

2020

Comprehensive Master Plan Update



Embracing a Sustainable Future - Respecting the Past

City of Parkersburg

West Virginia



Contents

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Embracing a Sustainable Future – Respecting the Past
City of Parkersburg Comprehensive Master Plan Update



Adopted by
Council of the City of Parkersburg,
West Virginia

March 22, 2011

Prepared by the Municipal Planning Commission of the City of Parkersburg

With assistance from





ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE 2020 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF PARKERSBURG

The Municipal Planning Commission of the City of Parkersburg has recommended that the 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan Update be adopted;

WHEREAS, the City of Parkersburg is required to update its Comprehensive Master Plan every 10 years per WV State Code (Chapter 8A), and,

WHEREAS, the general purpose of a comprehensive plan is to guide a governing body to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements within its territorial jurisdiction, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, and,

WHEREAS, the 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan Update addresses all the mandatory components required by West Virginia State Code,

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PARKERSBURG HEREBY ORDAINS that the 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan Update be adopted and that the plans may continue in effect for ten (10) years or until the plans are revised, amended or replaced in accordance with Chapter 8A of West Virginia State Code.

SPONSORED BY: MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

0-1388

Ord. to adopt 2020 Comprehensive
Master Plan.

Adopted first reading March 8, 2011

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After public hearing

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Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

Plan Purpose and Summary

Arguably the greatest expansion of economic growth and development, in the United States, took place during the last part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This period in history is often referred to as the Industrial Revolution. Parkersburg blossomed during this period, becoming the major employment center and transportation hub for the Mid-Ohio Valley. Many neighborhoods in Parkersburg were also established during the same time, because the local population grew. This means that much of the City's infrastructure people use today (roads, water and sewer) was built fifty to one hundred years ago.

Since then, older industrial cities like Parkersburg have seen significant job loss in manufacturing. In today's global economy, it is now profitable for businesses to locate labor intensive jobs overseas and then ship and sale their products here in the United States. That being said, some communities have been able to adjust more quickly to the new economy. Communities that have successfully made this transition, such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, have built upon their local assets by utilizing sustainable, smart growth principles.

To ensure Parkersburg residents continue to enjoy a good quality of life, now and in the future, the City must begin to approach economic growth and development in a sustainable way. For Parkersburg that means thinking about land use, development, and public/private investment in a comprehensive manner. This includes thinking about how a development project will impact future land use, strategically pursuing infill (re)development projects and creating a community that people find desirable in terms of aesthetics and amenities. The latter can be accomplished by updating existing land development and zoning regulations. If properly written and enforced, land use controls can encourage economic activity. And Parkersburg, like many older industrial cities has an array of assets to build upon. By adopting the sustainable, smart growth principles in this plan, not only will the quality of life of those who already live and work in Parkersburg be improved, but the City will also be more attractive to new private investors and skilled workers.

Google lists 15 different definitions for sustainable and another 15 for sustainable development. While the many definitions vary, all of them incorporate key elements of the United Nations definition that was introduced in the 1987 United Nations "Report on the World Commission on Environment and Development, which states that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This update to the City of Parkersburg's Comprehensive Master Plan evaluates changes in land use, the transportation system, housing, community facilities and services, and historic and cultural resources in the City since the completion of the 2001 Plan. It projects future trends based on these analyses and proposes appropriate land use and implementation tools to help the City embrace a sustainable future while still respecting its past.

The plan update was completed in three phases. The first phase involved an assessment of existing conditions in Parkersburg using data from the US Census Bureau, current planning documents, and other resources. Inventory maps were developed using geographic information systems (See Chapter 2). The second phase established a long term vision for Parkersburg and then translated that vision into a series of goals and objectives for specific functional elements of the plan, including future land use, housing, transportation, and cultural resources (See Chapter Three). The third phase involved the development of recommendations that will help Parkersburg achieve the established goals and objectives (See Chapters Four through Ten).



Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

This chapter discusses the legal basis for the comprehensive plan and provides a brief summary of the recommendations contained in each of the functional element plans.

The Purpose of the Plan

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A states that the general purpose of a comprehensive plan is to “guide a governing body to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvement within its territorial jurisdiction, in accordance with present and future needs and resources.” It also identifies nine specific purposes as listed below:

1. Set goals and objectives for land development, uses, and suitability for a governing body so that the governing body can make an informed decision.
2. Coordinate all governing bodies and units of government to ensure that all comprehensive plans are compatible.
3. Create conditions favorable to health, safety, mobility, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, recreational, educational, cultural opportunities and historic resources.
4. Reduce the wastes which result from haphazard development, congestion or scattering of population.
5. Reduce the destruction or demolition of historic sites and other resources by reusing land and buildings and revitalizing areas.
6. Promote a sense of community character and identity.
7. Promote the efficient utilization of natural resources, rural land, agricultural land and scenic areas.
8. Focus development in existing areas and fill in vacant or underused land near existing developed areas to create well designed and coordinated communities.
9. Promote cost-effective development of community facilities and services.

The Plan update...

- Focuses on current trends and issues and addresses them with appropriate solutions.
- Provides the best possible projection on future conditions based on current patterns and identifies strategies to help create a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Directs future change through a vision of community potential.
- Establishes the framework for consistency between future land use policies and land use regulatory measures.
- Assists city officials in their decision making processes.

The Plan update does not...

- Act as land use regulation; land use is regulated by zoning ordinances and maps.
- Require new standards for development and construction; subdivision and land development ordinances regulate these topics.



Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

- Determine what land will be developed; this is the property owner’s decision.
- Determine what land will be owned by the public sector or by private owners.

Recommended Review Process

The Comprehensive Master Plan is only useful if it is regularly used and updated. Therefore, it is recommended that the Planning Commission, with the assistance of the Development Department, continue to review the plan at least every five years to ensure it provides adequate guidance regarding future growth. As part of the review process, innovative best practices and new funding opportunities should be explored and incorporated into the plan.

Previous and Ongoing Planning Efforts

The Comprehensive Master Plan Update for the City of Parkersburg is a broad policy document that provides guidance for decision making. It also reflects the relationship with other planning efforts that have been completed in the community. The following is a partial list of those plans that were considered during the update process.

2001 City of Parkersburg Comprehensive Master Plan: The primary goal of the 2001 Plan was to ensure the viability and success of the Downtown so as to provide a strong, healthy core for the city and protect significant past investment. The implications of the completion of Corridor D were also a focus area. Key recommendations included policies for encouraging a mix of uses downtown, improving aesthetics throughout the city, with a focus on major gateways into Parkersburg, as well as further development of the riverfront areas. Streetscapes, access management, and appropriate areas for annexation were also among the plan’s recommendations. Many of these recommendations are carried over into this update as they are either ongoing activities or have yet to be addressed.

2001 City of Parkersburg CBD Market and Planning Study: This study focused on examining a variety of development potentials in the city’s core or Central Business District (CBD), specifically, the construction of a hotel/conference center, downtown housing, additional retail and commercial space, and further development of a riverfront park. While the construction of the riverfront park is underway, the city continues to work on other development opportunities.

2004 Storm Water Management Plan: The City of Parkersburg was required to submit a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) in accordance with 40 CFR Part 122.32 and 47 CSR 10 of the West Virginia Legislative Rules. The document outlines the City’s program to develop, implement and enforce a storm water management program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in accordance with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection’s (WVDEP’s) Phase II program.

2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan: This plan includes the vision, goals, and recommendations for the next five years (2009-2013) for the city’s parks. Recommendations for a riverfront park and the Elite Sports Center were included in the plan. The Elite Sports Center has been constructed and Riverfront Park is underway.



Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

Summary of Recommendations

The ultimate goal of this plan is to approach the growth and redevelopment of Parkersburg in such a way as to attract private and public investments, keep existing residents and appeal to new, and instill a sense of community pride.

Recommendations are organized by functional planning elements and include a proposed time frame for completion, lead and support partners for implementing the recommendations, and potential funding sources. They are summarized on the following pages; the details are found in the plan chapters.

Elements that were in the 2001 plan and that have been included in this plan include updating Parkersburg’s zoning and subdivision codes, access management strategies for major corridors, targeted annexation areas, gateway improvements, and partnering to facilitate redevelopment activities.

Several recommendations apply to more than one of the plan elements, including updates to codes, updating the City’s website to provide better access to information for residents, visitors, and businesses, and developing design guidelines to better manage the aesthetic quality of new development, as well as redevelopment projects.

Table 1 – Summary of Planning Recommendations

Recommendation	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020
Land Use Plan						
Adopt the Future Land Use Map						
Update ordinances						
Visioning for targeted redevelopment areas						
Increase land value, reduce surface parking downtown						
Grow through targeted annexation and infill development						
Comprehensive approach to land use planning						
Economic Development Plan						
Facilitate the growth of industry clusters						
Update the city website to include a “one-stop-shop” for business information and resources						
Continue downtown revitalization efforts						
Design guidelines for signage and other amenities along the gateways to the city.						
Promote mix of uses on Ft. Boreman Hill						
Business incubator to assist local entrepreneurs						
Supportive infrastructure for 21 st Century Economy						



Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

Recommendation	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020
Housing Plan						
Continue to target and apply for funding to assist with maintenance and rehab of existing housing in the city.						
Update zoning to ensure no barriers to increasing mix of housing types						
Provide incentives for constructing in targeted redevelopment areas						
Require minimum percentage of affordable housing in new/redevelopment projects						
Transportation Plan						
Work with residents to improve traffic law enforcement						
Identify appropriate locations for traffic calming measures to reduce speeding.						
Include access management best practices such as shared driveways in the Subdivision Ordinance						
Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities to all new and redevelopment projects						
Work with residents to prioritize sidewalk improvements						
Develop a city-wide, comprehensive shared-use path system						
Identify locations for transit-related amenities such as shelters and benches as funds are available						
Complete a downtown circulation study						
Infrastructure Plan						
Require on-site stormwater management best practices in the subdivision ordinance						
Support expansion of water and sewer services where economically feasible						
Work with WVDEP to obtain funding to complete a green infrastructure plan						
Increase vegetative/tree requirements for new and redevelopment projects						
Work with various partners to create a wireless network in the city.						



Chapter 1 – Plan Purpose and Summary

Recommendation	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020
Community Facilities and Services Plan						
Encourage civic engagement through the establishment of Neighborhood Associations						
Plan/schedule community clean-up days						
Encourage the participation of the city's youth in the decision making process						
Continue implementing recommendations from the 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan						
Implement plan for Little Kanawha Riverfront Redevelopment Project						
Ensure ordinances will allow for alternative energy facilities such as solar panels or wind turbines.						
Historic and Cultural Resources Plan						
Establish a Design Commission to help develop design guidelines						
Encourage the reuse of old buildings through a variety of incentives						
Expand and coordinate cultural events and activities throughout the city						
Partner to develop a venue for year-round larger scale regional events						
Continue support for the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)						
Extend CVB hours to better accommodate visitors						
Establish and market a Heritage Tourism Trail						



Trends and Issues

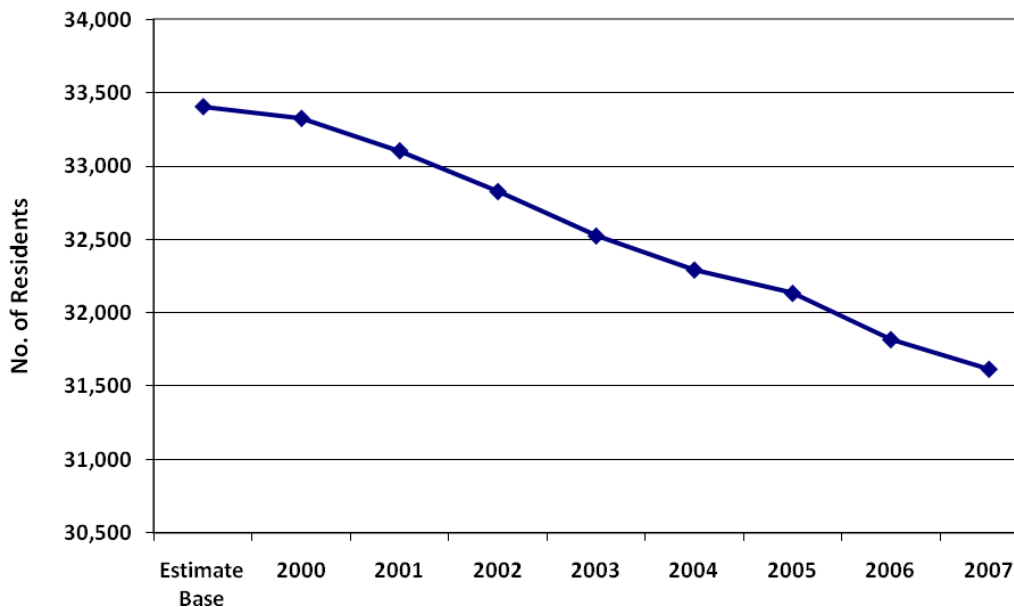
The first phase of the update process focused on understanding changes that have occurred in Parkersburg since the completion of the 2001 plan. Research on demographic, housing, and economic trends, as well as an inventory of existing community facilities, services, and infrastructure, was compiled into several “profiles” (See Appendix A). This chapter summarizes the results of that research as a series of important trends and some of the issues that are associated with those trends. Two Community Surveys were conducted to help validate the issues. (See Appendix B) The goals and objectives are based upon the results of this phase.

Demographics

Parkersburg’s population in 2000 was 33,099. The City continued its trend of population loss through the 1990s and into the 21st century. In fact, the rate of loss increased from 2000-2007.

If the trend of population loss continues over the next ten years, not only will it have a negative impact on the tax base, it will also impact the level and types of services the City can provide. The City of Parkersburg needs to find ways to make city living attractive to retain existing residents and attract new ones.

Figure 1 – Estimated Change in Population for the City of Parkersburg 2000 to 2009



Despite population loss, the number of households was relatively stable. Numbers of single person and nonfamily households rose.



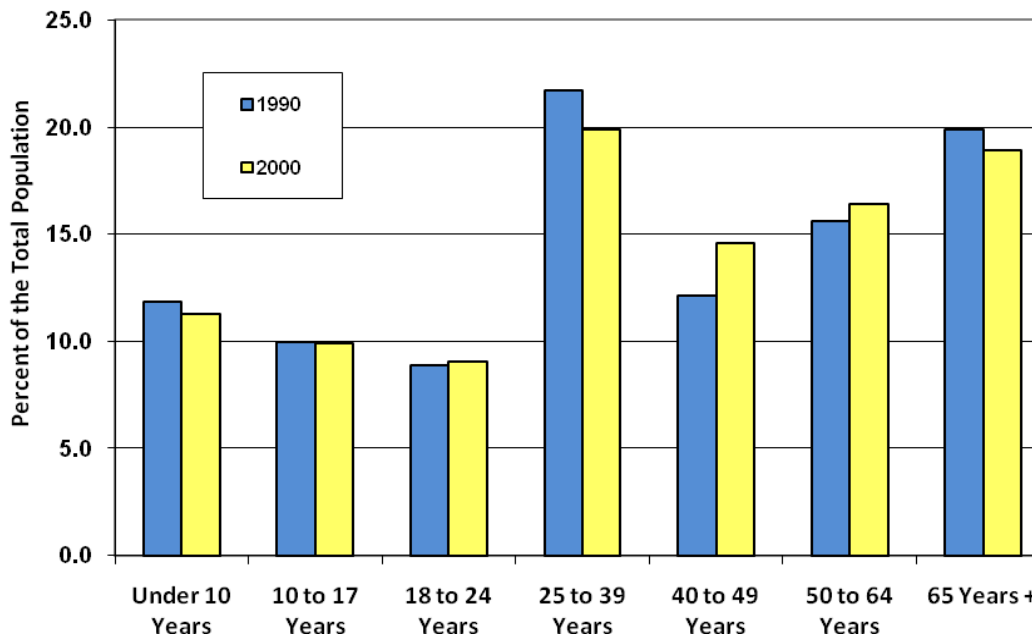
Chapter 2 – Trends and Issues

Continued changes in the types of households in the City may require changes in the available housing stock. Single-person householders, particularly young adults, are more likely to be interested in smaller units, such as apartments or town houses, than the traditional single family detached house. Other, non-traditional households, such as single-parents with children and “empty-nesters”, are also looking for alternative housing choices.

Residents aged 45 and older represented a larger percentage of the population in 2000 than they did in 1990.

As Parkersburg’s population continues to age, there will be a need for a different mix of public and private services. Among other things, transit, medical services, and independent and assisted living opportunities will be in greater demand. Education and recreation needs will also change.

Figure 2 – Change in Age Groups in the City of Parkersburg from 1990 to 2000



Racial diversity in Parkersburg has increased. In 2000, minorities comprised 4.2 percent of the total population in 2000. This increase is due in part to the skilled professionals working in area hospitals and other industries, as well as employees transferred from other Bureau of Public Debt facilities to Parkersburg.

While the increase has been small, it may prompt discussion of the benefits of diversity among community residents. New cultures bring new foods and restaurants, new celebrations, and new connections to the global community.

Less than 20 percent of adults held a college degree in 2000. Estimates from the American Community Survey, 2005-2007, indicate that the figure has risen to 20.9 percent; figures for Morgantown and Wheeling are 47.0 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively.



Chapter 2 – Trends and Issues

With such low educational attainment, it may be difficult to attract new “high tech” businesses to the City. When a company is looking for a new location, the quality and education of the workforce is a primary factor in the decision making process.

Median household incomes in the City are far lower than in surrounding communities. Dollar value increases fell behind inflation by nearly 10 percent from 1989 to 1999 and by 8 percent from 2000 to 2007.

This may reflect the types of jobs that City residents hold in occupations in with low wages as well as a high percentage of households living on limited retirement income.

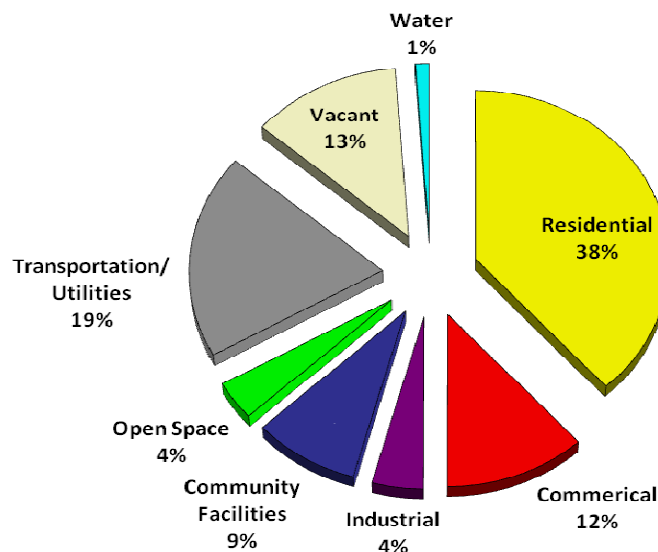
Data related to poverty status also highlights the economically depressed nature of its population.

A continued increase in the numbers of residents below the poverty level will strain the City’s budget, as the demand for social services increases. This trend, particularly the 20 percent in the number of children living below poverty, combined with overall population loss, is particularly troubling for the future of the City.

Land Use

Land within the Parkersburg city limits has been nearly fully developed. Intensive uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, community facilities, transportation, and utilities occupied 82 percent of the City in 2008. Another 4 percent was dedicated to open space uses, namely recreation and cemeteries. The remaining 14 percent comprised vacant land designated for future uses, woodlands, and the open water of the Little Kanawha River.

Figure 3 – 2008 Generalized Land Use Composition



With just over 970 acres of vacant land, the City has some capacity for new development, but little room for large scale developments that are typical of modern development practices. Fort Boreman Hill provides just one large site within the City limits.



Chapter 2 – Trends and Issues

The most prevalent land use in the City is residential, comprising 38.8 percent of the City. The amount of residential land grew from 2000 to 2008 with the annexation of the Wyndemere neighborhood, the Wyngate assisted-living facility and other minor developments.

Due to the City's dense roadway network of local streets, alleys, and state highways converging in the City, transportation occupies 19 percent of the City. The roadway network is finely gridded on Parkersburg's north side and less systematic on the south side.

Improvements for mobility could consider converting select minor streets to pedestrian alleys on the north side and making roadway critical connections to the network on the south side.

Of vacant lands, vacant residential comprise the largest portion. Numerous small vacant residential lots are dispersed throughout the south side of Parkersburg.

There may be opportunities for infill development in many neighborhoods.

There is limited residential property in downtown. While some commercial properties may be rentals owned by commercial agents, and therefore classified as commercial, the limited amount of residential use and high rental vacancies suggest that downtown is not an attractive place to live.

Residential uses bring life to downtown after 5pm and appeal to young, creative residents. Zoning and public investments can incentivize downtown living.

Land use patterns have become more complex, possibly less compatible, along Camden Avenue, Broadway Avenue, Pike Street, Rayon Drive, and Gihon Road.

The City should be aware of the increasing complexity and consider revised land use regulations, if necessary.

While the completion of US 50 as a limited access highway cutting through the City has changed the land use of properties in its right-of-way, induced changes in adjacent areas are not yet broadly visible in land use data. In the coming years, the increased mobility through the Parkersburg area may have the following impacts:

Decreased traffic on Route 47/7th Street may impact patronage at commercial businesses, resulting in vacancies along 7th Street and the relocation of businesses to other high traffic corridors.

Housing

Changes in Parkersburg's housing stock indicate a spreading pattern of development as new development occurs at the city's edges and older areas in the city's center become less dense.

The City may need to find ways to promote infill and redevelopment to retain its density in support of efficient infrastructure and services.

The city's decrease in total housing units as well as vacant housing units suggests that some blighted areas have been addressed through the removal of the vacant units, particularly in the city's center.

The City should identify additional areas for redevelopment.

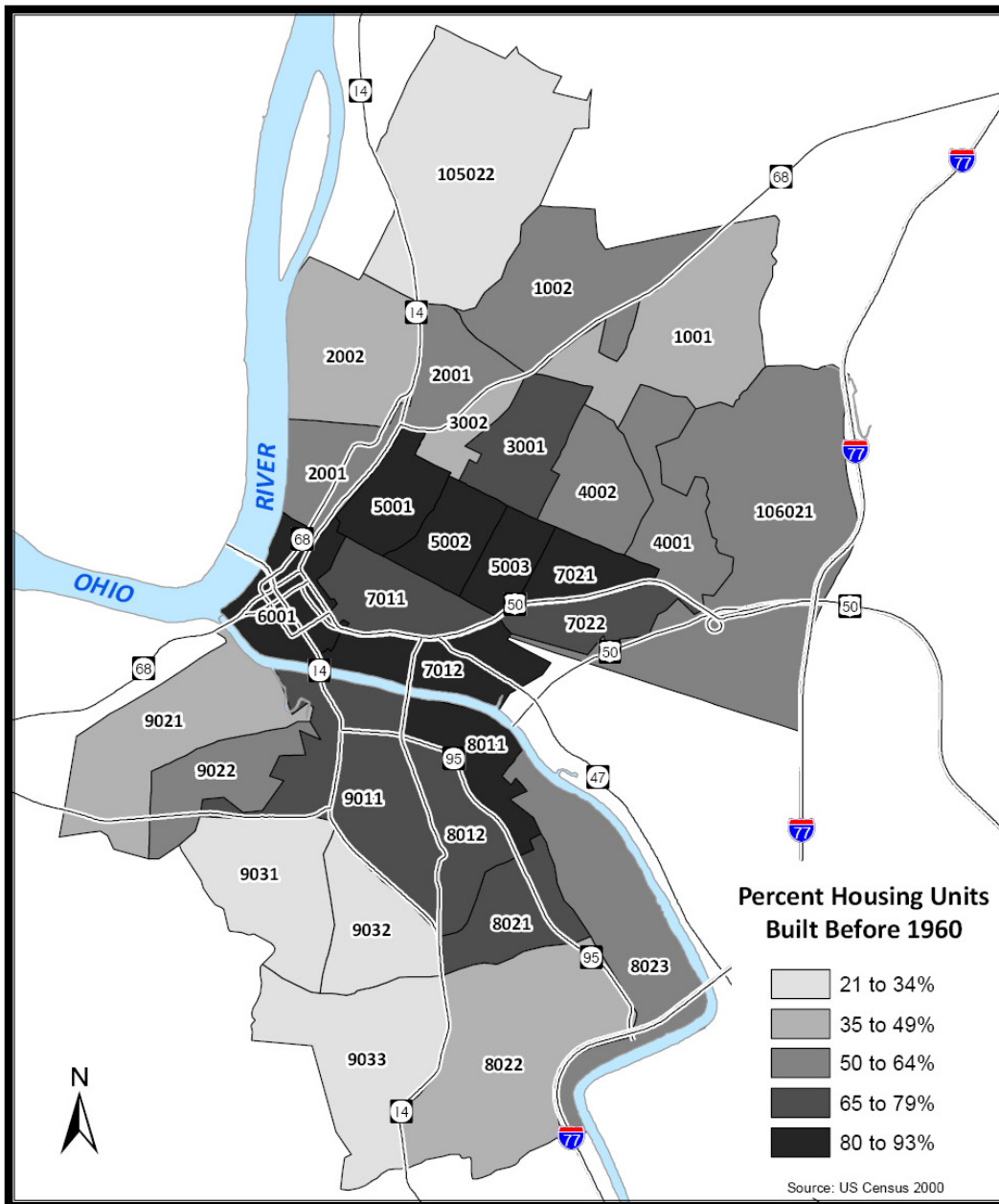
Homes built before 1960 are prevalent in Parkersburg.

There may be opportunities for designating additional historic districts for distinction (non-regulated) or preservation (through regulation).

While older housing can add to the rich visual character of the city, it can be expensive to maintain and impact the affordability of homes in certain sections of the City. As a result, the city may have a hard time attracting new residents to these areas.



Figure 4 – Percent of Housing Units Built Before 1960



The City's housing stock is predominantly single family housing units.

There may be a need for the City to incentivize construction of different types of housing to ensure that options are available to current and future residents.

The majority of Parkersburg's housing stock is older and valued at less than \$100,000.

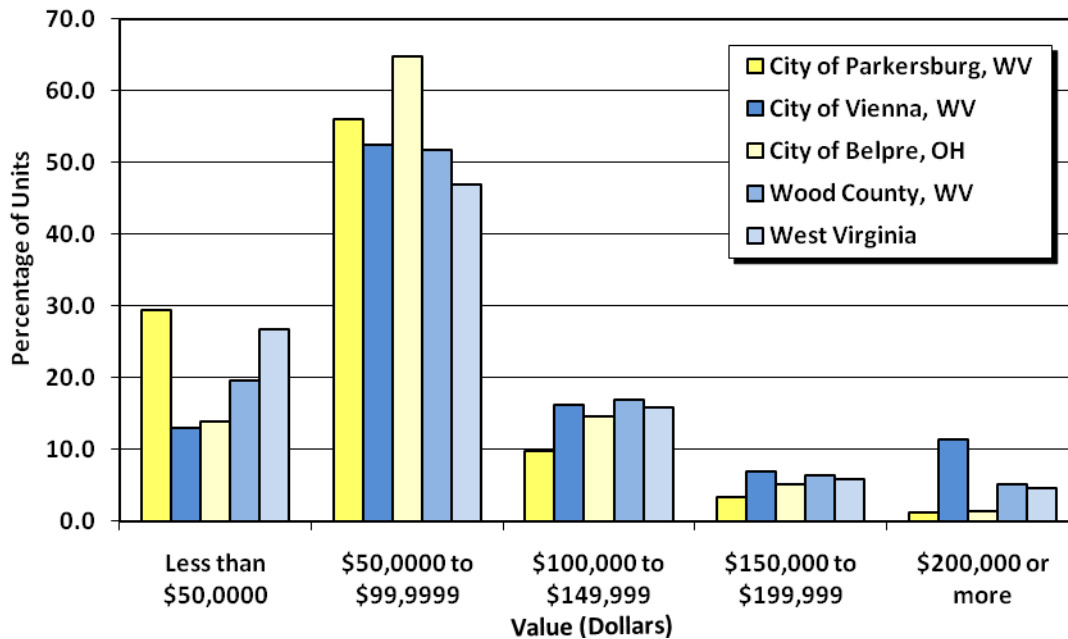
The need for housing for residents with higher incomes, as identified in the 2001 Parkersburg Comprehensive Master Plan, has not been met. The construction of modern, higher value housing or



Chapter 2 – Trends and Issues

improvement of existing homes within the City may attract new residents and improve the City's socioeconomic status.

Figure 5 – Percentage of Owner-Occupied Housing Units by House Value



Housing costs in Parkersburg are burdensome to a portion of City residents, particularly renters, even though rental rates are similar to other areas in the region.

This condition may be more strongly influenced by household income than housing costs. Further investigation may be warranted.

Parkersburg's aging population will likely create a high demand for housing options suitable for seniors, including small, single level homes for independent living and a range of options with associated medical and living assistance.

Parkersburg's high proportion of residents below the poverty level, as noted in the demographics profile, creates a high demand for subsidized public housing. The Parkersburg Housing Authority maintains a waiting list for limited Section 8 Existing Housing Assistance Payment Program rental subsidies.

With long waiting lists, more affordable private housing and subsidized housing may be needed.

Parkersburg's total housing supply of 16,100 units in 2000 is well above the projected housing unit needs for 2010, 2020, and 2030.

Even if housing losses continue, Parkersburg's current supply will be sufficient through the year 2030 in terms of the number of units. Whether or not these homes are in sound condition and have marketable amenities will determine how well the existing stock meets future market demand.



Historic and Cultural Resources

Considerable citizen effort, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, has been given to recognize and preserve historic resources in Parkersburg. The Wood County Historical and Preservation Society, the Wood County Historic Landmarks Commission, the West Augusta Historical and Genealogical Society, the Centennial Chapter of the Daughters of the American Pioneers, the Julia-Ann Square Historic Community Association, and the Parkersburg High School/Washington Avenue Historic Community Association have played and continue to play critical roles in the preservation of resources and the promotion of the City’s heritage.

Efforts by these organizations and others have resulted in the listing of 38 individual properties, three historic districts, and one multiple resource area in downtown on the National Registry of Historic Places. Properties range from homes and churches to public buildings and bridges.

These sites represent a significant portion of Parkersburg’s history. Additional walking trails of historic landmarks could feature these sites.

The Julia-Ann Square Historic District, recognized in 1977 for its late Victorian styled homes, and the Parkersburg High School – Washington Street Historic District, designated in 1992 and focused on the school and surrounding late Victorian homes, are regulated by ordinance and the Historic Architectural Review Board. The Avery Street Historic District, recognized as Parkersburg’s first “suburb” from the late 19th and early 20th Century, was designated in 1986.

Neale’s Station, the site of the first settlement, has not been protected.

Parkersburg is home to at least five historic cemeteries, which hold the remains of many prominent early settlers of the region and several State Historic Markers.

Arts venues, museums and several special events are concentrated in downtown and form the cultural hub of the city. The addition of the amphitheater at Riverfront Park will be a welcome addition to this collection.

The local arts community is extremely active in providing and promoting educational programs for the city’s youth.



Picture 1 – Historic homes on Juliana Street



Community Services

The Police department has placed significant emphasis on Community Oriented Policing (COP), bringing the department and the citizens together to solve problems in local neighborhoods. Parkersburg has approximately 50 individual Neighborhood Watch Groups and a Gang Resistance Education And Training program (GREAT) designed to prevent youth crime, violence, and gang involvement.

Parkersburg does not have a significant crime problem. There are no worrying trends with violent or serious crimes occurring in the City at significant numbers.

This is a very positive measure in safety in the city and should be noted in the City's efforts to retain and recruit residents and businesses.

With six stations in the City, the Parkersburg Fire Department has an average response time of 2-4 minutes; fire loss in the City is extremely low. The primary causes of fires in the City are overloaded outlets and improperly wired homes, however arson is a serious concern. One of the reasons for fire loss is a lack of smoke detectors in homes in the City. The Department distributes free smoke detectors to residents with qualified incomes.

Like the Police Department, the Fire Department places emphasis on community fire prevention and safety through a Risk Watch fire prevention program in area schools.

The Camden-Clark Ambulance Service and St. Josephs Ambulance Service (not affiliated with the hospital) staff and equip five ambulance stations in the City.

The Central Telecommunications Center of Wood County handled a total of approximately 90,431 calls that required a response for 2008; 38 percent came from Parkersburg. Of the 68,154 that required law enforcement response, 34,423 or 51 percent were handled by the Parkersburg Police Department. Domestic violence is a specific issue of concern noted by the Call Center. The County is investigating options to increase protection/intervention services.

Together, the Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital provide 625 hospital beds for inpatient medical services.

The Wood County School District operates 10 elementary school, three junior high schools, two high schools, and one vocational-technical school in the City.

Private schools in the Parkersburg area include the Parkersburg Catholic Grade School (grades K-6) and High School (grades 7-12). The Catholic School Board plans to relocate the grade school from its current location on Juliana St. to the Fairview Avenue campus adjacent to the High School.



Picture 2 – The new addition at Camden Clark Hospital



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Three institutions of higher learning are located in or near the City with a current enrollment of 4,502. WVU-Parkersburg offers certificate and associate programs as well as bachelors and graduate degrees. Mountain State College grants associates degrees in business, legal, medical, and computer technology fields. The Ohio Valley University, a private, liberal arts school, offers associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and endorsements. These institutions coordinate with the region’s Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to identify new education and training programs that can prepare residents for jobs in regional industries.

The Parkersburg and Wood County Public Library System operates two branches in Parkersburg: one at 3100 Emerson Avenue and one on the south side of Parkersburg at 1713 Blizzard Drive.

The 2000 Parkersburg Comprehensive Master Plan recommended that the facility on the south side be expanded to improve circulation and services. This expansion has not yet occurred. The library board is seeking a location to construct a new, larger branch library on the south side and preparing a funding strategy for the expansion.



Picture 3 – South Parkersburg Public Library

Municipal waste from residents of Parkersburg is disposed at the Northwestern Landfill. The landfill has 40 years of potential disposal capacity at current disposal levels.

Parkersburg owns and operates a materials recovery facility for the collection, sorting and sale of recyclable materials. In spite of curbside, drop-off and special event collections, recycling participation and volume rates are low. The City received a grant to implement a recycling education program.



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The city's Municipal Building houses most of its administrative offices and major service and safety departments. The Public Works department, maintenance garage, and recycling facility are located on 24th Street. The city's sign, electrical and streets services are housed on the south side. The Parks department is based at City Park. Additional governmental and community service properties include the Wood County Courthouse and administrative offices, the Wood County School District, and the Parkersburg Utility Board.

Parkersburg has nine parks occupying a total of 146 acres. The existing park system is well maintained and thoroughly used. The 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan outlines recommendations for two new or improved parks, new programs, and new promotional efforts.



Picture 4 – The pond at Southwood Park.

Transportation System

Outside of the Central Business District, opportunities for walking are primarily confined to residential neighborhoods, with some connections to destinations, such as schools and shopping. There are many areas in Parkersburg's south side that have no sidewalks at all.

Bike routes have been identified and are in various stages in the planning process, including the planned Cross Town Bikeway, and the Fort Neal Trail and its proposed extension to Fort Boreman Park. Planning for the Little Kanawha Connector Trail is well under way and funding has been secured. The American



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Discovery Trail, which is the only coast to coast bike trail in the US, extends from the North Bend Rail Trail through Parkersburg via the Little Kanawha Connector Trail.

The Mid-Ohio Valley Transit Authority (MOVTA) currently operates the six routes of the Easy Rider transit service. Private taxi service and a variety of specialized on-call transportation services are available to City residents. Lakefront Lines provides intercity passenger service from the MOVTA Intermodal Facility downtown.

According to the *Comprehensive Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan Update 2007* for the Parkersburg-Marietta Metropolitan Area, a 33 percent increase in total trips, a 37 percent increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and a 34 percent increase in Vehicle Hours of Travel (VHT) is projected for the metro area by 2030. Overall congestion is not expected to worsen because several major projects have been or will soon be completed. However, a number of major roadway segments are expected to be very congested during peak hours. In the City, they include:

Memorial Bridge (US 50) over the Ohio River

Murdoch Avenue (WV14)

Emerson Avenue (WV 68)

Rosemar Road

Pike Street (WV 14)

Pike Street and Blizzard Drive intersection

The City also expects congestion on 5th Street and the 5th Street Bridge to increase in future.

In the Central Business District (CBD), on-street metered and free parking and reserved parking lots provide a total of 899 spaces. Demand for parking is so high that parking lot owners, such as the Bureau of Public Debt and the City, maintain waiting lists of drivers interested in reserved spaces. Off-street parking consumes a considerable amount of non-taxable land—at least 20 acres in downtown—for a single story use.



Picture 5 – Surface parking in the CBD is a primary land use



CSX Transportation and Marietta Industrial Enterprises provide rail freight services. Marietta Industrial Enterprises also offers warehousing and trucking services.

The Mid Ohio Valley Regional Airport provides daily connecting service via Continental Connection from the Parkersburg area to Cleveland's Hopkins International Airport. The airport is located approximately 10 miles from downtown Parkersburg, just south of Williamstown. City residents typically drive to the airport following Emerson Avenue to Williamstown Pike to Airport Road.

Employment and Economy

Total employment in the Parkersburg-Marietta-Vienna Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) increased by 1,750 jobs, or 1.9 percent, between 2004 and 2006. Significant losses in the manufacturing industry – 1,635 jobs – were offset by small increases in most other industrial categories, suggesting that those who lost their jobs may have found employment in other industrial sectors within the MSA.

Most of the new jobs created in the MSA and in Wood County were in the construction industry, with 883 and 411 new jobs created between 2004 and 2006, respectively. The transportation and warehousing, and the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors also experienced significant increases of 12.3 and 18.1 percent, respectively.

Growth in transportation and warehousing may continue as a result of the opening of US 50. The arts, entertainment and recreation industry may struggle to sustain jobs in the current economic downturn.

Of the total private sector jobs found within the MSA in 2006, approximately 57 percent were located in Wood County. However, of the federal civilian jobs in the MSA, almost 90 percent were located in Wood County, clearly reflecting the presence of the Bureau of Public Debt in downtown Parkersburg.

There are 2,255 businesses that currently pay the Business and Occupation Tax in the City of Parkersburg. Of these, one in four is construction related, including specialty contractors such as plumbers, masons, and HVAC contractors. Retail trade enterprises represent 15 percent of the total number of businesses, while professional and technical services represent 4.6 percent.

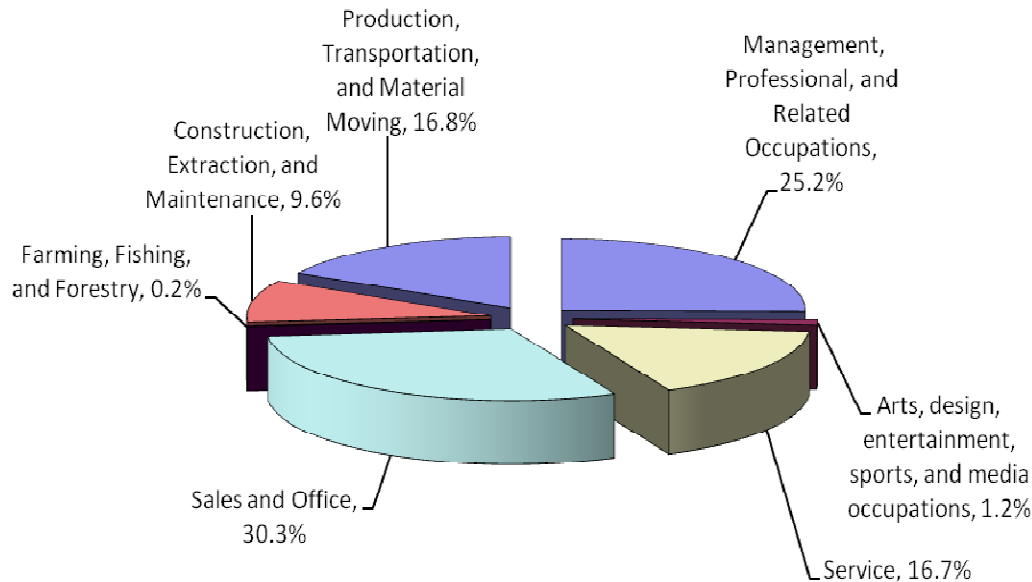
According to the Census Bureau, one third of the City's residents were employed in sales and service occupations, another 25 percent were employed in management and professional occupations such as financial specialists, architects, education, and legal occupations. Arts, entertainment and media occupations also fall within the management and professional occupations.

Mean annual wage estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the MSA in 2007 indicate that the average (mean) hourly wage for all occupations is \$15.72. However, there is great variation depending upon the occupation. Wages for sales and service occupations ranged from \$7.00 an hour for personal and home care aids to \$37.00 an hour for financial services sales agents. Mean hourly wages for construction and extraction occupations were \$16.66 and ranged from just under \$10.00 for helpers to over \$25.00 for first line supervisors.

Household and per capita incomes have not kept pace with inflation. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, unadjusted per capita personal incomes in the MSA increased by approximately 7.9 percent between 2004 and 2006. In Wood County, they increased by approximately 6.7 percent. When adjusted for inflation, the increase is just over one percent.



Figure 6 – Employment by Occupation in Parkersburg, 2000



According to 2000 Census data, which is the most recent available for the resident labor force, approximately 55 percent of the population, or 14,852 people, who were 16 years or older were in the labor force. Of those not in the labor force, less than one half (6,252) were over the age of 65 and most likely retired.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' unemployment data indicate that annual unemployment rates in the MSA were historically between five and six percent. However, in January of 2009, the rate jumped to 8 percent and February's preliminary figure was 9.2 percent. These higher rates are indicative of a national economic downturn, and are comparable to the national rates.

Infrastructure

The Parkersburg Public Service District is a complicated system that extends one or both of its water and sewer boundaries across each of the district lines.

Since 2001, additions to the PUB service area include about 70 residential units, 40 undeveloped residential lots, 10 commercial lots, a nursing home, and a landfill. Several of these new extensions would serve areas that are under consideration for development, including the extension along Highway 14 in Parkersburg's south side, near US 50 in the far eastern portion of the service area, and the area in the Lost Pavement portion of Parkersburg's south side.

While the numbers of residential water customers within the City increased since 2004 as a result of annexations, a severe decline in the City's commercial customers and declines in customers of all types outside the city decreased the total customer base by 11.1 percent and total water consumption by 23 percent. Concurrently, volumes of water produced and sold both declined since 2004.

This trend implies the potential for higher water costs in order to sustain funding for operations and maintenance.



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Similar to water service, the numbers of residential wastewater customers and service usage within the City increased, while declines in commercial customers within the City and customers of all types outside the City drew the total customer base down by 7.45 percent, and the total volume of wastewater treated down by 19.52 percent.

Similarly, this trend implies the potential for higher sewer costs in order to sustain funding for operations and maintenance.

Monthly average wastewater flows at the treatment plant in 2004-2005 were lower than reported in 1996, but monthly maximums were much higher.

Since 2001, the Parkersburg Utility Board has implemented several planned improvements to the water system and the wastewater system, including planning for sanitary sewer overload reduction, conveyance improvements, and upgraded waste water treatment facilities.

West Virginia's Administrative Order No. 4566 requires the PUB to take steps to reduce system wet weather flows and to provide increased sewer system conveyance and treatment capacity to prevent sewer system overflows (SSOs). Because of the very high monetary cost of SSO controls it is not feasible for PUB to implement them except in many phases over a very long time frame.

The Water System Evaluation and Recommendations—2006 Update outlines \$1.9 million in projected capital costs for continued maintenance of the wastewater system through 2030. The update includes fiscally constrained SSO controls for compliance with Administrative Order No. 4566.

Infrastructure is not a barrier to development of Fort Boreman Hill, as both water and sewer have been extended to the area and treatment capacity is available.

The City completed a Stormwater Master Plan in 2004. The Plan identified 6 minimum control measures that were expected to result in a citywide reduction in pollution discharge. The Stormwater Master Plan identifies structural and non-structural best management practices, as well as recommending an increased role for the City Tree Commission through maintaining and increasing the urban forest.

Additional measures for stormwater management are expected to be a near term requirement. This may require the establishment of a stormwater utility and fees. Education is cited as the greatest need to further reduction of storm water and improved water quality.

Natural Resources

There are few remaining areas in the city that have slopes greater than 15 percent. Fort Boreman Hill is the only significant undeveloped area within the city with slope constraints. Lands beyond the City limits are largely slope constrained.

Additional development of intensive uses both within the City and beyond would require sensitive construction techniques to avoid severe erosion and instability hazards.

The Ohio River and the Little Kanawha River are both listed as impaired streams. The Ohio River is impacted by iron, fecal coliform and mercury; the Little Kanawha River by mercury, fecal coliform and pH.

The severity and seasonality of these conditions may limit the waterways' potential for recreation and habitat.



Picture 6 – View of the Ohio River from Fort Boreman Park

Stormwater pollution is a significant water quality problem for West Virginia waters. Parkersburg has 253 outfalls discharging stormwater into State waters.

The city's new Stormwater Master Plan emphasizes individual and corporate responsibility in preventing stormwater pollution. The City should consider opportunities to demonstrate various techniques on its own properties and stormwater outfalls.

More than 1500 acres, or 20 percent, of Parkersburg is affected by the floodplains of the Ohio River, Little Kanawha River, Worthington Creek, Neal Run, Pond Run, and Little Pond Run. Much of this land was developed for commercial and industrial uses prior to the establishment of floodplain restrictions. Some residential areas are also affected. Only a small portion of the floodplain remains as open space – either forest or recreational lands.

The 450 acres of wetlands within the City lie predominantly in the 100-year floodplains of its waterways. Some exist as open water such as in City Park. Others are marshy areas that are largely undeveloped to date.

Wood County's air quality is classified by the US EPA as good, meaning satisfactory, with air pollution posing little or no risk to human health. Its critical air pollutant is sulfur dioxide, produced in various industrial processes from the burning of petroleum and coal. The County is classified as a "Maintenance Area" for ozone.

Fort Boreman Hill and the Johnson T. Janes Natural Area and Wildlife Preserve are the largest forested areas left within the City limits. Trees in parks, along streets, and throughout the City's neighborhoods



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help retain green space within the urban environment. The majority of steeply sloped areas surrounding the City are also forested. Parkersburg has been recognized by the nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community for 12 years.



Picture 7 – 2010 Arbor Day Tree Planting at the City Building

Both common and rare wildlife can be found in the Parkersburg area. The rivers draw waterfowl and osprey and provide habitat for aquatic species of plants and animals. The Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge at Neal Island (just west of the City) and the Johnson T. Janes Natural Area and Wildlife Preserve are protected lands for wildlife conservation.

Energy and Sustainability

The majority of Parkersburg’s housing stock was laid out in a gridded pattern that facilitates low-energy travel on foot and by bicycle. This pattern is also conducive to transit routing.

The siting and construction of early homes predates the energy conservation principles of the 1970s that promoted building orientation to maximize solar heating in winter, minimize such heating in summer and landscaping to create summer shade and winter wind breaks.

Parkersburg’s seasonal climate impacts residents and businesses in their energy use for heating and cooling and the City’s public works department for snow removal.

Allegheny Power, the area’s electric provider, has invested in carbon capture and sequestration technology for two of its coal burning power plants, one of which is located near Parkersburg.

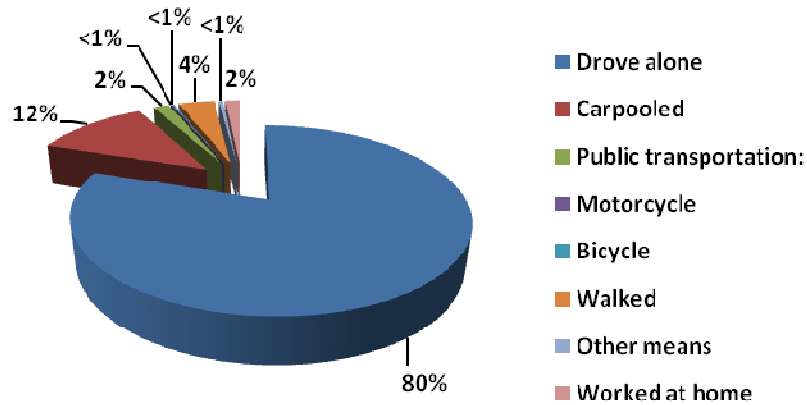
Renewable fuel sources, solar, geothermal, and wind, are not widely used for home heating. Wind speeds in the Parkersburg area are not conducive for large scale wind farm development, though small scale windmills may benefit individual property owners.

The vast majority of workers from Parkersburg drove alone to their work destinations. Compared to other cities of similar size, Parkersburg has a lower percentage of workers who use public transportation and/or walking but a higher percentage of people who carpool.



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Figure 7 – Means of Transportation to Work, 2000



Parkersburg has a good network of sidewalks throughout its downtown and its older residential neighborhoods. The modern separation of commercial and public uses from residential neighborhoods discourages walking as a travel option. Newer developments with wider streets tend to lack sidewalk systems.

Parkersburg has advocated for resource and energy conservation among its citizens. The city's website directs citizens to thegreenguide.com for ways to reduce energy usage and make more sustainable choices in everyday life, including buying environmentally friendly products. Many of the recommendations are applicable to the business sector. Citywide adoption of even a few green practices could result in a significant reduction of energy use and pollutants.

Nationwide, there is rising demand for walkable, green communities that encourage a healthy lifestyle while supporting a healthy planet. The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) initiative combines the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green design. The LEED for Neighborhood Development program focuses on housing diversity, storm water management, energy production, and transit accessibility. There are no LEED certified projects in West Virginia. An elevated emphasis on green building practices could distinguish Parkersburg from other communities in the region and the state.



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Goals and Objectives for 2020

As part of the planning process, three possible future scenarios were presented to the Planning Advisory Committee and the general public. After much discussion, it was agreed that the preferred future was a combination of the scenarios as described below.

Parkersburg has changed a lot in the past ten years. People throughout the City are working hard to make it a great place—and it shows.

There are a greater variety of homes for sale as seniors have started moving into active living and retirement communities. Young families snatch up home near schools and parks. Landlords have modernized loft apartments in downtown, especially around the college, attracting younger faces to the downtown. And improved properties along our transit routes don't stay on the market for long either.

The job market is growing, slowly but steadily, especially in the service sector. Health care and education are still two of our leading industries, but distribution facilities at the Industrial Park and call centers along the major travel corridors seem to be successful target markets. WVUP and Mountain State College have introduced several new programs through partnerships with the hospitals, the electronics industry, and even with some manufacturers. Graduate placement rates with local businesses have increased in recent years and people are taking advantage of resources and assistance programs for entrepreneurs—those changing careers in mid-life and young people on the cutting edge of technology.

The City's efforts to improve the 5th Street Bridge connection between the north and south sides really launched a whole initiative for welcoming people into the City in the design of public spaces and in attitudes. Business owners have emerged to sponsor streetscape projects and regular community events. Many downtown workers walk to downtown restaurants and shops on their lunch break, or bring their families in the evenings and on weekends.

At the same time, tourism and hospitality have really blossomed. Parkersburg has become the place to go for "stories on the river" whether its history, ecology or just plain "on the water" recreation. The Little Kanawha Connector Trail is open and there's always someone walking, running, biking, or skating along it. The school district has the 8th grade monitoring the water quality and other students are involved in planting native species along the riverbanks. The City developed a bicycle system that includes some on-street lanes and the off-road trails. Students are using the trails to get to school, sports activities, and even their after-school jobs. And there's always something to do at Point Park or City Park.



Figure 8 – Scenario Posters on display at the public meeting



Chapter 3 – Goals and Objectives for 2020

This scenario was then summarized in the Vision Statement and then translated into broad goals and specific objectives. Combined they set the stage for developing the recommendations for each functional element of the plan.

A Vision for 2020

Parkersburg has distinguished itself as a progressive, “green” city that encourages healthy, active lifestyles, neighborhood vitality, and sustainable community and economic development.

Community Development Goals for 2020

1. Each of Parkersburg’s residential neighborhoods, business districts, and industrial areas is a node of complementary uses and services laid out in a walkable pattern and connected to the rest of the City through sidewalks, trails, streets, and green spaces.
2. The City of Parkersburg is nationally recognized as a great place to live and do business, with both national and home-grown companies choosing to locate here as a result of strong support for the growth and development of a wide range of technology-based businesses.
3. The City of Parkersburg has viable housing options for both renters and buyers, including students with varying needs and lifestyles.
4. The City of Parkersburg has developed a balanced and efficient transportation system for all local modes of travelers and shippers.
5. The utilities and natural systems that interconnect and serve the City are managed for quality, maintained cost effectively, and engage green techniques and technologies where available.
6. The services provided by the City, its community partners, and citizen volunteers foster safe, clean neighborhoods and offer quality educational and medical services, and an array of parklands and recreational opportunities for all ages.
7. The celebration of the City’s riverside location and industrial heritage in public spaces, educational programs, and cultural activities builds civic pride and attracts both heritage tourists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

Goals and Objectives by Planning Element

Land Use and Development Goal:

By 2020, each of Parkersburg’s residential neighborhoods, business districts, and industrial areas is a node of complementary uses and services laid out in a walkable pattern and connected to the rest of the City through sidewalks, trails, streets, and green spaces.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Revises the current zoning ordinance to strengthen the physical urban design of the City and accommodate new development and redevelopment.



Chapter 3 – Goals and Objectives for 2020

2. Revises the current subdivision ordinance so as to encourage sustainable, smart growth and development.
3. Creates and advances redevelopment concepts for transforming underutilized areas into viable urban uses, and builds public-private partnerships to complete those projects
4. Works with local businesses to reduce the amount of surface parking downtown, thus freeing up valuable real estate for higher uses, as well as enhancing the visual attractiveness of the City, particularly from the pedestrian's point of view.
5. Requires energy efficient and best building practices in new construction and building rehabilitation projects of a significant size or value.
6. Annexes additional land and development to strategically grow the City.
7. Identifies and monitors areas of the City subject to blight risk and potential infill areas for development/redevelopment opportunities.
8. Cultivates and facilitates a comprehensive approach to land use planning.

Economic Development Goal:

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg is nationally recognized as a great place to live and do business, with both national and home-grown companies choosing to locate here as a result of strong support for the growth and development of a wide range of technology-based businesses.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Works with regional and state partners to facilitate the growth and development of targeted industry clusters already in the region such as Advanced Materials and Chemicals (Polymer Alliance Zone) and Health Care, as well as encouraging the growth and development of new clusters such as Advanced Energy and Heritage Tourism.
2. Formalizes the volunteer Downtown Task Force into a permanent management organization through the Main Street Program.
3. Partners with property owners to complete projects that will improve the first impressions of Parkersburg along the major gateways into town, including WV 14, Murdoch Avenue, Emerson Avenue, and 7th Street.
4. Works with a variety of partners, including the Area Roundtable, developers, and financial institutions, to attract new commercial enterprises to Fort Boreman Hill without increasing vacancies in commercial properties throughout the city. Targets already under consideration include a new National Guard Armory and Convention Center.
5. Continues to partner with WVU-P, Wood County Schools, the Workforce Investment Board and local businesses to provide unemployed and underemployed residents affordable, relevant training and educational opportunities for locally available and emerging jobs, particularly those in targeted industries.
6. Partners with WVU-P and the West Virginia Small Business Development Center to develop and maintain a business incubator in the City to encourage the growth and development of small entrepreneurial ventures.



Chapter 3 – Goals and Objectives for 2020

7. Ensures that infrastructure (sewer, water, and telecommunications) are available and operational.
8. Ensures Parkersburg also has recreation and lifestyle amenities that appeal to support the needs of new businesses and their employees.
9. Develop new initiatives and incentives to encourage new and existing businesses to locate in the City of Parkersburg.

Housing Goal:

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg has viable housing options for both renters and buyers with varying needs and lifestyles.

The City will reach this goal if it ...

1. Ensures housing is well maintained and modernized for safety, energy efficiency, and appearance.
2. Facilitates redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties to viable uses, including affordable, alternative types of housing.
3. Works with developers to ensure retirement living offers a range of housing types in locations that are adjacent to or have easy access to public transportation, amenities, and services.

Transportation Goal:

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg has developed a balanced and efficient transportation system for all local modes of travelers, be they vehicular or non-vehicular uses.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Continues to work closely with WVV to ensure that proposed roadway and intersection improvements aimed at reducing congestion and scheduled in the State's Transportation Improvement Program are funded and completed in a timely manner.
2. Ensures that neighborhood streets and sidewalks are safe and in good repair.
3. Requires bicycle, pedestrian, and access management improvements as part of any road improvement project or new or revitalized commercial/residential development so that most residents throughout the City will have the option to walk and/or ride a bike safely to schools, jobs, shopping, and other local destinations.
4. Prioritizes a Downtown Circulation Study in order to identify specific improvements that would move traffic downtown while safely accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists. The study should consider the feasibility of enhancing the existing pedestrian network in the downtown with possible pedestrian-only alleyways and plazas
5. Works with the Bicycle Advisory Board and WVV to establish a network of bike paths in the community that connect residents to schools, neighborhoods and destinations such as Riverfront Park and the new skateboard park at Neal Park.



Chapter 3 – Goals and Objectives for 2020

Infrastructure Goal:

By 2020, the man-made (gray) and natural (green) infrastructure that supports the city is managed to provide quality facilities and maximum benefits at reasonable cost.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Continues to implement its storm water management plan in compliance with state and federal regulations.
2. Continues to support the Parkersburg Utility Board in its efforts to properly operate, maintain, improve and expand the water and sanitary sewer systems in accordance with all state and federal regulations and in a manner that is economically feasible
3. Engages the Tree Commission to help identify and enhance Parkersburg's green infrastructure.

Community Services Goal:

By 2020, the services provided for the citizens of Parkersburg have fostered community pride in safe, clean neighborhoods, maintained high quality educational and medical services, and developed an array of parklands and recreational opportunities for all ages.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Fosters civic engagement among citizens of all ages.
2. Helps to ensure public safety services remain responsive and cost effective.
3. Helps to ensure library services throughout the city meet the needs of 21st century residents.
4. Continues to implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Plan in order to offer close-to-home and destination recreation facilities, as well as recreational programs that offer activities for all ages year-round.
5. Makes recycling as convenient as traditional trash disposal.
6. Works to reduce the environmental impacts of its operations and services and provides opportunities for its residents to do the same.



Chapter 3 – Goals and Objectives for 2020

Cultural and Historic Resources Goal:

By 2020, the celebration of Parkersburg's riverside location and industrial heritage is seen in public spaces, art educational programs, and cultural activities. It has not only helped to improve civic pride among residents, but has also attracted heritage tourists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and has helped make the city more attractive for new business.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Continues to partner with and support the activities of the Wood County Historic Preservation Society.
2. Works with the local historic districts and others to develop architectural design guidelines to ensure that new development complements the surrounding community character.
3. Supports local efforts to encourage the development of the heritage tourism industry.
4. Helps to ensure a diversity of community and special events that appeal to a variety of age groups are offered at several venues throughout the city during the year.
5. Improves the marketing of its historic and cultural offerings.



Land Use Plan

The City of Parkersburg has wonderful opportunities for future development. It is the most important regional center along the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and the Huntingdon/Cincinnati area. It is a major jobs center and has a great natural location at the confluence of the Ohio River and Little Kanawha River. Parkersburg also has much improved access since the completion of U.S. Route 50 and the new Blennerhassett Bridge. The City is blessed with wonderful neighborhoods, many of which have been lovingly restored to their historical significance. The current Mayor’s vision for Parkersburg for 2020 sees the city as a significantly different place in ten years; one where there are opportunities for growth and at the same time is a place for families to live, work and play.

However, new development projects are often approved and completed without thinking about the long term implications. The City needs to cultivate a comprehensive approach to land use planning to ensure new development compliments existing development and is viable in the future. In order for this to happen, the Development Department and the Public Works Department – Zoning Division must both be involved in the review of proposed development projects. The built environment in the City of Parkersburg must be thought about in a comprehensive manner, not just on a parcel by parcel basis, which traditionally has been the approach.

Goal for Land Use and Development

By 2020, each of Parkersburg’s residential neighborhoods, business districts, and industrial areas are nodes of complementary uses and services laid out in a walkable pattern and connected to the rest of the City through sidewalks, trails, streets, and green spaces.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Revises the current zoning ordinance to strengthen the physical urban design of the City and accommodate new development and redevelopment.
2. Revises the current subdivision ordinance so as to encourage sustainable, smart growth and development.
3. Creates and advances redevelopment concepts for transforming underutilized areas into viable urban uses, and builds public-private partnerships to complete those projects
4. Works with local businesses to reduce the amount of surface parking downtown, thus freeing up valuable real estate for higher uses, as well as enhancing the visual attractiveness of the City, particularly from the pedestrian’s point of view.
5. Requires energy efficient and best building practices in new construction and building rehabilitation projects of a significant size or value.
6. Annexes additional land and development to strategically grow the City.
7. Identifies and monitors areas of the City subject to blight risk and potential infill areas for development/redevelopment opportunities.
8. Cultivates and facilitates a comprehensive approach to land use planning.



Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map, shown on page 34 and full-size in the appendix map set, provides the basis for changes to the zoning ordinance and zoning map and includes nine land use designations:

- Urban Core
- General Commercial
- Commercial Office
- Neighborhood Center
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Greenspace

Descriptions of each land use designation, except institutional uses, are provided after the map. Each land use description outlines compatible primary and secondary uses, with primary uses comprising the majority of each category. Each description also recommends the types of infrastructure that should support each use area. Recommendations are given for water and sewer, multi-modal transportation system priorities, and natural and historic resource protection priorities, which can provide guidance for a revised zoning ordinance and map. Categories of design standards that should be tailored to each use area are also suggested; particularly buffers and landscaping that can be used as transition areas between uses. A photograph of a representative land use pattern, either from the City or another location, is also included. Together with the map, they provide a comprehensive guide for a revised land use and development policy.

Relationship to the 2001 Future Land Use Map

The primary difference between the 2010 and 2001 Future Land Use Map is the elimination of the “Planning Areas” as identified in 2001. It also consolidates a number of the 2001 “land use values” into single categories, for example Light Industrial and General Industrial are now just “Industrial”; however, both types of industry can be accommodated in the targeted areas. “Agriculture”, “Woodland”, “Recreational”, and “Undeveloped” values are combined into a single “Green Space” designation. New categories for 2010 include the “Urban Core”, which is generally the Central Business District; “Commercial Office”, which provides for some light industry, as well as office and certain commercial uses; and “Neighborhood Center”, which provides for a mix of smaller-scale commercial and service uses geared towards meeting the needs of local residents.

While the names of the categories have changed, the overall patterns are quite similar. Existing residential areas remain and are expanded in some areas. Several areas designated as General Commercial in 2001 have been changed to Neighborhood Centers in an effort to encourage commercial development that is more compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods, particularly along Emerson Avenue and Blizzard Drive. Commercial Office has replaced General Commercial along the Murdoch Avenue/Garfield Avenue Corridor to encourage more professional/healthcare related office development than commercial. This same category is used along Camden Avenue, but uses here would tend to be flexible spaces that can accommodate light industry and/or office uses. Greenspace has been expanded along Pond Creek to provide a buffer between the Ohio River and existing industrial properties. Annexation areas are not as extensive and priority areas have been identified. Areas of higher priority are identified on the future land use map.



Chapter 4 – Land Use Plan

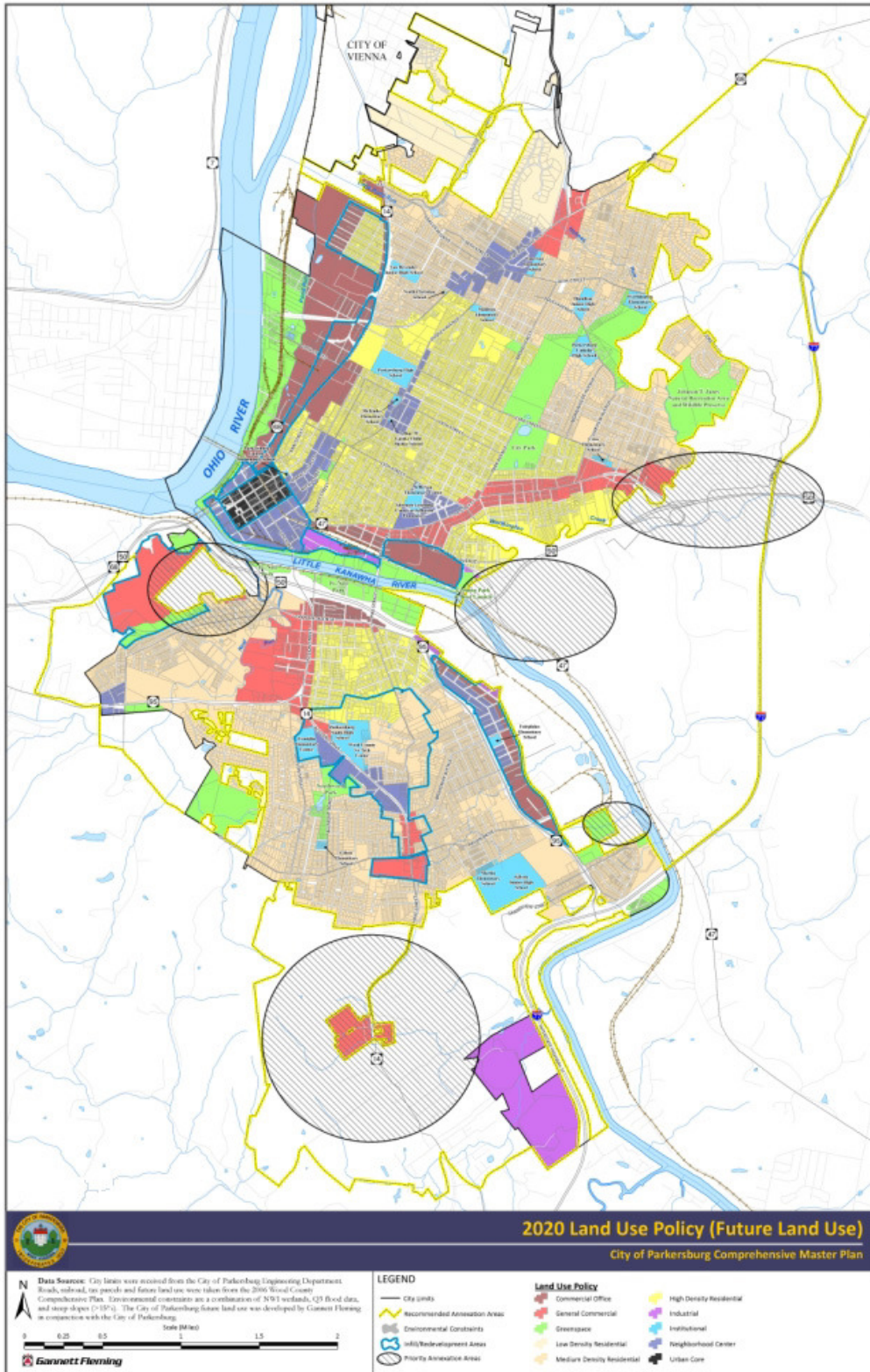
As discussed in the 2001 Plan, there are several areas in the community where commercial activities have encroached upon residential neighborhoods. These ‘transition areas’ are typically located along, but not limited to major travel corridors in the City. These include Emerson Avenue, Lakeview Drive, 36th Street, 7th Street, Camden Avenue and Broadway Avenue. In these area and more, prudence should be given to preserving the residential neighborhoods where appropriate.

Where commercial activity may be permitted to encroach in residential neighborhoods, and where non-compatible land used abut each other, significant screening should be a requirement. In order to make an informed decision about future rezoning applications, the Municipal Planning Commission should consider existing land use patterns, consult the future land use map and assess traffic patterns.



Chapter 4 – Land Use Plan

Figure 9 – Future Land Use Map (Full-size map in Appendix)





Urban Core

Purpose: Accommodate intensive commercial, institutional, residential and recreation uses in a high density, mixed used pattern, i.e. within the designation area, within sites and within structures

Primary Uses: Small to medium scale retail and office, arts/culture, education, health care and government, high density housing, including student housing

Secondary Uses: Mini parks

Transportation: Streets, on-street and off-street parking (side, rear, structured parking), transit routes, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes, way finding signage

Natural Resources: Urban forestry (street trees), bioretention facilities

Historic Resources: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, conserved building facades, application of historic design features in new, infill, or redevelopment (where appropriate)

Design Standards: Zero or maximum front setback; streetscapes and plazas; signage standards; benches, lighting, fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 8 – Market Street is a good example of proposed land uses in the Urban Core. There is a mix of shops and offices, as well as the new streetscape. Buildings have no setbacks and most of the parking is behind the buildings, although on-street parking is available.



General Commercial

Purpose: Sustain and encourage infill of existing commercial clusters in a medium to high density mixed use pattern with appropriate landscaping to provide a buffer zone for adjacent residential properties.

Primary Uses: Commercial retail, office, arts/culture, education, health care and government

Secondary Uses: Medium to large scale, regional commercial, medium and high density residential, and recreation

Transportation: Streets, transit routes, rail freight, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes, parking requirements, shared driveways

Natural Resource: Urban forestry (street trees), stormwater management

Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, application of historic design features in new/redevelopment (where appropriate)

Design Standards: Streetscapes; signage; fencing and landscaped buffers, scale of buildings



Picture 9 – The Kroger’s Shopping Center, car dealers, and fast food restaurants on Division Street are classified as general commercial uses.



Commercial Office

Purpose: Accommodate and encourage infill of concentrated commercial office/service in a medium to high density mixed use pattern

Primary Uses: Commercial retail, commercial office, light industrial, arts/culture, education, health care and government

Secondary Uses: Medium and high density residential, recreation (parks)

Water/Sewer Service: Public Water and Public Sewer

Transportation: Streets, transit routes, rail freight, sidewalks/crosswalks on-road bike lanes, parking requirements

Natural Resource: Urban forestry (street trees), bioretention facilities for stormwater management

Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, application of historic design features in new/redevelopment

Design Standards: Streetscapes; signage; fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 10 – There are many opportunities along the Murdoch Avenue/Garfield Avenue corridor for commercial office development such as the new PARS Building.



Neighborhood Center

- Purpose:** Accommodate and encourage infill of small to medium scale commercial, institutional, residential and recreation uses in a medium density mixed use pattern
- Primary Uses:** Commercial office, retail, education, health care and government services, arts/culture, medium and high density housing
- Secondary Uses:** Recreation (neighborhood parks)
- Water/Sewer Service:** Public Water and Public Sewer
- Transportation:** Streets, transit routes, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes, wayfinding signage, on-street and off-street parking (side, rear, or structured parking)
- Natural Resource:** Urban forestry (street trees)
- Historic Resource:** Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, conserved building facades, application of historic design features in new/redevelopment, historic district designations
- Design Standards:** Zero or maximum front setback; streetscapes and plazas: signage standards; street lighting; fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 11 – The concept sketch on the following page shows how minimal setbacks, landscaping and consistent design elements could transform this stretch of St. Mary's Avenue into a walkable neighborhood center. The above picture shows St. Mary's Avenue as it is today.



Figure 10 – Concept Sketch of St. Mary’s Avenue





High Density Residential

Purpose: Sustain the existing urban neighborhoods; maximize compatible infill and redevelopment

Primary Uses: High density residential (8-10 units per acre)

Secondary Uses: Neighborhood/small-scale commercial, education, health care and government services, and low density residential, recreation (parks)

Water/Sewer Service: Public Water and Public Sewer

Transportation: Streets, transit routes, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes

Natural Resource: Urban forestry (street trees)

Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, conserved building facades/exterior, application of historic design features in new, infill, or redevelopment, historic district designations

Design Standards: Maximum front setback, lighting, fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 12 – Apartments, condominiums, and townhouses such as these located on Avery Street are all considered to be high density.



Medium Density Residential

Purpose: Sustain the existing urban neighborhoods; maximize compatible infill and redevelopment

Primary Uses: Medium density residential (5-7 units per acre)

Secondary Uses: Neighborhood/small-scale commercial where appropriate, education, health care and government services, and low density residential, recreation (parks)

Water/Sewer Service: Public Water and Public Sewer

Transportation: Streets, transit routes, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes

Natural Resource: Urban forestry (street trees)

Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, application of historic design features in new, infill, or redevelopment, historic district designations

Design Standards: Lighting, fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 13 – Example of a Medium Density Residential neighborhood in South Parkersburg that lacks sidewalk connectivity.



Low Density Residential

Purpose: Sustain the existing suburban neighborhoods; maximize compatible infill and redevelopment

Primary Uses: Low density residential (3-4 units per acre)

Secondary Uses: Neighborhood, education, health care and government services, and low density residential, recreation (parks)

Water/Sewer Service: On-lot systems or public water/public sewer

Transportation: Streets, transit routes, sidewalks/crosswalks, on-road bike lanes

Natural Resource: Urban forestry (street trees)

Historic Resource: Adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites, application of historic design features in new, infill, or redevelopment, historic district designations

Design Standards: Lighting, fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 14 – Low Density Housing in the Wyndemere Subdivision



Industrial

Purpose: Accommodate medium to large scale industrial uses

Primary Uses: Light to heavy manufacturing, flex spaces, and warehousing

Secondary Uses: Large scale commercial uses, commercial uses associated with primary industry, recreation (parks)

Water/Sewer Service: Public Water/Public Sewer

Transportation: Limited roads, rail freight, river freight, on-road and off-road pedestrian/bicycle trails

Natural Resource: Riparian and wetland buffers, bioretention facilities

Historic Resource: Not applicable

Design Standards: Lighting, fencing and landscaped buffers



Picture 15 – The Coldwater Creek Distribution and Outlet Center in South Parkersburg is visible from Interstate 77.



Greenspace

- Purpose:** Accommodate open space/ park land
- Primary Uses:** Open space/park land
- Secondary Uses:** Open space/park land and community gardens
- Water/Sewer Service:** On-lot systems or public water/public sewer for parks facilities
- Transportation:** Limited road access, on-road and off-road pedestrian/bicycle trails, limited parking
- Natural Resource:** Riparian and wetland buffers
- Historic Resource:** Old buildings; interpretive signage; historic markers
- Design Standards:** Lighting in appropriate areas, fencing and landscaped buffers for recreation areas



Picture 16 – Friendship Neighborhood Park is located on 13th Street just north of Downtown Parkersburg.



Code Updates

Part Thirteen (Planning and Zoning) of the Codified Ordinances of Parkersburg, WV provides the City's regulations for planning, zoning, and subdivision activities. Each of these regulations should be reviewed and amended to assist with the implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan. The ordinances should be reviewed to ensure they are consistent and in compliance with Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code. Also the ordinances should be reviewed to reflect current zoning and subdivision standards and best practices, including the use of the transect model.

Transect-Based Planning and Development Codes

The concept of using a “transect-based” approach to planning and zoning is a recent phenomenon, but it has been used to understand the natural environment since the end of the 18th Century. At the heart of the approach is the fundamental idea that there are distinct zones, or transects, within a given region and each transect has a specific ecology or set of characteristics that not only make it unique, but also provides a habitat for certain plants and animals to thrive. The same concept can be applied to people and their environments – some will thrive in a downtown “habitat” while others need a rural “habitat”. The rural-to-urban transect mimics the natural transect and is illustrated below.

However, traditional zoning codes do not support the development of such habitats and instead have separated where we live from where we shop, where we work, and where we play. In addition, design standards in traditional zoning codes, including Parkersburg's, favor the car over every other means of transportation. As a result, one can travel across the country and see the same patterns of development – housing subdivisions with cul-de-sacs and no sidewalks, business parks, strip shopping centers, and big box stores with huge parking lots, and downtowns that are struggling to survive. In addition, this separation has made it impossible for children, the elderly, and those who can't afford to drive to retain any sense of independence as they must rely on others to take them to school, the park, a doctor's office, or the grocery store.

To overcome this trend, planners are using the transect concept as a basis for zoning and subdivision ordinances. The transect model has also been used to develop a model ordinance known as The SmartCode, which is freeware that is available in an editable format online.¹ As noted in the introduction to the SmartCode, it “is a form-based code that incorporates Smart Growth and New Urbanism principles. It is a unified development ordinance, addressing development at all scales of design, from regional planning on down to the building signage. It is based on the rural-to-urban transect rather than separated-use zoning, thereby able to integrate a full range of environmental techniques.”²

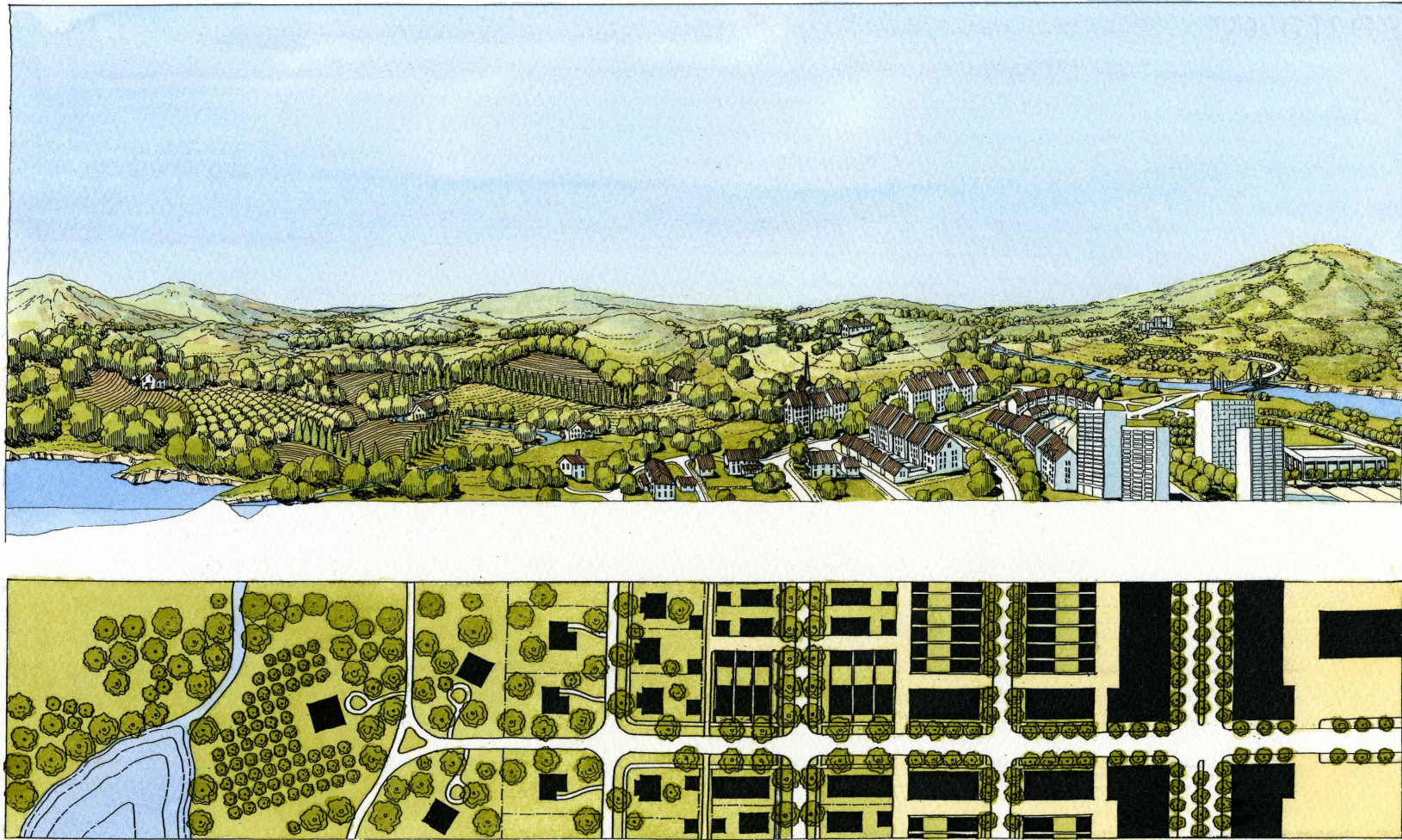
While the city would not necessarily have to adopt the SmartCode, many of its principals can be incorporated into a traditional zoning ordinance. The key is to focus on the appropriate elements for a given area. For instance, neighborhood centers would have a typical roadway section that included pedestrian and bike accommodations, there would be a maximum setback rather than a minimum, and parking requirements could be lessened in order to acknowledge that some patrons will now arrive on foot or by bike rather than by car.

¹ Freeware available at both www.smartcodecentral.org and www.transect.org.

² SmartCode Version 9.2, accessed online at www.smartcodecentral.org; July, 2010.



Figure 11 – The Rural-to-Urban Transect on the Ground and in “Plan View”



© DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY

Source: Center for Applied Transect Studies



The following recommendations focus on updates to the zoning and subdivision codes; however, it is highly recommended that the Public Works Department - Zoning Division and the Development Department work together to determine if the SmartCode could work in Parkersburg or if it is better to incorporate certain elements and principles into the existing format.

Recommendations:

1. *Revise the zoning ordinance.*

The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1973 and has been amended over the past 37 years. The ordinance should be reviewed and amendments made to the text as well as pertinent changes to the zoning map to make it consistent with the Future Land Use recommendations included in the adopted Comprehensive Master Plan Update. Suggested areas that need to be reviewed and amended include the following:

- a) Make the zoning ordinance consistent with the zoning provisions of Chapter 8A – Planning of the West Virginia Code.
- b) Review and update definitions even though it appears this was recently amended. Also provide consistent terminology throughout the ordinance.
- c) **Manage the variety of uses** permitted in each zoning district, removing incompatible uses/densities and adding compatible uses/densities to those permitted by right or by conditional use.
- d) **Manage the consistent scale and flexible design of buildings** in each district that establishes a distinctive character through minimum and/or maximum standards for lot area, setbacks, building height, and density.
- e) Encourage development patterns that can be **effectively served by transit**, including mixed-use community based centers.
- f) Manage the amount of **off-street parking** in recognition of the amount and proximity of on-street parking, joint use of existing off-street parking, and access to transit services.
- g) Retain, and where possible increase, **the amount and connectivity** of pervious, green and **open space** that affects environmental qualities, e.g. water quality, wetlands and hydrology, microclimate temperatures, and wildlife corridors.
- h) Improve the **efficiency/effectiveness of administration** through re-organization of sections, updated and applicable definitions, and removal of conflicting provisions.
- i) Provide for **maximum impervious surface requirements** to reduce runoff; encourage the use of pervious surfaces whenever possible, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.
- j) Provide an Article on supplemental regulations which allows regulations for specific uses and structures and a one-time link to the district regulations.
- k) **Group similar uses** in the district regulations rather than listing separately to reduce omitting uses.
- l) Provide **screening and buffer standards** (already provided in the Subdivision Ordinance) that will regulate new uses within an existing structure or development on one site.
- m) Add a section on **mixed uses** that provides for traditional neighborhood development.
- n) Review latest FEMA flood plain mapping to ensure consistency of ordinance language and mapping.



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- o) Provide for **overlay districts** such as mixed-use (traditional neighborhood development), flood plain, highway corridor and others.
- p) Review sign area and height of free standing signs in Sign section.
- q) Review purpose and scope of each district to **ensure compatibility** with Comprehensive Master Plan recommendations.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; Board of Zoning Appeals; builders; developers; residents

Funding Sources: City Budget, Planning Grants

2. *Revise zoning district locations and boundaries.*

The current city Zoning Map will need to be reviewed and amended to make it consistent with the Future Land Use Map and to provide for other districts as recommended. Attention should be given to new or revised districts, FEMA flood plain mapping overlay and other overlay districts recommended in the Zoning ordinance amendments. Also review for consistency with land uses in Wood County.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; Board of Zoning Appeals; builders; developers; residents

Funding Sources: City Budget

3. *Revise the subdivision ordinance.*

The City's current Subdivision Regulations are contained in Chapter Three- Subdivision Regulations of Part Thirteen of the Codified Ordinances. Most of the regulations are 30 years old and do not reflect current practices or sufficient detail to manage new developments. The city should review the regulations and update to assure the best land development and land use controls are in place. The following are some of the amendments Parkersburg should consider.

- a) Provide a good set of definitions that apply to the entire ordinance to clarify terms and eliminate inconsistencies.
- b) Review Chapter 8A Planning of the West Virginia Code to verify that the City's subdivision ordinance is compliant.
- c) Establish updated subdivision and development design standards including plan requirements, site development standards, modifications of development standards, covenants and deeds, and mapping and monuments.
- d) Provide updated infrastructure and grading standards for streets, potable water, sewers, fire hydrants, stormwater, and grading.



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- e) Update procedures for processing applications, amendments, waivers, appeals and improvement guarantees. Ensure consistency with the requirements of Chapter 8A of the WV Code.
- f) Develop detailed plan and plat standards and requirements.
- g) Develop detailed engineering standards for streets and parking, utilities, stormwater management, and other site development requirements.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division;

Support Partners: Planning Commission; Board of Zoning Appeals; builders; developers; residents

Funding Sources: City Budget

4. *Develop and adopt new sign ordinance.*

Clearly state community expectations (especially in certain districts – downtown), while giving developer flexibility. For example, monument signs should be encouraged on major thoroughfares (i.e. Emerson, etc.) to reduce safety hazards and improve aesthetics (visual appearance) of the community. Both community surveys said Parkersburg needed to improve aesthetics – a new sign ordinance starts to address this issue

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; WV Department of Transportation; builders; developers; residents

Funding Sources: City Budget

Visioning for Targeted Redevelopment Areas

The Future Land Use Map identifies ten locations that are targeted for infill (new use on vacant parcel) and redevelopment (changes to existing properties). However, each area is different in terms of existing uses and the potential for new uses. Once the subdivision and zoning regulations are adopted, the Development Department should take the lead in defining a viable vision for each area that would guide both public and private redevelopment efforts. A range of stakeholders/partners – residents, business owners, the development community, and newly established Neighborhood Associations – should be involved in the visioning process. Once the vision is established, zoning and subdivision codes should be adjusted to accommodate preferred uses if necessary.

Recommendations

Use the following ideas to jump start the visioning process for targeted infill and redevelopment areas shown on the Future Land Use Map. The process recently used for



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developing the vision for the abandoned parcels on the Little Kanawha River would be a good model for other areas of the city. Below are a few areas the City should first focus on.

- a) **Downtown Waterfront:** Alternative housing choices, i.e. apartments and condominiums, places to eat and shop, educational opportunities, and public spaces that invite residents to live and play in town after business hours would all be appropriate here, as well as in the urban core.
- b) **Fort Boreman Hill:** A mix of uses, including some type of convention center, up-scale housing, and the new National Guard Armory.
- c) **Garfield and Murdoch Avenue corridor:** This area is ideal for new office space and smaller scale commercial. Improved pedestrian access along the corridor should provide connections to surrounding neighborhoods so that residents can safely walk to new and existing businesses.
- d) **Parkersburg South High School:** This area presents opportunity for alternative types of housing within walking distance of commercial and recreation areas. Re-use of the present National Guard Armory as a community center and/or South Parkersburg Library locations should be explored.
- e) **Gihon Village Shopping Center:** Redevelopment in this area would be primarily commercial, but would increase in density so that transit service would be more efficient. Large expanses of parking could be reduced and pedestrian and bicyclist access could be improved so that residents in adjacent neighborhoods can choose to walk to new shops or medical offices. An overlay zone could be used here to encourage the development of a true village center.
- f) **19th Street, Dudley Avenue and St. Mary's Avenue:** This area presents an opportunity for infill (traditional neighborhood) development. The existing roadway network, built environment and services (including McKinley Elementary and Parkersburg High School), indicates that this area at one time was a small, but vibrant commercial district.
- g) **Plum Street, 13th Street, and 7th Street:** This area centers on the Jefferson Elementary School and would provide a transition between the general commercial activities along 7th Street and the residential areas to the north and west. Opportunities exist for smaller scale office or commercial uses, as well as higher density housing.
- h) **Emerson Avenue:** General commercial uses are stretched out along this corridor already. However, as properties redevelop over time consideration should be given to improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding residential areas, as well as to design standards to enhance the overall appearance of the corridor.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; builders; developers; residents

Funding Sources: City, state, and private investors and developers

Increase Land Value, Reduce Surface Parking

Downtown Parkersburg has a tremendous amount of surface parking. While this might be cost effective for a property owner, so much parking has a negative impact on the visual appearance and feel of the



city. It is also an underutilization of land for a city that is nearly built out. The city should further explore the financial implications of the extensive use of land for surface parking and the potential benefits of converting some areas to other uses, as vast tracts of surface parking can discourage private sector investment.

Recommendations

- 1. Conduct a pilot analysis of the financial return to the landowner and the city associated with the redevelopment of an existing surface lot as a building with parking on the ground floor and apartments above or retail on the ground floor with parking above.**

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (www.cnt.org) recently published a study,³ that looked at the potential of redeveloping surface lots to meet the growing demand for affordable, workforce, senior, and market rate housing near transit in the Chicago area; the potential tax revenue generated by redevelopment; barriers to redevelopment; and strategies to manage parking demand, though not remove it entirely.

The methodology involves estimating existing revenue and expenses for maintaining existing lots and then comparing current revenues to the potential tax revenue that could be generated if the lots were converted to residential, commercial, or mixed use developments. To calculate the potential property tax development revenue the formula to the right was used.

$$\text{Potential Property Tax Development Revenue} = (\text{Comparable taxes} / \text{s.f.} * \text{Total s.f. of proposed development by tax class and building type})$$

- Time Horizon:** 2014-2015
Lead Partners: Development Department
Support Partners: Development Authority; Business students from WVU-P and other local colleges
Funding Sources: City, state, and private investors

- 2. Review best practices in downtown parking policies to identify appropriate policies for Parkersburg.**

Suggested references include:

U.S. Parking Policies: An Overview of Management Strategies, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, February 2010.

Parking Management: Strategies for More Efficient Use of Parking Resources, TDM Encyclopedia, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Updated 25 February 2010.

Reforming Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth: Parking Best Practices & Strategies For Supporting Transit Oriented Development In the San Francisco Bay Area, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, June 2007.

³ Paved Over: Surface Parking Lots or Opportunities for Tax-Generating, Sustainable Development in November 2006



Time Horizon:

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Public Works Department – Zoning Division; Downtown Task Force

Funding Sources: City, state, and private investors

Smart Growth through Targeted Annexation and Infill Development

Parkersburg has a limited amount of space within its borders, which constrains the potential for new development. However, annexation can be used to increase the land area of the city. The annexation process is set out in the West Virginia Code and includes three methods: minor boundary adjustments, whereby the municipality petitions the adjacent county to adjust boundaries at city's expense; annexation by election, whereby a petition is made to vote on the annexation; and annexation without an election, whereby the majority of voters in the proposed annexation area petitions the municipality to be annexed.

Targeted annexation areas for future consideration are identified on the 2020 Land Use Policy (Future Land Use) Map. Recommended annexation areas are ambitious and long range, but provide Parkersburg with opportunities for growth. These areas reflect a scaling down of the recommendations found in the 2001 Plan due to the limitations imposed by the regions rough topography. However, within these areas, there are two major target areas: along the Route 14 corridor to the south and east of the City to I-77. Future land use in the southern area should be a continuation of the growth of the Patriot Center as a regional commercial center. Industrial activities should be encouraged to the east. However, under current laws, property owners must initiate the process and to date have been reluctant to do so.

The Development Department is currently working on Annexation Information Packets that will provide residents with basic information regarding how the annexation process works and a quality map that shows the existing boundaries of the city.

In addition to annexing properties currently outside of the City's boundaries, Parkersburg can also grow by encouraging developers to make the most of the vacant and underutilized properties within the City. Commonly referred to as "infill" development, this smart growth approach to new development takes advantage of existing infrastructure and also helps to stimulate additional new growth in the surrounding areas. Infill can take the form of rehabilitating older buildings to serve new purposes or by constructing new.



Recommendations:

- 1. *Parkersburg should lobby state legislators to revise West Virginia’s annexation regulations to address the authority and procedures to allow for the annexation of large areas via major boundary adjustments.***

This would help to eliminate the “checkerboard” annexations that have occurred in the past, including along the fringes of the city limits. It would also strengthen the city’s ability to annex infill areas. Once this type of annexation process is approved at the state level, the City of Parkersburg can then develop incentives for property owners in targeted areas that will make it worth their while to be incorporated into the city.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; City Council; Mayor

Funding Sources: City Budget

- 2. *Require all properties being considered for annexation to have streets and other infrastructure that meet city code standards as a condition for annexation.***

Parkersburg is not in a position to bear the cost of ensuring that annexed properties meet city standards, but is often forced to do so as there is no language in the current code that requires property owners to do this prior to annexation. However, WV Code does give municipalities the right to include such language in their codes. The city can either require the property owner to make the improvements, or, with prior notification, can complete the improvements and then bill the abutting property owners for the improvements.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; City Council; Mayor

Funding Sources: City Budget

- 3. *Develop and maintain a database of vacant properties in the City.***

By having this information readily available, the City would be in a better position to work with developers to target appropriate properties for redevelopment. In addition, as funding and grant opportunities become available, the city need only go to the database to fill out the necessary paperwork. Student interns would be ideal to complete this task.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division

Support Partners: Planning Commission; City Council; Mayor, WVU-P

Funding Sources: City Budget, student interns



4. Provide incentives to encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized properties throughout the City.

Incentives could include a guaranteed streamlined review process for developers, density bonuses (see the Housing Plan), or could come in the form of assistance with acquisition, clean-up, and resale of environmentally challenging sites. The property database discussed in the previous recommendation would allow the city to direct developers to appropriate sites and provide basic information regarding any constraints on the property in question, thus facilitating the process.

Time Horizon: 2012 forward

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: Developers, financial institutions

Funding Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Group (CDBG) Program and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP); West Virginia Development Fund Leveraged Loan Program and Demolition Program



Economic Development Plan

The City of Parkersburg has been working hard to implement recommendations related to economic development since its last Comprehensive Master Plan was completed in 2001. But this process takes time and even though the current recession has affected local economic revitalization efforts, good things are happening in Parkersburg.

Recent accomplishments since the 2001 plan include, keeping Mountain State Blue Cross in the City, and getting Coldwater Creek to locate its distribution facility in South Parkersburg. WVU-P is working on the rehabilitation of an old building on Market Street and hopes to have classes, as well as provide space for new businesses. New streetscapes on Market Street and on 5th Street are creating a more inviting feel to the downtown. There are also many projects in the planning stages that have the potential to have a positive impact on the City's economy, including new development on Fort Boreman Hill.

At a regional level, there is also reason to be optimistic. The Polymer Alliance Zone (PAZ) provides a strong core for developing new supply and support businesses, the new Hino Motors facility in Williamstown is expected to grow, and the State of West Virginia has made a strong commitment to technology-based economic development (TBED). Their WV Blueprint for TBED outlines five key components that need to be addressed in order for West Virginia to compete successfully in the global market place: talent, early-stage seed capital, entrepreneurial know-how, image, and leadership. While more work needs to be done, Parkersburg has already taken steps, in each of these areas, to make itself a more attractive place to do business.

- **Talent** – the establishments of a Downtown Farmers Market, new Skateboard Park and the redevelopment of Point Park are just a few of the new amenities making Parkersburg a desirable place to live, work and play.
- **Early-stage seed capital** – The Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council makes available small, revolving loans to businesses. The City makes available matching grants to improve the façade buildings downtown.
- **Entrepreneurial know-how** – Civic organizations, including the Rotary and Lions Club, share information and a give back to the community
- **Image** – Streetscape improvements ,CVB website and urban bike trails
- **Leadership** – The Area Roundtable and Downtown Taskforce promote economic growth and development in the City.

This plan focuses on completing several economic development initiatives already underway and identifying ways the City can facilitate the implementation of the State's blueprint for success.

Goal for Economic Development

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg is nationally recognized as a great place to live and do business, with both national and home-grown companies choosing to locate here as a result of strong support for the growth and development of a wide range of technology-based businesses.



Chapter 5 – Economic Development Plan

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Works with regional and state partners to facilitate the growth and development of targeted industry clusters already in the region such as Advanced Materials and Chemicals (Polymer Alliance Zone) and the Healthcare Industry, as well as encouraging the growth and development of new clusters such as Advanced Energy and Heritage Tourism.
2. Formalizes the volunteer Downtown Task Force into a permanent management organization through the national Main Street Program.
3. Partners with property owners to complete projects that will improve the first impressions of Parkersburg along the major gateways into town, including WV 14, Murdoch Avenue, Emerson Avenue, and 7thStreet.
4. Works with a variety of partners, including the Area Roundtable, developers, and financial institutions, to attract new commercial enterprises to Fort Boreman Hill without increasing vacancies in commercial properties throughout the city. Targets already under consideration include a new National Guard Armory and Convention Center.
5. Continues to partner with WVU-P, Wood County Schools, the Workforce Investment Board and local businesses to provide unemployed and underemployed residents affordable, relevant training and educational opportunities for locally available and emerging jobs, particularly those in targeted industries.
6. Partners with WVU-P and the West Virginia Small Business Development Center to develop and maintain a business incubator in the City to encourage the growth and development of small entrepreneurial ventures.
7. Ensures that infrastructure (sewer, water, and telecommunications) are available and operational.
8. Ensures Parkersburg is a place for successful business operations, but also has recreation and lifestyle amenities for their employees.
9. Develops new initiatives that provide incentives for new and existing businesses to locate in the City of Parkersburg.

Facilitate the Growth and Development of Industry Clusters

An industry cluster is a system of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field. The term was introduced in the 1990s by Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter and has become a standard unit for analyzing a region's economic prospects. Business clusters are a more strategic approach to economic development than just attracting the next big company because they exchange ideas regularly through daily business communications and transactions, leading to innovation, which is essential to economic growth. Although clusters tend to grow and develop naturally, their growth can be facilitated by ensuring that key infrastructure is in place to support their growth. As industry clusters grow and develop, new jobs are created and wages tend to increase, particularly within the technology-based clusters. Additional wages means more disposable income is available for residents to spend in the local economy, thus enhancing the growth and development of other economic sectors such as retail, personal services, and construction.

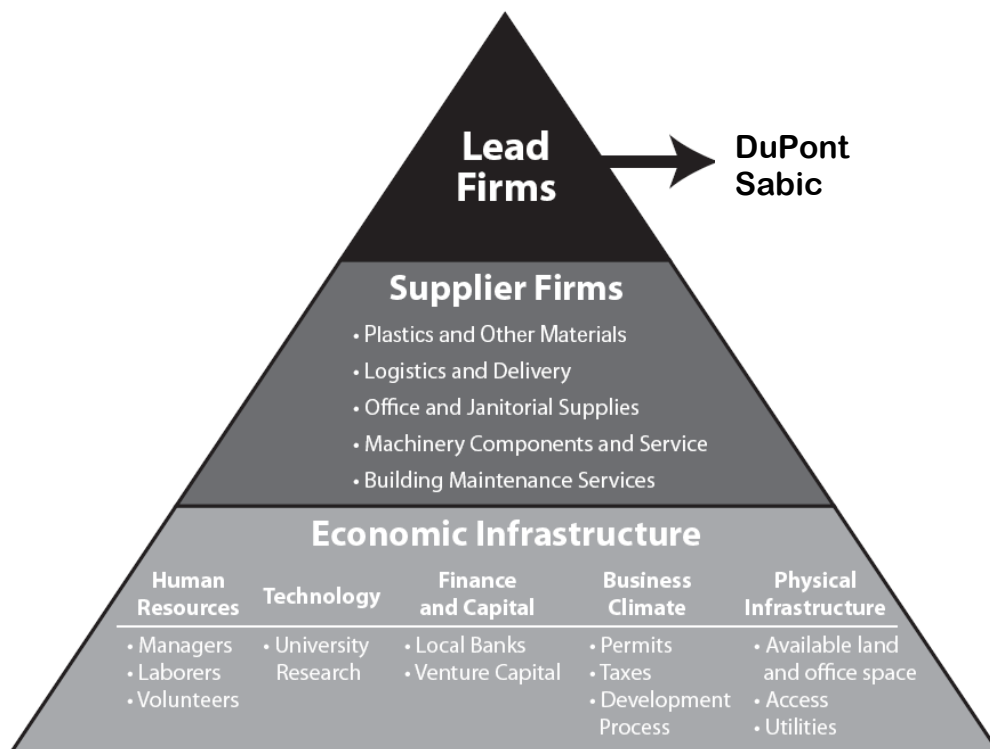


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The Polymer Plastics manufacturing cluster is a prominent cluster in Parkersburg region. Growing this cluster is a priority at the local, regional, and state levels as evidenced by the establishment of the Polymer Alliance Zone (PAZ) in 1996, a member organization that is comprised of polymer and related industries. Other existing industry clusters in the area include Healthcare, Education, and Warehousing. There is also the potential to support the growth of two additional clusters, Advanced Energy and Heritage Tourism, as they fit well with other City goals, including downtown redevelopment, historic preservation, and becoming more sustainable. They also take advantage of Parkersburg’s assets, such as its prime location along the river, access to regional markets and the interstate highway network, as well as access to resources provided by West Virginia University – Parkersburg (WVU-P).

Figure 12 provides a general idea of how a cluster is structured, with lead firms that specialize in polymer development and production being supported by a network of supplier firms that provide raw materials and a wide array of support functions. The growth of all the firms in the pyramid rely on a foundation of strong economic infrastructure – human resources, technology, finance and capital, the business climate, and the physical infrastructure.

Figure 12 – Industry Cluster Pyramid





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Recommendations:

1. **Create a Website Taskforce comprised of a representative from each city department that will be responsible for leading a complete overhaul of the City's website in order to provide a "one stop shop" for prospective and existing businesses and residents searching for important information.**

In today's economy, easy access to up to date local information regarding available properties, the city's development and permitting process, taxes, and workforce availability is critical. In addition, information about the many community and cultural amenities available in Parkersburg such as schools, parks and recreation, and neighborhoods is also important so that prospective employers and employees know what the area has to offer. When all other elements (site availability, taxes, and available workforce) are equal, the presence of these amenities can be a deciding factor in the relocation process. A sample new home page for Parkersburg's website should be easy to navigate with links that take the visitor to the information they need. WVU-P offers a Degree Certificate and an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Animation, Game and Web Design and the city should explore the possibility of an internship program to help develop and maintain the site in addition to a full time IT person.

Time Horizon: Start up in 2011/2012; ongoing maintenance

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: WVU-P, Local and regional economic development agencies.

Funding Sources: City budget; student interns

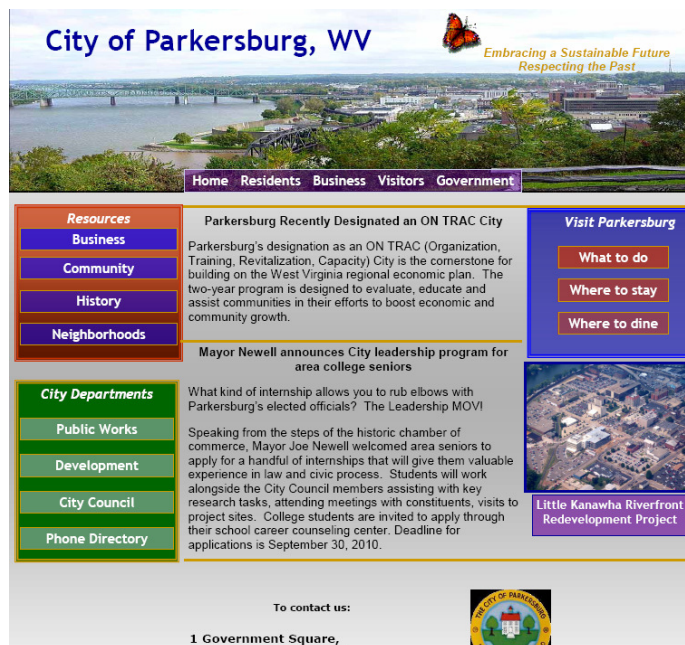


Figure 13 – A sample City website



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2. **Help encourage young professionals to stay in Parkersburg by working with the Young Emerging Leaders of the Mid-Ohio Valley and similar groups to develop a page on the updated website that is geared specifically to highlighting jobs, amenities, and activities in the city that appeal to younger generations.**

Invite representatives from local young professional groups to meet with the Website Taskforce in order to develop a page on the website that is specifically geared to young working adults. Job and volunteer opportunities, social networking events, and recent news of interest are just a few of the possible topics that could be included. A regular “In the Spotlight” segment that highlights local success stories of young entrepreneurs should also be included, as they can provide inspiration to others

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: WVU-P, Chamber of Commerce, Wood County Schools.

Funding Sources:

3. **Continue to partner with WVU-P, the Area Round Table, the Workforce Investment Board, and other organizations to identify opportunities to support the growth and development of new industries in the City and Region.**

Advanced Energy and Heritage Tourism are good targets and fit well with other goals including downtown redevelopment, historic preservation, and becoming more sustainable

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: The Area Roundtable

Support Partners: Local financial institutions; City of Parkersburg.

Funding Sources: INNOVA, WV Development Office, U.S. Department of Interior

Downtown Revitalization

Parkersburg’s downtown is the core of the city and its success impacts the entire community. Ultimately, the vision for Downtown is that it not only is a strong business center, but also becomes a vibrant livable neighborhood. Parkersburg already has a Downtown Task Force, a group of dedicated volunteers committed to revitalizing the downtown. The city was recently designated as an ON TRAC (Organization, Training, Revitalization, and Capacity) Community, which was created by Main Street West Virginia. The two-year program is designed to evaluate, educate and assist communities in their efforts to boost economic and community growth. Once the program is completed, the city becomes eligible for the Main Street Program, which helps provide funding for Parkersburg to hire a full-

“A vibrant downtown gives the whole community and region a sense of pride and a positive self-image. It serves as an anchor for the community by providing stability that is necessary for economic growth.”

West Virginia Department of Commerce Community Resources Web page



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time downtown manager, which would allow downtown programs to gain momentum and the Community Development and Planning Departments to focus on issues in other areas of the city.

Recommendations:

1. ***Use the ON TRAC program to lay the groundwork for becoming a Main Street Community and hiring a full-time downtown manager.***

Active participation in the ON TRAC program will provide the basic education and training needed to move into the Main Street Program.

Time Horizon: 2013-2015

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Downtown Task Force/COC/CVB.

Funding Sources: n/a

2. ***Develop a banner sponsorship program for downtown Parkersburg.***

Not only do the banners make the city look nice, they can be used to promote businesses, as well as events. As part of the program, a recognizable city logo should be developed and used as part of the banners. Some communities use a local landmark in graphic form on the banners; others are simpler and include only a welcome and the sponsor

Time Horizon: 2013-2015

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Downtown Task Force

Funding Sources: Business sponsors

3. ***Work with WWW to develop a Wayfinding Sign System Plan for the City of Parkersburg***

A good wayfinding sign system would help to promote tourism, highlight and market key attractions, enhance urban design and the visitor's experience, reinforce the community's identity, and improve traffic flow and safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Elements of the plan would include developing sign design concepts (also using a new city logo), a preferred inventory of signs, locations, and messages, and a prioritization schedule

Time Horizon: 2013-2015

Lead Partners: WWW, City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: Downtown Task Force, Local businesses, Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, WV Department of Transportation – Highway Division

Funding Sources: Transportation Enhancement Program, Business Sponsors



Gateway Improvements

First impressions are important to a City, especially one that is located on a major highway. A good first impression can mean the difference between a traveler stopping for fuel, food, and an overnight stay or passing through on their way to some other destination. Attractive gateways into a community are an important element of economic development as they foster community pride and strong sense of place among local residents.

There are several gateways into Parkersburg that should be updated so they are more attractive and welcoming to both visitors and residents. The City has already tackled some sections of the 5th Street gateway; however, 7th Street, WV 14, and, Murdoch and Garfield Avenues also deserve attention. Juliana Street should also be considered as Fort Boreman Hill develops as this will be the primary connection between the hill and Downtown Parkersburg. Gateway features typically include signage and other elements such as trees and banners, clearly showing visitors they are in a certain location.

Recommendations:

- 1. Develop a set of common elements that can be used by public and private organizations to create beautiful, welcoming, and recognizable gateways into the City of Parkersburg.***

Using 5th Street as a starting point, identify and make available online as part of a broader set of design guidelines, a core set of recognizable streetscape elements that can be tailored to fit the different character of each of the city's gateways, including trees, lighting, banners, and wayfinding signage.

Time Horizon: 2011-2012

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Department of Public Works; WWW

Funding Sources: Department operating budgets; possible grants

- 2. Consider funding a gateway improvement program similar to the sidewalk improvement program targeted to business owners along the gateway corridors to encourage them to assist with implementing the streetscapes by making investments in beautifying their own properties using the streetscape design elements***

A public/private partnership would bring benefits to both players, reduced costs for exterior improvements, improved image of businesses with more customers as the end result. There may be an opportunity to expand the role of the Tree Commission to include design and maintenance of gate way features.

Time Horizon: 2013-2015

Lead Partners: City Council; Development Department

Support Partners: Tree Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, local garden clubs and businesses

Funding Sources: Various grant and partnership opportunities, including the Transportation Enhancement Program



- 3. Work with WWW to develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the design and installation of streetscapes throughout the city. These types of improvements greatly improve the overall character of the city and also add value to adjacent private properties.**

A CIP would allow the city to prioritize expenditures, as well as show a commitment to beautifying the city. This also sets the stage for identifying and applying for potential alternative funding sources. It also helps to ensure that as state projects come online the streetscape details can be included.

Time Horizon: 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: WWW; Public Works Department

Funding Sources: City Budget

Appropriate Economic Development on Fort Boreman Hill

Fort Boreman Hill is the only large tract of undeveloped land in Parkersburg. Now that Corridor D is complete, improved access to the site should make it a much more desirable location for new development. Currently, the National Guard is considering constructing a new facility on the Hill and there have also been some discussions about a minor league stadium. The 2001 Central Business District (CBD) Market and Planning Study recommended that Fort Boreman be considered as part of a redefined CBD, with a mix of office development and housing in addition to the park. Ultimately, the market will determine the mix; however, the City can use their land development ordinances to manage what would be allowed to develop. See the Land Use Chapter for a more thorough discussion of the opportunities associated with Fort Boreman.



Recommendation:

Promote an appropriate mix of land uses that will improve the quality of life for residents, as well as create jobs.

The key to the success of the development of the Fort Boreman Hill will be to minimize the relocation of existing city businesses to new spaces on the hill, particularly commercial enterprises, thus leaving vacant shopping centers elsewhere in the city. An overlay district with design standards should be included in the updated zoning ordinance to better regulate new development here.

Time Horizon: 2011 - 2012

Lead Partners: Wood County Development Authority



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Support Partners: Public Works Department – Zoning Division, Development Department
Funding Sources: n/a

Business Incubator

Business incubators are becoming one of the tools to help start-up businesses get off the ground. Most incubators follow a traditional model where a building is set up with appropriate space for targeted businesses at below market rent. In addition, administrative and technical support is offered for each incubating business.

Parkersburg's central location in the Mid Ohio Valley makes it a natural place for such a facility. Establishing an incubator that can be used to support different types of business, rather than one type of business, would be more beneficial to the City and business owners as it would increase the range of small business opportunities. WVU-P is already considering the inclusion of incubator space in their new downtown facility, which is ideal given its access, amenities, and existing businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Identify which growing industries in the area would benefit from an incubator.

Each industry will have different needs. Knowing ahead of time what the targets are will drive site/building selection and technology requirements.

Time Horizon: 2011 to identify industries
Lead Partners: The Area Round Table; Chamber of Commerce; WVU-P
Support Partners: Mayor's Office, Development Department, Polymer Alliance Zone, WIB-MOV
Funding Sources: n/a

2. Identify appropriate locations and establish a business incubator

Depending on the target industries, this could be downtown if oriented more towards development of professional service or hospitality businesses or in South Parkersburg if more geared towards polymer or advanced energy production. If possible, consider co-locating the incubator with the Farmer's Market in a rehabilitated building or in the new WVU-P building downtown. This would provide a year-round venue for the market and provide greater visibility for incubating businesses.

Time Horizon: 2012
Lead Partners: Development Department
Support Partners: The Area Round Table; WVU-P, National Business Incubation Association
Funding Sources: WVU-P Foundation, Appalachian Regional Council Grants, WV Governor's Community Partnership program; INNOVA Commercialization Group



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Supportive Infrastructure for 21st Century Global Economy

As discussed at the beginning of this plan, businesses looking to relocate or develop in Parkersburg need access to what is often referred to as economic infrastructure - human resources, technology, finance and capital, the business climate, and physical infrastructure. It is in these areas that the city can best support economic development. Each category is discussed in brief below. Details are provided in other sections of the Comprehensive Master Plan and are referenced accordingly.

Human Resources refer primarily to the available workforce. While there are many resources to help residents find jobs and assist with retraining if needed, the greatest challenge for the city is to find ways to keep young people from leaving town. In addition to working to attract new employers to the Parkersburg area, the city can work to ensure a variety of affordable housing is available (Housing Plan). Recreational and lifestyle amenities, including special events and recreation facilities also make the city more attractive place to live. (Cultural and Historic Resources Plan).

Technology: High speed internet and wireless internet access have become essential business components and should be available at least Downtown, if not throughout the entire community.

Finance and Capital: Access to financing and venture capital is particularly important for new and small businesses. There are a number of lending institutions within the city. In addition, the Mid Ohio Valley Regional Planning Council has a revolving loan fund that is available. Another possibility would be to investigate the possibility of creating a local business development fund whereby local philanthropists and companies would donate funds to the fund, which in turn would be made available for new business ventures willing to locate within the city limits at relatively low rates. There are also federal and local grants programs that can be tapped into.

Business Climate: Businesses need to know that the development review process is predictable, as well as affordable. Making sure that new and existing business prospects have access to everything they need to make decisions is also important. An overhauled website as described previously would go a long way in meeting this need. A regular e-newsletter could eventually be developed in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority that could be sent to local businesses.

Physical Infrastructure: Adequate land, water and sewer, and other utilities must be available for business uses (Land Use Plan and Infrastructure Plan). It must also be apparent that they are available. Again, a new and improved website that includes or is linked to this information will help to get the word out.



Housing Plan

Improving Parkersburg’s existing housing stock continues to be a critical component of Parkersburg’s revitalization process. Since the completion of the 2001 Comprehensive Master Plan, the city has been somewhat successful in tackling this issue as evidenced by the Avery Court redevelopment project. However, recent market conditions, particularly an extremely tight financial market, have hindered efforts to entice developers to build new or to rehab housing within the City. In addition, the age and physical condition of the existing housing stock is not appealing to many of the area’s potential buyers. Yet, there are many indications there is a demand for housing in the City of Parkersburg, particularly for young adults looking for something other than a single family house, as well as seniors and “empty nesters” looking to downsize. This plan builds on the recommendations in the 2001 Plan and includes strategies to improve rental property maintenance, update existing codes to remove barriers to constructing a range of affordable housing types, and target specific locations for new or redeveloped housing.



Picture 17 – Residential neighborhood in south Parkersburg

Goal for Housing

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg has viable housing options for both renters and buyers with varying needs and lifestyles.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Ensures housing is well maintained and modernized for safety, energy efficiency, and appearance.
2. Facilitates redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties to viable uses, including affordable, alternative types of housing.
3. Works with developers to ensure retirement living offers a range of housing types in locations that are adjacent to or have easy access to public transportation, amenities, and services.

Make Older Housing an Asset

As indicated in the housing profile, approximately 64 percent of Parkersburg’s total housing units are over 50 years old. The age of the housing stock is important, because it is indicative of historic integrity, structural composition and condition, specifically in terms of electrical, heating, and plumbing. While older housing can enrich the unique character of a city, it can be significantly more expensive to maintain, because older housing tends to be less energy efficient and repairs and improvements can be

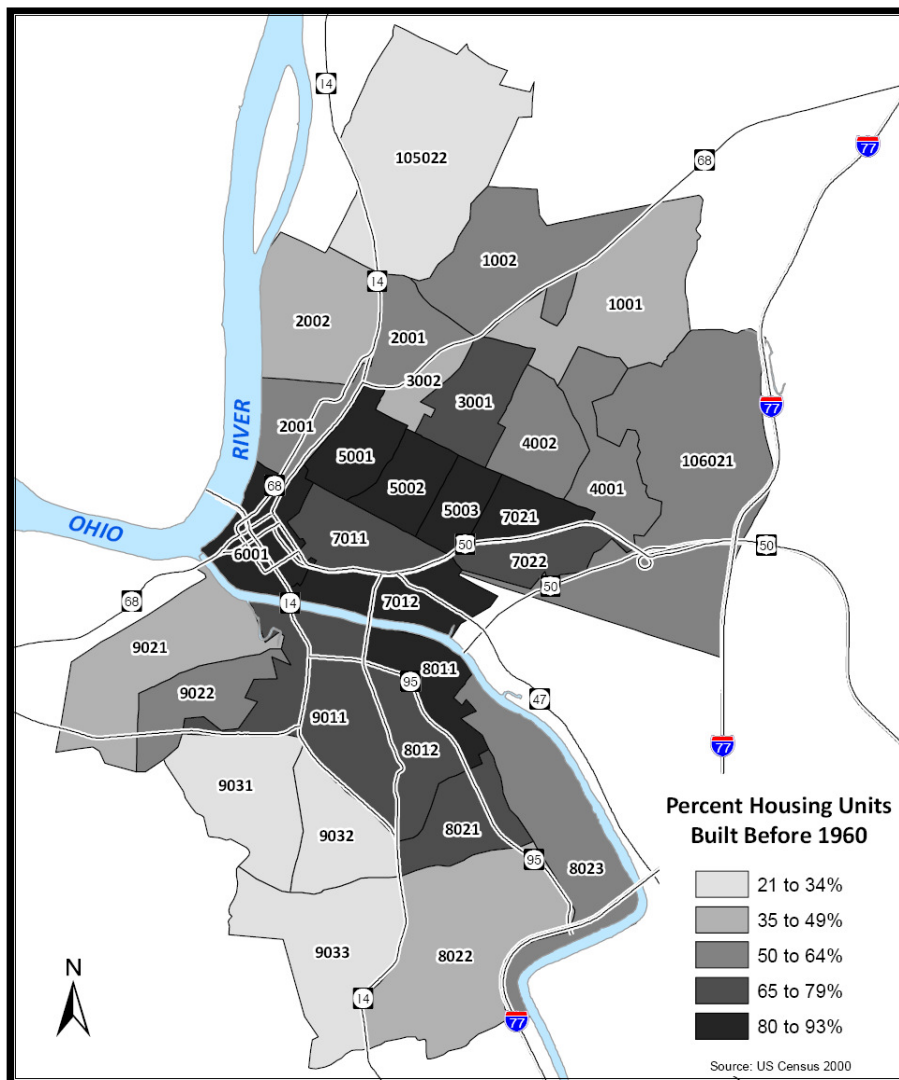


Chapter 6 – Housing Plan

costly. As a result it can be difficult to attract and retain homeowners, which can lead to a significant amount of rental and/or vacant properties.

Parkersburg has recently been successful in obtaining grant funds to help with the acquisition and demolition of vacant structures. However, the City continues to be challenged by absentee landlords who do not properly maintain rental units, which are often old homes. This is a common problem in communities throughout the country. When an owner can get market rental rates regardless of the condition of the property, there is little incentive to make improvements. There are also many property owners who find it less expensive to pay fines than to correct problems found during the normal inspection process.

Figure 14 – Percentage of Renter Occupied Housing Units





Recommendations:

- 1. Continue to identify and apply for grant funds that can be used for maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvement of existing homes in Parkersburg. Target areas with the highest proportion of older housing as shown in Figure 1.**

Parkersburg continues to be relatively successful in obtaining a wide range of grant funding for housing related issues and recently received \$1.3 Million in Neighborhood Stabilization grant funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds will be used to build 6 new single-family homes in the target neighborhood defined by 13th Street, 19th Street, St. Mary Avenue and Avery Street. By mixing new housing with existing housing, home values tend to go up within the neighborhood and are more likely to attract new investment over the long haul. The City's Development Department also makes a variety of low to no cost funds available for owners to improve their properties. Competitive grant programs are an essential funding component for cities such as Parkersburg and will continue to be an integral part of the equation until such time as tax revenues can cover such programs.



Picture 18 – Mixed housing in North Parkersburg

Time Horizon:	Ongoing
Lead Partners:	Development Department
Support Partners:	Parkersburg Housing Authority/Wood County HOME Consortium and West Virginia Housing Development Fund
Funding Sources:	West Virginia Housing Development Fund State Neighborhood Housing and Economic Stabilization Program (NHESP), Leveraged Loan Program, Mini-Mod Program, and Demolition Program; City of Parkersburg and Wood County HOME Consortium Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program, Emergency Repair Program, and Targeted Rental Rehabilitation Program

- 2. Create a "Housing Resources" webpage on the city's updated website that includes information about and links to local, state, and federal funding programs for homeowners looking to purchase or improve a home, as well as for developers interested in redevelopment projects and building affordable housing.**

One of the recommendations in the Economic Development Plan calls for a complete overhaul of the city's website, which should include a page that is dedicated to housing resources. Links to banks, the Federal Home Loan Bank program, local real estate workshops, and educational resources should be included. Also include information about local funding sources such as the



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Rental Rehab Grant, which provides up to \$10,000 for rehabilitation of housing units in targeted neighborhoods that will be offered as rentals at HUD rental rates for 5 yrs.

Time Horizon: Ongoing, with emphasis on 2011 for website construction

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: City of Parkersburg/Wood County HOME Consortium and West Virginia Housing Development Fund, Local Development community

Funding Sources: City budget

Expand Housing Diversity

Parkersburg's existing housing stock does not offer a wide range of housing types and prices options. In 2000, almost three quarters of Parkersburg's housing stock was single-family, detached housing and recent development trends suggest new housing is also predominantly single-family, detached. Yet not all of the city's residents want or can afford to buy a single family home, in fact, there is already a pent up demand for condominiums, apartments, and even townhomes, as evidenced by the waiting lists for those that do exist. Changes in demographics, particularly the aging of the population, suggest that the demand for alternative housing choices in the city will grow. Working to create a greater diversity of affordable modern housing will be very important if the city is to keep residents from moving out, as well as attract new residents, particularly higher income households looking to "move up" and young, entry level employees, who can't afford to purchase a home or simply don't want the financial responsibility associated with being a homeowner.



Picture 19 – Apartments such as these in South Parkersburg provide an alternative to the single family home in the city.

Recommendations:

- 1. Review and update the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance to ensure that there are no barriers to increasing the mix of housing available in Parkersburg.***

These two ordinances guide where different types of housing are located, and the density of that housing. The Zoning Ordinance, which has not been amended since its adoption in 1973, does provide for a variety of residential mixed uses (Planned Neighborhood Development District) and the B-4 Residential-Office District Use Regulations. The City may wish to consider amending their Zoning Ordinance to provide for a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) District. These districts encourage innovations in residential and nonresidential development and renewal and make use of mixed forms of development, are pedestrian friendly and reduce traffic congestion. Usually these districts are used as overlays so they can be used in a number of zoning districts. TND districts are very useful zoning applications for mature cities such as



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Parkersburg that have limited vacant land, but have renewal opportunities for mixed use development.

Time Horizon: 2011-2012

Lead Partners: Development Department - Planning Division

Support Partners: Public Works Department – Zoning Division, Developers, City of Parkersburg/Wood County HOME Consortium, and West Virginia Housing Development Fund

Funding Sources: City budget

2. Provide incentives for the construction of certain types of new housing in targeted locations of the city by streamlining the development review process.

Time is money for any developer. The city could guarantee that if a developer constructs a certain type of housing, for example housing for seniors or moderately priced condominiums, in a targeted area, the design review and permit process would be prioritized and completed in half the time, with reduced fees. This will require close coordination among several city departments and will take time to establish a new process.

Targeted areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan, include vacant and underutilized properties in the downtown, 19th Street and Dudley Avenue, 13th Street and Plum Street, and around Parkersburg South High School. Projects that should be priorities in the downtown would be condominiums and loft and studio apartments constructed in old buildings such as the old Blue Cross Headquarters and new buildings with parking on the first floor, that are within walking distance of the new riverfront park, the emerging arts district, WVUP, and the hospitals. These units will appeal to a wide range of buyers including young professionals, empty nesters, and students.

Town houses or mid-rise apartments with first floor parking should be considered a priority for vacant riverfront properties along the flood wall, as the ground level parking helps mitigate flood hazards, while the upper floors will have good river views. These units tend to command higher prices and would likely appeal to young couples or down-sizing baby boomers. In the areas around Parkersburg South High School, priorities would include town houses, garden style apartments, and smaller single floor homes specifically designed for seniors.



Picture 20 – The Wyngate Senior Living Community offers smaller single floor units in North Parkersburg



Time Horizon:	2012 forward
Lead Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Support Partners:	Developers, financial institutions
Funding Sources:	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Group (CDBG) Program and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP); West Virginia Development Fund Leveraged Loan Program and Demolition Program

3. *Update the city's codes to encourage the development of affordable housing units for sale and/or rent to accommodate a mix of tenants with different incomes in both new and redevelopment projects.*

Many communities across the country are including language in their subdivision regulations that require new and redevelopment projects to include a certain percentage of affordable units in order to prevent continued isolation of lower income families. Parkersburg could benefit from such a policy as per capita incomes in the city are relatively low and there are many residents who are currently spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

An alternative to **requiring** affordable units would be to provide incentives to developers in the form of density bonuses. Simply put, a density bonus permits developers to increase the number of units on a property if they agree to restrict the rents or sales price on some of the units and is part of the zoning code. Additional cash flow from the “bonus” units are used to offset the reduced revenues from the affordable units. WV Code allows for the inclusion of such incentives in the zoning code. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, density bonuses range from 15 percent to 25 percent and can be mandatory or voluntary and either set or flexible, depending upon the unique circumstances in each community.

Time Horizon:	2012 forward
Lead Partners:	Public Works Department-Zoning Division
Support Partners:	Development Department; Developers, financial institutions
Funding Sources:	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Group (CDBG) Program and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP); West Virginia Development Fund Leveraged Loan Program and Demolition Program



Transportation Plan

Parkersburg’s transportation system primarily consists of streets and highways, as well as a large but discontinuous sidewalk network. Currently there are no designated bike lanes and transit service is limited. In general, the community survey results indicate that residents of Parkersburg would like to see congestion and safety improved at several key locations throughout the city, including along WV 14, the intersection of Emerson Avenue and 36th Street, and the intersection of Rayon Road, Gihon Road, and WV 14. They would also like to see better enforcement of traffic laws within city neighborhoods, particularly posted speed limits, parking restrictions, and stopping at stop signs. In addition, many residents of Parkersburg are interested in being able to get to work and other destinations without always having to get in the car.



Picture 21 – Emerson Avenue is one of several roads in Parkersburg that are owned and maintained by the WV Department of Highways.

This plan focuses on ways the City can help to reduce congestion, improve safety and mobility for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists on City streets, and fill in the gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network to create more “complete streets”. The plan also considers reviewing transit routes in relation to changes in land use in an effort to improve service and briefly discusses the issue of parking as a predominant land use downtown.

By promoting, planning, and developing an improved, multimodal transportation system that accommodates walking, biking, and transit Parkersburg can be in a better position to address their air quality non-attainment status with the EPA. Walking and biking produce no toxic emissions, and transit uses far less energy per person to move people than the private car, thus helping to improve overall air quality in the city.

Goal for Transportation

By 2020, the City of Parkersburg has developed a balanced and efficient transportation system for all local modes of travelers, be they vehicular or non-vehicular uses.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Continues to work closely with the Wood-Washington-Wirt County Interstate Planning Commission (WWW) to ensure that proposed roadway and intersection improvements aimed at reducing congestion and scheduled in the State’s Transportation Improvement Program are funded and completed in a timely manner.
2. Ensures that neighborhood streets and sidewalks are safe and in good repair.



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3. Requires bicycle, pedestrian, and access management improvements as part of any road improvement project or new or revitalized commercial/residential development so that most residents throughout the City will have the option to walk and/or ride a bike safely to schools, jobs, shopping, and other local destinations.
4. Prioritizes a Downtown Circulation Study in order to identify specific improvements that would move traffic downtown while safely accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists. The study should consider the feasibility of enhancing the existing pedestrian network in the downtown with possible pedestrian-only alleyways and plazas
5. Works with the Bicycle Advisory Board and WVV to establish a network of bike paths in the community that connect residents to schools, neighborhoods and destinations such as Riverfront Park and the new skateboard park at Neal Park.

Complete Programmed Improvements on State Routes

Currently there are several improvement projects that have been identified by the City of Parkersburg as being a priority in order to improve traffic flow and safety and are programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the period 2012 to 2018. These projects include,

- Intersection improvements at Gihon Rd. and WV 14.
- Addition of a right turn lane on WV 68 (Garfield Avenue) at Ann St.
- The realignment of the intersection Emerson Avenue and 36th Street, as well as signal renovations and the construction of a turn lane on 36th St
- Improving WV 14 to a 4-lane highway from Mineral Wells to Pettyville

The completion of these projects is the responsibility of the State Division of Highways and the City has limited ability to control their scheduling and/or funding. This is further complicated by the lack of an approved Federal long range transportation spending bill.

Recommendations:

1. ***Ensure that proposed roadway and intersection improvements aimed at improving safety and reducing congestion are scheduled in the State's Transportation Improvement Program and are funded and completed in a timely manner.***

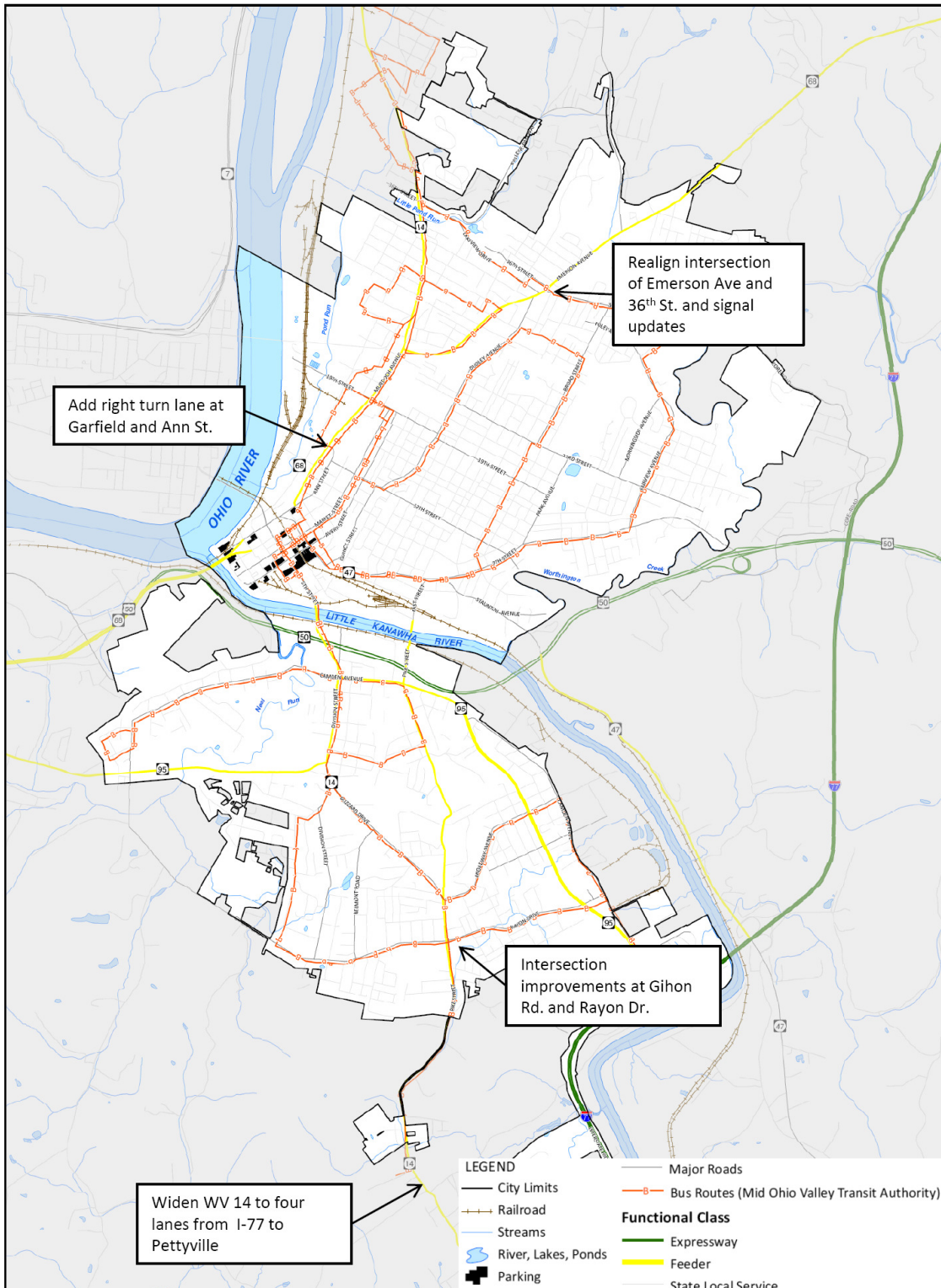
Continue to work with WVV to keep prioritized projects in Parkersburg on track.

Time Horizon:	2010 - 2020
Lead Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Support Partners:	WVV
Funding Sources:	State and federal highway funds as allocated



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Figure 15 – Targeted Improvement Projects



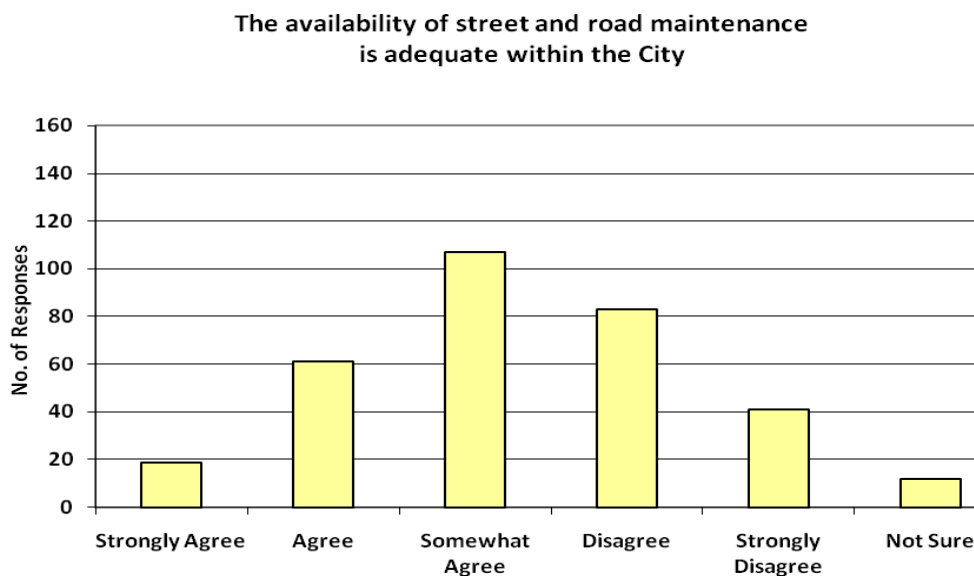
Source: FY 2010 Obligated Projects in the Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission Study Area



Maintain and Improve the Local Transportation Network

While the City can do little about the State Routes, they do have jurisdiction over a significant local street network. The community survey showed that there is room for improvement regarding the road maintenance currently provided by the City, as shown in **Figure 16**. The City will continue to dedicate funds to maintain and improve the local network as tax revenues allow. Residents are also concerned about road safety, particularly about drivers speeding and ignoring stop signs in their neighborhoods. Finally, there appears to be an increased demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly in South Parkersburg where there are numerous gaps in the sidewalk network and no marked bike lanes.

Figure 16 – Community Survey Results - Street and Road Maintenance



Recommendations:

- 1. Work with City Police and neighborhood associations to identify locations with higher than average traffic violation and generate ideas to improve enforcement.**

While residents have expressed concerns about speeding and ignoring traffic rules, there are no easy answers to this issue. A dialogue with neighborhood residents will be needed to identify local solutions to the problem.

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: Parkersburg Police Department

Support Partners: Development Department, Neighborhood Associations, WWW

Funding Sources: Part of an overall Neighborhood Outreach program



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- 2. Determine if traffic calming measures could be used to reduce speeding in target locations and begin to design and program these improvements so that they can be considered as part of a long term capital improvement program.***

There are a number of roadway design features that can be used to force drivers to slow down. Narrow travel lanes and bumping out the curbs at intersections are two common practices in use around the country. These options should be considered over the long term as a way to manage travel speeds in some neighborhoods. Ultimately these concepts would be incorporated into the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance or a Design Guide. TrafficCalming.org⁴ is an online resource that has details about design, policy, and numerous examples of techniques currently in use throughout the country.

In some locations, it may be appropriate to consider returning one-way streets back to two-way thoroughfares. However further study with the help of WWW and local residents will be needed to understand all of the potential implications of such change.

Regardless of which measures are ultimately selected, close coordination with the Fire Department will be needed to ensure that there is adequate access for their equipment.

Time Horizon: 2013 - 2015

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: WWW, City Council, local contractors

Funding Sources: City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

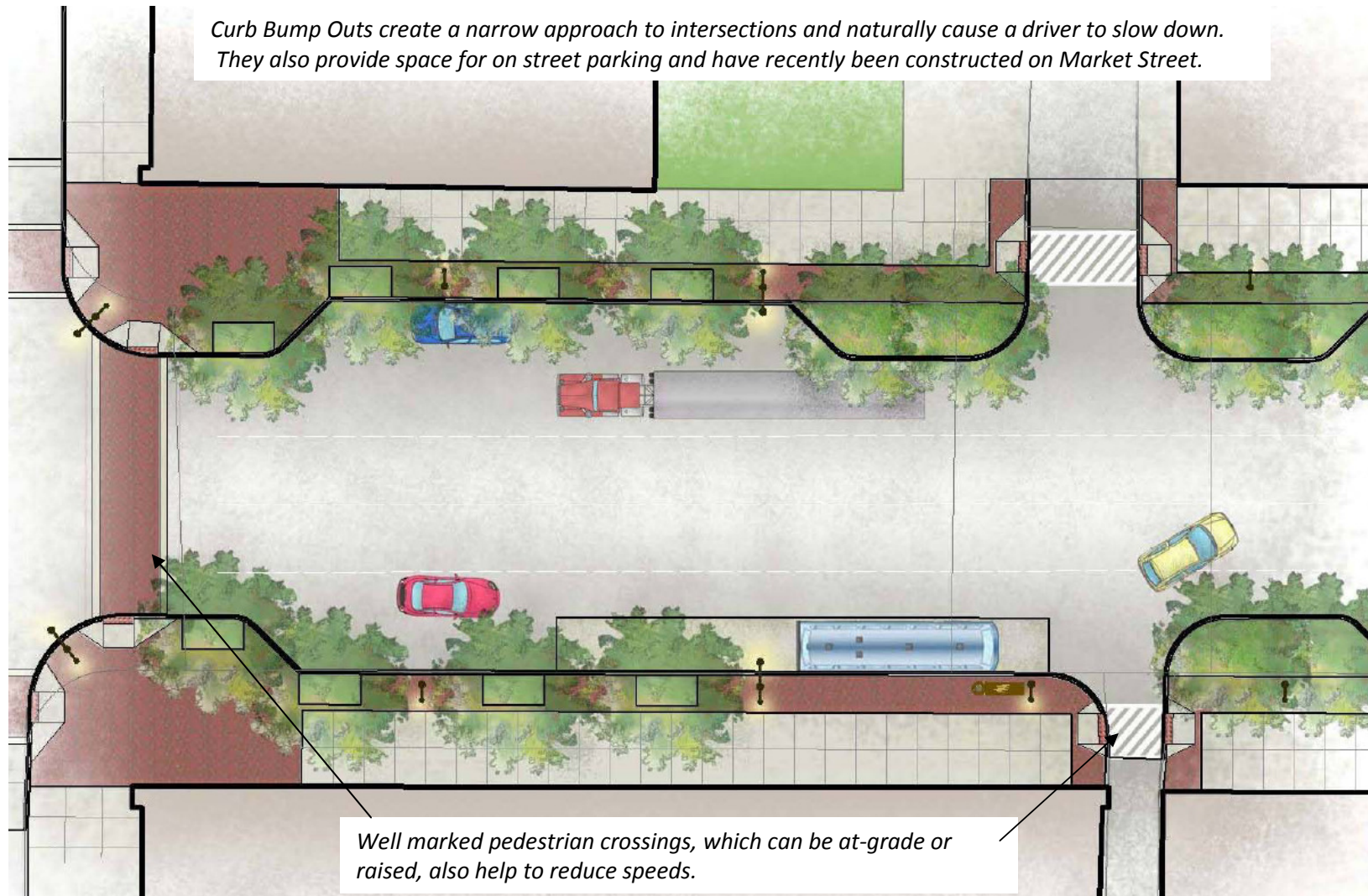


Picture 22 – Roundabouts slow traffic and help manage access. They also provide opportunities for stormwater management and green space.

⁴ www.trafficcalming.org



Picture 23 – Additional Traffic Calming Techniques





3. *Improve the overall appearance of the city's major thoroughfares*

Work with DOT to develop guidelines for streetscapes and signage along major thoroughfares. This can dramatically improve the visual appeal of a commercial thoroughfare and spur revitalization projects. Columbus, OH just completed a major improvement of an old commercial corridor (Morse Road) and now commercial development is returning. Since road improvements started, there has been an increase in redevelopment. Provide design guidelines to property owners to encourage their participation.

Time Horizon:	Ongoing
Lead Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Support Partners:	WWW, City Council, Tree Commission
Funding Sources:	City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

4. *Update the Subdivision Ordinance to include access management regulations that require shared driveways and parking whenever possible.*

This was a recommendation of the 2001 Plan and should be addressed. Reducing the number of entrances along a commercial corridor can go a long way in minimizing accidents and congestion. Provisions should be made for new development projects, as well as for redevelopment projects.

Time Horizon:	2013
Lead Partners:	Development Department – Planning Division; Public Works Department – Zoning Division;
Support Partners:	Planning Commission; builders, developers, residents
Funding Sources:	City Budget

Complete Streets

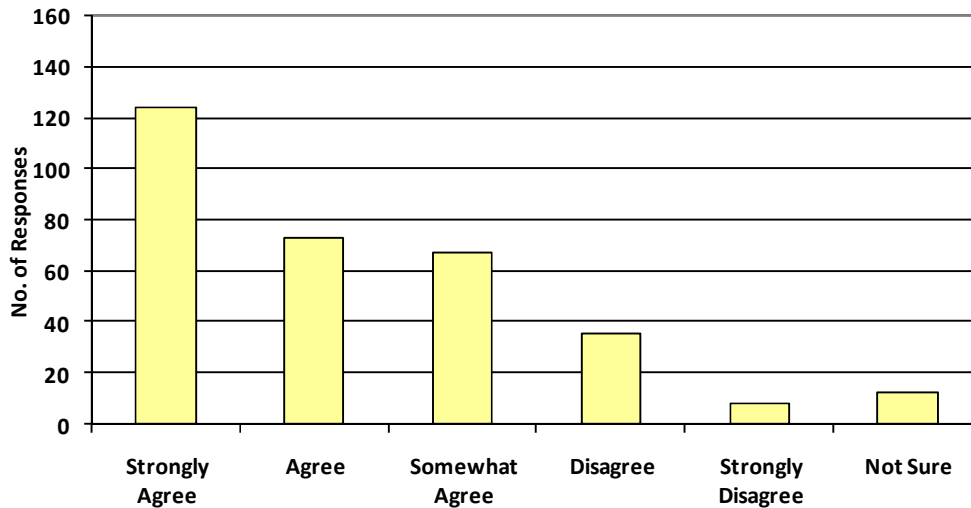
Complete Streets is an approach to street design that looks to accommodate all users safely, including motorists, public transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Though each complete street is unique, common elements include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more.

Findings from the Transportation Profile indicate that while there are many locations in Parkersburg that have some of the elements of a complete street, most roads are designed for cars, particularly in South Parkersburg. Yet results from the community survey suggest there is a desire among residents to be able to walk and/or ride a bike safely to nearby destinations and many are strongly in favor of investing in the installation of sidewalks and bike lanes. **(Figure 17)**



Figure 17 – Community Survey Results (Question #5)

The City should focus future investments on installing sidewalks and bike lanes



The National Complete Streets Coalition⁵ has an extensive array of resources available online and free of charge to assist the City with developing its own Complete Streets Program that is tailored specifically to Parkersburg. In addition, the City should implement the following recommendation in support of such a program.

Recommendations:

- 1. Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included as part of any road improvement project or commercial/residential (re)development project**

Update the City Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to require the inclusion of these elements in new projects, as well as part of improvement projects when appropriate.

Time Horizon: 2011 - 2012

Lead Partners: City Development Department - Planning Division

Support Partners: Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council; WWW; National Complete Streets Coalition; WV Department of Highways

Funding Sources: City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

⁵ www.completestreets.org



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2. *Work with Neighborhood Associations to identify key gaps in the existing sidewalk network and develop a plan to fill them.*

Neighborhoods in north Parkersburg tend to have a much better network of sidewalks than those south of the Little Kanawha, primarily due to the era in which they were constructed. Yet there are many locations throughout the city that are missing links between residential areas and commercial areas that if filled could provide a reasonable and safe alternative to driving. Local groups have the most knowledge about current travel patterns and will be critical in helping to prioritize efforts.

Time Horizon: 2011 - 2012

Lead Partners: City Development Department - Planning Division

Support Partners: Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council; WVV; National Complete Streets Coalition; WV Department of Highways

Funding Sources: City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

3. *Work with the Parkersburg Bicycle Advisory Board and WVV to develop a comprehensive bike/multiuse path plan for the City.*

The WVV and the advisory board have already begun to identify new bike routes in the city. However, these routes are primarily on-road and not all can accommodate pedestrians. The first step would be to identify key destinations, such as employment centers, neighborhood centers, community services, schools, and parks. The second step would be to work with Neighborhood Associations to determine the best routes to “connect the destinations”.



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Figure 18 illustrates the existing and proposed bike routes in Parkersburg.

Time Horizon:	2011 - 2012
Lead Partners:	WWW, Parkersburg Bicycle Advisory Board
Support Partners:	Development Department; MOVTA, Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council; Neighborhood Associations; National Complete Streets Coalition; WV Department of Highways
Funding Sources:	City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)



Figure 18 – Existing and Proposed Bike Routes in Parkersburg





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4. *Work with MOVTA and WWW to identify high traffic areas throughout the city that would benefit from public transportation facilities such as shelters, benches, or bike racks.*

Currently, there are no designated bus stops along MOVTA's routes. As a result there are no shelters or benches where riders can wait comfortably for a bus. While there are certainly costs associated with these improvements, they can add value to the overall system and help increase ridership.

Time Horizon: 2011 - 2012

Lead Partners: City Development Department - Planning Division

Support Partners: MOVTA, Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council; WWW; National Complete Streets Coalition; WV Department of Highways

Funding Sources: City budget, Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)



Picture 24 – A bus shelter with benches, a trash can, and bike racks could be located in front of Parkersburg South High School and would give students a safe and weatherproof place to wait for a bus that could take them to the Elite Sports Center, Riverfront Park and after-school jobs.



Downtown Circulation Study

The completion of Corridor D in 2008 has made this a good time to re-evaluate traffic patterns in the downtown in order to increase mobility and safety for all modes of transportation. Such a study should explore the pros and cons of restoring two-way traffic to portions of the downtown. It should also consider the feasibility of creating a designated pedestrian network with possible pedestrian-only streets or alleyways.

Recommendation:

Complete a Downtown Circulation Study to identify specific improvements that will help move traffic in the downtown while safely accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists

The circulation study should include an origin/destination study, an assessment of existing routes to get to major destinations in the city, as well as through routes. Roadways that tend to have relatively low traffic volumes, particularly alleyways, are good candidates for enhanced pedestrian facilities and street level activities such as outdoor cafes.

Time Horizon: 2011 - 2015

Lead Partners: WWW; City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: West Virginia Department of Highways; WWW; Bicycle Advisory Board

Funding Sources: Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP); Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality Program (CMAQ)



Picture 25 – The historic B&O Bridge prevents 6th Street from becoming a major auto thoroughfare; however, there is great potential for creating a unique pedestrian plaza that could incorporate some interpretive signage about the bridge and the nearby Arts District.



Chapter 7 – Transportation Plan

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Infrastructure Plan

The Parkersburg Public Service District (PSD) is responsible for managing water and waste water systems within the city. Services also extend into the City of Vienna and Wood County. The Engineering Department is responsible for managing storm water in the city. Parts of these systems are approaching 100 years old or more and are in need of repair, but finding the funds to do so continues to be a challenge. In addition to the traditional "gray" infrastructure, the Tree Commission continues to improve and protect the "green" infrastructure - trees, open spaces, and stream valleys – in Parkersburg. Recommendations focus on using green infrastructure approaches to help take the burden off of the more traditional gray infrastructure.

Goal for Infrastructure

By 2020, the man-made (gray) and natural (green) infrastructure that supports the city is managed to provide quality facilities and maximum benefits at reasonable cost.

The City will reach this goal if it...

1. Continues to implement its storm water management plan in compliance with state and federal regulations.
2. Continues to support the Parkersburg Utility Board in its efforts to properly operate, maintain, improve and expand the water and sanitary sewer systems where it is economically feasible and profitable to do so.
3. Engages the Tree Commission to help identify and enhance Parkersburg's green infrastructure.
4. Explores the cost of providing wireless hot spots throughout the city.

Managing Stormwater Runoff

Parkersburg's Engineering Division completed a Stormwater Management Plan in 2004 as required by the State of West Virginia. As noted in the Executive Summary, the "document outlines the City's program to develop, implement and enforce a storm water management program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality and to satisfy the appropriate requirements of the Clean Water Act..." The document is currently available on the city's webpage and includes six minimum control measures that are expected to result in a city-wide reduction in pollution discharges into the city's water ways:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Public Education and Outreach | 4. Construction Site Runoff Control |
| 2. Public Participation and Involvement | 5. Post Construction Runoff Control |
| 3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination | 6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping |

The plan also identifies a variety of structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs) for managing runoff which may or may not be allowed within the existing codes.



Recommendations:

1. **Ensure that updates to the subdivision ordinance include requirements for including site specific BMPs for reducing storm water run-off.**

Stormwater management practices aim to reduce runoff, increase infiltration, and provide settling, filtering, and biological treatment of the remaining runoff. Some of these measures are most effective on-site, providing detention and infiltration primarily through the site's landscape. Others are carefully designed bioengineering systems that mimic nature. The six categories of storm water management practices include⁶:

- Bioretention: a vegetated sink that detains and filters runoff, providing some infiltration
- Stormwater ponds: wet or dry ponds detain and store runoff for slow release
- Constructed wetlands: detains and biologically treats runoff
- Filtration: engineered sand filtration systems
- Infiltration: excavated trenches or drains that provide infiltration of runoff to subsurface flow
- Conveyance and open channels: moves runoff slowly from site or to pervious areas

Examples of several of these management practices are shown at the end of this section. Information about each of these techniques, guides for implementation and a model ordinance are available through Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation website listed below⁷.

Time Horizon:	2012
Lead Partners:	Development Department – Planning Division
Support Partners:	City Engineering Division, Development Community
Funding Sources:	Part of the code update process



Bioretention facilities help to manage stormwater directly on site, which reduces the amount that must be handled by the sewer system

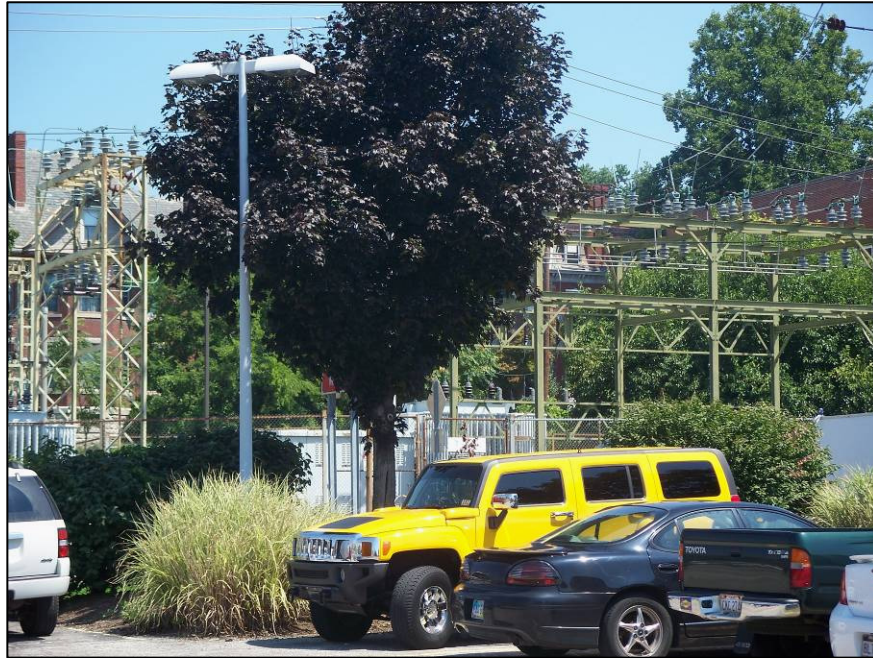
Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service (www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov)

⁶ Environmental Land Use Planning and Management, John Randolph, Island Press, 2004.

⁷ Virginia Stormwater Management Program www.dcr.virginia.gov



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Picture 27 – A small bioretention facility has been constructed in a parking area at 8th Street and Juliana Street in an effort to manage stormwater on the site.

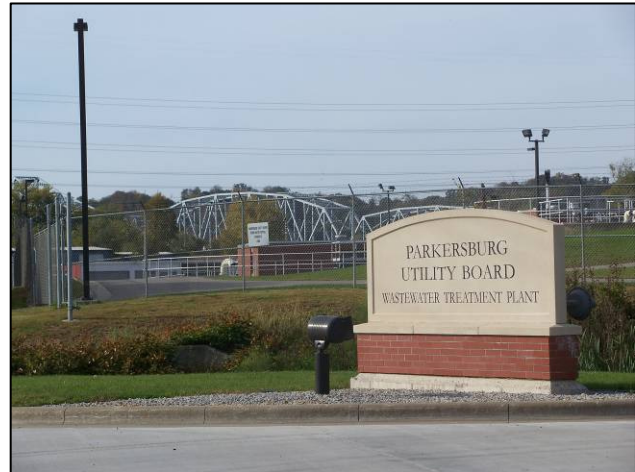


Picture 26 – The pond at Fort Neal Park was built to help mitigate stormwater runoff from the Elite Sports Center and new skate park. The retention pond will also serve as a recreational amenity, complete with walking path, shade trees and benches.



Provide Adequate Sewer and Water Services

Results from the Community Survey indicate that residents of Parkersburg are generally satisfied with the availability of sewer and water. The Parkersburg Utility Board (PUB) is responsible for the planning and operations of these systems; however, the Community Development Department – Planning Division can provide valuable input on expansions and problem areas based on the Future Land Use Plan and the results of Neighborhood meetings. In order to accommodate new growth, as well as redevelopment, it is essential that adequate sewer and water is available to support it.



Picture 28 – Entrance to the Parkersburg Wastewater Treatment Plant

Recommendation:

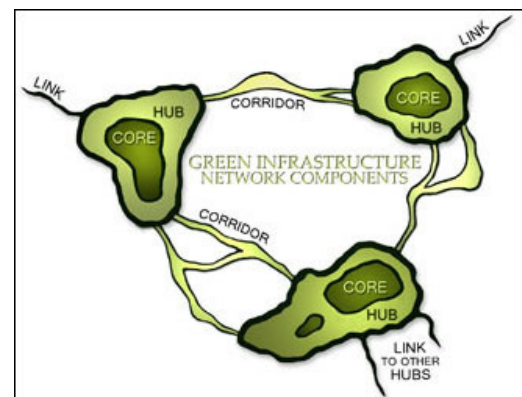
Support the Parkersburg Utility Board in its efforts to properly operate, maintain, improve and expand the water and sanitary sewer systems where it is economically feasible and profitable to do so.

The Development Department - Planning Division should continue to work closely with the Parkersburg Utility Board to identify appropriate service expansion locations, as well as any problem areas that have been reported. The PUB should meet with development staff prior to extending services.

- Time Horizon:** Ongoing
- Lead Partners:** City of Parkersburg
- Support Partners:** Department of Public Works
- Funding Sources:** Part of the code update process

Expand and Enhance Parkersburg's Green Infrastructure

The Conservation Fund defines Green Infrastructure as “strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.”⁸ It includes woodlands, wetlands, rivers, and grasslands and generally takes the form of cores, hubs and corridors. Parkersburg has extensive green infrastructure that should be preserved



Source: www.greeninfrastructure.net

⁸ The Conservation Fund Green Infrastructure Web Page; www.greeninfrastructure.net



Chapter 8 – Infrastructure Plan

and expanded upon as a way to protect valuable environmental resources that add to the quality of life of all residents. Recommendations focus on better understanding the existing green infrastructure and how to improve and expand upon it.

Recommendations:

1. *Work with WV Department of Environmental Protection to obtain funding to complete a green infrastructure plan for Parkersburg.*

Protecting the city’s green infrastructure should be a priority as the benefits are many. However, the process of identifying and characterizing the cores, hubs, and corridors require a certain level of scientific expertise. The Tree Commission is already working on improving Parkersburg’s urban forest and would be a good group to lead such an effort. In addition to identifying the green infrastructure, the plan would identify priority protection and improvement areas. With this information in hand, the city can include best practices in neighborhood beautification projects.

Time Horizon: 2012 - 2013

Lead Partners: Development Department; Public Works Department-Zoning Division

Support Partners: Conservation Fund; West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; EPA

Funding Sources: WV Clean Water State Revolving Fund

2. *Increase the requirements for vegetation in new and redevelopment projects, particularly in parking lots, as part of the updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinances.*

Trees and shrubs not only beautify the city, but they also serve an important ecological function. They remove carbon dioxide from the air, soak up excess stormwater, and their shade provides a cooling effect. Updates to the ordinance will ensure that a bare minimum of tree cover is added to the existing tree canopy as development and redevelopment occur throughout the city. Also consider requirements for a minimum amount of green space as part of new residential and commercial development, which tends to add value to the project.

The Municipal Handbook Series, which is available online⁹, is a series of “how to” manuals to help local officials implement green infrastructure in their communities. This resource should be consulted during the update process.

Time Horizon: 2012

Lead Partners: Development Department – Planning Division



⁹ www.epa.gov



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Support Partners: Department of Public Works; the Conservation Fund; West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; EPA

Funding Sources: Part of the code update process

3. *While updating the zoning and subdivision ordinances, consider the inclusion of overlay zones that limit development in the City's wetlands and floodplains.*

Because Parkersburg is nearly built out, opportunities for natural resource protection, particularly water resources, lie in managing storm water pollution, enhancing the urban forest, and protecting and/or re-establishing natural land and water corridors. Floodplain overlay districts in the zoning code are typically used throughout the country and can be further supported by subdivision regulations that require new development plans to show wetlands, floodplains, and other sensitive environmental resources on the site, as well as how the developer plans to minimize impacts to the resources.

Time Horizon: 2012

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Department of Public Works; the Conservation Fund; West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; EPA

Funding Sources: Part of the code update process

Wireless Technology

Parkersburg would benefit greatly from having wireless hot spots located downtown and at other locations around the City. It would help existing small businesses and increase redevelopment opportunities. Broadband and wireless internet access is necessary in the 21st Century in order to be economically competitive. This recommendation is also alluded to in the Economic Development Plan.

Recommendation:

Work with WVU-P, local businesses, and the Area Roundtable to determine the cost of developing a wireless network of 'hot spots' in Parkersburg and identify available funding sources.

Not only would the City need to come up with a plan for implementing and funding such a network, but would also have to determine which department would be responsible for its operation and maintenance. However, in the long run it could prove to set Parkersburg apart as a place for doing business.

Time Horizon: 2015

Lead Partners: Development Department

Support Partners: Department of Public Works; WVU-P; local internet providers

Funding Sources: n/a



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Community Facilities and Services Plan

Parkersburg's residents have access to all the basic community facilities and services typically found in a city of its size. Some are privately owned and operated, others are provided by city and county government. The results from the community survey indicate that most residents are generally satisfied with emergency services, schools, and other public services. However, given recent economic conditions, available public funding is very tight, which means everyone in the community needs to do their part to help keep Parkersburg a clean, safe, and beautiful place where people of all ages can live, work, and play. Therefore, in addition to continuing to work with local partners to provide quality facilities and services in the city, the plan recommends ways to encourage active involvement of the citizens of Parkersburg in improving the city.

Goal for Community Facilities and Services

By 2020, the services provided for the citizens of Parkersburg have fostered community pride in safe, clean neighborhoods, maintained high quality educational and medical services, and developed an array of parklands and recreational opportunities for all ages.

The City will reach this goal if ...

1. The city fosters civic engagement among citizens of all ages.
2. Public safety services remain responsive and cost effective.
3. Library services throughout the city meet the needs of 21st century residents.
4. The city continues to implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Plan in order to offer close-to-home and destination recreation facilities, as well as recreational programs that offer activities for all ages year-round.
5. Recycling is as convenient as traditional trash disposal.
6. The city works to reduce the environmental impacts of its operations and services.

Civic Engagement

A key to the success of the entire Comprehensive Plan will be engaging the general public in its implementation. The best way to do this is for Parkersburg is to make sure residents have easy access to information about opportunities to get involved in volunteer projects, as well as to continue to support the many organizations that are already providing quality services throughout the city.



Picture 29 – Mayor Newell greets Parkersburg residents at a community meeting to discuss



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Recommendations:

1. *Include links to local service providers and charitable organizations on the updated web site.*

Several of the plan elements recommend updating Parkersburg's website so that it becomes the central source of information about the city for residents and visitors alike. Some links to local providers are already available, but others are not. As the website is updated, develop a page devoted just to the community's facilities and services; highlight planned volunteer and fund raising opportunities to support those providers. Ensure that the 211 link is easily accessible.

Time Horizon: Begin in 2011 and continue annually

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: Wood County Schools, Parkersburg Police and Fire Departments, private service providers, Parkersburg Area Community Foundation, WVU-P

Funding Sources: City Budget

2. *Improve the lines of communication with city neighborhoods by conducting annual neighborhood meetings, similar to a traditional "Town Meeting".*

3. *Provide residents with a forum in which people can engage their neighbors and City staff about how best to maintain and improve their neighborhoods.*

Start by working with the Neighborhood Watch Co-Op, which is made up of individual Neighborhood Watch Groups throughout Parkersburg, and develop an interactive neighborhood meeting approach to better understand each neighborhood's needs and to encourage residents to organize into Neighborhood Associations that would coordinate a variety of activities such as clean up days. These groups would provide a line of communication between city officials and residents of the neighborhood. The associations also provide a more comfortable forum for neighbors to discuss and work on common issues.

A typical agenda could include the following discussion topics:

- Upcoming projects in or impacting the neighborhood,
- Available public assistance,
- Volunteer and service opportunities for volunteerism in the neighborhood,
- Public service needs, and
- Other community issues.

Meetings should be held at a neighborhood school, park pavilion, fire hall, or church. Representatives from the development department should coordinate and attend these meetings and then coordinate with City Council and other departments to help address the community's needs.

Time Horizon: Begin in 2011 and continue annually

Lead Partners: Development Department; Parkersburg Neighborhood Watch Co-Op

Support Partners: Parkersburg Police Department, local service providers, church groups, Parent/Teacher organizations



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Funding Sources: Utilize existing meetings and events whenever possible to minimize additional staff time needed to coordinate and attend

4. *Plan and schedule community clean-up days for public places*

During the Annual Neighborhood Meetings, identify specific clean-up projects that would benefit the neighborhood, such as transforming a vacant lot into a community garden. The city can then work with the Sanitation Department to arrange for low to no cost dumpsters for community groups who are cleaning up their neighborhoods and even provide personal safety equipment and labor. The Tree Commission should be consulted for ideas on how preserving existing trees or planting new trees can be integrated into clean-up days as part of the restoration process.

The city should also consider setting aside a Community Beautification Fund that would be used to support the efforts of established Neighborhood Associations by providing matching funds for locally identified beautification projects.

Time Horizon: Begin in 2011 and continue annually

Lead Partners: Public Works Department; Development Department

Support Partners: Parkersburg Tree Commission; Master Gardeners – WVU Wood County Extension Office

Funding Sources: Our Community Foundation, Master Gardeners - WVU Wood County Extension Office, Wood County Schools and donations from volunteers. Wood County Solid Waste Authority



Picture 30 – With a little help from volunteers, small spaces like this one across from Parkersburg Catholic Elementary School can be transformed into inviting spots to stop and take a break or meet up with friends.



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

5. ***Encourage youth to become more involved in the decision making process by inviting them to participate in the Mayor's Youth Council and area leadership programs. Consider developing a City internship program for students attending local colleges.***

These programs provide young residents the opportunity to get involved in a number of civic activities, which could include attending regular meetings of local public service agencies. In addition, high school and college students should be encouraged to get involved in the development of transportation projects, workforce training programs, and parks and recreation projects through the public meeting process.

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: Mayor's Office, Chamber of Commerce

Support Partners: Wood County Schools, WVU-P, Marietta College, Local churches and civic groups

Funding Sources: Use general funds to cover the fee for one or two city residents interested in the Chamber Leadership Program. Intern programs could be paid or unpaid.

Improved Community Facilities

The City of Parkersburg has always strived to provide quality community facilities and services for its residents despite limited budgets. Schools are considered some of the best in the region, police and fire departments have excellent response rates, and there are nine parks located throughout the city.

While results from the community survey indicate that these services are generally considered adequate, there is always room for improvement. Funds are appropriated annually to the Police and Fire Departments, the Wood County Library System, and for parks and recreation facilities, but planning and decision-making for police, fire, schools, and even the hospitals are beyond the purview of this plan.

However, the city is responsible for the planning and improving parks and recreation facilities. The 2001 Comprehensive Master Plan recommended improving Riverfront Park, which is now under construction and is due to be completed by summer of 2011. In addition, a contract to design and construct a new skateboard park will be issued in the Fall 2010 as a result of the fund-raising efforts of the skaters and other local supporters, including the Parkersburg Downtown Taskforce. A Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed in 2008 that reiterated the need for an expansion of Point Park and also recommended the construction of the Elite Sports Center on the south side of the Little Kanawha, among other things. The sports center is finished, construction is underway at Point Park, and the new skate park will be located in Ft. Neal Park along with a new pond, walking path, picnic shelters and access to bike trails.



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Recommendations:

1. Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

This plan includes the vision, goals, and recommendations for managing Parkersburg’s parks and recreation facilities for the next five years (2009-2013). In addition to the projects mentioned above, the plan identifies three new programs for implementation: a Playground Safety Program, Partners with Parks, and Pride in our Parks. The Playground Safety Program would include mandates to ensure proper care and maintenance of public playground equipment in the parks. Partners with Parks would encourage partnerships between area businesses and city park through the use of sponsorships whereby the sponsor can attach their name to events or equipment for mutual benefit. The Pride in our Parks Program would encourage organizations, groups, companies, and individuals to volunteer at least twice per year for parkland beautification work or even use interns. The plan also recommends a Park and Recreation Division link from the city website and a “blanket” email system that connects all city employees in order to get the word out about upcoming activities and volunteer opportunities.

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: Parks and Recreation Division

Support Partners: Neighborhood groups, local businesses, WVU-P

Funding Sources: Continue to identify grant opportunities and encourage private participation through volunteerism or donations; also explore opportunities for fundraising events that specifically benefit local parks.



Picture 31 – City Park is the oldest of Parkersburg's nine public parks.



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

2. *Work with the Wood County Master Gardeners to establish more community gardens throughout the City.*

Community gardens introduce green spaces into urban neighborhoods and also provide a local source of food for residents. The City can work with the Master Gardeners to identify vacant properties that could be used for such gardens, assist with labor and materials to construct them, and even provide space at the Farmer’s Market at a reduced cost so that community gardeners could also sell any surplus flowers and vegetables.

Time Horizon: Ongoing

Lead Partners: Wood County Master Gardeners

Support Partners: Development Department, Parks and Recreation Division, Neighborhood groups, local businesses, WVU-P

Funding Sources: Continue to identify grant opportunities and encourage private participation through volunteerism or donations

3. *Work with the Wood County Development Authority and other partners to implement the proposed conceptual land use plan for the Little Kanawha Riverfront Redevelopment Project.*

Over the last 50 years, conventional development practices steered new development to “greenfields”, which are large tracts of land (such as old family farms) that can be readily developed and are served with water, sewer and roadway improvements. While such improvements can be costly, municipalities have eagerly provided these services in return for economic growth and development or at least the prospect of. Because Parkersburg developed in the late 19th and early 20th century, greenfields are not prevalent in the community. However, the City does have an old industrial corridor strewn with vacant buildings and underutilized properties – “Brownfields” - along the Little Kanawha River. Unfortunately, the degree to which many of these properties are contaminated is not yet known. However, that is beginning to change.

To encourage infill and redevelopment projects in the community, the City launched a Brownfields Initiative in 2004. Since then, more than 12 properties (57.05 acres) have been identified and/or assessed through a U.S. EPA Petroleum Assessment Grant. One of the properties identified in the inventory was an 8-acre site along the Little Kanawha River. The site is owned by two different people, the vast majority of which is owned by Foam Coating Roofing Inc. Working with the property owner, the City obtained a FOCUS WV Grant from the WV Brownfield Assistance Center and the Benedum Foundation. The \$5,000 grant enabled the City complete a planning/visioning exercise with young people and the general public. Information from the planning exercises was used to develop a conceptual land use plan for the property. The plan was developed by environmental consultants with experience in Brownfield redevelopment. Based on their initial analysis, the site’s best reuse was passive recreation.

Amenities proposed for the site include a new public marina with riverfront restaurant, nature ecology center, preserved wetland and boardwalk, walking trails and a disc (Frisbee) golf course. Light commercial (retail) activity is also viable as a new bike shop, dehli, kayak/canoe rental and



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

ice cream was also proposed. This is possible, because of the site’s location on the Little Kanawha, access to major thoroughfares and readily available utilities. Three urban bike trails are also planned to converge on the site, making it a destination center for recreational enthusiasts.

Additional funds, including a Stage II FOCUS WV Grant and U.S. EPA Community-wide Hazardous Substances Grant, will reduce the barriers associated with redevelopment. And should the Little Kanawha Riverfront (LKR) Redevelopment Project come to fruition, it could potentially stimulate new investment in the City’s industrial corridor and beyond.

Time Horizon:	Ongoing
Lead Partners:	Development Department; Parks and Recreation Division
Support Partners:	Parkersburg Boys and Girls Club, The Area Roundtable, West Virginia Port Authority, WVU-P, water recreation enthusiasts/volunteers
Funding Sources:	WV Brownfields Assistance Center, U.S. EPA

4. Expand efforts to promote and support recycling efforts throughout the City.

Parkersburg already does a great deal to encourage residents to recycle, including providing curbside pickup, neighborhood drop off areas, and providing receptacles at local events. However, only about 20% of residents participate. One possibility for improving participation would be to investigate opportunities for single-stream recycling, rather than having to separate recyclable materials.

Time Horizon:	Ongoing
Lead Partners:	Parkersburg Municipal Recyclery
Support Partners:	Local waste haulers; West Virginia Solid Waste Management Board
Funding Sources:	West Virginia Solid Waste Management Board



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Figure 19 – Preliminary Master Plan for the Little Kanawha Riverfront Redevelopment Project





Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

Greener Municipal Operations

Parkersburg is committed to resource and energy conservation and should continue to help inform city residents about things they can do to be more sustainable. City government continues to look at how they can implement "green practices" into everyday activities efficiently and have recently completed an energy audit of their operations. WVU-P is integrating alternative energy programs into their curriculum, which could be a catalyst for setting Parkersburg apart in the region as a leader in this area. In addition to greening its own operations, the city can also ensure that residents and businesses are able to use alternative energy sources to power their lives.

Recommendation:

While updating the city's Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, ensure that citizens have the ability to tap into solar and wind power. While there is presently little or no demand for solar panels, small wind turbines and charging station for electric vehicles, Parkersburg should be ready to accommodate these facilities in the future

Currently, there is no language in the City Code that deals with alternative energy, particularly the equipment needed to produce and use it. The Planning Division of the Development Department, the Planning Commission, and the Zoning Division will need to coordinate so that these facilities can be used with minimal disruption to neighbors.

Time Horizon:	2013
Lead Partners:	Development Department; Public Works Department – Zoning Division
Support Partners:	Planning Commission; WVU-P; West Virginia Department of Commerce Energy
Funding Sources:	Part of the code update process



Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Services Plan

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Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Parkersburg is fortunate in that it has a wealth of historic and cultural resources that make it a great place to live, work and visit. The city's historic buildings and districts, the cultural events, and the many arts education activities are important assets that should be preserved and shared because they help distinguish Parkersburg as a special place. This plan focuses on creating greater awareness of the importance of these quality resources and exploring new ways to preserve and market them, not only to attract visitors to the city and the region, but also to consider it as a place to call home or start a business.

Goal for Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

By 2020, the celebration of Parkersburg's riverside location and industrial heritage is seen in public spaces, art educational programs, and cultural activities. It has not only helped to improve civic pride among residents, but has also attracted heritage tourists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and has helped make the city more competitive for new business.

The City will reach this goal if ...

1. The city continues to support the Wood County Historic Preservation Society's activities in the city.
2. The city works with the local historic districts and others to develop architectural design guidelines to ensure that new development complements the surrounding community character.
3. The city supports local efforts to encourage the development of the heritage tourism industry.
4. A diversity of community and special events that appeal to a variety of age groups are offered at several venues throughout the city during the year.
5. The city improves the marketing of its historic and cultural offerings.

Preserve Historic Treasures, Enhance Community Character

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the benefits of taking care of an area's historic resources are many. They distinguish a place and show a respect for the past. They are also integral to the character of the community and can provide a good foundation for attracting visitors who want to experience something out of the ordinary. In Parkersburg, many of the old buildings were torn down during the 1960s and 70s, but there are many gems that remain. The Wood County Historic Preservation Society, which was formed to prevent the destruction of the County Courthouse downtown, leads historic preservation efforts in the city.

Design guidelines would help enhance Parkersburg's architectural uniqueness, historic character, and overall appearance. Cities across the country are using design guidelines as they seek to revitalize downtowns and neighborhoods and are finding that quality design of the built environment has resulted in a better quality of life for their citizens and has made them more competitive in retaining and attracting businesses.



Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Recommendations:

1. ***Establish a Design Commission that would be responsible for developing design guidelines that will help to ensure new development and rehabilitation projects complement the character of the surrounding community.***

A Design Commission would need to be established and ideally would work with a community advisory group made up of design professionals and ordinary citizens. The process would include establishing design goals for different areas of the city, which should be based on the Future Land Use Map (See the Land Use Plan). The next step would be to determine how the various elements of the built environment should look. The purpose of the guidelines would be to provide direction rather than prescriptive requirements such as those found in the zoning and subdivision ordinances or the building codes. At the same time, it will be very important to coordinate the guidelines with any updates to those ordinances and codes.

Time Horizon: 2012-2013

Lead Partners: Development Department – Planning Division

Support Partners: Public Works Department – Zoning Division, The Julia-Ann Square Historic District and Parkersburg High School Campus-Washington Avenue Historic District Architectural Review Boards, The Area Roundtable, Downtown Task Force, Neighborhood Associations

Funding Sources: City Budget

2. ***Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of old buildings whenever possible by providing incentives such as reduced fees and possible tax incentives for potential developers.***

Much of what makes Parkersburg a special place is the architecture that reflects its history. By reusing old buildings rather than tearing them down a piece of history is preserved. In addition, fewer natural resources are required than for new construction. WVU-P is setting an excellent example with their building on Market Street and the old National Guard Armory on the south side is a promising opportunity for reuse as a community center or a new library.

When buildings cannot possibly be saved, provide incentives for property owners to build a new building keeping in character with its surroundings rather than surface parking.

Time Horizon: 2011



Picture 32 – Dr. Marie Gnage, President of WVU-P, shows off early facade plans for WVU-P’s building on Market Street.



Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Lead Partners:	Development Department – Planning Division
Support Partners:	Public Works Department – Zoning Division, The Area Roundtable, Downtown Task Force, Neighborhood Associations
Funding Sources:	n/a

Expand and Coordinate Cultural Events and Activities

Parkersburg offers several cultural activities and events for residents and visitors to enjoy. These events range from Multi-Cultural Festivals, which celebrate community diversity, to the Taste of Parkersburg, which features food and beverages from restaurants, wine distributors and breweries from the Mid-Ohio Valley. There are also many more opportunities to expand these offerings to include generational programs, health and wellness activities, life and pre-professional skill development activities, sporting events, games, and live music events, particularly once Riverfront Park is opened. Surveys conducted during the development of the plan indicate that residents are interested in these activities; however, there is no single organization that currently handles the coordination and development of such activities. In addition, the timing of events is limited because there are no indoor venues in the city that can host large events such as car shows, conferences, or sporting events.

Recommendations:

- 1. Work with the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau to establish a central events committee that would plan, coordinate, and market new events and activities in the city.***

A central events committee that would ideally be comprised of community volunteers would be responsible for coming up with ideas for new events, including holiday festivals, speaker series, and even water-based activities on the Ohio and Little Kanawha Rivers, based on interests of residents and program leaders. In addition, the committee could reach out to local organizations and the media to gather and post information about planned community events on the existing CVB calendar, which should be directly linked to the city's web page. By tapping into the resources of the CVB, local groups would have access to a broader market, which would help improve attendance. A central committee would also help improve communication between a variety of event planners.

Time Horizon:	2012-2013
Lead Partners:	Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Support Partners:	City of Parkersburg, Development Department, community volunteers, local event organizers
Funding Sources:	City budget, Hotel/Motel Tax, State Tourism Department



Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

- 2. Continue to work with the Wood County Development Authority to identify a location for and find a developer to construct a venue for year-round cultural events.**

Even though the Smoot Theater is a wonderful venue for a variety of live theater events, it has its limitations. What is needed is a year-round venue that is large enough to attract regional events such as concerts, trade shows and conventions, and possibly even sporting events. This type of venue would go a long way in helping to diversify the cultural offerings available to Parkersburg's residents, as well as attract visitors to the area. Currently, discussions are underway to explore the possibilities of locating such a facility on Fort Boreman Hill. This would be an ideal location as there is very good regional access from Corridor D, as well as to and from downtown.

Time Horizon: 2012-2013

Lead Partners: City of Parkersburg

Support Partners: Wood County Development Authority; local development community

Funding Sources: n/a

Promote Cultural and Historic Offerings

Parkersburg's historic and cultural offerings are currently marketed through the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), a non-profit that aims to strengthen the area's economy by promoting it as a destination for travel, meetings, and conventions. The Greater Parkersburg CVB distributes promotional materials and hosts a website that provides information to the general public about the area's attractions, events, lodging, dining, recreational and visitor services. They are located at the corner of 7th Street and Avery Street downtown.

In 2004, the Greater Parkersburg CVB conducted a comprehensive Tourism Research Study to better understand the area's tourism market and identify the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to tourism. They have been working on many of the recommendations since that time, including improving the Visitor's Center and improving their website. The city has been working on streetscapes and other improvements that have already helped to attract new restaurants to Market Street. The Economic Development Plan includes specific recommendations for enhancing the major gateways into the city.

Recommendations

- 1. Continue to allocate funds from the annual budget for the promotion of the arts and cultural programs and events available throughout Parkersburg.**





Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Funds are annually appropriated to the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau to market the many things the city and region have to offer. The city should also provide local arts and cultural

Time Horizon:	Ongoing
Lead Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Support Partners:	Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Funding Sources:	City budget

2. Encourage the CVB to extend their hours to better accommodate visitors.

Currently the CVB Visitors Center is only open between 9 and 5 Monday through Friday. Yet many travelers are visiting on the weekends or arrive late in the day. Being open at least on Saturday should be a priority for the CVB in order to better serve a large percentage of potential “customers”. The center could be closed on Monday and open on Saturday instead in order to keep costs under control.

Time Horizon:	2011
Lead Partners:	Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Support Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Funding Sources:	n/a

3. The CVB should establish a Heritage Tourism Taskforce in partnership with the Wood County Historical Preservation Society to create and market a Heritage Tourism Trail.

Parkersburg Heritage Trail could be a self-guided tour that would include Point Park, the Oil and Gas Museum, the Blennerhassett Museum, historic sites and buildings both inside and outside of the city, the Parkersburg Arts Center, and the city's Historic Districts. It could ultimately become part of the National Heritage Trail similar to the National Coal Heritage Trail in southern West Virginia. The taskforce would also be responsible for identifying additional ways to "get the word out" about these wonderful assets that tell the story of the city. The Taskforce should fall under the larger umbrella of a Central Events Committee.

Time Horizon:	2012
Lead Partners:	Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Support Partners:	City of Parkersburg
Funding Sources:	Wood County Historical Society, City of Parkersburg, CVB, State Heritage



Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

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Appendix 1: Background Profiles

Appendix 2: Community Survey Report

Appendix 3: Maps

Appendix 4: Renderings of Recommended Improvements