

CITY OF WATERVLIET

MASTER PLAN 2018



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

**Why prepare a Master Plan?
The City of Watervliet.**

Why Prepare a Master Plan?

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 states, “A local unit of government may adopt, amend, and implement a master plan as provided in this act.” Furthermore, The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 requires that a community’s zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool for governing the classification and regulation of land use. As such, zoning ordinances are legal documents which may be enforced. The Master Plan is not the same as the zoning ordinance and it cannot change the zoning of anyone’s property. In other words, the Master Plan, on its own, cannot regulate land use. Rather, it is intended to guide future land use decisions, including amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The Master Plan is the collective vision for the community; the Zoning Ordinance translates that vision into regulation. If a community’s Master Plan is current, then zoning ordinance decisions may be made according to the Master Plan. Such ordinances and decisions are presumed to be valid by the courts.

The City of Watervliet

Watervliet is a small town, with a close-knit atmosphere, where neighbors help neighbors. The Paw Paw River, Mill Creek and the public lands that sit near the water anchor memories for residents who have walked, fished, swam and boated in the vicinity. In fact, the city’s name is rooted in its water since “Watervliet” is the Dutch term for “flowing water”.

Watervliet was historically a “company town” where most residents worked for the saw mills of the 1800’s. The Watervliet Paper Mill was located on the Paw Paw River, west of Main Street, until the late 1980’s. While the mills impacted the growth and history of the city, there is a recognition that Watervliet is in another phase of its evolution. The cleared sites of the mill and old school symbolically set the stage for the next chapter of Watervliet’s story.

There is movement towards development and redevelopment in the city. While new activity and opportunity is welcomed, there is a definite philosophy that Watervliet treasures the historic fabric of their community. Citizens and officials desire to protect the treasured ideology of their historic small town and as a result, there has been progression towards proactively rehabilitating several historic structures.

The city encompasses 1.3 square miles, which makes parklands, water and the downtown accessible to most pedestrian activity. In addition to a sidewalk

system, there are portions of waterfront trails within the city. School facilities are placed along north, southwest and eastern boundaries of the community to provide the youth with opportunity to enjoy open space and play areas. Watervliet recognizes that proximity to facilities and amenities is a prime benefit of living in an efficiently arranged city. People appreciate not having to routinely use a vehicle to access services, recreational facilities, shopping opportunities and family activities.

The hospital and school system are a strong source of pride and community identity. It is recognized that growth in these institutions will reinforce the city's development and redevelopment efforts. The hospital currently provides 70 beds and several hundred jobs. The school system services over 1,200 student Panthers, Kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Citizens are kept safe by the city's own police force and a volunteer fire department, which is based downtown serving Watervliet Township and portions of Bainbridge Township. While the city does not have formal recreation programs, school programs in addition to sporting leagues managed by dedicated parents are a strong part of Watervliet's heritage. The library is in the heart of the downtown and provides a vital community service.

The City of Watervliet and Watervliet Township, along with the City and Township of Coloma, occupy a geography approximately 6 miles by 6 miles in area. It is worth noting a single township in Michigan often occupies a similar amount of land area. In part, it is the smaller geography of these communities that has fostered many collaborative efforts among them.

Paw Paw Lake hosts many summer cottages and a growing number of primary residential homes. At one time, watercraft much larger than canoes ran the river to Paw Paw Lake. Paddle boats would travel upstream to deliver goods to the Watervliet mill, and then turn around near the dam basin for the return trip. The City of Watervliet services a portion of the Paw Paw Lake community. The lake straddles both Coloma and Watervliet Townships, just north of the city. The lake can pose a challenge with respect to providing public services. The dispatch of public safety personnel, design of road networks, and utility systems must consider not only the lake but the river system.

In a larger context, both the Red Arrow Highway and CSX rail line link Watervliet with several sibling cities including Paw Paw, Lawrence and Hartford to the east (in Van Buren County) and Coloma to the west.

Coloma and Watervliet are both in Berrien County. In close proximity, Interstate 94 runs approximately parallel to Red Arrow Highway and provides convenient service.

The Paw Paw River flows through the northern edge of downtown. The river banks are high and the floodplains adjacent to the river are wide which have prevented development in these areas. The floodplains and river banks contribute to the wild and scenic character of the river, even through the downtown area. The Paw Paw River can be navigated (with small portages) from County Highway 681 in Van Buren County all the way to Lake Michigan. The navigability of the river was enhanced in late 2011 and early 2012 by the removal of two dam structures with the collaboration by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Berrien County and the City of Watervliet. The dams were removed and the river bed was improved as were the banks to lessen erosion. The 1910 vintage dam was composed of two structures. The easterly structure is located about 1,700 feet east of M-140 and diverts the Paw Paw River down a raceway to the spillway. The spillway structure was located about 1,400 feet downstream of the old diversion dam and was removed in 2000. At one time, the structures were used to generate hydroelectric power. The hydroelectric power plant was abandoned in 1968 and has since been torn down.

The closest urban area is the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph area which is about 14 miles southwest of Watervliet. Many city residents commute away for employment, urban entertainment and for some of their major purchases. South Haven is also frequented by Watervliet residents. While not as prominent as the I-94 corridor, M-63 is approximately 13 miles west of Watervliet. Both South Bend and Kalamazoo are major cities about 40 miles from Watervliet, which is considered by many workers a reasonable commute.

State traffic counts conducted in 2016 by the Michigan Department of Transportation indicate that near the Watervliet exit number 41, I-94 carried an average of 33,964 vehicles per day. I-94 carries approximately 36,523 vehicles at exit 39, the Coloma exit. M-140 (Main Street) is the city's primary north/south route and links Watervliet with South Haven to the north and Niles to the south. Within the city, M-140 carries an average of 9,366 vehicles per day by 2016 Michigan Department of Transportation figures. The high traffic moving in and around Watervliet presents increased opportunity for shoppers and visitors to stop in Watervliet and stay for a while.



II. TRENDS

Demographics

Demographics

Population Profile

In recent history, the city's population peaked in 1970 to just over 2,000 people. By 1980, the population declined to 1,867 people, which is, interestingly, close to the same number as the 2000 census figure. Most of the area's population growth between 1990 and 2000 was in Watervliet Township (see Table 1), which experienced a 15.9% population increase in those 10 years. To contrast, between 1990-2016, the cities of Watervliet and Coloma experienced a population decrease of 10% and 13%, respectively. Coloma Township experienced a 2.5% decrease in population. Although the city's population decreased between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, the number of households and housing units increased in that same timeframe, which indicates smaller household sizes.

Table 1: Population					
Community	1990	2000	2010	2016	% change (1990-2016)
City of Watervliet	1,867	1,843	1,735	1,680	10% decrease
Watervliet Township	2,926	3,392	3,102	3,083	5% increase
City of Coloma	1,669	1,588	1,483	1,446	13% decrease
Coloma Township	5,123	5,217	5,020	4,993	3% decrease
Berrien County	162,453	162,353	156,813	154,010	5% decrease

Households

A household is defined as a person or people living in a dwelling unit. As examples, unrelated persons cohabitating in the same dwelling unit, a married couple with children, and a widower are each defined as a household. Because it is the household that demands public services, it is important to understand the composition of city households in addition to shifts in the population. Across the nation, household sizes are decreasing. This is because of an increase in single-person households, childless households and fewer children per family.

In 2015, there was an estimate of 766 households in the city, which is a slight increase from 2010; however, the population experienced a slight decrease between these same years. The majority of Watervliet's households consist of married couple families (see Table 2). Watervliet's ratio of married couple families, however, is slightly lower than Michigan's averages. The city also had higher rates of single parent homes and significantly more senior citizen households than the state averages. With that in mind, the types and styles of homes available in the city should be carefully considered in comparison to their residents. For instance, today's seniors prefer to age in place if they can. Therefore, ensuring homes are readily accessible and affordable will be important.

Table 2: Household Types					
Type of Household	2010	% Total	2015	% Total	% Change
Watervliet Married Household	280	41.40%	279	44%	>1%
Michigan Married Household	1,914,310	49.80%	1,836,068	47.80%	-4%
Watervliet Single Parent Household	160	23.70%	279	22.70%	42.70%
Michigan Single Parent Household	3,843,997	16.70%	3,841,148	17.30%	>1%
Watervliet Senior Citizen Household	118	17.50%	110	17.20%	-6.80%
Michigan Senior Citizen Household	395,931	10.30%	437,890	11%	9.60%

Watervliet has a high ratio of households with children (persons under 19 years of age); much higher consecutively than state averages (see Table 3). Due to the prevalence of younger residents, the City should remain mindful that amenities and activities geared toward younger residents should be considered. Likewise, 14% of households in the city consist of senior citizens. Understanding household composition is also important for planning community services. For example, while not always the case, senior households and single-parent households may have more limited financial means than two-income households. It will be important for these types of households to have convenient and low-cost services like parks, libraries, walking paths and public recreation programs. Likewise, if they are homeowners, they may also lack the resources to update or rehabilitate their homes.

Table 3: Household Ages					
Household Ages	2010	% Total	2015	% Total	% Change
Watervliet Age 0-19	534	30.70%	534	30%	no change
Michigan Age 0-19	2,648,885	26.80%	2,534,546	25.60%	-4.30%
Watervliet Age 20-24	92	5.30%	87	4.90%	-5.40%
Michigan Age 20-24	669,072	6.80%	712,841	7.20%	6.10%
Watervliet Age 25-34	223	12.90%	117	6.60%	-47.50%
Michigan Age 25-34	1,164,149	11.80%	1,188,068	12%	2%
Watervliet Age 35-54	476	27.40%	489	27.40%	2.70%
Michigan Age 35-54	2,788,007	28.20%	2,633,552	26.60%	-5.50%
Watervliet Age 55-64	209	12%	301	11.70%	30.60%
Michigan Age 55-64	1,251,997	12.70%	1,346,477	13.60%	7%
Watervliet Age 65+	201	11.60%	254	14.30%	20.90%
Michigan Age 65+	1,361,530	13.80%	1,485,085	15%	8.30%

Housing Stock

The city's housing stock is aging. According to American Fact Finder, as of 2016, 88% of the homes in Watervliet were built prior to 1979. Most of the homes, at 63.8%, were built prior to 1959. Although the housing stock may be older, there are many fine historic homes in the community that help frame the city's character. Upkeep and modernization is critical to maintaining the housing stock, especially with the rising cost of fuel. Older homes that are not weatherized can become a strain on homeowners in terms of utility bills, so upkeep and modernization may suffer. The city's rental unit registration program can help ensure the commercial housing stock (i.e., rental units) remains desirable and kept at a certain level of quality.

Serious consideration should be given to the growing amount of vacant homes within Watervliet. Since 2010, the city has seen a 34.67% increase in vacant structures (see Table 4). The code enforcement program should continue to be aggressive or these homes may become blighted and fall into disrepair. The amount of rental homes in the City have decreased slightly, which is a good sign since homeownership reflects investment in the community. As of November 2017, 80% of the rental homes in Watervliet are registered under the rental ordinance. This allows the city to monitor rental home conditions and tenants.

Table 4: Housing Conditions					
Housing Units in City		Census 2010	2017	2022	% change (2010-2017)
Households		752	752	752	No Change
Vacant houses		75	101	108	Increase 34.67%
Owner-occupied		461	439	436	Decrease -4.77%
Renter-occupied		216	212	108	Decrease -1.85%

The River Oaks development, which can provide lots for approximately 41 homes, is located north of the high school along the Paw Paw River. The homes in River Oaks are green homes, built to be affordable and efficient with drought resistant, rain garden drainage. Also, to the north of the city, in the area of Twin Hills Drive, there are vacant lots of land available for new homes to be built.



III. GOALS

Issues and Opportunities

Vision Statements

Goals and Strategies

Issues and Opportunities

As part of the Downtown Vision Plan, the community pinpointed areas for infill, redevelopment and development. The issues addressed included lack of connectivity from downtown to the Paw Paw River and lake, missing frontages where buildings were demolished, or mid-block parking lots exist, and a lack of consistent architecture along Main Street. For further details, see Appendix A: Downtown Vision Plan, page 4.

Currently, the City's walk score is 35 out of 100. Assuring that core businesses are accessible for pedestrians through location and sidewalks will increase this score. Any community or market area can only support a certain amount of commercial development based on its population. Earmarking too much land for commercial development can inhibit downtown revitalization, exacerbate high vacancy rates, promote marginal business development (because commercial land is abundant and relatively cheap) and inhibit the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures (because it is easier to build new).

The city will also consider rental rehabilitation programs through the MEDC to provide for affordable units in the upper floors of the downtown. Rehabilitating top floors greatly enhances the safety of buildings in the downtown area, ensuring their sustainability for years into the future.

Missing middle housing is a problem in many communities, and Watervliet is no exception. According to the Congress for New Urbanism, the "missing middle is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living" (CNU website). The houses that meet missing middle specifications are diverse and could include a variety of housing types like duplexes, fourplexes and bungalow courts located in an area which supports walkability, retail, restaurants and public transportation.

Vision Statements

The visions below will become a framework for land use decisions, community investment decisions, and human resource decisions in Watervliet. They serve as a uniting mission for every citizen who resides within the city limits.

Downtown Vision

The City of Watervliet, intent on developing a shared and compelling vision, worked to complete a formal Downtown Vision Plan. The plan was completed in 2016 through a series of workshops, coordinated by the DDA, the steering committee and their consultant. As stated by the Downtown Vision Plan, (see Appendix A: Downtown Vision Plan, page 5) the formal downtown vision statement for Watervliet is to create:

A vibrant, reinvigorated downtown will be the heart of the community making Watervliet a magnet for investment and a place for residents and visitors to work, live, play and shop.

The specific downtown goals include:

1. Attracting people by telling the story
2. Establishing a culture of learning
3. Fostering cooperation
4. Creating an environment for investment
5. Building a vibrant, amenity rich downtown

City-wide Vision

For the entire city, Watervliet has developed the following vision:

In the years ahead, Watervliet will be highly successful with fostering a strong sense of community with the historic fabric of its existing structures which are carefully rehabilitated. The lake, river, trails and sidewalks are an important tie among neighborhoods and downtown. Homes in Watervliet are affordable and the housing stock is strong and well-maintained. Downtown apartments and multi-family residential is located close to downtown to promote convenient and easy access to community services and contribute to the hum of activity in the city's core.

Goals & Strategies

While a vision is a broad statement of a desired state of existence, goals and strategies hone-in on a more detailed plan for future action to attain the vision. Below are goals and strategic statements for the city, which come from interaction with the public, city leadership, review of existing city documents, and observations from planning consultants.

GOAL 1

Create an attractive and pleasant living environment in the city where people feel confident to live and invest.

GOAL 2

Maintain healthy and diverse neighborhoods that foster community interaction.

GOAL 3

Develop a park and trail way system throughout the city.

GOAL 4

Improve downtown Watervliet to make it more attractive for residents and visitors.

GOAL 5

Promote mixed uses in pockets throughout the city.



IV. FUTURE LAND USE

Existing Land Use

Focus Areas

Master Plan Districts

Future Land Use Map

Zoning Plan

Existing Land Use

The most dominant land uses in Watervliet are single-family neighborhoods and institutional uses (schools, churches and the hospital). Multi-family uses are primarily scattered within single-family neighborhoods on single lots with one complex (senior apartments) adjacent to the downtown. The city recognizes that multi-family housing in or near the central business district would be advantageous, so residents are close to services. Also, a concentration of households' help promote downtown businesses, especially homes in the upper floors of the downtown.

Aside from a few scattered businesses along Red Arrow Highway, the city's commercial district is beautifully compact and convenient for pedestrians, an attribute of typical small towns. This fact will be a large contributor to the rebirth of the downtown, provided the city does not allow commercial to bleed along the M-140 or Red Arrow Corridor. A mistake many communities make is to over zone for commercial uses, stringing them along travel corridors in an inefficient, auto-oriented manner. Watervliet's primary goal is to keep the community walkable.

Focus Areas

Corridors

The 2008 I-94 Plan identifies a detailed method for developing the I-94/Red Arrow corridor between Watervliet and Hartford. The plan called for:

- Land uses that maximize economic development opportunities for the area.
- Design standards to increase the quality of development in the area.
- Creation of a marketing group to promote the corridor.
- Provisions to extend infrastructure.
- Creation of a corridor development authority.
- Workforce awareness and training opportunities.

The collaborative nature of the 5-part vision statement for the I-94 Plan is worthy of renewal by the city:

1. Balance growth and development with the preservation of the region's natural resources and be in harmony with the residential growth within the two cities;
2. Sustain and diversify the area's economy by promoting a climate for locally controlled businesses to succeed, to attract new businesses to the region, and to support businesses in the creation and maintenance of stable jobs;
3. Support the vitality of downtown areas and the reuse and redevelopment of underutilized or vacant commercial or industrial buildings and sites;
4. Improve the quality of life for residents of the region and preserve community character;
5. Foster the principles and practices of strategic, comprehensive planning and collaboration-building within and among the communities and organizations serving the region.

Housing

The City of Watervliet does not need a great deal of change in land use for the majority of the city. The mingling of single-family neighborhoods with a strong institutional presence are part of the fabric of the city. Although some multi-family is interspersed in existing single-family neighborhoods, the community recognizes the need to incorporate Missing Middle housing in more strategic areas closer to the downtown. The "missing middle" refers to housing that is in-between the single-family home and the large apartment complex. It ranges from townhouses, to flats, duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, and courtyard housing. This type of housing can blend density; therefore, the zoning code should have a form-based option to encourage this type of development. The missing middle is very flexible and can provide infill for an existing neighborhood or be a mixed-use development in a commercial district. Utilizing this type of residential housing, the City of Watervliet will be able to provide a variety of desirable homes to residents of all ages.

Downtown

The downtown area will continue to be clearly bound at the south by Red Arrow Highway and bound at the north by the old Mill property. A concerted effort will be made to tie single-family neighborhoods more closely to the downtown. As an example, trails should be made through Hays Park, along Mill Creek, and up to Church Street to link the northeast quadrant of the city with the downtown (without having to walk along M-140). For more information, see Appendix A: Downtown Vision Plan.

Highway District

Additional commercial development is not planned for Red Arrow Highway in order to prevent the dilution of the downtown district. Commercial properties near the highway will be clearly limited to areas south of Summit Street. Highway commercial development will be zoned for the appropriate areas, in contrast to appropriate businesses zoned for the downtown. The Highway Service district should be developed adjacent to the highway for the convenience of the traveling public and therefore, should be limited to the types of businesses and services that serve this population. The Highway Service district should gradually transform into the downtown district to entice travelers to drive a little further down the road to discover the strong, traditional business district in downtown Watervliet.

Special Project Areas

Special project areas within the city, like the old mill and school sites, should be developed as mixed-use properties. All mixed-use properties will preferentially hold affordable residential units in combination with retail, office, restaurant or service uses. These developments will aid the city in adding Missing Middle housing to vacant areas that are within walking distance of the downtown. Development of these properties as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) will allow for flexibility from zoning ordinance density requirements, open space for recreation, preservation of place, new and exciting living opportunities, and creativity in development.

One conceptual idea for the old school site involves townhouses along Crescent Street which will serve as a buffer between the adjacent neighborhood and higher intensity uses. Closer to Main Street and Red Arrow Highway, higher intensity commercial will develop. Parking will be provided in a court situation and no front yard parking will be permitted. Buildings will be tucked against sidewalks with a zero setback to mimic the traditional downtown layout. First floors are earmarked for retail and service uses while upper levels are slated for apartments and office space. Buildings are expected to provide high quality design including ample windows and generous entries for storefronts and balconies and other pleasant outside spaces for residences.

Another conceptual idea involves the old mill site. Again, the design should be mixed-use but is imagined to be different from the old school site conceptual development. The city would like to see ample open space area adjacent to the river for residents to enjoy. The bulk of the road frontage for the property will be dedicated to businesses that would benefit from the river setting, like restaurants with outdoor seating or canoe and kayak liveries. Rear portions of the property

should be developed following the missing middle strategy with high quality multi-family housing. A trail loop along the railroad will link the development with the downtown in order to avoid traveling the busy M-140 corridor. As part of this conceptual idea, a pedestrian bridge across the Paw Paw River (near the curve of Riverside and Paw Paw Street) will also bring residents from the northwest quadrant of the city to the downtown, through the old mill site.

For these sites, the City Planning Commission and Council may want to consider involving the community in a pre-design exercise for both areas. Although each property should be developed as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), this option is best requested by potential developers. If the city can agree on the uses and general design of the sites, this will be an advantage to potential developers who will be assured that the site plan process will be smooth.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a term used to describe a transportation network that includes accommodation for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and other legal users. Complete Streets provide transportation choices, allowing people to move about their communities safely and easily. As the community's population ages, Complete Streets will become more essential to preserve the mobility of residents.

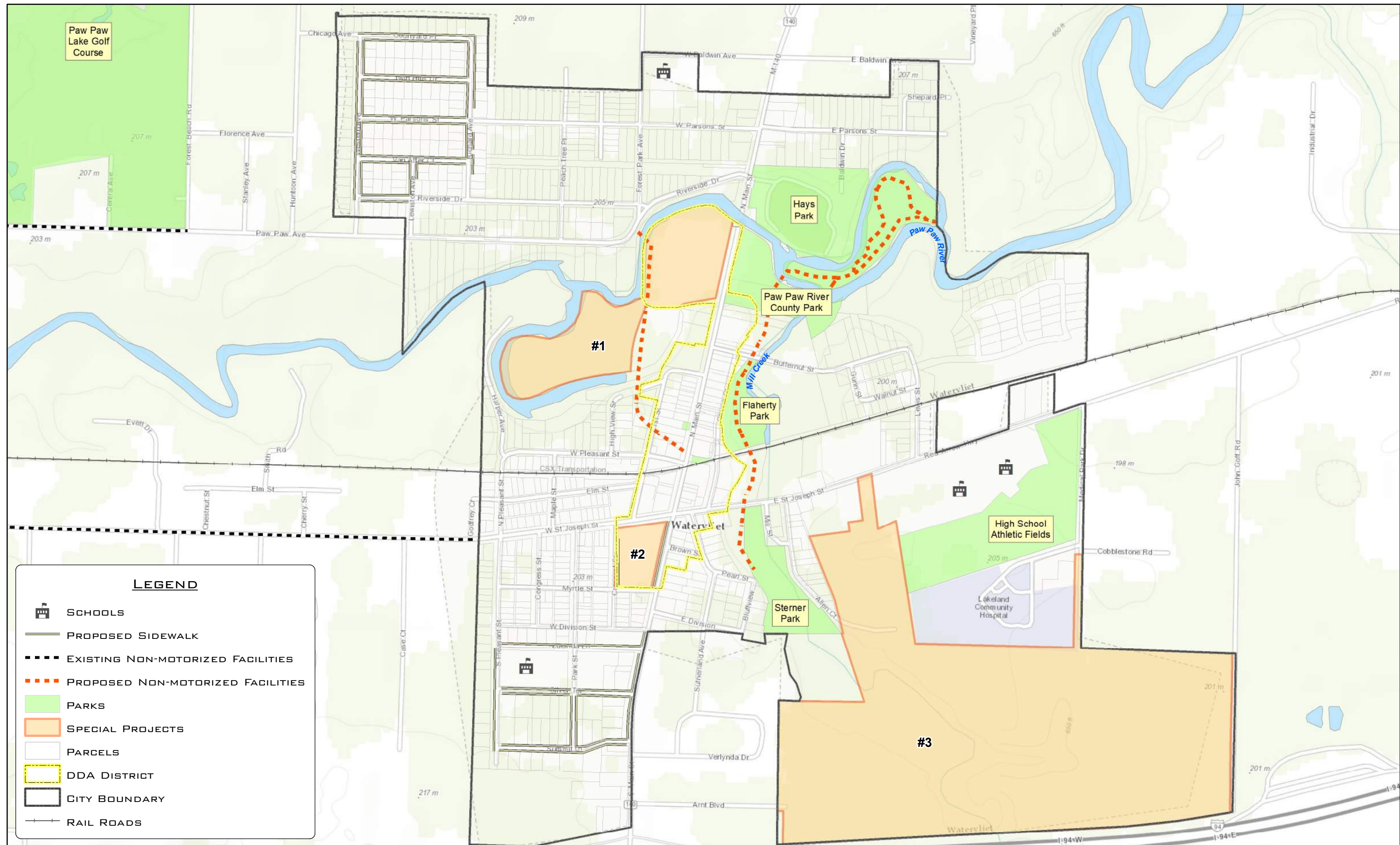
Complete Streets can include the following elements:

- Sidewalks for pedestrians to link together neighborhoods, schools and other destinations.
- Bicycle lanes as dedicated travel lanes on streets for experienced bicycle riders.
- Off-street shared use paths for pedestrians, cyclists and others who may be less comfortable with riding in the streets or for use where dedicated bike lanes are impractical.
- Protective streetscape to provide shade from sun as well as minor protection from rain. Street lights contribute to a sense of safety and security.
- Traffic signals with pedestrian signal heads as well as audible crossing signals for visually impaired pedestrians to safely cross major roadways. Pedestrian-only signals work well when vehicular traffic conditions are such that traffic only need stop when pedestrians are present.

- Bump-outs and other traffic calming devices to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, slow vehicular traffic, and alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians.
- Crosswalks, pedestrian pavement markings, and crosswalk signals to make it safer for children to walk to school, along with other strategies to help slow motorized traffic.
- Wayfinding signage to make it easier for people on foot or on bicycles to understand where they are and where they are going. Wayfinding signs help identify a place and important destinations and civic spaces.
- Traffic signals to extend walk time for pedestrians, allowing pedestrians the opportunity to walk across major roadways.

Not all complete streets elements are necessary or appropriate on all streets. While it is important to optimize the street network throughout the city, it is also important to do so within the context of the street types and adjacent land uses.

In order to plan and implement complete streets elements, Watervliet should adopt a non-motorized plan to guide incremental implementation of complete streets principles. Adoption of a policy and plan will enable Watervliet to seek additional grant opportunities for implementation of transportation system enhancements.



Master Plan Districts

Residential 1 The residential 1 district is intended for single family homes and larger lots (1/unit per acre).

Residential 2 This district is also intended for single family homes on smaller lots, typical of traditional city lots (4/units per acre).

Residential 3 High density residential development is intended for the Residential 3 areas, however less intensive uses like single family homes can also be in this area (10/units per acre). More units per area may be acceptable through a PUD process.

Central Business The Central Business District is intended for retail, restaurant and service uses typically found in traditional downtowns. Zero lot line setbacks and 100% lot coverages encompass this area. This is the core of Watervliet and walkability should be prioritized in this area.

General Business Commercial uses that are not located downtown, but are not intensive enough for the highway district, belong in the General Business District. This could include commercial campuses as well.

Highway Business This area serves typical highway traveler needs from auto and gas service to food establishments.

Mixed Use Designed to fulfill needs for missing middle housing, the object of mixed use projects is to promote a walkable, neighborhood and commercial atmosphere in Watervliet.

Institutional These areas support public uses for government, schools and hospitals. Settings could include campuses for many like uses.

Special Project Area 1 This area is best intended for uses that are primarily low density with some open space desired, so the public can enjoy the river frontage. Low density uses like kayak and canoe liveries, recreational areas or other uses that are not too intensive would be desired.

Special Project Area 2 This lot within the city would be desirable for a multi-family development since it is close to downtown and close to schools and other public facilities.

Special Project Area 3 This is a large span of undeveloped area. As part of the I-94 Plan, the city envisions some high intensity uses closer to the road and possibly multi-family and/or mixed development to the rear of the property. There should be a mix of uses on this property.

Zoning Plan

The Zoning Plan table outlines an approach to guide zoning decisions under this Master Plan. It identifies zoning districts that are compatible with each of the future land use designations. It also presents zoning districts that may be compatible and suggests some guidance for use by the Planning Commission, the City Commission and the public.

These standards are meant as a point of beginning in a rezoning decision. They should not be regarded as the only factors to be considered. Each rezoning case should be considered on a case-by-case basis; extenuating circumstances could apply to any rezoning request. Deciding bodies should always pay attention to existing and potential land use conflicts and to changing conditions that could impact a rezoning decision. Typically, a rezoning request must be considered using the following standards:

1. Consistency with the Master Plan and Future Land Use plan. As indicated, the following Zoning Plan will be helpful in this regard, but needs to be applied in the context of this entire plan, not in isolation.
2. Reasonable use for the property as currently zoned. Property owners are entitled to expect that a reasonable use may be found for their property but it is not necessarily reasonable to expect any use desired if it conflicts with broader public objectives.
3. Consideration for whether there are other, more appropriate locations in the community for the proposed zoning. This involves an analysis of the existing land uses, the zoning ordinance and the future land use plan to evaluate whether the community has already provided appropriately for a particular class of uses.
4. Potential detrimental effects of a proposed change in zoning on adjoining and surrounding land uses.

Table 5: Zoning Plan

Future Land Use Category	Zoning Ordinance Districts
Residential 1: Single family homes up to one dwelling unit per acre.	R-1 One Family Residence District
Residential 2: Single family homes with average density of four units per acre.	R-1 One Family Residence District R-2 One/Two Family Residence District
Residential 3: Single family homes and multiple family dwellings with densities up to 10 dwelling units per acre.	R-2 One/Two Family Residence District R-3 General Residence District
Central Business: This area accommodates all smaller commercial and service entities, as typically found in downtown areas.	B-1 Retail Business District
General Business: Designed for commercial and service uses that are not permitted downtown, yet are not intensive enough to be in the Highway Business District.	B-2 Retail & Service District B-OT Office/Technical
Highway Business: Accommodating all corridor business and service entities like gas stations, fast food restaurants and car repair shops.	B-2 Retail & Service District B-3 Auto-Oriented District
Mixed Use: Designed for flexibility, mixed use districts are meant to accommodate missing middle housing elements, retail, and service establishments in the same area.	R-2 One/Two Family Residence District R-3 General Residence District B-2 Retail & Service District B-OT Office/Technical
Institutional: This area accommodates uses, public and private, that are used by the entire community such as schools, the hospital, and City Hall.	B-OT Office/Technical
Industrial: Accommodating more intensive uses, this area is meant to serve large production facilities, warehouses, and the like.	No Equivalent



V. IMPLEMENTATION

Benchmarks Implementation Plan

Benchmarks

High-Density Housing: Consider adding multi-family housing to strategic areas of the city. These areas should be close to the downtown and walkable.

Neighborhood redevelopment-The Bungalow Court (Berkeley, CA)



Strategies that the Bungalow Court offers:

- High density development (5-10 units per acre)
- Typical unit size is 500-800 square feet
- Parking/Garages in the rear yards
- Front yard area is a shared courtyard
- Maintenance-free (provided through a neighborhood association)
- Individual units

Beautiful Downtown: The inviting and fun atmosphere of downtown Saugatuck is the inspiration behind Watervliet's vision. The aesthetics are pleasing, there is street furniture and landscaping, and the shops are unique and inviting.

Downtown Saugatuck (Michigan)



Strategies that unique and active downtowns offer:

- Pedestrian-friendly
- High quality, unique shopping experience
- Planned parking
- Attractive streetscape

Downtown Living: Mason is a classic, small-town that has managed to retain their hometown character while still implementing 2nd and 3rd floor apartments with MEDC/MSHDA grants. As a result of their hard work, 90% of the downtown's upper floors are brand-new affordable residential apartments.

Downtown Mason (Michigan)



Strategies that mixed-use units downtown offer:

- Unique living opportunities that attract both young and old
- Safer downtown buildings
- Increase in affordable units
- More activity downtown, shops stay open later

Implementation Plan

GOAL 1			
Create an attractive and pleasant living environment in the city where people feel confident to live and invest.			
Time	Actions	Executing Body	Champions
Bi-annually	City clean-up days.	DDA	Members of DDA, downtown business owners, volunteers
Annually	Review landscaping and screening standards.	Planning Commission	City Commission
Monthly	Revisit I-94 Plan with Hartford and work strategies.	Planning Commission	City Staff
Daily	Continue code enforcement actions and provide resources for volunteer help.	Code Enforcement	City Manager

GOAL 2			
Maintain healthy and diverse neighborhoods that foster community interaction.			
Time	Actions	Executing Body	Champions
Quarterly	Form task groups to organize city-wide activities.	DDA	Business owners, neighborhood assoc., volunteers
Seasonal	Start a community garden.	DDA	Business owners, neighborhood assoc., volunteers
ASAP	Meet with MDoT regarding streetscape plan and pedestrian crossings.	City Staff	DDA, business owners, schools
ASAP	Apply for funding for streetscape plan (vision document) and pedestrian crossings.	City Staff	City Manager

GOAL 3			
Develop a park and trail way system throughout the city.			
Time	Actions	Executing Body	Champions
ASAP	Form task group to tie park activities into the downtown.	City Staff	Volunteers
Seasonal	Maintain existing parks and recreation amenities use the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	City Staff	Parks task group, volunteers

GOAL 4			
Improve downtown Watervliet to make it more attractive for residents and visitors.			
Time	Actions	Executing Body	Champions
ASAP	Meet with MDoT regarding streetscape plan and pedestrian crossings.	City Staff	DDA, business owners, schools
ASAP	Apply for funding for streetscape plan (vision document) and pedestrian crossings.	City Staff	City Manager
Annually	Continue to market the DDA Façade Program.	DDA	City Staff
ASAP	Work with CAT team representative to discover grants for downtown to increase aesthetics and longevity of buildings.	City Staff	DDA
Weekly	Consider bringing food vendors downtown.	DDA	City Commission
ASAP	Develop infill, outdoor display, outdoor seating, and rooftop seating regulations in the zoning ordinance and meet with MDoT Regarding sidewalk cafes.	Planning Commission	City Staff, DDA
Continuous	Continue developing the Makers Market and other fun activities and consider collaboration with other communities.	DDA	Place Committee, volunteers

GOAL 5			
Promote mixed uses in pockets throughout the City			
Time	Actions	Executing Body	Champions
ASAP	Actively pursue interested downtown owners in Rental Rehabilitation programs through MEDC to encourage downtown living in upper floors.	City Staff	DDA, business owners
ASAP	Zone special Project areas as mixed use and increase marketing methods.	City Staff/Planning Commission	City Manager
After rezoning	Consider implementing form-based code for areas where mixed use would be desired.	Planning Commission	City Commission

Watervliet Master Plan

APPENDIX





CITY OF WATERVLIET
158 W PLEASANT ST
P.O. BOX 86
WATERVLIET MI 49098

Phone: (269) 463-6769

Fax: (269) 463-7708

Public Notice

Watervliet Planning Commission, Watervliet, MI in Berrien County

Notice of Intent to Conduct Master Planning

Effective Monday, July 31, 2017, the City of Watervliet Planning Commission has approved the issuance of the City of Watervliet, Notice of Intent to Conduct Master Planning as required under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008). In accordance with the requirements of Michigan's PA 33 of 2008 and related amendments, this is to notify you that the City of Watervliet, Michigan, is initiating the process to complete a Master Plan Update for the City.

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), and related amendments, when a city is intending to prepare a Master Plan update, it must notify by first class mail any City, Village and Township located within or contiguous to the city and to the County Planning Commission. The same notice must also be sent to any railroad companies or public utility that registers for such a notice with the city. The notice of intent to plan should note that the city is beginning a planning process and encourage and request cooperation and comments from adjacent communities. This notice has been posted with the City Clerk's office in the City of Watervliet and is also being posted on the City's website.

The City is asking for your cooperation and assistance in this process. Specifically, we would like to know if you have any thoughts, concerns, or issues you feel should be addressed in this effort that would allow us to work more cooperatively when planning for our area.

Later in the process, the City will be issuing a draft copy of the Master Plan Update for public review and comment, as required by statute. At that time, we would appreciate all comments regarding the Plan's content and how you feel it may affect planning efforts in your community.

PLEASE BE NOTIFIED that you are invited to send a letter and/or email stating your opinions, position, or questions to the Watervliet Planning Commission (c/o City Manager), P.O. Box 86, Watervliet, MI 49098, or send an email to: CityManager@Watervliet.org. The City of Watervliet thanks you for your cooperation and assistance.

Dated July 31, 2017

Michael Uskiewicz
 City Manager



CITY OF WATERVLIIET
158 W PLEASANT ST
P.O. BOX 86
WATERVLIIET MI 49098

Phone: (269) 463-6769

Fax: (269) 463-7708

January 12, 2018

Berrien County Planning Commission
 2100 E. Empire Avenue
 Benton Harbor, MI 49022

RE: Draft City of Watervliet Master Plan Update

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 125.3839 (2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, please find enclosed a copy of the draft City of Watervliet Master Plan Update. Pursuant to the requirements of the Act, we are requesting your review and comment in advance of the City's public hearing. The plan is also available for download at:

<http://www.watervliet.org>

The Act provides surrounding communities and other respondents with 63 days to provide comments on the proposed Plan. Your comments must be submitted no later than 63 days after you receive this notice.

Please submit comments to:

City of Watervliet Planning Commission
 c/o Michael Uskiewicz, City Manager
 City of Watervliet, P.O. Box 86, Watervliet, MI 49098 or by email at:
citymanager@watervliet.org

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and timely response in reviewing the draft Master Plan. Comments offered during this review process will be taken into account in adjusting and refining the Plan. Please feel free to contact Michael Uskiewicz at 269.463.6769 if you have any questions. We look forward to your input.

Sincerely,

Joe Engel, Planning Commission Chair
 City of Watervliet



CITY OF WATERVLIET, 158 W PLEASANT ST, P.O. BOX 86, WATERVLIET MI 49098
Phone: (269) 463-6769 Fax: (269) 463-7708

**CITY OF WATERVLIET
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

BE IT HEREBY NOTICED that the City of Watervliet Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Watervliet City Hall located at 158 West Pleasant Street, Watervliet, MI to hear comments regarding the Master Plan Update Draft.

Any member of the public may stop by City Hall during business hours to review the draft plan prior to the meeting. Any property owner, their representative, or other interested person is invited to attend the meeting to be held as noticed above. Written responses can be sent or hand delivered to the attention of the Planning Commission, P.O. Box 86, Watervliet, MI 49098. Please direct any questions to City Manager Michael Uskiewicz, 269.463.6769.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact the City Clerk at Watervliet City Hall by calling 269.436.6769, or by emailing Clerk@Watervliet.org no later than 6 days prior to the scheduled meeting.

Joe Engel, Chair

Planning Commission



Resolution No. 07-2018

Watervliet Planning Commission
Berrien County, MI

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION
City of Watervliet Master Plan Update
By Watervliet Planning Commission**

WHEREAS, the City Commission created the Planning Commission for the purposes stated in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission may adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the City, as empowered by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has worked on updating the existing Master Plan of 2012 to stay in compliance with all state regulations and law requirements, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watervliet has contracted with a professional consultant to assist the Planning Commission with the technical studies necessary to make the Master Plan Update for the City of Watervliet.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby approves the New Master Plan 2018 for the City of Watervliet, along with the text, maps, charts, graphs, and other descriptive materials contained in the Plan.

Motion to approve the Master Plan by HUTCHINS, supported by BROWN.

AYES: BROWN, ENGEL, HOLLAWAY, HUTCHINS, MUTH, AND STRUNK

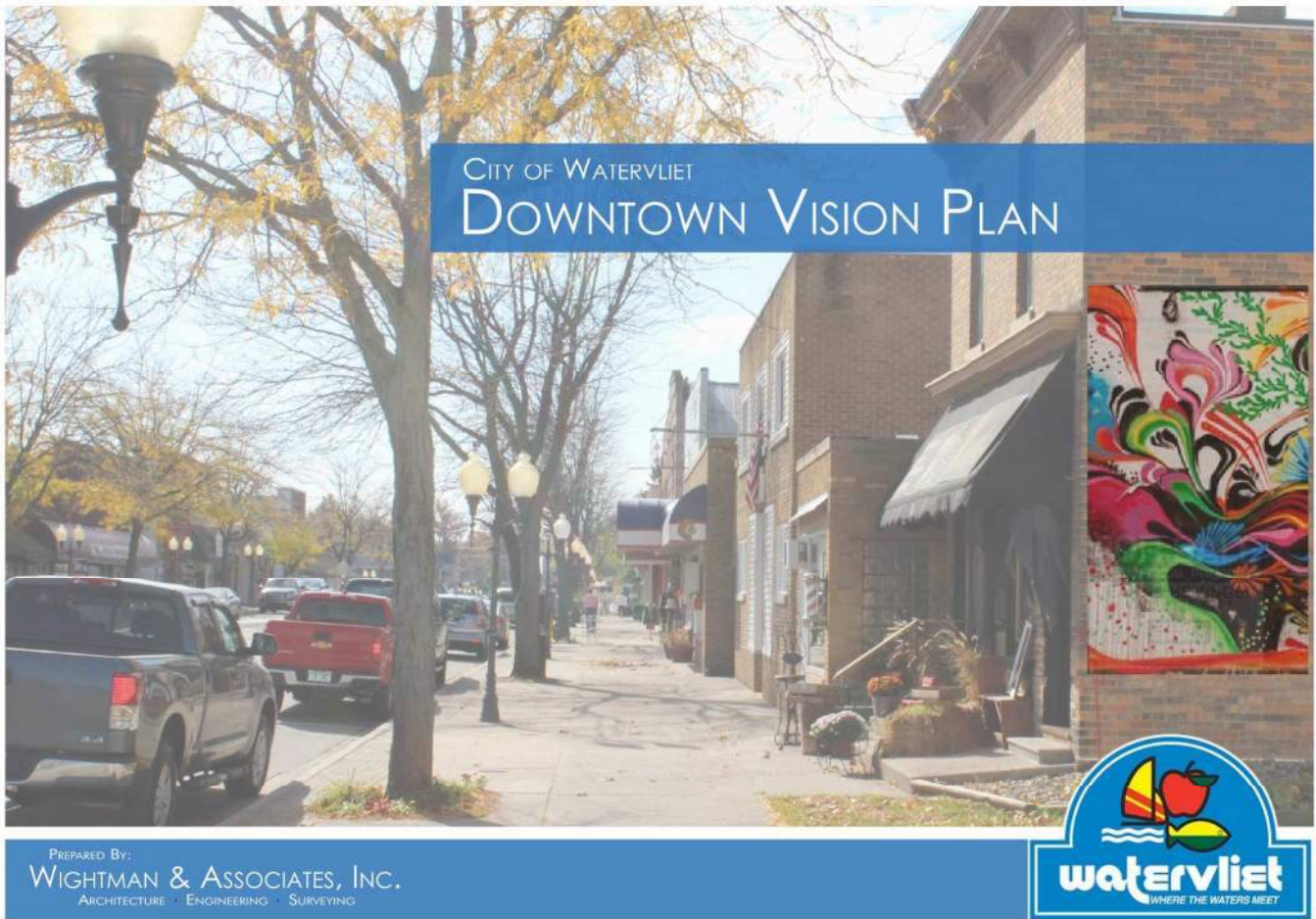
NAYS:

ABSENT: HEHL

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF MARCH 2018.


Planning Commission Chairperson

03/26/2018
Date



Introduction

LETTER FROM THE CITY OF WATERVLIET

We are pleased to present this Vision Plan for the future development of the Downtown of Watervliet. This plan was facilitated by Wightman & Associates as well as A5 Inc. with a great deal of input from city residents, business owners, and others who do not live in the city but have an avid interest in its development.

A series of workshops were held in an effort to engage stakeholders to move Watervliet forward from a City that has great potential to a City that has become a focal point to the regional amenities it has within its city limits. The Watervliet Downtown Development Authority engaged Wightman & Associates and A5 Inc. to kick start the process of reimagining what the future of Downtown Watervliet can be. The kick off meeting occurred on August 25, 2015 with an open discussion on what is best about Watervliet followed by what is worst about Watervliet. This led to other topics such as; what are the reasons you would give someone for starting a business in Watervliet; to which type of businesses the stakeholders thought would make the city attractive to visitors and residents.

A primary goal of the DDA was to engage stakeholders and the public to identify the community's vision for the future of downtown Watervliet. The strategy used established a series of workshops that would target specific feedback to help drive the vision plan. This was supplemented by "Parking Days" on Main Street and a social media campaign with strategic news releases to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the entire process.

Through this process we developed a downtown vision statement, a core value statement, and a plan for the future of Downtown Watervliet. We identified a number of themes which lead to goals that would support those themes producing a series of statements that would equal success. Stakeholders wanted to make Downtown Watervliet a place where people wanted to live, invest, play and shop. An action plan was developed for different projects ranging from short term to long term as well as potential partnerships, grant opportunities, and a strategy for moving successful steps forward.

The DDA, Vision Plan Steering Committee, and the City of Watervliet produced this plan for Watervliet's Future Downtown. This will become a planning guide to assist city leaders, developers and citizens in the redevelopment and improvements needed for the future growth and prosperity of Watervliet.

The Downtown Vision Plan is the result of the hard work and deliberations of many concerned stakeholders and citizens who want to see Watervliet become a vibrant, reinvigorated downtown which will be the heart of the community, making Watervliet a magnet for investment and a place where residents and visitors will want to live, invest, play and shop. We move forward from here excited about the future of our great community.

Sincerely,


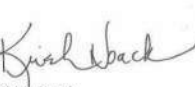
  
 Bob Becker Michael Uskiewicz Kristy Noack
 Watervliet DDA Chair Watervliet City Manager Vision Plan Steering Committee

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Acknowledgments

Vision Plan Steering Committee

Krista Kogel, Kristy Noack, K. C. McKay, Tim Freeburn, Dan Hummel, Jim Shymkus, Ken Kregel, and Tom Gear.

Watervliet DDA

Bob Becker, Karl Bayer, Jennifer Moore, Tim Freeburn, Rochelle Ulleg, Tom Gear, Tad Parish, Krista Kogel, and David Brinker.

City of Watervliet

Emilie Saratore, Mayor Brinker, Dena Yow, and the great Community involvement at both Public Workshops and PARK(ing) Day.

2015/16 Commissioners: Duane Cobb, Deah Thornton, Rick Kinzier, Daniel Hummel, Melanie Marvin, Barbara Schofield.

2016 City Clerk: Tonia Betty

Design Team

Wightman & Associates: Bill LaDitka, Jorden Parker, Timothy Lawrence
a5: John Harris, Chuck Colley, Fletcher Martin, Emerson Harris

A special thank you to the Tri-City Record for photo-documenting each Public Workshop and publishing the various stories to keep the community informed throughout this process.

Introduction

Downtown Watervliet has great potential: a brewery anchors the north end, popular shops are the foundation to the core, and connectivity to regional travel routes flow to the south. Watervliet has high quality water, agricultural, and landscape amenities close at hand. Tourism thrives along the largest lake in Berrien County, Paw Paw Lake. While downtown Watervliet has great potential, it has yet to become the focal point of these regional amenities. This process of developing a vision plan for downtown Watervliet has culminated in the following pages to provide inspiration, direction, and strategy to implement the community's vision for the future of their city.

The Watervliet DDA engaged Wightman & Associates & a5 to kick-start the process of reimagining what the future of Downtown Watervliet can be. The DDA established a Steering Committee from members of the community, city commission, and DDA to create a vision and guide the process. In the kick-off meeting, the Steering Committee identified a series of themes that would help inform the creation of goals, guide the design, and set some boundaries for future conversation. Part of this was identifying current communities that exemplify the qualities they envisioned for Watervliet's future. Below you can find these four communities and a short description of their qualities.

Communities We Want to be Like

Saugatuck

Embodies the feel of a quaint and pedestrian friendly downtown. Lessons learned are great streetscape, high quality shopfronts, and small, decentralized parking areas.



Saugatuck, MI

Sawyer is a great example of a small community that has achieved success because of a few high quality amenities. Build around your current anchors and strengthen their success.



Sawyer, MI

Sonoma is one of the best communities in the world due to the city's ability to translate the world class agriculture and landscape amenities into events that draw people downtown year 'round.



Sonoma, CA

Galena is an anomaly. With a small permanent population, the town has become a major retail and tourism hub by fostering top notch architecture and downtown environment.



Galena, IL

PARK(ing) Day 2015

Summary of What We Heard (The Big Ideas):

- **Outdoor Seating**
Benches
Cafe Style
- **Address Downtown Stores**
Aesthetic Appeal
Types of Business
- **Town Overall Aesthetic (Face-lift)**
- **Grocery Store**
- **Connection to fishing, canoeing, walking on the river**



Wightman & Associates

Watervliet Downtown Vision

3

Workshop #1

Public Engagement

A primary goal of the DDA and steering committee was to engage the public and identify the community's vision for the future of downtown Watervliet. This led to Wightman & Associates teaming with marketing and branding firm a5 to develop an outreach strategy for the public engagement process. The strategy established a series of workshops that would target specific feedback to help drive the vision plan. This was supplemented by a social media campaign and strategic news releases to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the entire process.

Workshop #1 focused on the big picture: what is great today? What is Missing Today? If the future could hold anything, what should it be? These inquiries led to the foundational themes, goals, and successes that became the touchstone for the following analysis and planning phases. see page 5.



Workshop Attendees Discussing Issues



Issues & Opportunities Map

The issues and opportunities map is a graphic representation of positive aspects, or assets, within the community vs. areas for improvement. Also included is an opportunities aspect to this map, identifying infill, improvement, and development opportunities prioritized by the steering committee. Issues today include: lack of connectivity from downtown to Paw Paw River and Lake, missing frontages where buildings were demolished or mid-block parking lots exist, and lack of consistent architecture along Main Street. The prioritized opportunities are as follows.
Infill Opportunity: New zero-setback downtown building type at mid-block parking lot in front of Flaherty Park.
Improvement Opportunity: Fill in the "hole" and create new public/private enterprises at the crossroads of Main Street and train tracks.
Development Opportunity: Attract a private developer to identify potential commercial & residential projects to extend the spirit of downtown to the south of Red Arrow Highway.

WATERVLIT WHY

MAKE DOWNTOWN WATERVLIT A DESTINATION PEOPLE LOVE.

A VIBRANT, REINVIGORATED DOWNTOWN WILL BE THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY MAKING WATERVLIT A MAGNET FOR INVESTMENT AND A PLACE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO WORK, LIVE, PLAY, AND SHOP.

THEMES

Growth

Downtown Watervliet is a place to grow. Foster a "learning culture" and "outdoor movement" to connect with surrounding access to water, agriculture, and regional assets.

Identity

Defined by its natural assets, maker's culture, and small town vibe, downtown Watervliet currently lacks a coherent built environment. Make downtown a welcoming, family-friendly environment that celebrates gateways and intensifies Watervliet's spirit.

Amenities

Downtown Watervliet lacks "things to do" that embrace the culture and assets of the surrounding area. Connect downtown to regional trail systems and waterways, wine and beer services, restaurants, watersports, and motorsports. Find opportunities to host festivals and events that celebrate Watervliet's spirit.

Public Spaces

Amenities need positive, human scale spaces in which to happen. Identify opportunities for public spaces such as parks, plazas, or facilities that can host or support desired amenities.

Connections

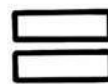
Public spaces must be connected better as to, today, fast moving traffic creates an intimidating pedestrian experience. Add streetscape improvements and wayfinding that strategically link nearby regional trails, water assets, and basic services.

Traffic Calming

Fast moving vehicles currently inhibit pedestrian access, limit bicycle use, and degrade window shopping. Find opportunities to slow traffic, stop people, and get them out of their cars to enjoy downtown as a premier destination.



GOALS



SUCCESS

PEOPLE

Attract People Tell the Story

A downtown that attracts multiple generations of visitors and residents to encourage them to return again and again.

Establish a Culture of Learning Engage All Ages

A connected network of water resources, green infrastructure, mentors, businesses, and centers of learning.

Foster Cooperation Build Bridges

Involvement of City leaders and citizens throughout decision making processes and the execution of successful public/private developments.

PLACE

Create an Environment for Investment Invest in the Community

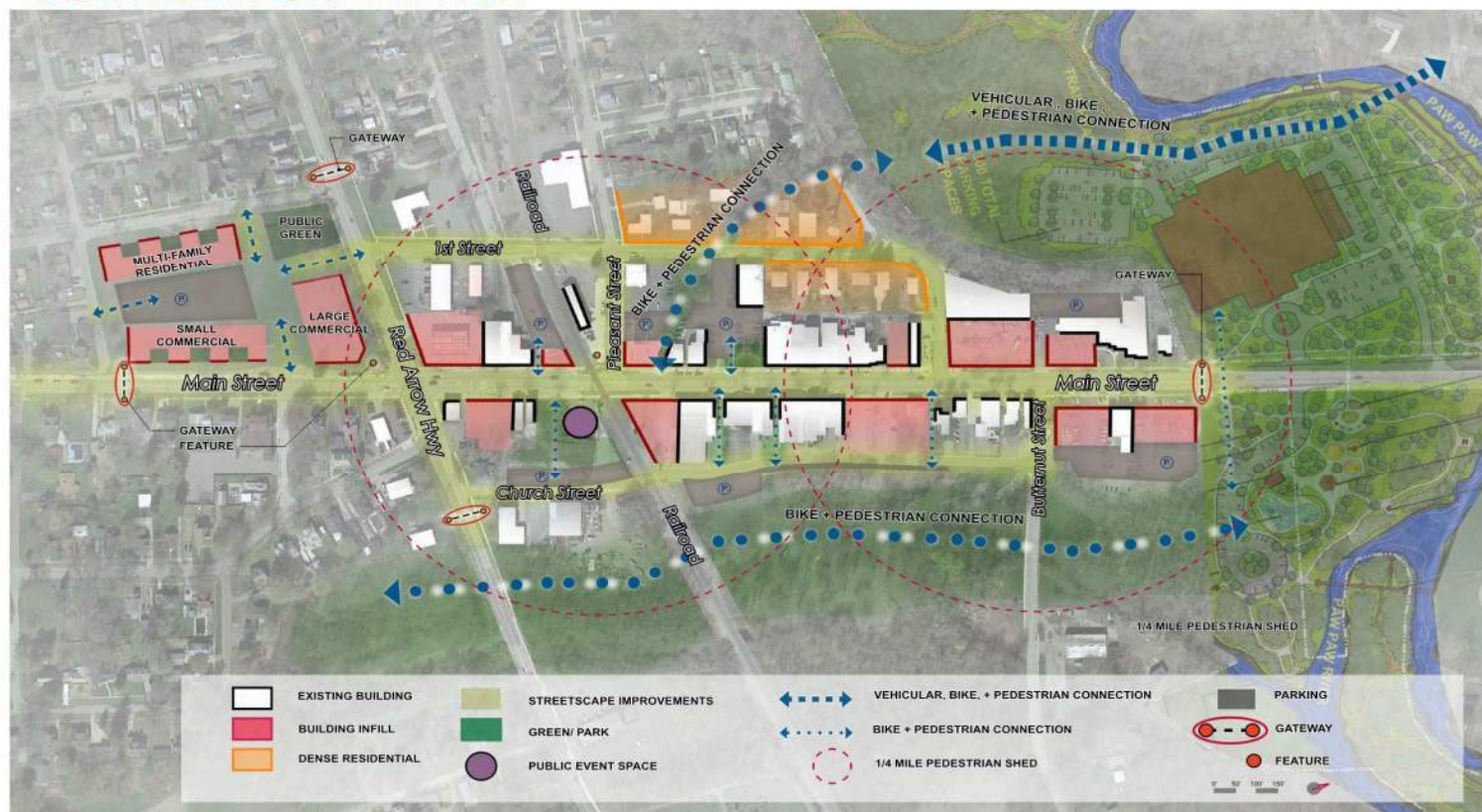
The ability for investors to see potential and align new development to help meet Watervliet's overall goals.

Build a Vibrant, Amenity Rich Downtown Create the Place

A retail and event oriented downtown that is alive daily and year 'round as the hub of the community.

Planning

Downtown Growth Plan



A Vision for the Future

With Watervliet's issues and opportunities documented, the next step was to design a growth plan identifying new frontages, connections, and prioritized design considerations from the previous public engagement events. Graphic in nature and not a literal design, the Growth Plan on the preceding page represents approximate locations for the following improvements:

- **Existing Buildings:** An audit will be necessary to determine which buildings are in good shape, need maintenance/renovation, or are at the end of their life cycle and need to be replaced.
- **Building Infill:** These are locations where empty lots or inefficient parking lots take up valuable street frontage and should be replaced, or infilled, with buildings or elements that help create a consistent street frontage.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** The streets identified would benefit from additional pedestrian and bicycle accommodation. Main Street specifically needs significant improvements to both street lighting and trees along with wider sidewalks and vehicular traffic calming.
- **Green/Park:** With the possibility of a significant county park to the north of downtown in the future, Watervliet needs to strategize how to connect the current infrastructure with the surrounding natural amenities.
- **Connections & Pedestrian Shed:** 1/4 of a mile is a distance that can be assumed an individual can walk in 5 minutes. With off-street parking moved away from Main Street frontages, pedestrian connectivity will be important.
- **Parking:** Currently large off-street lots disrupt Main Street's building frontage with empty space. It is proposed to relocate these lots to areas along Church Street behind the Main Street buildings and connected via pedestrian "alleys."
- **Gateway/Feature:** Gateways will help identify arrival at the downtown district and will help tell the story of what Watervliet's spirit is. These gateways can be literal or interpretive, but the tone they set should be carried into features incorporated throughout downtown.



Pedestrian Alley Visioning Image



Downtown Gateway Visioning Image

Suburban Retrofit



Before Image

Graphic Courtesy of "Sprawl Repair Manual"



After Image

Graphic Courtesy of "Sprawl Repair Manual"

Suburban building types exist in many downtown areas, mostly to accommodate drive-thru oriented businesses or to satisfy burdensome onsite parking ordinances. Many of these buildings are reaching the end of their life cycle as they were built in the 60's, 70's and 80's and are either ready for renovation or demolition. Healthy communities are replacing or reimagining these vehicle oriented buildings with pedestrian oriented designs, especially in historic downtown areas. This typically means incorporating zero-setback buildings with generous shopfronts, sidewalks, and seating options. Parking will be primarily on-street supplemented by smaller, off-street parking lots behind the buildings along the main street. This is not only important for pedestrians but also for the land owner and municipality as the more dense development type will yield more profits and a significantly more diverse tax base. Watervliet can utilize these concepts in several ways: reimagining vehicle oriented businesses, replacing parking lots along Main Street with building frontage, and redistributing parking along church and first street with pedestrian "alley" connectors, as seen above left.

Planning



The Heart of Downtown Plan

One of the first images any visitor or commuter sees of downtown Watervliet is the empty intersection at Main Street and the railroad. This site is also one of the most difficult for a potential developer to create a project due to the lack of investment today. In order to spark interest and establish the City's commitment to reinvestment, a major public space is proposed to be the hub of community events, festivals, and gatherings. Depicted on the following page is a sketch rendering of what this intersection could possibly look like in the future. The Heart of Downtown is the Main and railroad intersection, so to create the spirit of the place the following is recommended:

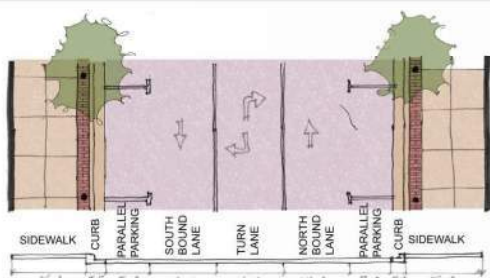
- **Infill Buildings:** To create a homogenous frontage along Main Street, infill buildings are proposed in red to supplement the existing buildings in brown. These buildings should be zero-setback, mixed use, two-three story buildings that can accommodate outdoor dining and streetscape amenities.
- **Civic Buildings:** Recommended locations of public, or civic, buildings are in purple. These include: a pavilion that can be incorporated with a business incubator, a stage to host live music and events, and a landmark tower to draw people downtown and let them know they have arrived.
- **Event Green:** While easily able to accommodate large community events, the event green should be flexible for future use, possibly as an informal lunch location where food trucks could set-up in the back parking lot.
- **Splash Pad:** The proposed County park to the north of downtown includes a splash pad. It is recommended that the City petitions the county to alternatively provide funding for the splash pad to be located in the Heart of Downtown.
- **Streetscape Amenities:** Proposed in this plan are planters, a median where turn lanes are not necessary, public play, outdoor dining, wayfinding, and seating. Public play is anything a passerby can stop and interact with in a positive and fun way: large chess and checkers board, swings, lounge chairs, etc....



View Looking Northeast at the Central Plaza

Planning

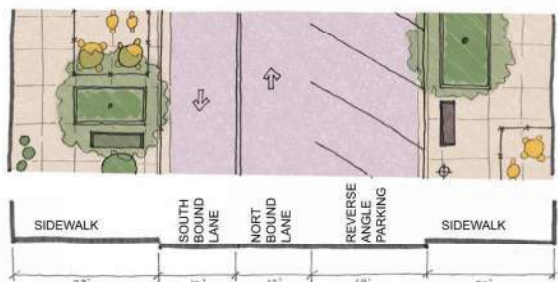
Existing Streetscape (Main St./M-140)



Today, Main Street has large volumes of fast moving traffic filled with people that downtown currently has difficulty encouraging to stop and shop. With minimal sidewalk width, dilapidated lighting, and landscape that has reached its life cycle the streetscape is in need of a major facelift. The opportunity exists to eliminate the center turn lane within the downtown district and take that 12 foot dimension and add it to the sidewalks on either side of Main Street. The parallel parking on both sides of the street can be reimagined as well, a few of the possible options are depicted in the following three options. Outdoor dining, seating, and public play amenities are minimal. There have been individual efforts to add outdoor dining to establishments but is difficult due to the sidewalk width.

Some short-term streetscape solutions are: Replace lighting that is in disrepair. Utilize a parking space in front of a restaurant for outdoor dining by building a surface for seating and railing for traffic separation. Provide small funds for building owners or shopkeepers to repair and update shopfronts along Main Street. Provide benches or other seating along Main Street. These few solutions of many more are simple improvements that are inexpensive to fill the gap between today and when larger projects can be funded and implemented.

Streetscape Option #1 (Main St./M1-40)

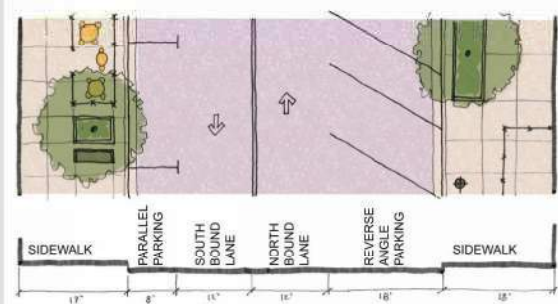


This option maximizes the sidewalk width to accommodate outdoor dining, benches, and landscape beds. To have a successful downtown commercial district pedestrians should feel comfortable and have amenities that encourage them to stop and relax or interact. Outdoor dining brings the inside outside and allows patrons and pedestrians to feel part of the various activities that are taking place along the street.

In this option, the turn lane is eliminated and two sides of parallel parking are replaced with one side of reverse angle parking, which would result in an approximate net gain/loss of zero, overall on-street parking spaces. The opportunity exists to flip flop the drive lanes and reverse angle parking at a midpoint through downtown to alter the flow of traffic and slow drivers down. Today it is difficult for a pedestrian to cross Main Street due to the large block sizes and large volume of traffic; mid-block crosswalks will help ease the difficulty of crossing and also help calm traffic. This option can also be combined with one or both of the following options as necessary.

Streetscape Option #2 (Main St./M-140)

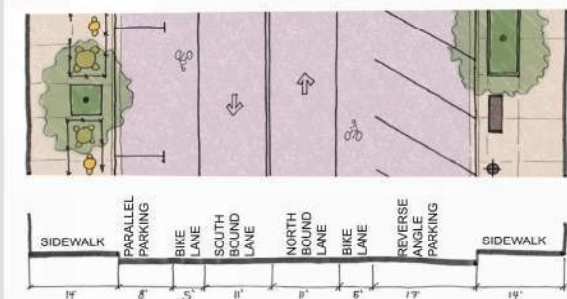
This option also eliminates the center turn lane but splits that width between increased sidewalks and maximized parking. With this minimal width increase businesses will be able to incorporate outdoor dining while still maintaining on-street parking on both sides. This would result in a net gain of on-street parking by allowing one side of more dense, reverse-angle parking. This also helps buffer pedestrians from the flow of traffic and provides vehicular access on both sides of the street.



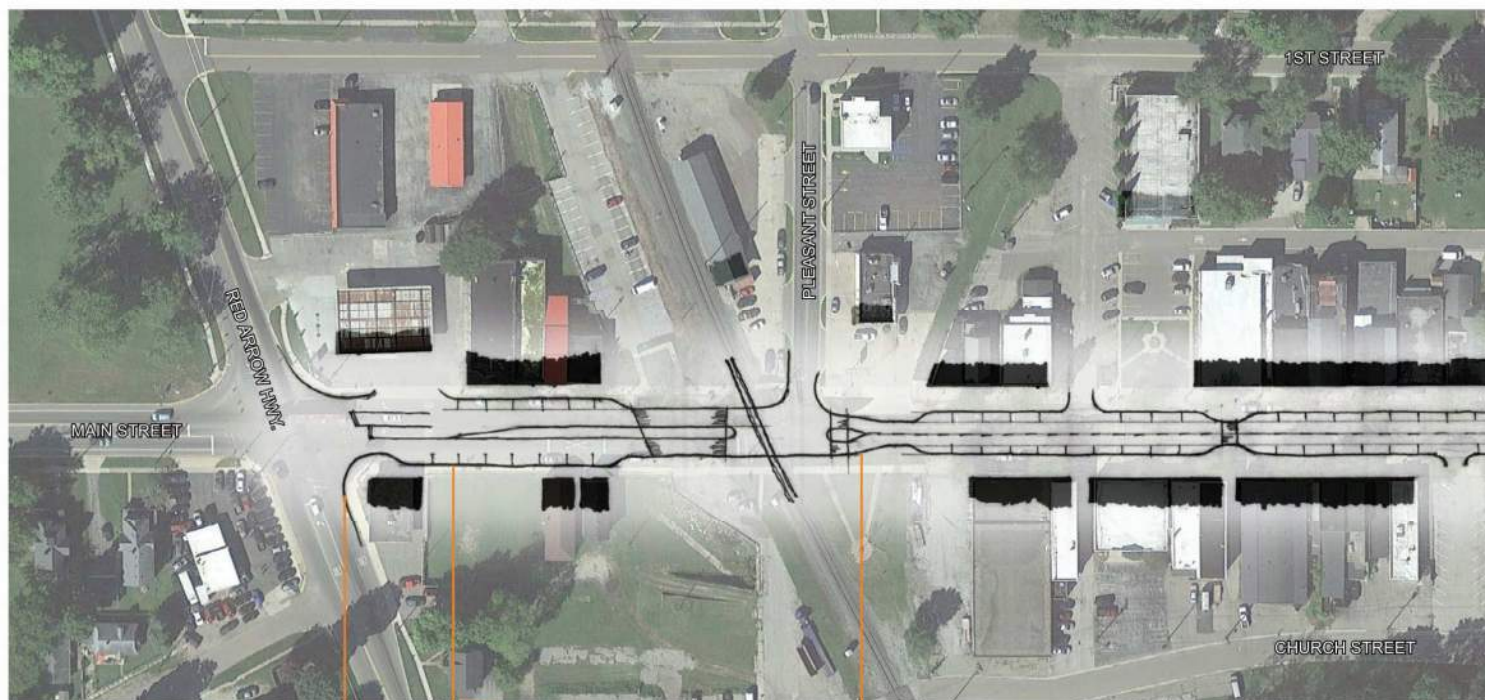
Streetscape Option #2 with Bike Lanes (Main St./M1-40)

Both options can accommodate bike lanes along the entire length of Main Street, but it is recommended that bike lanes are only installed along the most northern portion of the streetscape enhancements. Incorporating bike lanes requires a much greater street width and this would take away from the ability to maintain positive pedestrian space along shopfronts. By looking at the following pages, the overall streetscape plan depicts the recommended location of bike lanes in relation to primary pedestrian access versus primary vehicular access.

By providing bike lanes to the north, downtown can connect the streetscape improvements to the regional Van Buren bike trail and the local bike trail around Paw Paw Lake. The Van Buren Trail connects to the Kat-Haven Trail between South Haven and Kalamazoo. In the future, this could become a closed loop that passes through Watervliet and provides a continuous bicyclist route through the area. By connecting to the existing Paw Paw Lake trail Watervliet will show their commitment to providing resources and amenities that can accommodate the lake residents and tourists, encouraging them to spend time downtown.



Planning



- Turn lanes and radius to remain
- Eliminate turn lane, replace with curbed median and raised planters
- Eliminate turn lane and add width to sidewalk by relocating curb. Parking can be a combination of parallel and/or diagonal - See options p. 10-11.



Keep turn lane and add bike lanes to each shoulder. Bike Lanes end at 1st Street where Main Street's future design speed will slow traffic and accommodate safer bicycle traffic. If bike lanes are incorporated prior to streetscape changes then bikers can alternately travel back block via 1st or Butternut Streets.

Workshop #2

Workshop 2

This workshop targeted community response regarding the proposed planning documents. In order to gauge what people want to see incorporated in future projects, we created a graphic preference survey that utilized various visioning images that attendees ranked 1 to 5, 5 being most desirable and 1 being least desirable. Each image is averaged among all responses and then categorized by the highest desirability.

Once the community had a chance to review the planning documents two activities were held to help establish future implementation. First, attendees were split into small groups and tasked to identify **metrics of success** for each goal, these can be seen to the upper right. Secondly, each group was asked to **write the headline** describing the future success of Watervliet, each can be found at the lower left.



Workshop Attendees Sharing Ideas

Workshop 2: Small Group Activities

What Does Success Look Like?

Attract People: Full Parking Lots, Active Farmer's Market, Higher Tax Base, 100% Occupancy Downtown, 50% Higher Sales Downtown, More Students in School, Paw Paw Lake Residents Shop Downtown, Full Parks, Activities Daily/Weekly/ Year 'Round.

Culture of Learning: Businesses Host Learning Classes, Business Incubator, Outdoor Lifestyle, Community College Satellite Campus, Old World Arts & Crafts Festival, Library Park as Learning Opportunity, Cooking/Brewing/Making Culture.

Foster Cooperation: Cooperation Between Local Governments, Student Involvement, New Jobs, Open Meetings, Citizen Involvement, Community Leadership Involvement, School & Community Pride.

Environment for Reinvestment: Professional Image, Responsibility for Budget, High Traffic Shops, Quality Public Space, Streetscape Improvements, Tax Incentives for New Businesses, Business Incubator, Upkeep on dilapidated Buildings.

Create a Vibrant, Amenity Rich Downtown: Self-Sufficient, Destination Activity, New Streetscape, Increase in Library Patrons, Good Restaurants, Vibrant Farmer's Market, Outdoor Theatre, Utilize Alleys/Greenspace.

Write the Headline

Coloma Proposes to Merge with Watervliet

10 Year Parks Plan Completed as County Park Hosts Opening Day

Watervliet Named Best Small Town in America

From Near Extinction to Distiction, Watervliet is a Destination

Watervliet: A Place to Learn, Play, & Stay in Southwest Michigan

Graphic Preference Survey Results



Wightman & Associates

Watervliet Downtown Vision 15

Branding

Branding

Branding is about perception. In order to grow, Watervliet needs to create an authentic brand that raises awareness of Watervliet and sets the community apart from others.

A Brand or Story Would:

- Raise awareness of Watervliet
- Create a differentiated story that will set Watervliet apart from other communities.
- Help sell the community as a great place to live, visit, and start/grow a business.
- Create excitement and momentum.

The Brand Consists of:

- Logo
- Tagline, or theme line
- Key messages used for verbal and written communication.
- Creative that is used consistently across digital communication (website, email, and social media) as well as marketing and sales efforts (advertising, billboards, PR, brochures, presentations, etc...)
- Elevator pitch (30 second story on "Why Watervliet?")

A great brand should be identifiable, differentiated, and consistent.

Real WOODSTOCK

The Real Woodstock campaign is a branding and marketing effort to tell the story of Woodstock, Illinois, led by a5.



Travel Michigan and the MEDC developed the Pure Michigan national campaign to brand the state as a premier tourist destination.

PURE MICHIGAN®

Events

To create a great place, Watervliet needs to be active. Infrastructure can take time and a sizeable budget. Recruiting developers, designing and building new structures, and bringing in new retail takes time. Events can be developed quickly with manageable budgets and a profit motive—and can bring immediate results.

Watervliet should elevate existing events for the community, including Fourth of July, Christmas and the Homecoming Parade, while creating new events that are “ownable” and appeal to people Watervliet wants to attract to visit, start and run a business, and become a resident.

New Events Could Include:

- A car show reimagined for the future (i.e. clean fuel)
- An antique show - indoors and out
- A craft beer festival - with soda and family activities
- A local wine festival
- A “Makers Faire” that promotes a Learning Culture

In 2016, focus on improving one existing event (i.e. Fourth of July, Homecoming parade or Christmas) to make it a **GREAT** event. Develop one **NEW** event that can bring in tourists and prospective residents. Each event should have a set of goals, be revenue neutral (or profitable), and generate measurable results, including:

- Bringing thousands to downtown to show off the possibilities.
- Generate business for existing retailers
- Create excitement about Watervliet and the future.



Implementation

Project Financing:

Grant funding is an excellent opportunity to leverage local resources and offset overall project costs. This will require a local funding strategy, possibly in the form of an economic development plan. Wightman & Associates has significant experience submitting and securing grant funding on behalf of our project partners. Listed below are some potential funding strategies.

Grant Opportunities:

Recreation Related Funding:

- **MNRTF - Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund:** 15,000 - 300,000\$ available for Development projects. Required local match varies. April application deadline, grants issued Spring of following year. Grants are available for both acquisition and development projects.
- **LWCF - Land and Water Conservation Funds:** 30,000 - 100,000\$ available. 50% local match required. April application deadline, award recommendations submitted to the DNR in November.
- **MDNR - Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant:** 30,000 - 100,000\$ available for Development projects only. 25% local match required. April application deadline, grants issued at the beginning of the year. (This type of grant is a reimbursement for project expenses.)

Transportation Related Funding:

- **MDOT - Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program:** 40% local match recommended, 20% required. Funds projects such as multi-use paths, streetscapes, historic preservation, and other safe alternative transportation options. Applications accepted year-round.
- **MDOT - Transportation Economic Development Fund:** 20% local match required. Funds available to state, county, and city road agencies for highway needs relating to a variety of economic development issues. Applications accepted year-round.
- **MDOT - Rural Funds:** 20% match required. Must get on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Loan Opportunities:

Infrastructure Financing:

- **USDA - United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development**
- **SRF/ DWR/ USDA: (State Revolving Fund/ Drinking Water Revolving Fund/ United States Department of Agriculture)** Funding available for water and sewer projects. (State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, and US Department of Agriculture respectively)

MEDC Opportunities:

Programs

- **Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC):** The RRC certification is a formal recognition that a community has a vision for the future and the fundamental practices in place to get there.
- **Redevelopment Ready Sites:** The RRC program works with a community to prioritize development opportunities, after which they partner with the University of Michigan to establish a “Redevelopment Ready Site Study” for the specific project.
- **Public Spaces Community Places Crowdfunding Initiative:** Established to stimulate funding and activity around special places in communities throughout the state, this program engages community donation crowdfunding with the incentive of a match fund from the MEDC.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):**
 - **Downtown Infrastructure Grant:** 10% minimum match, \$750k maximum award.
 - **Downtown Facade Improvement:** Must have (2) participating properties (Population under 15,000). Minimum amount is \$30,000.
 - **Community Development - Farm to Food:** Funding for 3-4 season farmer's markets. Municipality must provide 25% of total cost, maximum award of \$750k.

Summary of Next Steps

First Steps:

- **Team Building (Grow Together)**
 - Hire a professional
 - Include: City, DDA, DPW, Township, etc...
- **Brand/Marketing Campaign**
 - Hire a professional
 - Communications
 - Social media, public relations
- **Build Upon Success**
 - Create ownable events (see Events, p. 17)
- **Create "Place Committee"**
 - Could mean renaming a current committee
 - Responsibilities to include:
 - Events
 - Management (Downtown)
 - Permits for temporary projects (ie: parking space as outdoor dining space)
- **Meet with Berrien County**
 - Begin discussions about relocating proposed splash pad from county park to downtown.

Short Term (Year 1 & 2)

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REINVESTMENT

- Fill in hole at old lumber yard site. (\$200,000)
- Repair existing lighting, add poles where needed
- Pursue marketing/branding campaign
 - Signage on 94
 - Social Media
 - Water Tower
- Master Plan, Zoning, Parks & Rec, DDA Development Plan updates to accommodate vision plan.

BUILD A VIBRANT, AMENITY-RICH DOWNTOWN

- Alley Improvement Projects
- Central Piazza Phase 1
 - Phase 1 funding applications
 - Phase 1 Design & Construction (\$800,000)
- Create temporary seating areas along Main St.
 - Comfy, landscaped
- Traffic calming (temporary)
 - Mid-block crosswalk (paint change)

ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF LEARNING

- Upgrade one or two existing events, create one new event.
- Encourage businesses to host "learning culture" events (home brew classes, floral arrangement design)

FOSTER COOPERATION

- Utilize ongoing professional services to maintain "best practices" for decision making and leadership engagement.

ATTRACT PEOPLE

- Create I-94 signage
- Execute results from the brand and marketing campaign

Mid Term (Years 2-4)

FOSTER COOPERATION

- Bike lanes to north on M-140/Main St.

BUILD A VIBRANT, AMENITY-RICH DOWNTOWN

- Complete Central Piazza project
 - Phase 2 funding applications
 - Phase 2 Design & Construction (\$700,000)

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REINVESTMENT

- Complete Streetscape Project
 - Complete funding applications
 - Collaborate with MDOT
 - Design & Construction (\$2,000,000)

ATTRACT PEOPLE

- Gateways at entries to Downtown Watervliet (\$200,000)
- Retail/Economic Development Plan

Long Term (Years 5+)

FOSTER COOPERATION/ATTRACT PEOPLE

- I-94 Bridge Identity (Watervliet Design)
 - MDOT to begin bridge replacement/remediation projects in 10+ years.

Wightman Placemaking Lab

Definition of Placemaking:

The focused analysis, design and management of a place which fosters human interaction and inspires memorable experiences. Spaces that elevate our interaction from static to dynamic, generate fond memories and call us to return are true Places = Comfortable Provocative Memory Places.



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