. ft. middle school has significant adaptive use potential. The auditorium and gym spaces present challenges for strictly residential conversion to market-rate apartments. The city would like to see the building repurposed as an artist live/work space similar to the City of Dearborn's City Hall Artspace Lofts. Other options include higher education. For instance, Kendall College was a possible tenant for the Armory building. The Owosso-Mitchell amphitheater hosts concert events throughout the summer. To preserve this community asset, the city should encourage the future developer to provide a public access easement for the amphitheater and perhaps a portion of the parking lot (to accommodate barrier free parking).



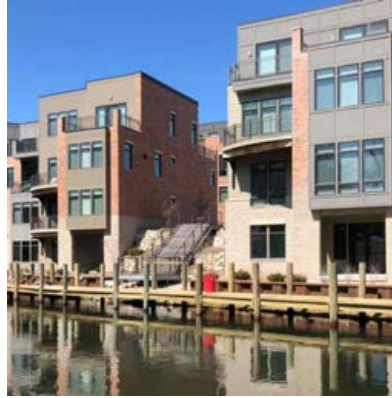
## MATTHEWS BUILDING

Located in a prominent intersection within the Downtown core, adjacent to the Shiawassee River and across from City Hall, the Matthews Building site has significant redevelopment potential. The building is an aggregate of several buildings dating from the end of the nineteenth into the early twentieth century. The individual buildings are distinguishable according to their variable heights, different window trims, and variations on the stepped brick frieze. The extensive remodeling that has occurred over time, including multiple coats of paint and the application of various covers to the façade, challenges the observer to sort out a coherent description of its appearance. These additions also make adaptive use more challenging. Originally constructed in 1899, to replace the Mueller Brother Brewery that burned in 1898. The building is listed as a contributing to the National Register Historic District.



## RIVER'S EDGE

Located along the south bank of Shiawassee River, just west of S Washington St, this 2.5-acre underutilized industrial site has significant redevelopment potential from a location and amenity perspective due to proximity to downtown, the Stream Railroading Institute and the James Miner Riverwalk. An opportunity for attached single family or multiple family. The development should provide for public access along riverfront. The surrounding neighborhood has architectural charm and walkable scale, but it is somewhat disconnected from downtown. There is an opportunity to connect the neighborhood to downtown via a pedestrian bridge across river at corner of Genesee and Green St which could be considered as part of a larger city-wide non-motorized effort.





## FORMER VANGUARD SITE

This 3-acre former industrial site adjacent to the railroad offers an opportunity to provide a more desirable transition between more intense uses and the residential neighborhood to the north. Like the Woodard Station development, this site offers an opportunity to strengthen the Westtown commercial area by adding residential density and creating a sense of place. Opportunity for duplexes or triplexes with rear parking and landscaping buffer along the railroad corridor. The development should be limited to 2-3 stories.



# WESTOWN

While historically commercial corridors served as neighborhood-serving local businesses, as buying habits have changed these areas have seen varying levels of strength and decay across Owosso. Existing walkable centers should be preserved and strengthened to spur further investment. Many corridors, though, may be best to transition from retail or general commercial areas to mixed-use office, housing, and live/work opportunities. This is especially true for the gateway corridors of Corunna, Main Street and Washington. Future zoning changes are recommended to place a renewed emphasis on walkable design and character while allowing a flexible mixture of uses.

Westown in particular provides opportunity to complement, while not duplicating, the success of Downtown by capitalizing on its existing traditional “main street” storefronts and walkability to nearby neighborhoods. The success of the Woodward building redevelopment indicates Westown may have more potential as an eclectic “warehouse” district that builds on the area’s industrial past. While a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) was established, no TIF has been established for the area. A more formalized business association and funding mechanism are needed to help brand Westown as its own district and fund streetscape improvements and a more formalized shared parking strategy.








## KEY STRATEGIES FOR WESTOWN

- Expand the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) boundary along Lyon to Beehler and along Lansing to Cedar and the railroad tracks to capture future development and support necessary infrastructure and streetscape improvements.
- Continue to invest in the rehabilitation of buildings along Main between State and Cedar to reinforce the sense of place and support existing and future businesses. This includes facade improvements and signage that enhances the historic integrity of the buildings.
- Potential open space opportunity west of the railroad tracks near the intersection of State St. The site is currently undeveloped private property.
- Opportunities for new attached residential development to increase pedestrian traffic in the district and provide a transition to the adjacent neighborhoods. Opportunities include a commercial site at Main and Cedar and the former Vanguard site along Lyon.



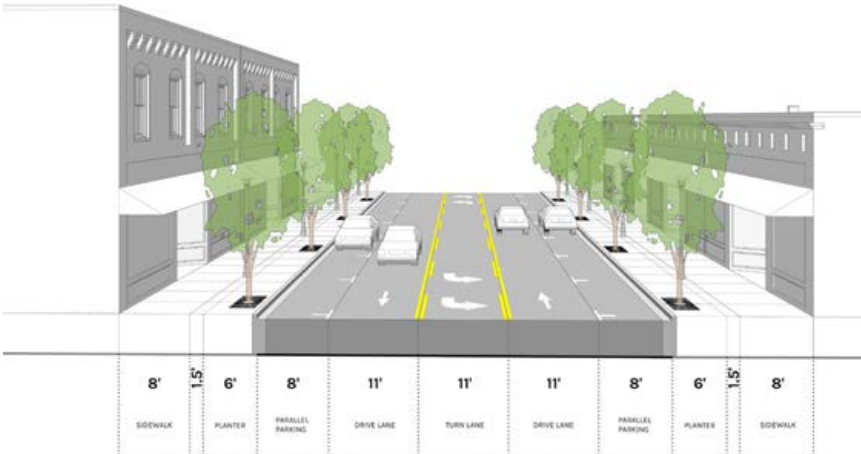
# WESTTOWN FRAMEWORK

## LEGEND

-  Potential CIA Expansion Area
-  Proposed Redevelopment/Infill
-  Proposed Open Space
-  Proposed Gateways
-  Prime "Main Street" Frontages

# MAIN STREET ROAD DIET

## STATE STREET TO M-21 BRIDGE



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- 60 to 66-foot Right-of-Way
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (2019): 21,607
- 4-lane with on-street parking

### CHALLENGE

- Westtown's existing building stock provides a traditional main street experience; however, the existing road-profile is that of an auto-oriented commercial corridor. There is also an opportunity to gain additional pedestrian space with a road diet.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the number of travel lanes and add center turn lane
- Retain the same number of on-street parking spaces
- Install enhanced sidewalk amenities
- Plant additional street trees

Note: Federal Highway Administration advises that roadways with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 20,000 vehicles per day or less may be good candidates for a road diet.

**CHAPTER 4**

**DOWNTOWN PLAN**



# WHAT DO WE ENVISION FOR DOWNTOWN OWOSSO?

*Downtown Owosso functions as the social, cultural and economic hub of the community and the region. Riverfronts also play a critical role in this country historically as a place of commerce and more recently as a source of recreation and a driver for investment. As the city's "front porch" and "living room", the downtown and riverfront district play an integral role in defining the identity and character of a community.*

Throughout its history, Downtown Owosso and the Shiawassee River have been the focal point of activity in the city. Today, the downtown continues to serve as the cultural and economic center of the city. Many of the historic buildings have been restored and re-adapted into new uses - supporting locally owned stores and restaurants.

Despite some heavy losses through the decades, Owosso's downtown contains an impressive collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture. With the support and leadership of Owosso Main Street, dozens of façade improvements and millions of private dollars have been invested in downtown Owosso in the last decade.

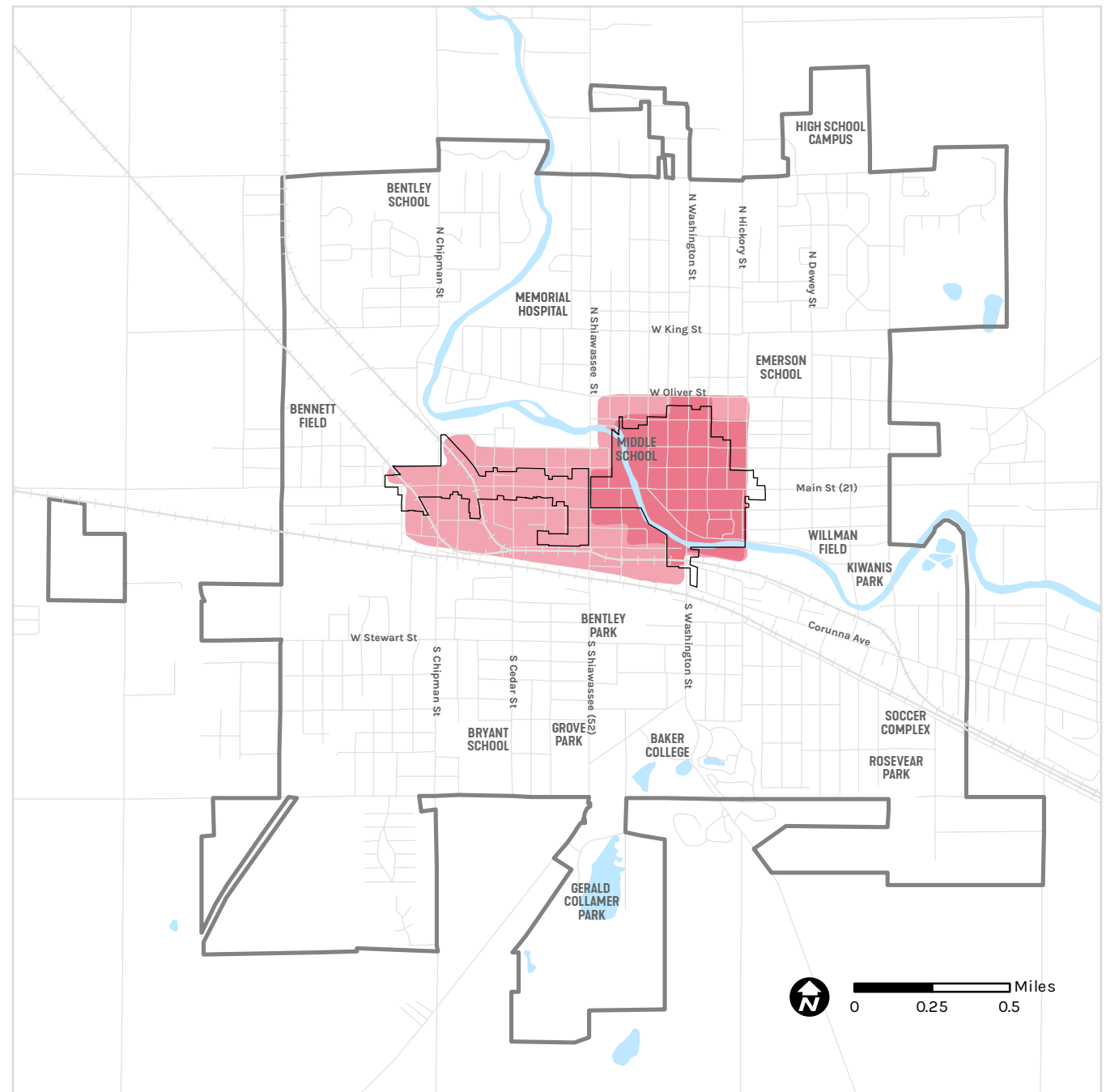


# FRAMEWORK

Downtown is the center of the community. It is where people gather. The Downtown is one of the city's two centers. The other being Westtown. Centers are characterized by their active ground floor uses and a mix of residential and office on upper stories. The centers benefit from access to open space and connections to neighborhoods, and corridors. While not always physically connected, centers and districts have a synergistic relationship.

## LEGEND

Centers



# ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

## WHAT MAKES DOWNTOWN GREAT?

Downtown Owosso offers:

- Architecturally significant buildings
- Unique local businesses
- Destination for arts & culture
- Access to open space, trails, and the Shiawassee River
- Downtown management and dedicated volunteers
- Downtown programming and events
- Great local businesses and restaurants

## BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS

The City of Owosso has had several successful redevelopment and building rehabilitation projects in recent years including:

- The Amory (2018)
- Capitol Bowl (2006)
- Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts (2014)
- Woodard Station Loft, Westown (2007)
- The Wesener Building (2018)

## WHAT CAN WE IMPROVE?

Downtown challenges include:

- Establishing better gateways
- M-21/Main Street is a barrier
- Maintenance issues with existing streetscape along Washington and Exchange
- Improving connections between destinations, increase walkability
- More connections to the Shiawassee River, nodes - family friendly and arts & culture
- Increasing retail





# MAIN STREET APPROACH

## FOUR-POINT APPROACH

- **ECONOMIC VITALITY** - Strengthens existing economic assets, while also identifying opportunities for new development and growth.
- **DESIGN** - Leverages unique, historic character to create inviting districts that attract visitors, residents and businesses.
- **ORGANIZATION** - Cultivates partnerships and coordinates resources around a shared community vision for downtown.
- **PROMOTION** - Communicates the value and vitality of downtown to community members, potential investors and key stakeholders.

## TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

- Day Tripper Tourism and Residential Development Transformation Strategy Development Plan
- Desired Future State: Downtown Owosso is widely known for its enthusiastic, welcoming culture that invites and embraces businesses, residents and visitors alike, showcasing a green and thriving environment of beautiful, walkable boulevards and authentic, unique attractions, residential, shopping, and dining experiences; the small town-downtown with appeal!

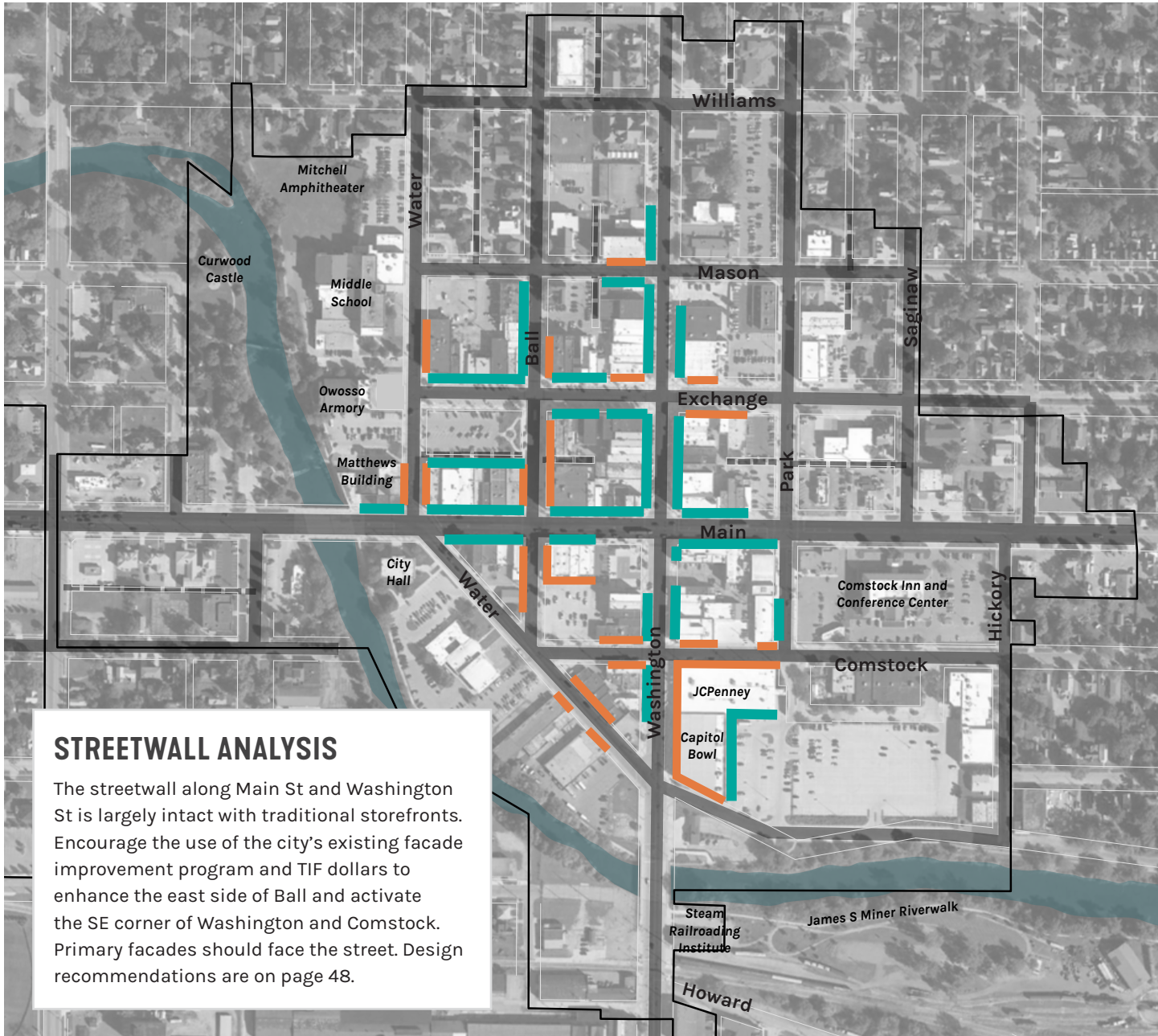


## KEY STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN

- Expand and sustain a model of “coopetition” among Downtown Owosso businesses, organizations and attractions.
- Promote our success and the Downtown Owosso brand through better storytelling
- Improve connections to the river and increase the amount of dedicate open space
- Support historic rehabilitation and compatible redevelopment
- Establish a Downtown zoning district to regulate new development
- Support upper story residential
- Promote Downtown as a hub for arts and culture
- 

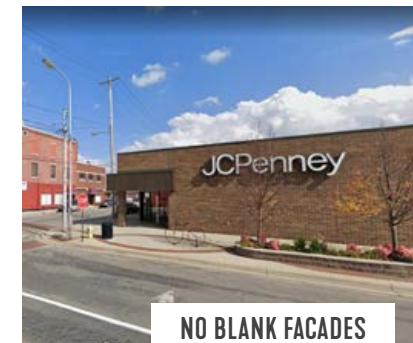


Source: Main Street America



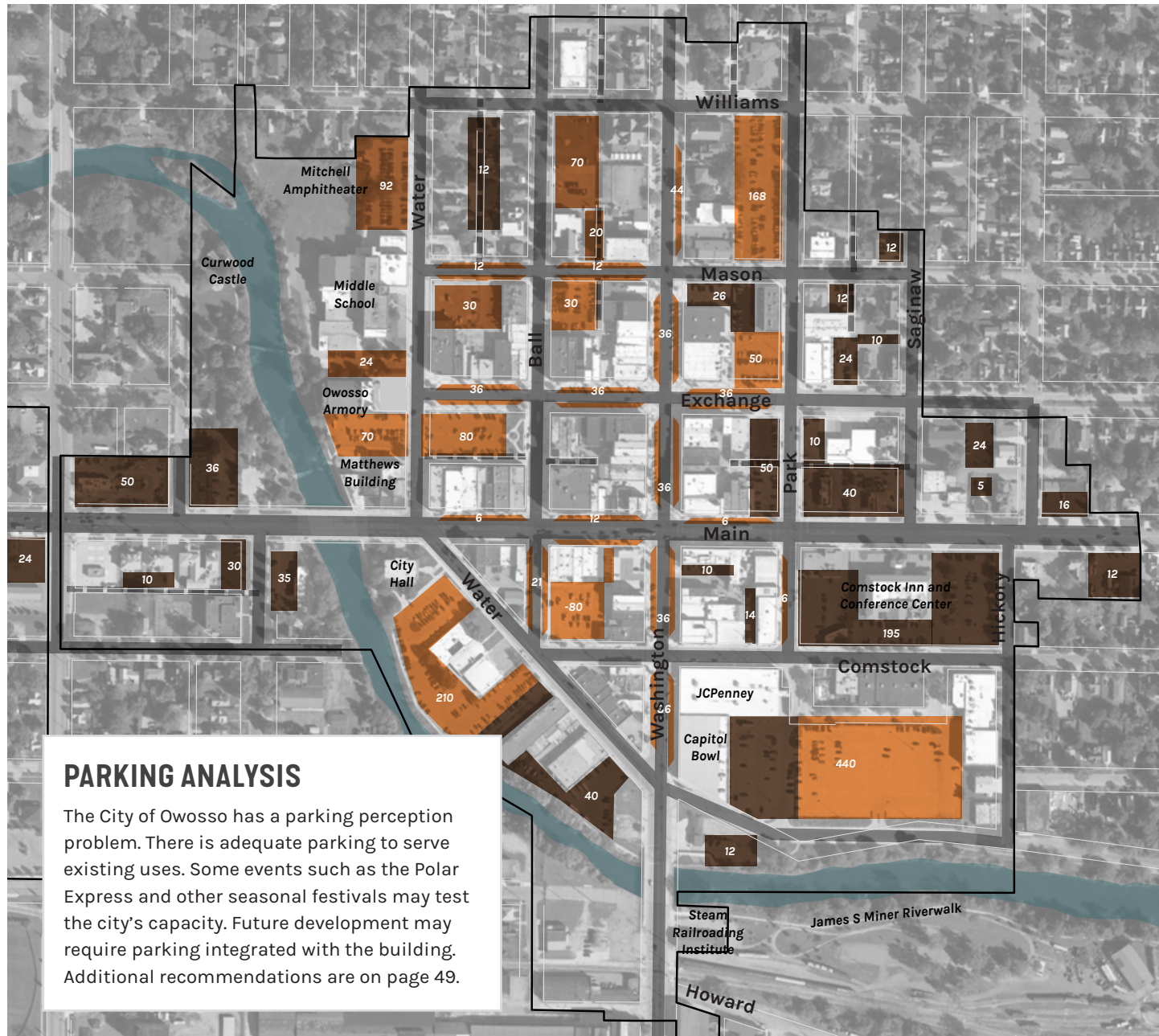
### STREETWALL ANALYSIS

The streetwall along Main St and Washington St is largely intact with traditional storefronts. Encourage the use of the city's existing facade improvement program and TIF dollars to enhance the east side of Ball and activate the SE corner of Washington and Comstock. Primary facades should face the street. Design recommendations are on page 48.



#### LEGEND

- Primary Facades
- Secondary Facades



**LEGEND**

- Public parking
- Semi-public parking
- Private parking
- Street
- Alley

# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

The following goals, policies, and actions help translate the city's assets and challenges into tools to strengthen downtown and related land uses.

## GOAL 1: PROTECT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY

### CREATE A WELCOMING DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY

- Cultivate an environment that demonstrates a commitment to the development of businesses, housing, and community organizations in Downtown Owosso.
- Expand and sustain a model of “coopetition” among Downtown Owosso businesses, organizations and attractions.

### STRENGTHEN CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Support a strict code enforcement program of commercial, residential and tenant properties.
- Educate business owners and employees on the importance of reserving on-street parking for customers/patrons.

## STRIKE BALANCE BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

- Support privately owned river-friendly development on the Shiawassee River
- Consider zoning changes that encourage or require riparian preservation

## GOAL 2: PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND INVESTORS

### ENSURE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IS INCLUSIVE

- Continue the Main Street program in downtown.
- With the city, define Main Street's role in the RRC initiative; plan and deploy activities accordingly.

### IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

- Support a regulatory environment that demonstrates a commitment to the development of businesses, housing and community organizations in Downtown Owosso.

## IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

- Expand outreach and education of façade grant opportunities
- Conduct customer service surveys of property owners, businesses and organizations

## GOAL 3: MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### DIVERSIFY FUNDING SOURCES

- Determine if establishing a principal shopping district (Act 120 of 1961) would provide a benefit to the City
- Participate in the City's six-year capital improvements plan an annual basis
- Amend the DDA Plan to allow for more creative project financing

### INVEST IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- Include Main Street in the City's annual update process for the six-year capital improvements plan (CIP)
- Improve the aesthetic appearance of downtown parking lots

- Improve the pedestrian experience along the Washington Street bridge
- Coordinate roadway and bridge improvements with MDOT's long-range plans

## **GOAL 4: IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER AND HERITAGE**

### **STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS TO THE RIVER**

- Improve utilization of and access the riverfront through public-private partnerships
- Continue to support biking, walking, and river activities in downtown.

### **PROMOTE HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

- Continue the historic preservation program for downtown's historic structures with program elements to include facade restoration, upper story tenant development, design services, and qualification measures to access state and federal tax credits
- Utilize the Downtown Historic District Commission to ensure preservation of downtown properties, while encouraging economically viable uses in existing buildings.

### **PROMOTE THE DOWNTOWN OWOSSO BRAND**

- Working on telling our story - locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally. Promote successes and initiatives
- Continue to support festivals and events
- Incorporate downtown brand into downtown gateways and wayfinding
- Develop a mobile app featuring Downtown Owosso attractions/ businesses (possible fundraiser through ad sales)
- Create and deploy a public relations media content calendar
- Install historic markers describing noteworthy buildings, events and people. Coordinate the design with an overall City signage plan.

## **GOAL 5: INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE**

### **ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM**

- Improve the sense of arrival for the South Washington Street entrance to the downtown and provide safe pedestrian crossings
- Enhance all downtown gateways with beautification and wayfinding

- Improve the aesthetic appearance of downtown parking lots
- Activate the alleys in downtown as gathering spaces, art exhibits, events, etc.
- Revise zoning standards to require 10' parking setback with screened buffer zones

### **SUPPORT THE CITY'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

- Create and deploy a "Welcome" packet and/or goodie basket for new arrivals
- Create and demonstrate a welcoming culture of hospitality for the visitors, businesses, and residents of Downtown Owosso
- Increase lifestyle, entertainment options including festivals and cultural events

### **PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE MAIN STREET CHARACTER**

- Engage in a zoning revision that includes design guidelines and/or elements of a form based code for downtown and Westtown.
- Consider the potential of "build-to" lines, mixed vertical uses, and minimum heights in the downtown and in Westtown.

### **SUPPORT A MIX OF USES**

- Expand housing options
- Improve rental rehab program
- Establish smaller-scale retail and office infill development
- Work with property owners on redesign vision and outlot potential the public parking lot

### **PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

- Enhance the riverfront through public-private partnership
- Activate the alleys in downtown as gathering spaces, art exhibits, events, etc.
- Transition existing parking lots into dedicated pedestrian space (plaza, farmers market, etc.)
- Improve connections to the river. Establishing varying activity nodes along the riverwalk

### **IMPROVE SAFETY OF STREETS FOR ALL USERS**

- Road diet on M-21/Main Street
- Reconnect street grid or at minimum create pedestrian connection between Water St and Comstock St.

- Incorporate distinctive and clearly marked crosswalks at road crossings that align with existing sidewalks and pathways.

## **GOAL 6: BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

### **ADVANCE TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES**

- Expand and sustain a model of “coopetition” among Downtown Owosso businesses, organizations and attractions
- Create or support creation of day-tripper attraction packages
- Engage business owners in defining “coopetition” and how to measure

### **SUPPORT AND ENGAGE LOCAL BUSINESSES**

- Survey business owners about needs/gaps
- OMS/DDA to act as resource for businesses in development/strengthening of networks/network opportunities

## **GOAL 7: STRENGTHEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

- Continue to pursue and work with the State of Michigan on grants
- Cooperation between all downtown groups: Chamber, Main Street, Theatre, Farmers Market, Art Center, Amphitheater, Steam Railroad Institute, Owosso Historic Commission, Historic District Commission
- Support and promote arts & culture, in partnership with Shiawassee Arts Council, Lebowsky Center for the Performing Arts, Owosso Public School District, and others.

# ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

## DOWNTOWN ZONING DISTRICT

- Commercial entryways locations
- Build-to line and maximum setback of 10 feet
- New buildings downtown must be built to complement nearby historic buildings and allowable building materials
- Ground floor transparency required
- Minimum building height of two stories for the center city district, the original 9-block core area
- Horizontal breaks in material to distinguish floors

## BENEFITS OF A FORM BASED CODE

- Emphasizes the form and context of a district and promotes a more flexible mixture of uses
- Supports the recent trends in vibrant, walkable communities or “placemaking” – greater focus on buildings’ relation to the public realm
- Proactive approach to zoning to embed the community’s vision for character and place types

## DOWNTOWN PARKING REGULATIONS

- Driveway access shall be restricted to certain blocks, parking lot locations shall be restricted to certain locations on parcels (not adjacent to Main Street)
- Interior landscaping is required for parking lots with over 40 parking spaces
- Private parking will be permitted under special use permit
- A maximum limit shall be placed on private parking; otherwise, no parking spaces are required for uses other than residential and institutional
- Parking lots must be located behind or to the side of buildings to reduce the visual impact of parked cars

## DOWNTOWN USES

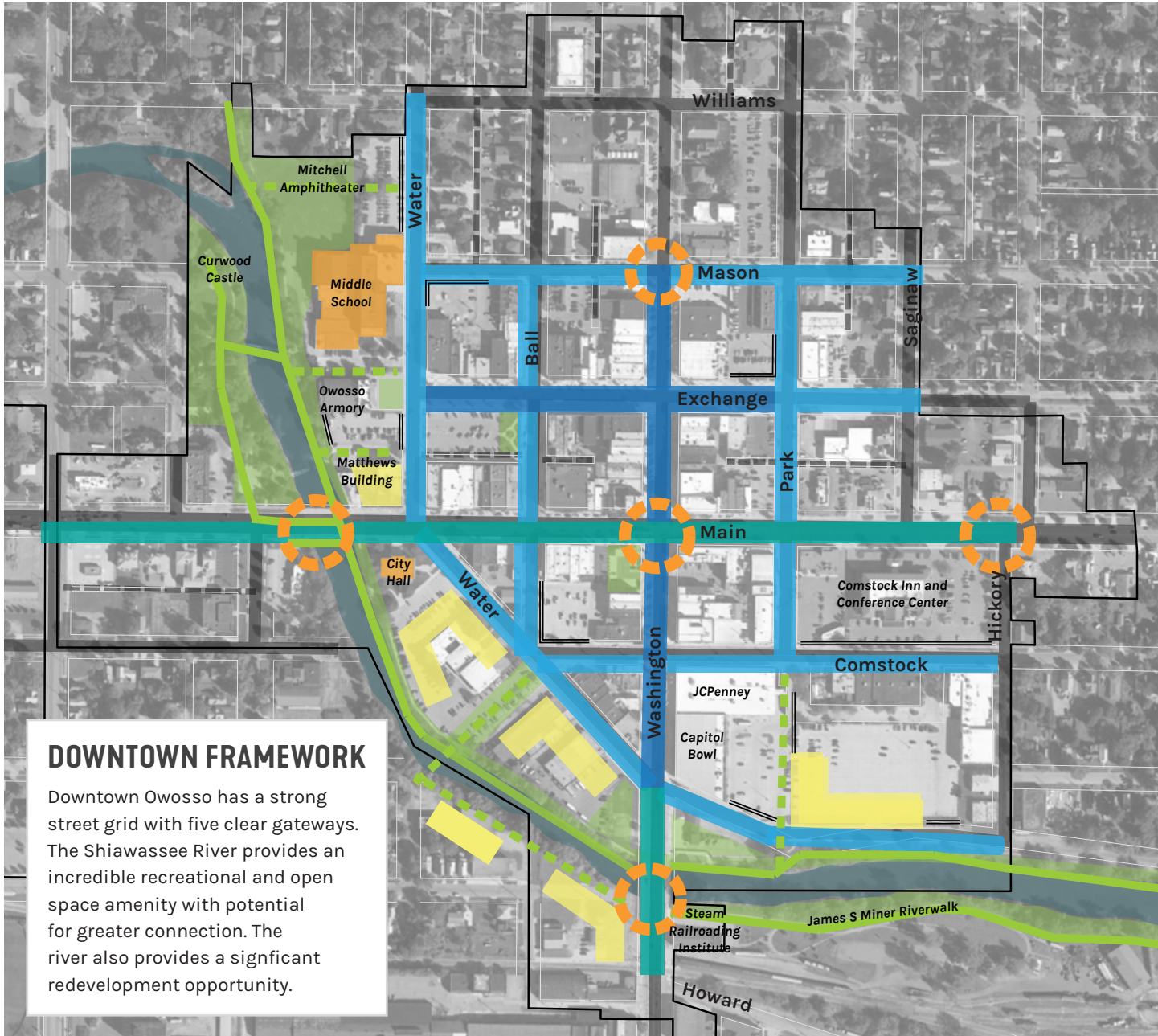
- Ordinances that regulate sidewalk cafes and food trucks
- Continue to review the residential parking requirements for downtown to determine if there are changes needed as additional residential units are developed



## DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN

Important design strategies include the following:

- Continuous street edge with multistory buildings and well-articulated facades
- New development complementary to existing building forms and materials
- Retain and maintain older structures, especially historic facades
- Welcoming storefronts with active window displays and outdoor seating
- Pedestrian-scale design elements like awnings, projecting blade signs, landscaping, and lighting
- Well-screened service areas: waste receptacles, delivery areas, mechanical equipment, and utilities
- Landscaped parking areas with well-defined pedestrian-ways and screening from sidewalks



**DOWNTOWN FRAMEWORK**

Downtown Owosso has a strong street grid with five clear gateways. The Shiawassee River provides an incredible recreational and open space amenity with potential for greater connection. The river also provides a significant redevelopment opportunity.

LEGEND

- Proposed Rehab/Adaptive Use
- Proposed Redevelopment/Infill
- Existing/Proposed Open Space
- Proposed Gateways
- Existing Riverfront Trail
- Proposed Trail Connections
- Parking Lot Improvements
- Main St Improvements
- Washington/Exchange St Improvements
- Side Street Improvements



## MAIN STREET PERSPECTIVE SKETCH

- Consider potential to reduce road to three lanes in downtown core to allow for safer bike traffic
- Manage vehicular speeds to levels appropriate for downtowns
- Widen walks for outdoor dining, and commercial use
- Provide additional landscape, lighting, and healthy trees to enhance pedestrian safety and sense of place
- Maintain on street parking



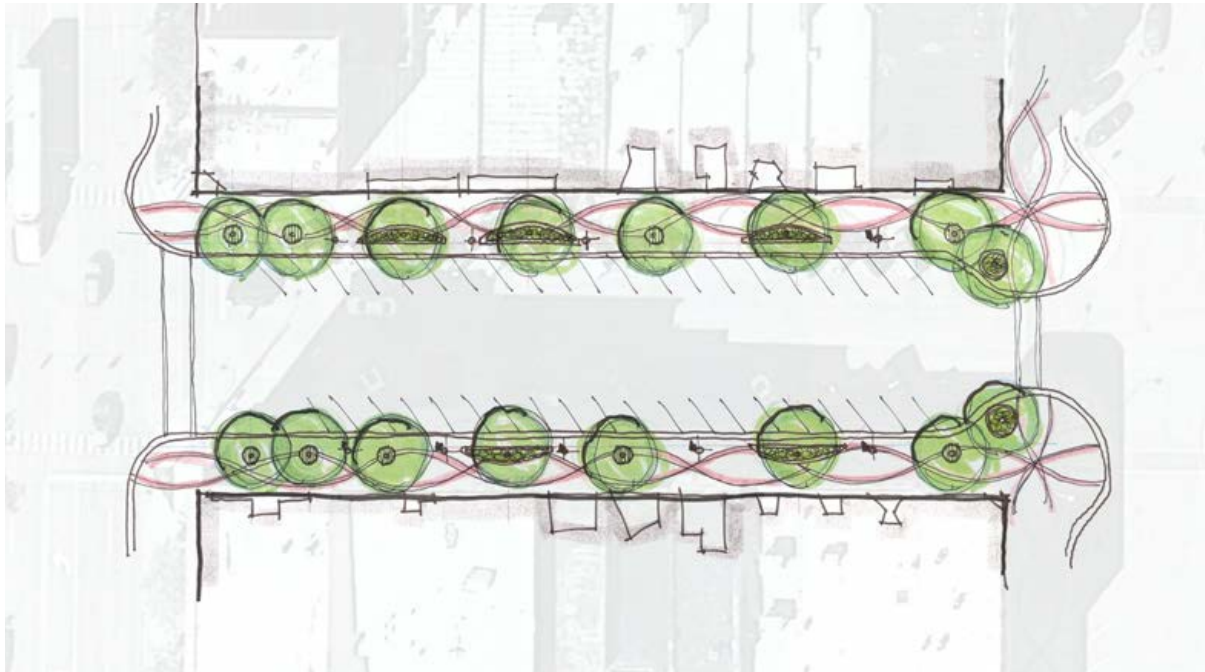
Main St looking west

## DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

- Continue the historic preservation program for downtown's historic structures
- Gateways at M-21 Bridge, Main St/Washington St, Main St/Hickory St, Washington St/Mason St, and Washington St Bridge
- Enhance and expand existing riverwalk and increase connections between Downtown and the river
- Reconnect street grid or at minimum create pedestrian connection between Water St and Comstock St.
- Main St is a primary shopping street. Improvements should focus on pedestrian scale and character.
- Washington St and Exchange St are primary shopping streets. Improved in 2010. Update per detail on p 48.
- Improvements for secondary streets include limit lane widths, plant trees, install lights, and additional on-street parking.
- Refocus existing plaza at Main St and Washington St
- Install landscape buffer and decorative fence detail along parking lots.
- Activate the alleys in downtown as gathering spaces, art exhibits, events, etc.

# DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

## TYPICAL WASHINGTON STREET BLOCK



## WASHINGTON AND EXCHANGE STREET

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Wide sidewalks, ample parking, and paving and lights provide opportunity for successful use and commercial value.
- Tree species used has limited size and lifespan. Small crown does not create a shaded environment and are undersized for scale of street.
- Gaps between trees appear stark, and are not conducive to commercial sidewalk use.
- Planters constructed of pre-cast wall units are prone to damage over long term

### PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Remove pre-cast wall unit planters.
- Install additional trees in large grates or low curbed planters, with adequate soil treatment.
- Install larger open planters with low curbs, allowing for use of flowers and/or ornamental grasses (with more limited maintenance needs)
- Consider new parking bump-outs at block ends to reduce pedestrian crossing distance.
- Plant larger scaled urban tolerant trees to provide shade and pedestrian character.
- If bricks continue to cause maintenance issues, consider replacing with integrally colored, poured concrete band.



## GATEWAYS

**GATEWAYS AT M-21 BRIDGE, MAIN ST/ WASHINGTON ST, MAIN ST/HICKORY ST, WASHINGTON ST/MASON ST, AND WASHINGTON ST BRIDGE.**

Successful downtowns create a distinctive character and environment from other parts of the community. One way to celebrate the downtown and denote it as special place is to provide visual markers at the gateways into downtown, which could be a key intersection, a bridge over a river, or a place along the street where the architecture changes from suburban to downtown.

Gateway treatments can vary, but often include banner poles and lights, enhanced signage and landscaping, pedestrian bump-outs, and even overhead structures.

Per gateway intersection, project costs can range from \$55,000 for a modest treatment of two corners without a bump-out, up to \$425,000 for a more ambitious treatment with corner bump-outs.



## RIVERWALK

**ENHANCE AND EXPAND EXISTING RIVERWALK AND INCREASE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DOWNTOWN AND THE SHIAWASSEE RIVER**

The Downtown Plan identifies a number of key pedestrian and non-motorized connections that would improve access to, and within, downtown, as well as connect to the existing riverfront and pathways. This work may include paved pedestrian paths, landscaping, lighting, boardwalks, pedestrian bridges, and removal of existing improvements.

Typical costs for a pedestrian path are between \$650 and \$1,100 per linear foot of path. Repaving an existing path would cost about \$125 per linear foot. Boardwalks along the river with railing and lighting will range in cost between \$1,450 and \$2,400 per linear foot, depending on the width and complexity of the structure.

Pedestrian bridges can vary in cost depending on whether the bridge is custom designed, or a factory fabricated catalogue item. On the average, pedestrian bridges range from \$250,000 to \$350,000.



## PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

**RECONNECT STREET GRID OR AT MINIMUM CREATE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION BETWEEN WATER ST AND COMSTOCK ST. VIA THE PARK ST RIGHT OF WAY.**

Disrupting the vehicular and pedestrian connectivity of a downtown street grid is, in some circumstances, detrimental to the commercial vitality of downtown, and frustrating to visitors that appreciate legible connections from parking to shops, or from downtown to a natural amenity such as a river.

In this light the Downtown Plan recommends improving the connection from Water St. to Comstock St. along the former Park St. alignment.

For estimation purposes, and to be consistent with the illustrated downtown plan, we are assuming this would be a pedestrian path, and implemented in conjunction with the redevelopment of the large public parking lot.

Costs would be similar to those described for pedestrian paths, and be in the range of \$292,500 to \$495,000 assuming a length of 450 feet.



## MAIN STREET

### REINFORCING MAIN ST AS A PRIMARY SHOPPING STREET.

Main Street is a MDOT right of way and is five lanes of traffic. Sidewalks are wide enough for limited pedestrian traffic, but not enough to support outdoor dining. The walks are functional, but the streetscape and walk are beginning to appear worn and unkempt. The existing traffic lanes are at minimally accepted widths, so reducing lane widths in order to gain pedestrian space is not feasible. According to traffic data available, the corridor may be a candidate for a traffic diet, subject to further study and analysis. The Downtown Plan recommends improvements that focus on increasing pedestrian scale and character.

Based on the perspective sketch provided with this plan, improvements would include reducing the width of the street, increasing sidewalks, and installing lights, landscape planters, stormwater modifications, street trees, street furnishings, and related improvements. If a street diet is not feasible, the bump-outs should be lengthened to increase pedestrian safety, provide space for outdoor dining, and humanize the scale of the street.



Costs for a significant road reconfiguration typically range from \$3,200 to \$5,400 per linear foot of roadway, not including sanitary sewer, water system, and telecommunication network upgrades. For a project of this scope, coordination and partnering with the Michigan Department of Transportation is essential for further planning, design, engineering, funding, and implementation.

## WASHINGTON AND EXCHANGE STREET

### WASHINGTON ST AND EXCHANGE ST ARE PRIMARY SHOPPING STREETS.

These streetscapes were improved in 2010 and have been an attractive addition to the downtown environment. As the project has matured there is an opportunity to fine tune the design to meet the needs of downtown visitors and businesses based on best practices. As illustrated in this plan, such improvements could include reconfiguration of the planters and landscape, installation of additional trees, and addition of key pedestrian bump-outs.

The costs for improving a typical block in this area will range from \$150,000 to \$250,000, including both sides of the street on a typical 290 foot long block.



## SECONDARY STREETS

### IMPROVEMENTS FOR SECONDARY STREETS INCLUDE LIMITING LANE WIDTHS, PLANTING TREES, INSTALLING LIGHTS, AND, WHERE FEASIBLE, ADDING ON-STREET PARKING.

Existing secondary streets in the downtown typically have wider vehicular lanes that are required for safe travel and access. Over time, as these streets are reconstructed due to their condition, we recommend that that the vehicular lane widths are reduced and sidewalks widened to improve pedestrian comfort and access, create space for commercial use of the walks and the installation of amenities such as street trees and lighting. In many communities the cost of such maintenance and reconstruction is shared between the city and the downtown development authority, and these funding sources are supported by grants through MDOT, and other state agencies.



## DOWNTOWN PLAZAS

### REFOCUS EXISTING PLAZA AT MAIN ST AND WASHINGTON ST

While the combination of parking and plaza uses can be beneficial to local businesses and support community events, the use of the primary corner in downtown for parking is not the highest and best use of public property, particularly when there is a number of on-street and off-street public parking facilities in the area. The Downtown Plan recommends repurposing the site for full time use as an open space, allowing for additional landscape enhancements, encouraging more programmed and informal use of the space, and incentivizing adjacent development.

Typical urban pocket parks include lighting, overhead trellis/stage/roofed structures, trees and landscaping, site furnishings, and related amenities. Costs for such spaces typically ranges from \$55 to \$95 per square foot, which in the case of the Owosso site would translate to a cost of about \$550,000 and \$950,000.



## PARKING LOT TREATMENTS

### INSTALL LANDSCAPE BUFFER AND DECORATIVE FENCE DETAIL ALONG PARKING LOTS.

Parking lots that are directly adjacent to pedestrian sidewalks detract from the visual quality of a downtown, limit space for snow storage in the winter, and appear inhospitable to pedestrians. The Downtown Plan recommends that as parking lots are improved and reconstructed a landscape buffer is installed that may include removal of pavement, storm water modifications and best practices, landscaping, fences or walls, pedestrian access ways, and parking lot signage.

Such improvements can range from \$375 to \$625 per linear foot of street frontage, not including repaving of the lots. For a typical lot on downtown Owosso, this cost would range from \$92,750 to \$156,250, based on an average lot frontage of 250 linear feet.



## FARMERS MARKET

### INSTALL PERMANENT FARMERS MARKET

The Downtown Owosso Farmers Market strives to promote a strong local economy, support our downtown businesses, celebrate our talented and diverse community and foster a social gathering place where relationships are built and our community grows together!

The market runs on Saturdays from May through October and takes place on Exchange Street. The is an importantly to transform one of the Downtown parking lots into a permanent Farmers Market location.

Permanent farmers' market structures serve as sources of community and economic development. The markets create reliable sources of vendor income. In addition, the economic benefits extend to the surrounding business community creating a shared customer base for local shops.

The cost of construction for a pavilion-style farmers market structure in Downtown Owosso could range from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

# MAIN STREET

## M-21 BRIDGE TO HICKORY STREET



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

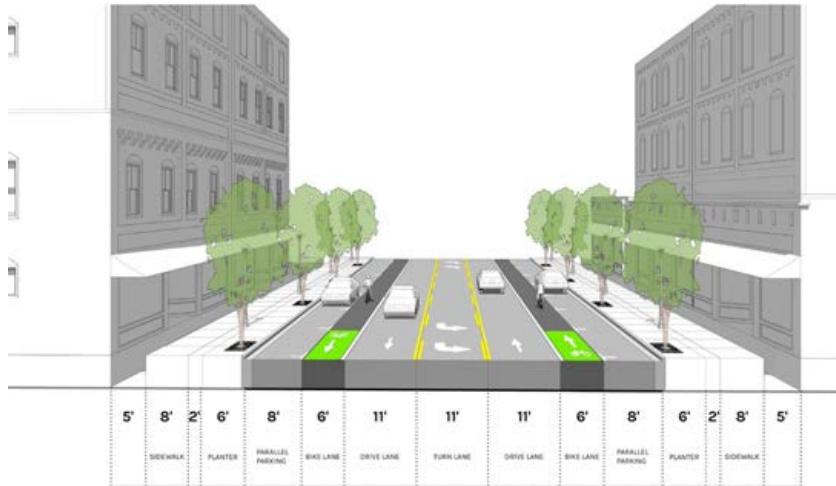
- 99-foot ROW
- Annual Average Daily Trips (2019): 16,444
- 4-lane with on-street parking

### CHALLENGE

- S Washington St feels disconnected from the rest of the downtown. Main St is currently a barrier for pedestrians.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the number of travel lanes and add center turn lane
- Add bike lanes in both directions
- Install enhanced sidewalk amenities
- Plant additional street trees



Note: Federal Highway Administration advises that roadways with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 20,000 vehicles per day or less may be good candidates for a road diet.

# WASHINGTON STREET BRIDGE

## WATER STREET TO THE RAILROAD



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

- 99-foot ROW
- Annual Average Daily Trips (2019): 6,726
- 4-lane with on-street parking

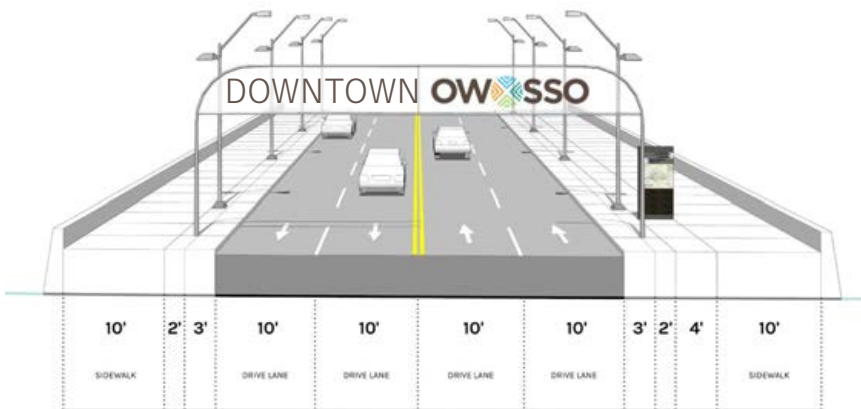
### CHALLENGE

- The S Washington Street bridge is the southern gateway in Downtown Owosso but it does not provide a sense of arrival. It functions as a connector between existing riverwalk sections however the sidewalk is too narrow to function adequately as a non-motorized path. The bridge offer a unique gateway and

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the width of travel lanes to 10'
- Improve pedestrian zone, particularly on the east side of the bridge to provide riverwalk connection
- Replace light fixtures
- Replace railing
- Gateway element such as an arch or banners

Note: Federal Highway Administration advises that roadways with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 20,000 vehicles per day or less may be good candidates for a road diet.



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**CHAPTER 5**

**FUTURE LAND USE**



# FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use plan and map depicts the preferred, generalized composition of future land uses for the City of Owosso. The Future Land Use plan is the general framework upon which land use and policy decisions for the city will be guided for the next 25 years.

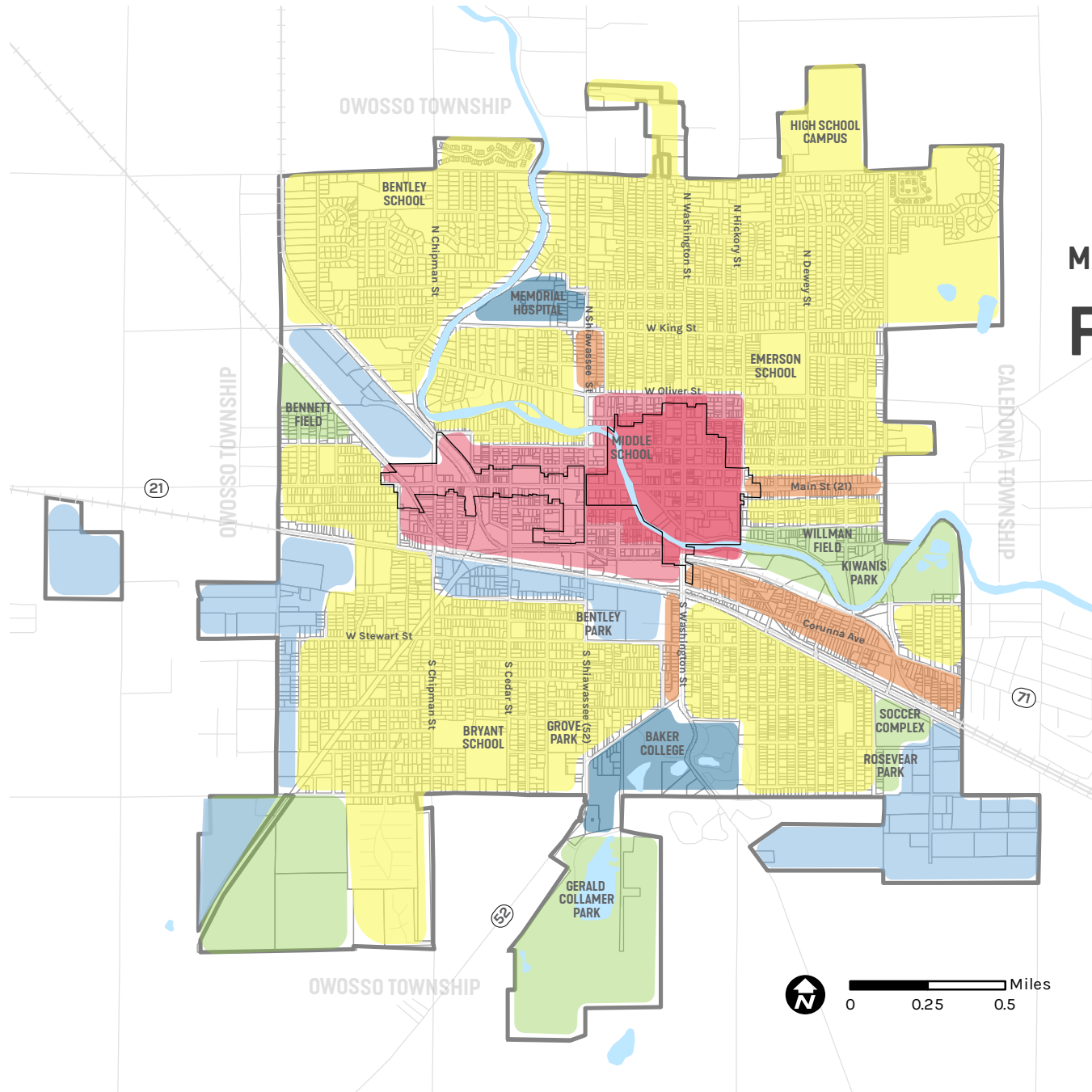
The Future Land Use plan was developed after careful consideration of the city’s priorities and several dynamic factors, including existing land use, redevelopment opportunities, community services, and future growth.

The Future Land Use map is the generalized long-term vision. Zoning is the key mechanism for achieving the desired land use pattern and quality of development advocated in the plan. The Zoning Plan shows the relationship between the future land use categories and the regulatory zoning districts.

## PLACE TYPES

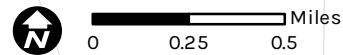
The following place types are intended to guide future land use and character decisionmaking, particularly in applying the zoning ordinance. See previous chapters where opportunities and strategies by place type are outlined in more detail.

PLACE TYPES	Neighborhoods	Centers	Corridors	Districts - Campus	Districts - Industrial	Open Space
<b>Residential Uses</b>						
Detached single-family home						
Attached single-family						
Multi-family building						
Mixed-use						
<b>Commercial Uses</b>						
Retail sales/services						
Office						
Lodging						
Mixed-use						
<b>Industrial Uses</b>						
Warehouse						
Maker Space						
Light Production facilities (w/retail)						
Research and Development						
Manufacturing						
Logistics						
<b>Institutional Uses</b>						
School						
Church						
Municipal Building						
Hospital/Clinic						
College						
<b>Open Space Uses</b>						
Neighborhood Park/Playground						
Community Park						
Plaza						
Natural Area/Stormwater Mgmt						



MAP #  
**FUTURE LAND USE**

- Neighborhoods
- Centers
- Corridors
- Districts
- Open Space



# FUTURE LAND USE

## NEIGHBORHOODS

**Intent.** Neighborhoods are where homes are clustered together along with other small-scale uses that serve the people that live there.

**Description.** The City's neighborhoods are generally located in four quadrants surrounding the mixed use center. There are a few smaller neighborhood islands separated by Shiawassee River, the railroad, or corridors. Each of the neighborhoods in Owosso has its own character, influenced by the size, age, and architecture of the buildings, the density of homes, the layout of the streets, as well as the access to parks and public spaces.

**Appropriate Uses.** Neighborhoods can include a variety of housing types, along with other uses such as schools, churches, parks, and small-scale businesses. Non-single-family uses like multiple-family residential, small-scale businesses, or institutional uses are most applicable along collector and arterial streets and as a buffer between single-family and more intense uses.

**Building and Site Design.** Neighborhoods are walkable, pedestrian-scale environments. Mature trees should be preserved and landscaping

should be incorporated as a buffer between land uses. Additions and new construction should be compatible with the scale, height, massing, and setbacks of existing buildings. Stoops and porches are encouraged and garages and parking areas should be placed behind the front building line when possible. Ideally, the old historic homes near downtown should be preserved as single-family. The converse of single-family to multi-family should not be immediately obvious by utilizing shared entrances and screening parking areas.

**Compatible Zoning Districts.** R-1, R-2, R-T, RM-1, RM-2, MPH, B-1

## CENTERS

**Intent.** Centers are the heart beats of the City – the places where people walk, gather, shop, and meet.

**Description.** In Owosso the centers include the historic Downtown Owosso and the Westown business district. Each area has a distinct character, but they are similar in that they were developed with a mix of uses in mind. Residences and businesses are integrated by streets and sidewalks. Downtown is planned to be more intense than Westown, but both areas

are characterized by walkable active first floor uses fronting the street, limited parking lots facing the street, employment uses, and nearby residential neighborhoods.

**Appropriate Uses.** Centers are higher density areas and incorporate horizontal and vertical mix of uses. Residential uses include multi-family buildings and upper story residential within mixed use buildings. Commercial uses include retail sales/services, office, lodging, and general mixed-use. Industrial uses include maker space and light production facilities with a retail storefront. Other appropriate uses include municipal buildings, plazas, and public parking areas.

**Building and Site Design.** Centers are pedestrian-oriented environments where people are encouraged to linger in the public realm enjoying the shops, events, outdoor dining, and other social and civic activities. Building massing, fenestration, storefronts, and overhangs should activate the street. Signage and lighting should be pedestrian-oriented and integrated with the building design. Parking is generally provided off-site.

**Compatible Zoning Districts.** RM-1, RM-2, OS-1, B-3, B-4, PUD

## CORRIDORS

**Intent.** Corridors are the streets that connect the City together, and sometimes divide it. They are the arteries of transportation into, around and through the City and are home to most of the commercial areas.

**Description.** Historic Corridors connect the centers of the City with other corridors and the surrounding neighborhoods. The City has four primary corridors: Main St (M-21) east of downtown, Corunne Ave between downtown and the city limits, S. Washington Ave south of downtown to Baker College, and N. Shiawassee St between downtown and the hospital.

**Appropriate Uses.** They are dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways – office, retail, bed and breakfast and residences (single and multi-family). A mixture of uses are appropriate along these corridors. Local business and small-scale maker space should accompany attached residential development for prioritized redevelopment. Appropriate residential uses include attached single-family, multi-family, and upper story residential in a mixed use building. Appropriate commercial uses include retail sales/services and office. Industrial uses include

light production facilities with retail storefront and research and development. Institutional uses include schools, churches, and municipal buildings.

**Building and Site Design.** Emphasis should be on improving the site and building design to create visually appealing entrances into the heart of the city. Limiting the numbers of driveways, drive-thrus, and front yard parking will help transition these corridors into more walkable, vibrant mixed-use areas.

**Compatible Zoning Districts.** RM-1, RM-2, OS-1

## DISTRICTS

**Intent.** Districts are parts of the city dedicated to a single type of activity, such as employment centers or educational campuses. Some districts encompass challenging sites and require more detailed study to inform future regulation. Districts are different from the corridors, centers and neighborhoods in that they generally do not involve a mixture of uses.

**Description.** There are several areas planned as Districts scattered throughout the city. These areas are generally along the edge of the

**Appropriate Uses.** The challenge for regulating any district is to ensure that they serve their intended purpose without compromising the quality of life in the surrounding areas. The City must assure that workers, products and visitors can reach their destinations easily and safely. The districts are sub-categorized into two sub-groups – campuses and industrial. The character of each is dependent upon their use and the impacts of both on their neighborhoods should be mitigated. Campuses are intended for educational and medical uses. Industrial districts are expected to continue to accommodate traditional industrial uses like warehouses, manufacturing, and logistics, but should be open to future transition into more campus-like business park settings with improved site and building design.

**Building and Site Design.** Districts are typically large areas with like uses. Emphasis should be on buffering between neighborhoods.

**Compatible Zoning Districts.** OS-1, I-1, I-2, PUD

## OPEN SPACE

**Intent.** The final framework element is open space. Open space is an important contributor to quality of life and enhances all the other elements, particularly neighborhoods, centers and districts.

**Description.** This includes large natural areas, neighborhood parks, and non-motorized trail systems.

**Appropriate Uses.** These areas are intended to remain as parks and open space to provide opportunities for recreation, preservation, and flood mitigation.

**Building and Site Design.** Best practices for stormwater.


**Compatible Zoning Districts.** C-OS, PUD

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES/SERVICES.

Owosso provides universal public water and sewer access within its jurisdiction. Utilities are generally sized to meet the current and potential transmission and pressure demands, and there is excess capacity for treatment of water and sewer.

## LAND USE PATTERNS IN THE REGION.

Land use patterns for the surrounding areas of Shiawassee County were considered to ensure that the future land use plan is compatible with and compliment those patterns. In general, much of the county development is centered in the Mid-County area. Most development is within the cities of Owosso and Corunna, with some additional and intense development on M-21 in Caledonia Township (commercial) and in the Owosso Township industrial park to the west. Most of the other developed land is on or near the state highways, in close proximity to Owosso. Outside of the currently developed areas, agricultural uses and extremely low residential uses dominate. Residential uses are primarily limited to land division act, large lot homesteads. The agricultural land around the city is very productive and has observed increases in value in recent years. Water and sewer utilities are limited to the urbanized areas.



**CHAPTER 6**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

# IMPLEMENTATION

The Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use and redevelopment of the city for the next 25 years. Goals, objectives, and actions noted throughout the Plan should be carefully considered during decisions on rezonings, zoning text amendments, other regulations, capital investments for improvements to streets, “complete streets” bikeways/ walkways, utilities, public facilities, land acquisition, and development proposals. Recommendations in this Plan apply to both public land (parks, sites, and right-of-way) and guidance for development and redevelopment of privately-owned property.

Some Plan recommendations may involve the need for changes to land use regulations and/ or potential new programs. Others may involve partnerships with other municipalities, agencies, organizations, or groups. Since the Plan is a long-range guide, refinements or additional studies may also be appropriate in the future to reflect new information, respond to unanticipated factors or to address changes in city policies.

To that end, this chapter provides a summary of the recommendations described in the previous sections of the plan. It also acts as a quick reference for the city staff, planning commission, and the city council to evaluate its progress toward implementation of the Plan.

Tools to implement the Master Plan generally fall into six categories and some strategies may include more than one:

1. Land use regulations
2. Capital improvement programs, such as streets, city buildings, or other major purchases
3. Property acquisition programs
4. Special Funding Programs (CDBG for example)
5. Programs or additional studies
6. Partnerships, such as working with other organizations on planning, education, funding, or delivery of cost-efficient services.

Each tool has a different purpose toward Plan implementation and may suggest specific immediate changes, long-term policies and others involve ongoing activities.



# IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## 1. LAND USE REGULATIONS

The primary tool for Plan implementation, which includes the Zoning Ordinance and other land use regulations, is summarized below. The city also has several other codes and ordinances to ensure that activities remain compatible with the surrounding area, such as noise, blight and nuisance ordinances.

### ZONING REGULATIONS

Zoning regulations control the intensity and arrangement of land development through standards on lot size or units per acre, setbacks from property lines, building dimensions and similar minimum requirements. Various site design elements discussed in this Plan are also regulated through site plan review and address landscaping, lighting, driveways, parking and circulation, pedestrian systems and signs. Zoning can also be used to help assure performance in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, state regulated wetlands, woodlands and wellhead areas.

### ZONING MAP

Over time, changes to the zoning map should become more consistent with the land use pattern identified on the Future Land Use Map. In some cases, the city may wish to initiate certain rezonings as part of an overall zoning map amendment. Other changes to the zoning map can be made in response to requests by landowners or developers. In those cases, city officials will need to determine if the time is proper for a change. It is important that the future land use plan be understood as a long-range blueprint: Implementation is expected, but gradually in response to needs, conditions and availability of infrastructure. The Zoning Plan section of this chapter outlines how the Future Land Use Plan relates to current zoning. The Zoning Recommendations later in this chapter contain rezoning guidelines.

### SUBDIVISION, LAND DIVISION AND CONDOMINIUM REGULATIONS

Subdivision, land division and condominium regulations control the manner in which property is subdivided in the city and the public improvements required to support the development. The distinctions are not always apparent once a project is built, but the approval procedures are different due to separate state statutes that govern these types of land development approaches in Michigan.

### PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS

Public infrastructure refers to the basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of the city such as city streets, water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, among others. Standards to ensure consistency and uniformity have been adopted so that each facility is designed and constructed to support existing and future development.

## 2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) serves as the city's multi-year planning instrument used to identify needs and financing sources for public infrastructure improvements. The City of Owosso recently completed an annual 6-year CIP that contains recommended capital projects, timing, estimated costs and funding for public infrastructure (streets, bikeways, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, waterlines, storm sewers and drainage) and community facilities (public buildings, fire, police and parks). Capital projects identified help support and promote desired development, and to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the city. The number of projects and project timing are influenced by several factors, in particular, the cost, need for environmental clearance or approval by other agencies, and funds available.

The CIP process precedes the budget process and is used by City Council when developing the annual budget. Recommending approval of the CIP by the Planning Commission does not mean that they grant final approval of all projects contained within the plan. Rather by recommending approval of the CIP, the Planning Commission acknowledges that these projects

represent a reasonable interpretation of the upcoming needs for the community and that projects contained in the first year of the plan are suitable for inclusion in the upcoming budget, if funding is available.

Capital Improvement Review Committee includes the city manager, city clerk, finance director, director of public services, director of public safety, DDA director, parks and recreation director, Main Street manager, human resources director, and IT director.

## 3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

Like all municipalities, the City of Owosso has the authority to acquire private property for a public purpose. This may include outright purchase acceptance of land donated by another party or acquisition through eminent domain. In addition to the ability to acquire private property for public infrastructure or facilities such as roads, sewers, public buildings and parks, the city may acquire private property to facilitate redevelopment and to eliminate nonconforming uses or structures.

Property acquisition is also an important tool in implementing development projects,

particularly for site development and redevelopment. By purchasing property in an area identified for new development, the DDA or the city will have an added tool to attract developers and build the desired project. For example, to develop new housing, the DDA or city can acquire several of the vacant lots and can contribute them to the project. This will provide an incentive to lower the cost, and minimize the risk, for the developer. Should the first phase be successful, the developer will more than likely undertake construction of additional units without any form of subsidy. The goal is to use tax increment financing to attract developers by minimizing risk, leverage private investment and eventually eliminate the need for financial assistance.

## 4. FUNDING PROGRAMS

Some of the recommendations may be funded locally, some through outside funds, and many through a combination. The city monitors new federal and state funding programs that may be available to assist in implementation. In addition, foundations and other organizations may provide contributions.

### **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) OR PRINCIPAL SHOPPING DISTRICT (PSD)**

The city can establish a Business Improvement District (BID) or a Principal Shopping District (PSD) to promote economic development in the Downtown or Westown area. A BID/PSD allows a municipality to collect revenues, levy special assessments and issue bonds in order to address the maintenance, security, and operation of that district. The BID/PSD may also undertake the promotion of economic development in the district. Projects may also be financed by grants and gifts.

### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)**

In addition to traditional sources, the city can raise revenues within a specific geographic area for specific purposes, or to capture the new increment of tax revenues in a specific geographic area for specific purposes. The City of Owosso has the following authorities:

- **Downtown Development Authority (DDA).** The DDA/OMS is funded primarily through a TIF mechanism which has been in place since 1984. The city's latest TIF plan amendment occurred in 2003 and plans through 2024.

- **Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA).** Westown has an established CIA. The group but does not have a dedicated source of income and has no formal plan.

### **OPPORTUNITY ZONES**

Opportunity Zones are a new concept recently enacted in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The program is designed to incentivize patient capital investments in low-income communities nationwide that have been cut off from capital and experienced a lack of business growth. There are three types of tax incentives that relate to the treatment of capital gains, each of the incentives are connected to the longevity of an investor's stake in a qualified Opportunity Fund that provides the most upside to those who hold their investment for 10 years or more.

### **TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)**

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) administers the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in Michigan, where regional trail connections and safe routes to school are among the highest priorities for funding. TAP is a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds designated

by Congress for specific activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. Projects are selected on a competitive basis for funding in a future fiscal year. Competitiveness is primarily established by project concept and project constructability.

- **Project Concept** - Two types of highly competitive concepts are projects that develop/connect regional trails and projects that make walking/biking routes to school safer.
- **Project Constructability** - Applications are reviewed by a team of technical experts to gauge the ability of the proposed projects to be constructed using all current federal and state standards, constructed on time, and constructed on budget.
- The items that typically are most important for this review are:
  - High level of positive public involvement
  - Reasonable cost estimate (based on similar recent federal aid projects)
  - Industry design standards used without exceptions

- Demonstrated high likelihood of all permits to be secured
- Demonstrated high level of coordination with all necessary agencies

## 5. OTHER PROGRAMS

A variety of housing, economic development, informational and other programs may be used by the City to assist with implementation of recommendations in this Plan. Many of these are through state programs as identified in the preceding chapters such as the following:

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
- MSHDA MiPlace
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Michigan Community Revitalization Program (MCRP)
- MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Complete Streets Coalition
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

## 6. PARTNERSHIPS

While the city can 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 should all participate. Partnerships with the public and private sector, including Owosso Schools, Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership, Owosso Main Street (and Michigan Main Street), Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce, regional recreation and tourism organizations, the nearby higher education institutions (Baker College), neighboring municipalities, local businesses, and large land owners will also lead to success implementing the plan's initiatives.

Partnerships may range from sharing information to funding and shared promotions or services. The spirit of cooperation through alliances and partnerships will be sustained to benefit everyone in the region. City government cannot and should not do it all. Only through public/private collaboration can the plan's vision be realized.

# ZONING PLAN

Zoning is a key 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.

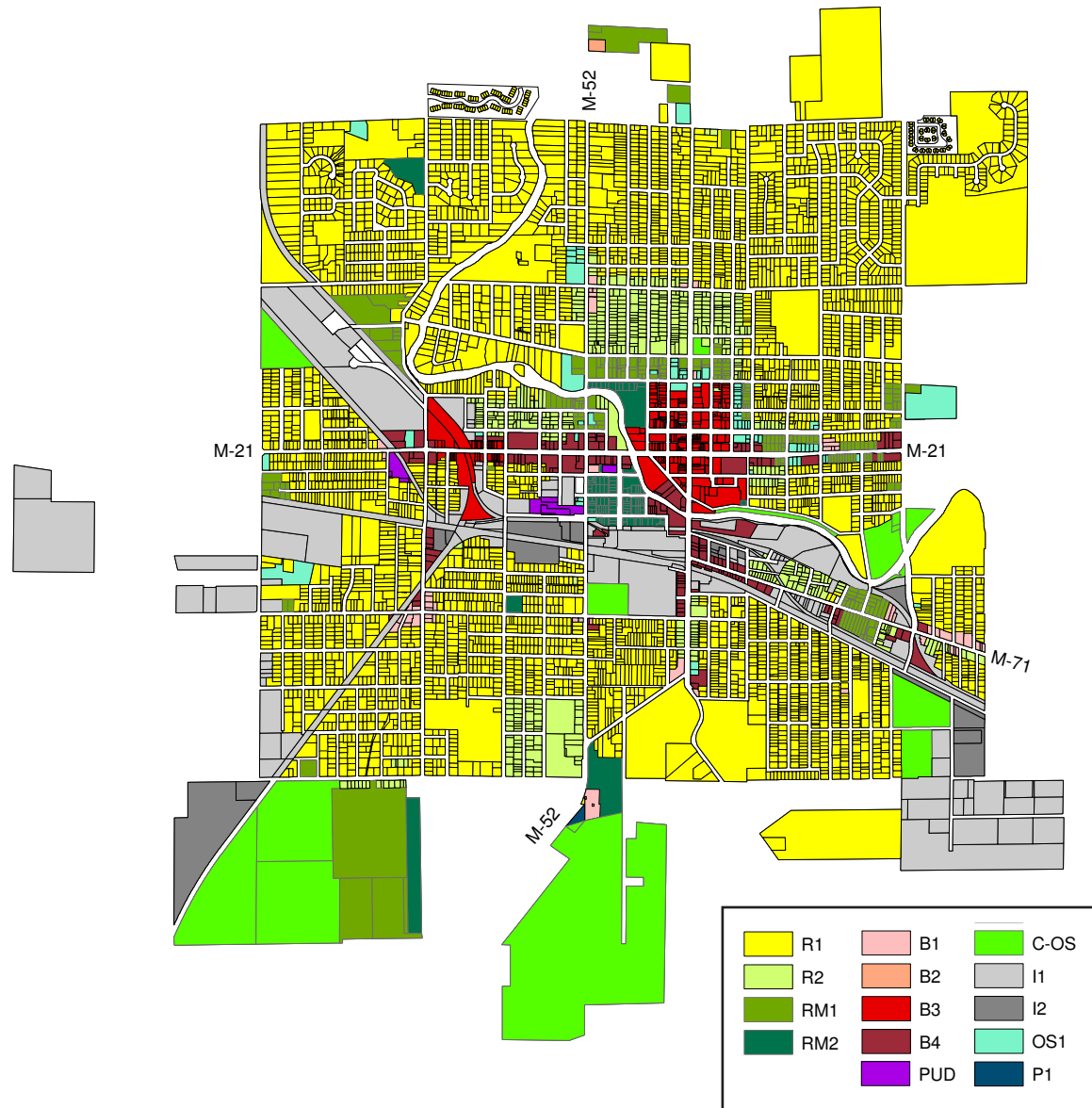
The plan categories correspond to zoning districts, but there is some generalization. The following table provides a zoning plan indicating how the future land use categories in this Master Plan relate to the zoning districts in the zoning ordinance. In certain instances, more than one zoning district may be applicable to a future land use category.

ZONING DISTRICTS	Neighborhoods	Centers	Corridors	Districts - Campus	Districts - Industrial	Open Space
R-1, One-Family Residential						
R-2, Two-Family Residential						
R-T, Attached One-Family Residential						
RM-1, Multiple Family Residential						
RM-2, Multiple Family Residential - High Rise						
MPH, Manufactured Home Park						
OS-1, Office Service						
B-1, Local Business						
B-2, Planned Shopping Center	Eliminate					
B-3, Central Business District						
B-4, Business District						
I-1, Light Industrial						
I-2, General Industrial						
P-1, Vehicular Parking	Eliminate					
C-OS, Conservation/Open Space						
PUD, Planned Unit Development						

# ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the Future Land Use Plan 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 (10-20 years).

In addition, the Future Land Use map is generalized. Zoning changes in accordance with the plan should be made gradually and strategically so that change can be managed. The Future Land Use map as well as the plan's goals and strategies should be consulted to judge the merits of a rezoning request.



As one of the primary tools to implement this plan, the zoning ordinance and accompanying map should be amended to align the strategies in this plan with the zoning districts and administrative procedures. The recommendations below should be taken into consideration with a more comprehensive audit of the ordinance during the amendment process.

## RRC REPORT OF FINDINGS RECOMMENDATIONS (2017)

As part of the RRC-certification process, the city should undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning ordinance and ensure it aligns with the master plan goals. The following recommendations were included in RRC's report of findings from August 2017.

- Incorporate placemaking elements in the ordinance
- Consider a form-based code for downtown
- Consider if additional ordinance provisions are needed for the preservation of sensitive historic and environmental features

- Provide development standards to encourage sustainable infrastructure such as rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, pervious pavement, parking lot landscaping, and preservation of native vegetation/trees
- Provide standards for elements that enhance non-motorized transportation
- Formulate policy or ordinance to compel completion of sidewalk network
- Incorporate additional flexible parking standards in the ordinance
- Review ordinance definitions and update as needed
- Refresh the zoning ordinance graphics to ensure readability and understanding

## DDA/OMS DOWNTOWN RECOMMENDATIONS (2019)

During a January 2019 strategic planning session, the following recommendations were identified by the DDA/Owosso Main Street.

### DOWNTOWN DISTRICT SHOULD PROVIDE FOR:

- Commercial entryways locations
- Zero setbacks and maximum setback of 10 feet
- New buildings downtown must be built to complement nearby historic buildings and allowable building materials
- Ground floor transparency required
- Minimum building height of two stories for the center city district, the original 9-block core area
- Horizontal breaks in material to distinguish floors

**DOWNTOWN PARKING REGULATIONS SHOULD PROVIDE FOR:**

- Driveway access should be restricted to certain blocks, parking lot locations shall be restricted to certain locations on parcels (not adjacent to Main Street)
- Interior landscaping is required for parking lots with over 40 parking spaces
- Private parking will be permitted under special use permit
- A maximum limit shall be placed on private parking; otherwise, no parking spaces are required for uses other than residential and institutional
- Parking lots must be located behind or to the side of buildings to reduce the visual impact of parked cars

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Ordinances that regulate sidewalk cafes and food trucks
- Continue to review the residential parking requirements for downtown to determine if there are changes needed as additional residential units are developed



# ACTION PLAN

The implementation tools outlined above are available and should be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. Comprehensive implementation actions have been developed to organize and apply these tools. Under each topic, specific actions, tools, and a timeframe for implementation are identified. The details of the strategies to implement the Master Plan are specified in the table below.

## TIMEFRAME

- Ongoing: annually
- Immediate: 1-3 years
- Short: 4-5 years
- Long: 5-15 years

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Manager: City Manager
- CC: City Council
- PC: Planning Commission
- OMS: Owosso Main Street / Downtown Development Authority
- CD: Community Development
- P&R: Parks & Rec Steering Committee
- PS: Public Services Committee
- County: Shiawassee County

## TOOL

- Reg: Regulatory
- Policy: Policy/Program
- CIP: Capital Improvement
- Partner: Partnership

## EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Grade scale of A to F (A being easiest to implement based on anticipated level of effort and cost)

## TOPIC

- Administrative
- Development Review Process
- Historic Revitalization + Preservation
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Land Use/Zoning
- Mixed-Use and Infill Development
- Neighborhood Programming
- Neighborhood Connectivity
- Organizations + Recreation
- Redevelopment Process
- Regional Outreach

# PRIORITY ACTIONS

## ZONING AMENDMENTS

- Initiate zoning map amendments to provide for the development of missing middle housing. (Redevelopment Ready sites).
- Establish new setback and site design standards that respect the existing nature of the community and promote developments that are high quality and complementary to the city character.
- Engage in a zoning revision that includes design guidelines and/or elements of a form based code for downtown and Westtown.
- Modify zoning to permit a flexible mixture of uses along corridors but with strengthened emphasis on design and character.
- Require landscaping that enhances the development site along the street and within the parking lot.
- Consider zoning changes that encourage or require riparian preservation.

## PROCEDURAL CHANGES

- Reorganize fee schedules to factor in administrative costs and update the fee schedule on an annual basis.
- Improve the residential rental inspection program for more regular inspections (2-3 year cycle). Continue to support and staff a code enforcement/ building official and housing manager to oversee rehabilitation programs and code compliance.
- Develop permit checklists for homeowners.
- Develop a documented policy to guide the internal review process including tasks, times, responsible parties, etc.

## PROJECTS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Study the cost and feasibility of potential kayak launch sites along the Shiawassee River.
- Main Street to participate in the City's six-year capital improvements plan on an annual basis.
- Activate the alleys in downtown as gathering spaces, art exhibits, events, etc.

## MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

- Create marketing materials to attract developers to Owosso and promote redevelopment sites.
- Encourage home-based businesses, livework space, mixed uses, and flexible commercial spaces to accommodate the new economy worker and business.
- Develop a process to share successes, events, promotions, and development opportunities across partner communication channels.
- Expand and sustain a model of “coopetition” among Downtown Owosso businesses, organizations and attractions.
- Create and deploy a public relations media content calendar.
- Work on telling the story of Owosso - locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally. Promote successful projects and initiatives.

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE ADCTIONS</b>					
#	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	Amend the zoning ordinance to address new issues and recommendations detailed in this or an amended master plan.	Ongoing	PC, CC	Reg	
	Hold an annual joint meeting with city council, planning commission and OMS.	Ongoing	CC, PC, OMS	Partner	
	Publish an annual report of planning commission activity.	Ongoing	PC	Policy	
	Review the master plan progress annually and prepare a report for the city council on its implementation. (RRC Best Practice).	Ongoing	PC, CC	Policy	
	Revise capital improvements program plan annually. Continue to improve the CIP process.	Ongoing	CIP committee, PC, CC	Policy	
	Initiate zoning map amendments to provide for the development of missing middle housing. (Redevelopment Ready sites)	Immediate (1-2 years)	PC, CC	Reg	
	Reorganize fee schedules to factor in administrative costs and update the fee schedule on an annual basis.	Immediate (1-2 years)	City Staff, PC	Policy	
	Add definitions for key words to make the zoning ordinance more user-friendly.	Short-term (3-4 years)	PC	Reg	
	Create an orientation packet for development-related boards and commissions.	Short-term (3-4 years)	City Staff	Policy	

<b>GOAL 1. PROTECT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY</b>						
#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Strongly pursue code enforcement on hazardous, unsafe, and ill-kept housing.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Encourage single-family attached housing on vacant and redevelopment sites, particularly as a transition between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Encourage the adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings such as schools, churches, or former warehouse buildings for multi-family residential.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Encourage Brownfield redevelopment, including the utilization of Brownfield TIF for residential development.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Protect the city's six wellheads and other drainage features.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Continue to support the Friends of the Shiawassee River in their attempts to protect and enhance the water quality.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Continue to hold events to facilitate business support, training, and networking (Social media marketing, small business resources).	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Encourage nonconforming sites to gradually upgrade and be brought more into conformance with the intent of the zoning ordinance.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Encourage sustainable design and aesthetic upgrades that will enhance the use and exchange value of property.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Prioritize code enforcement and blight control efforts on Westown, East M-21, South M-52, and M-71.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Utilize the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that development will minimize disruption to valuable natural feature areas.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Support a strict code enforcement program of commercial, residential, and tenant properties.	Ongoing			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Develop an educational code enforcement program to help connect residents to the resources and tools they need to maintain their homes. Prioritize education and awareness over fines.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Improve the residential rental inspection program for more regular inspections (2-3 year cycle). Continue to support and staff a code enforcement/ building official and housing manager to oversee rehabilitation programs and code compliance.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Develop a detailed plan for the Jerome Street corridor that would expand recreational options and eliminate flood risk to homes, potentially by closing the street and actively acquiring such homes.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Consider zoning changes that encourage rain gardens, permeable paving materials, LEED certification, and other sustainable development goals.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Support existing businesses.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Consider zoning changes that encourage or require riparian preservation.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Cultivate an environment that demonstrates a commitment to the development of businesses, housing, and community organizations in Downtown Owosso.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Educate business owners and employees on the importance of reserving on-street parking for customers/patrons.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Expand and sustain a model of "coopetition" among Downtown Owosso businesses, organizations and attractions.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Amend zoning standards to reduce the conversion of single-family homes to multi-unit apartments and minimize impacts.	Short-term (3-4 years)			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Pursue implementation of city-wide, public recycling and waste management.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Plan for attached single-family and multi-family along corridors and as transitional uses between neighborhoods and commercial or employment areas.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Require higher on-site stormwater detention/retention.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Improve connectivity over time to reinstate the grid street pattern.	Long-term (5-15 years)			

**GOAL 2. PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO RESIDENTS AND INVESTORS**

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	4 DwtN	Conduct customer service surveys of property owners, businesses, and organization.	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	Continue the Main Street program in downtown.	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	Support a regulatory environment that demonstrates a commitment to the development of businesses, housing and community organization in Downtown Owosso.	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	With the city, define Main Street's role in the RRC initiative; plan and deploy activities accordingly.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Develop permit checklists for homeowners.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Prioritize education over fines when dealing with code enforcement issues.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Create a guide to development.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Develop a documented policy to guide the internal review process including tasks, times, responsible parties, etc.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Develop an ordinance that permits solar energy and pursue LED conversions of public lights.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Explore educational opportunities available for education of home owner associations, neighborhood associations/groups, landlord associations, and builder associations.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Develop an outreach strategy for potentially controversial development projects.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Develop potential incentive packages.	Short-term (3-4 years)			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	3 EcDev	Encourage home-based businesses, live-work space, mixed uses, and flexible commercial spaces to accommodate the new economy worker and business.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Promote and support a regional approach to economic development that is business friendly and easily accessible by businesses.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Consider decorative lighting on S. Elm Street.	Long-term (5-15 years)			



**GOAL 3. MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Coordinate with county departments regarding regional issues such as safety, public health, hazard mitigation, economic development, education, and transportation.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Proactively plan for essential resources and upgrades for police, fire, and code enforcement.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Ensure proactive communication to residents about any potential changes in service. Includes temporary and long-term changes.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Maintain high-quality public water, sewer, and infrastructure. Consider a single-hauler municipal waste and recycling program. May require regional collaboration.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Allocate resources for regular training for city staff as well as elected and appointed leadership and committee volunteers.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Continue to improve annual the capital improvement program (CIP) planning process.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Seek grant funding opportunities for infrastructure projects, particularly water, stormwater, and non-motorized systems.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Proactively address capital needs and time projects in parallel with redevelopment.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Support training for local elected officials.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Coordinate an infrastructure improvement plan for streets and underground utilities, with design standards.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Main Street to participate in the City's six-year capital improvements plan on an annual basis.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Determine if establishing a principal shopping district (Act 120 of 1961) would provide benefit to the City.	Immediate (1-2 years)			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Plan for capital projects to provide for better stormwater management, particularly within the neighborhoods.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Coordinate with Owosso Public School District to develop a citizen academy for residents of all ages.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Develop a tax increment financing plan for the Westtown Corridor Improvement Authority at a time when taxable values are observed to be stable or increase.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Amend the DDA Plan to allow for more creative project financing.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Improve the aesthetic appearance of downtown parking lots.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Improve the pedestrian experience along the Washington Street bridge.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Develop neighborhood identities and service groups that can perform activities and events related to home improvements and networking.	Long-term (5-15 years)			
	3 EcDev	Consider redevelopment opportunities for current municipal properties, specifically City Hall and the public safety building.	Long-term (5-15 years)			
	3 EcDev	Educate building owners regarding potential financial benefits of upper floor rehabilitation, including state and federal tax credits for historic rehabilitation.	Long-term (5-15 years)			
	4 Dwtm	Coordinate roadway and bridge improvements with MDOT's long-range plans.	Long-term (5-15 years)			

<b>GOAL 4. IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER AND HERITAGE</b>						
#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Continue to support neighborhood events that highlight local history, historic homes, and beautiful gardens.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Facilitate regular and frequent events in the downtown and Westown business districts in conjunction with the evolution and improvement of existing events such as the North Pole Express.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Continue the historic preservation program for downtown's historic structures with program elements to include façade restoration, upper story tenant development, design services, and qualification measures to access state and federal tax credits.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Continue to develop and maintain a uniform or complementary wayfinding and identification sign program.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Continue to support biking, walking, and river activities in downtown.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Continue to support festivals and events.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Utilize the Downtown Historic District Commission to ensure preservation of downtown properties, while encouraging economically viable uses in existing buildings.	Ongoing			
	5 FLU	Promote infill housing in older neighborhoods and on established corridors to help rejuvenate such areas.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Move the sign ordinance into the zoning code and update it so that it adequately serves businesses but promotes more subtle materials, lighting, color, size, positioning, and landscaping that complements the building and neighborhood.	3-5 years			
	3 EcDev	Recognize and assess Redevelopment Ready Sites in order to prepare for packaging and marketing.	3-5 years			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Establish new setback and site design standards that respect the existing nature of the community and promote developments that are high quality and complementary to the city character.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Create marketing materials to attract developers to Owosso.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Create zoning provisions that require building materials to be high quality and durable.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Develop design standards for non- residential structures that complement the historic character of the area while respecting the needs of modern businesses.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Modify zoning to permit a flexible mixture of uses along corridors but with strengthened emphasis on design and character.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Promote tourism. Advance and expand Downtown's Day-Tripper Transformation Strategy.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Require landscaping that enhances the development site along the street and within the parking lot.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Create and deploy a public relations media content calendar.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Develop a mobile app featuring Downtown Owosso attractions/ businesses (possible fundraiser through as sales).	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Improve utilization of and access to the riverfront through public-private partnerships.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Incorporate downtown brand into downtown gateways and wayfinding.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 DwtN	Work on telling the story of Owosso - locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally. Promote successful projects & initiatives.	Immediate (1-2 years)			

**GOAL 5. INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE**

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Support and promote arts & culture, in partnership with Shiawassee Arts Council, Owosso Community Players, Owosso Public School District, and others.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Improve connections between neighborhoods and key destinations, activity centers throughout the city, including the riverfront, schools, and parks.	Ongoing			
	2 Nbhd	Seek grant funding opportunities to increase parks and recreation facilities.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Attempt to utilize upper floor rental rehabilitation program in Westown.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Consider implementation of the “complete streets” and “road diet” design concepts for all major streets and state highways.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Require all new commercial construction to provide pedestrian pathways along the roadway and require linkages from the building to parking areas and the pathway.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Provide safe pedestrian circulation when designing access and circulation for vehicles.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Prioritize neighborhood-serving mixed-use nodes to provide walkable access to daily retail and service needs.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Increase lifestyle, entertainment options including festivals and cultural events.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Support privately owned river-friendly development on the Shiawassee River.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Expand housing options.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Continue to support weekend and evening activities in the downtown.	Ongoing			
	4 Dwtm	Encourage and support upper floor residential uses.	Ongoing			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Study the cost and feasibility of potential kayak launch sites along the Shiawassee River.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	3 EcDev	Encourage home-based businesses, live-work space, mixed uses, and flexible commercial spaces to accommodate the new economy worker and business.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Activate the alleys in downtown as gathering spaces, art exhibits, events, etc.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Create and demonstrate a welcoming culture of hospitality for the vision, businesses, and residents of Downtown Owosso.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Create and deploy a "Welcome" packet and/or goodie basket for new arrivals.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Engage in a zoning revision that includes design guidelines and/or elements of a form based code for downtown and Westown.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Enhance all downtown gateway with beautification and wayfinding.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Road diet on M-21/Main Street.	Immediate (1-2 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Pursue "safe routes to schools" improvements in partnership with the Owosso Public Schools.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	2 Nbhd	Develop an adopt a park program.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Finalize a non-motorized plan map and implementation strategy that links to other regional trail efforts.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Prioritize neighborhood-serving mixed-use nodes to provide walkable access to daily retail and service needs.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	4 Dwtn	Consider the potential of "build-to" lines, mixed vertical uses, and minimum heights in the downtown and in Westown.	Short-term (3-4 years)			

**GOAL 6. BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY**

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	3 EcDev	Redevelopment Ready Sites marketing via signage in public areas, info packets and status updates in print/online/social, stakeholder facilitation, pre-project and post-project awareness efforts.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Increase investment in regional marketing.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Partner with MEDC (RRC staff) and technical assistant consultants to identify and facilitate developer introductions and site tours.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Prioritize the Shiawassee River as an environmental, economic, and recreational asset for Owosso.	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	Support and promote arts & culture, in partnership with Shiawassee Arts Council, Owosso Community Players, Owosso Public School District, and others.	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	Continue to pursue and work with the State of Michigan on grants .	Ongoing			
	4 DwtN	Cooperation between all downtown groups: Chamber, Main Street, Theatre, Farmers Market, Art Center, Amphitheater, Steam Railroad Institute, Owosso Historic Commission, Historic District Commission.	Ongoing			
	5 FLU	Develop design standards for non- residential structures that complement the historic character of the area while respecting the needs of modern businesses.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Develop a process to share successes, events, promotions, and development opportunities across partner communication channels (e.g., newsletters, press releases with partners like Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, etc.).	Immediate (1-2 years)			

#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	3 EcDev	Consider a coordinated study and plan effort that could drive tourism by increasing the draw to the Steam Railroading Institute, the Lebowsky Center, etc.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	5 FLU	Create zoning provisions that require building materials to be high quality and durable.	Short-term (3-4 years)			
	3 EcDev	Conduct a market study to understand the needs of the community that are currently unmet and identify potential targets for business recruitment.	Long-term (5-15 years)			
	5 FLU	Encourage nonconforming sites to gradually upgrade and be brought more into conformance with the intent of the zoning ordinance.	Long-term (5-15 years)			



<b>GOAL 7. STRENGTHEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS</b>						
#	Chapt.	Actions	Timing	Prime Responsibility	Tool	Ease of Implement.
	2 Nbhd	Foster stronger relationships between the public schools, local government, student groups, and community groups.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Develop and utilize RFQs and Business Development Packets.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Build a student culture in the community between Baker College and downtown by encouraging strong pedestrian connections between campus, dorms, and downtown.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Continue to support the efforts of the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership.	Ongoing			
	3 EcDev	Develop a tax increment financing plan for the Westtown Corridor Improvement Authority at a time when taxable values are observed to be stable or increase.	Long-term (5-15 years)			

# Design a Better Future

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