

MARCH 2024

CITY OF WEIRTON HOUSING STUDY





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I. PROJECT CONTEXT



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Planning Approach

The Housing Study is designed to be a strategic and frequently-used road map to identify and meet current and future housing priorities. This tool can be used by several groups and individuals including:

- Development organizations and other groups who make policy, conceive and execute programs, and seek funding to meet housing needs
- Service providers who serve specific populations and need information to support their work and evaluate their effectiveness
- Local and county governments who establish priorities, evaluate development proposals, and establish the plans that become the basis for action
- Housing professionals, including developers, builders, real estate agents, and financial institutions who make decisions that influence the supply and construction of housing
- Employers who seek to attract talent to the region and grow their business
- Existing and prospective businesses, who use housing supply to influence their investment and location decisions
- Consumers, prospective residents, citizens, and a wide variety of other users

The role of any housing study should also be to maintain diversity and equity throughout the housing market and to identify gaps in the housing market for potential new buyers.

Background

In 2018, the City of Weirton adopted a Comprehensive Plan Update. This Housing Plan is focused on advancing the Comprehensive Plan goal to “Create Complete Neighborhoods” through the following objectives:

- Ensure that the new residential zoning districts encourage residential form and scale that matches the desired neighborhood character.
- Preserve and enhance the City’s established neighborhoods is a prime objective.
- Revitalize at-risk and distressed neighborhoods.
- Address demolition by neglect through various methods.
- Encourage home-ownership by publicizing local and regional programs.
- Ensure that there are no local barriers to providing affordable and supportive housing to disadvantaged persons.

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, Form Energy has begun development of a new facility in the old Weirton Steel Mill. The building will total around 420,000 square feet and the is projected to generate 750 jobs by 2028. This will create a vital need for additional housing in the City. Some of the key reasons why this is important include

- **Employee Attraction and Retention:** When a new company establishes its presence in a community, it typically hires a significant number of employees. Providing accessible and affordable housing options near the workplace can make the community more attractive to potential employees.
- **Reduced Commute Times:** When housing is in close proximity to a company’s office, it reduces commute times for employees. Shorter commutes result in less stress, improved work-life balance, and increased productivity, as employees spend less time on the road.
- **Economic Growth:** Form Energy has the potential to bring economic growth to Weirton through job creation, increased local business activity, and tax revenue. Expanding housing options in the area can help stimulate further economic development as the city experiences an influx of residents.
- **Increased Tax Revenue:** The expansion of housing can lead to increased property tax revenue for the community.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** When a community invests in housing near the workplace, it often improves the overall quality of life for residents. This includes access to amenities, parks, recreational facilities, and a vibrant local culture.
- **Urban Revitalization:** In some cases, a new company’s arrival may be an opportunity to revitalize underdeveloped or declining urban areas. Building housing in these locations can be a catalyst for regeneration and economic rejuvenation.

History

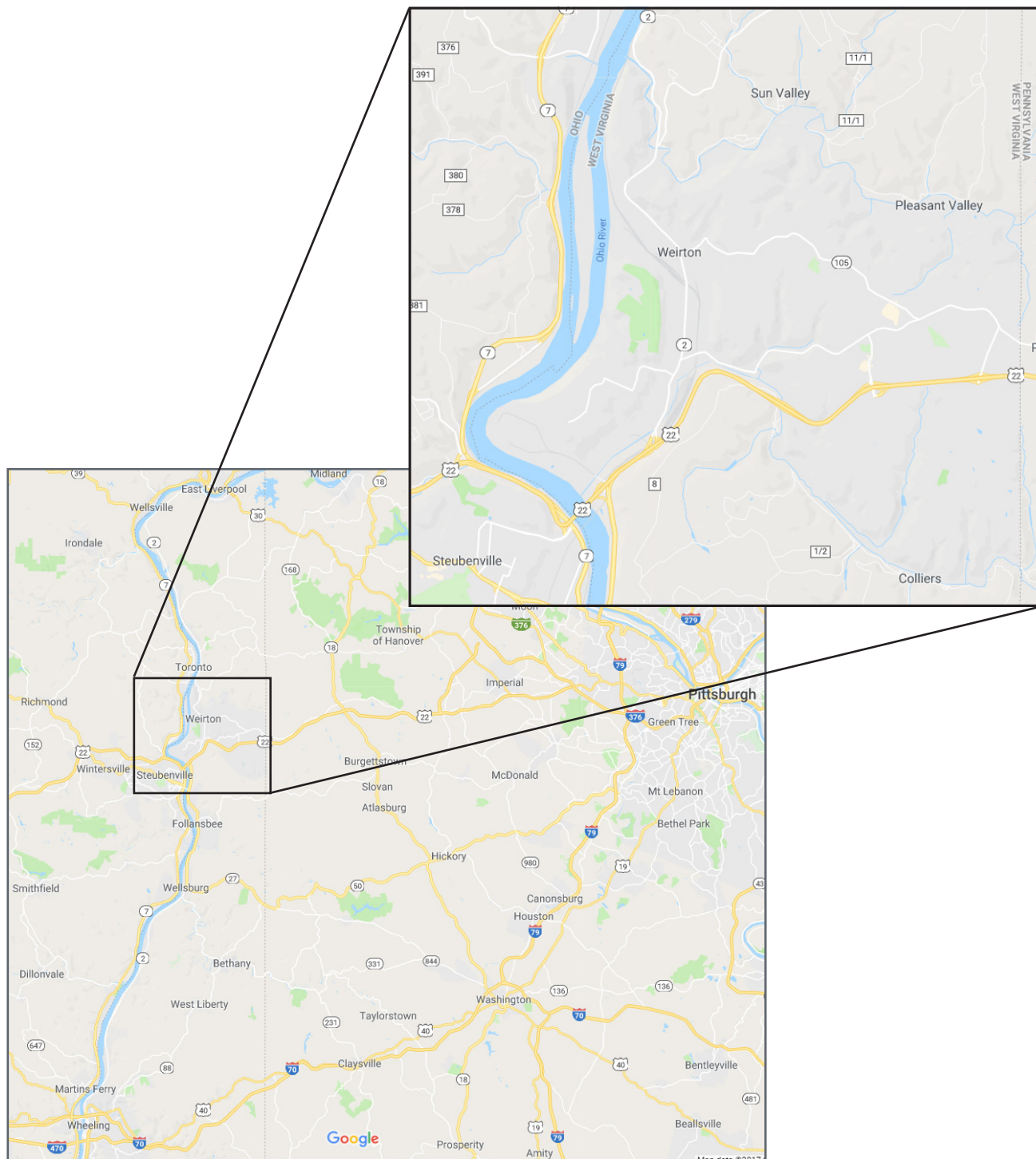
Weirton's history is entwined with the rise and fall of American heavy industry. Founded by steel magnate Ernest Weir in 1909, Weirton Steel Company was once the largest private employer in West Virginia and the state's first billion-dollar corporation. The Cattrell Brothers opened a lumber yard near the new mill and were contracted to build several homes and stores. The new town was named "Weirton" in honor of Ernest T. Weir.

On April 1, 1947 the incorporated cities of Holliday's Cove, Marland Heights and Weirton Heights merged with the unincorporated town of Weirton to form the City of Weirton. The president of Weirton Steel Company, Thomas E. Millsop, became the city's first mayor. Prior to the City's incorporation, municipal services were provided by the Weirton Improvement Company, a subsidiary of Weirton Steel.

By 1978, Weirton Steel operations had grown to be so large that many northern neighborhoods in the City had been purchased by WSX for additional parking and new facilities. Consequently, many of these residents moved to Marland Heights and Pleasant Valley, a small community just north of Weirton. At its height, Weirton Steel employed over 12,000 people.

Beginning with the energy crisis of the 1970s, much of the American steel industry experienced new competitive pressures arising from profound economic and technological changes. By the end of the 1980s, the emergence of thin-slab casting technology enabled these smaller mills to directly compete in the flat rolled steel market. By 2005, the WSX was owned by ArcelorMittal and employment dropped to a historic low of approximate 1,000 workers; ranking as the 67th largest private employer in West Virginia. In 2017, ArcelorMittal sold 1,100 acres of surplus property to The Frontier Group of Companies who's plans so far include developing Ohio Valley Industrial Park as well as searching for ways to increase significant development and reuse opportunities. One example of Frontier's plans include selling a portion of their property to Form Energy which will be a key component to the redevelopment of Weirton's north end.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS



Understanding where the housing market in the City of Weirton, WV is headed — and what should be done about it —requires an analysis of current conditions and an exploration of why and how things are as they are.

Housing need fluctuates according to a variety of driving forces, key among which are changing numbers and types of households and the economic conditions that affect migration and spending power. Housing supply responds to housing need, but not in a way that provides each household with an suitable, decent and affordable place to live. This section tells the story of both supply and demand, taking stock of today's households and the housing options available to them.

This chapter builds upon the City's Comprehensive Plan, updating and expanding upon its survey of demographic, economic and housing research and placing the data within the context of housing implications. Data sources include the 2020 Census unless indicated otherwise.

The City of Weirton is located in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia, nestled along the Ohio River between Pennsylvania and Ohio. It is one of only three cities in the United States that borders two other states on two sides (Ohio to the west and Pennsylvania to the east) and its own state on the other two sides.

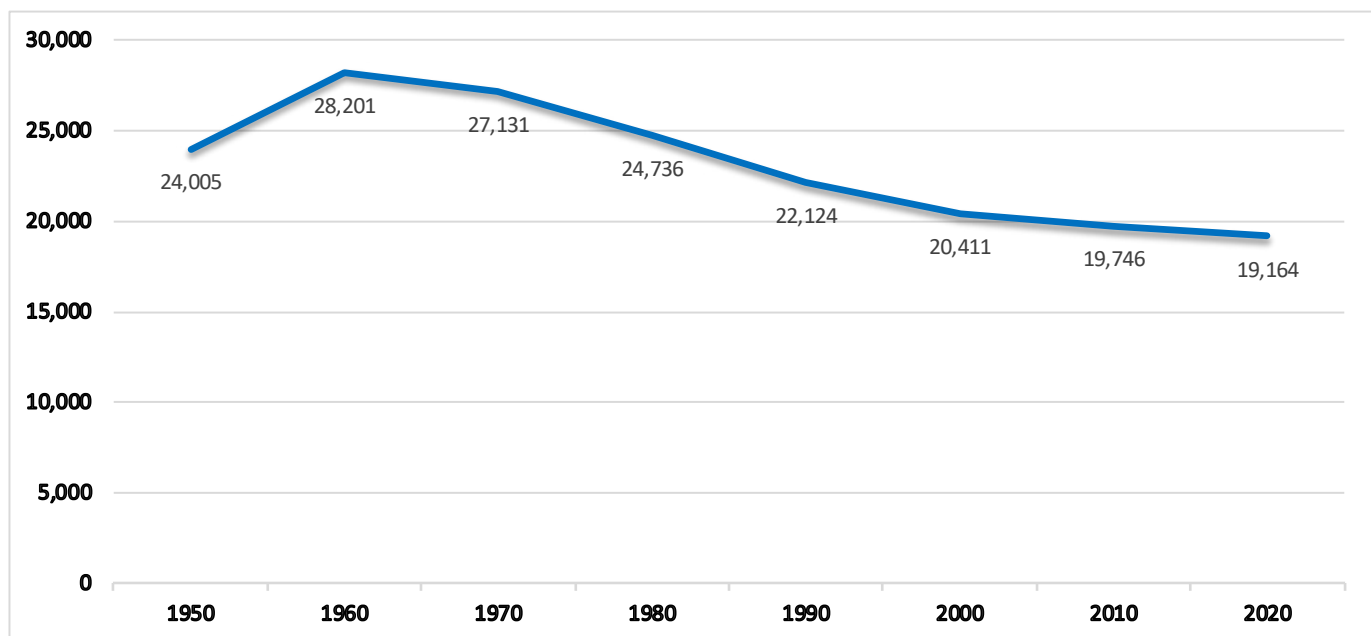
Weirton lies just across the Ohio River from Steubenville, Ohio, and about 35 miles west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, along U.S. Route 22. With the opening of PA Route 576 in 2006, the Pittsburgh International Airport is less than 25 miles away.

Demographics

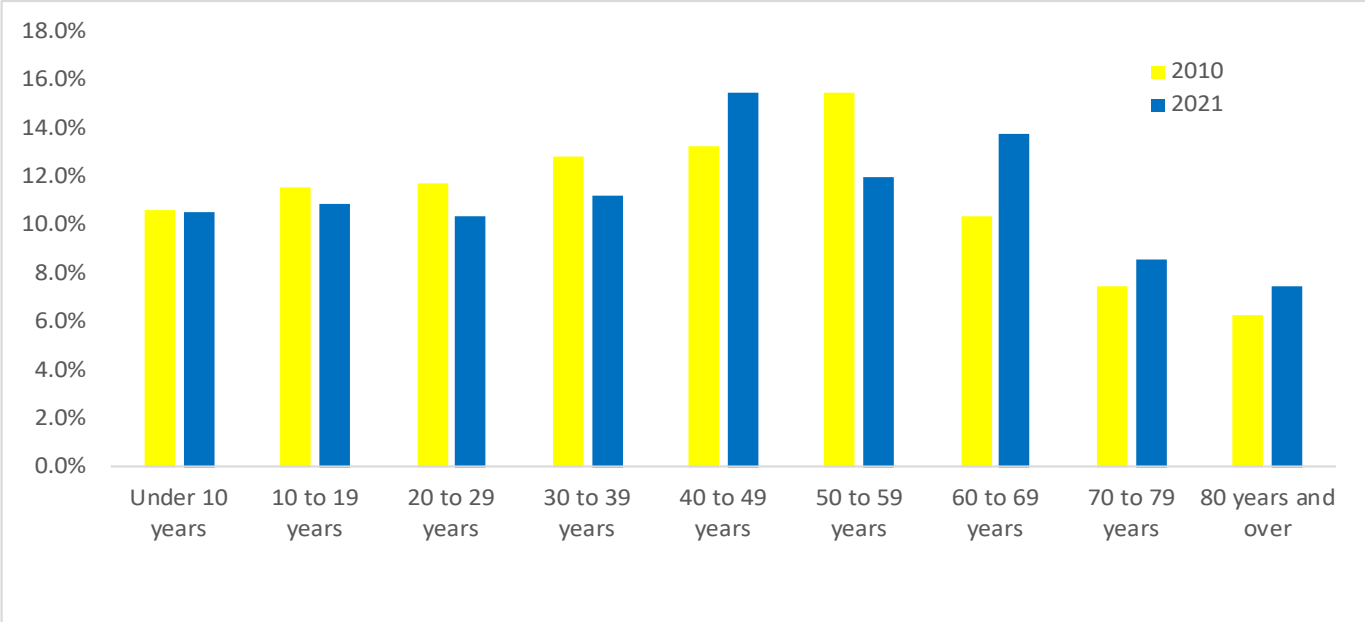
Weirton has not had an increase in population since 1960, although losses have stabilized since 2010. Despite this population loss, new housing units will be needed to accommodate expected growth related to the Form Energy development. Residential development was the highest priority in terms of new development per the public survey completed for the Comprehensive Plan, and it was consistently highlighted in the interviews conducted for this study. The next few pages highlight demographic information for the City in terms of population, housing and economic characteristics.



Weirton Population



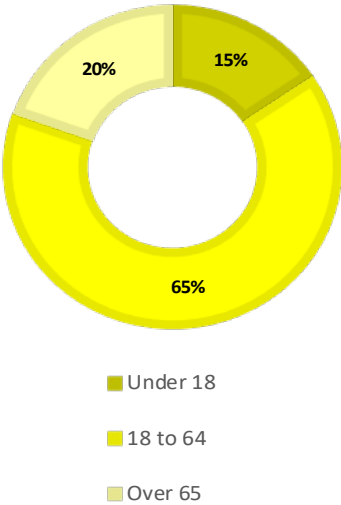
Population by age range



44.5 Median age
Slightly higher than the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (44.3) and 3.7% higher than West Virginia (42.9)

27.5% Aged 40-59 years
Highest percentage of two age groups combined. Ages 70 or older account for 16.1% (lowest).

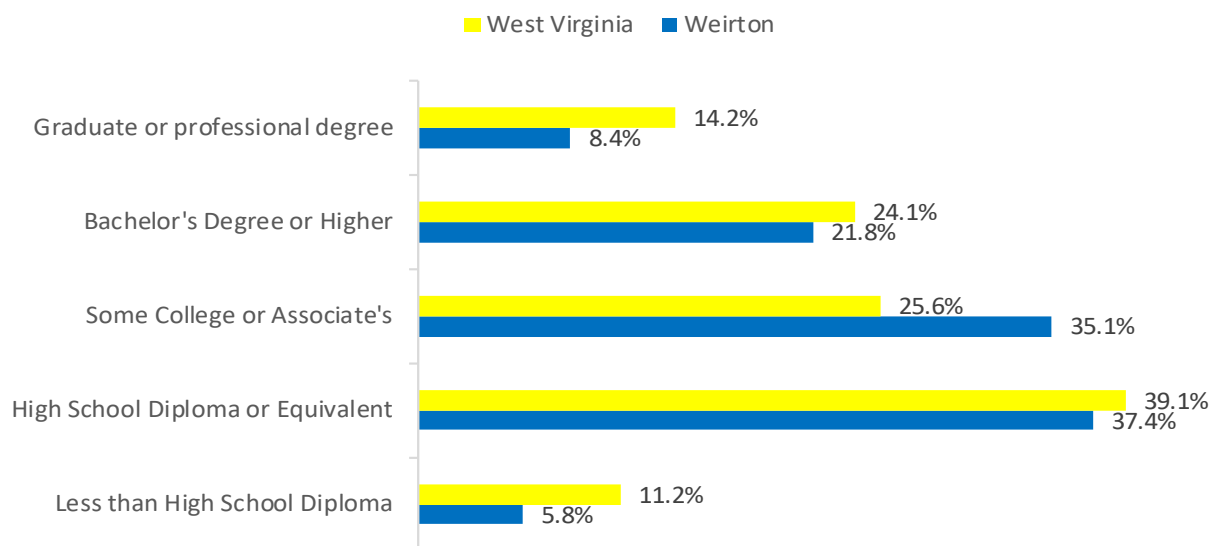
Population by age category



Race & Ethnicity

	2010		2020	
	#	%	#	%
Weirton	19,746	100.0%	19,163	100.0%
White	18,500	93.7%	17,143	89.5%
Non-White	1,246	6.3%	2,020	10.5%
Black	770	3.9%	747	3.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	107	0.5%	112	0.6%
American Indian	20	0.1%	27	0.1%
Some other race	33	0.2%	86	0.4%
Two or more races	316	1.6%	1,048	5.5%
Hispanic*	129	0.7%	206	1.1%

Educational Attainment



94.2%

High school education or higher

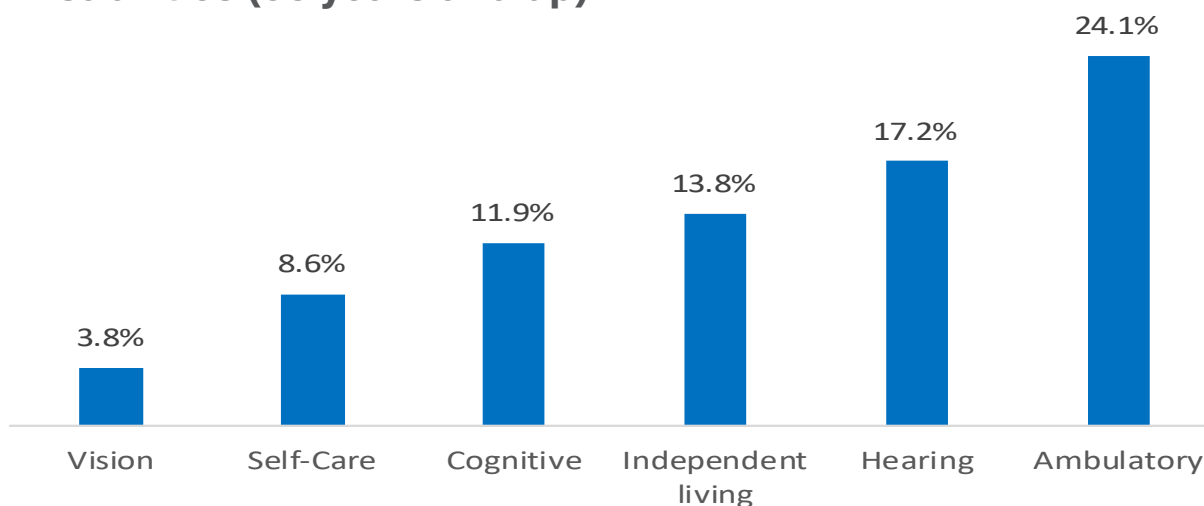
21.8%

Bachelor's degree or higher

15.5%

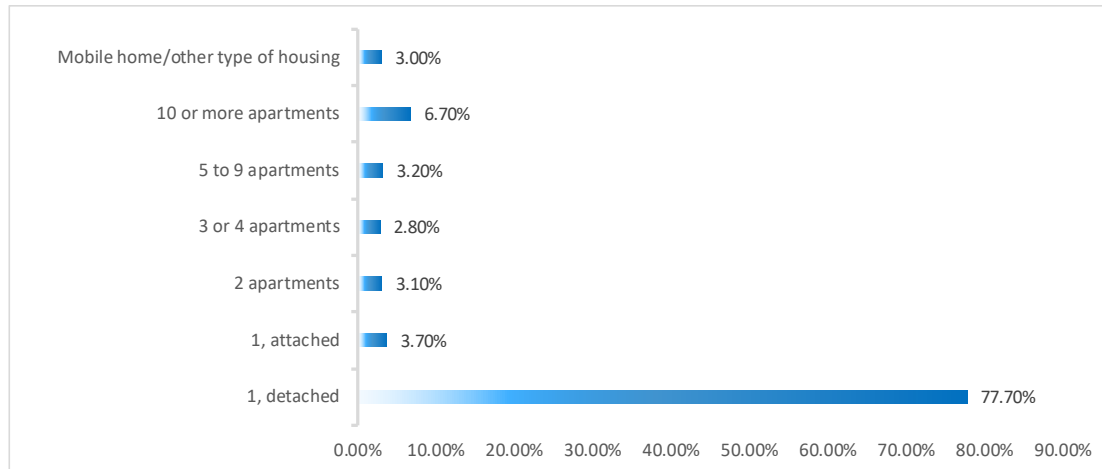
Increase of high school diplomas from 2010 (78.7)

Disabilities (65 years and up)



Housing

Housing Structure



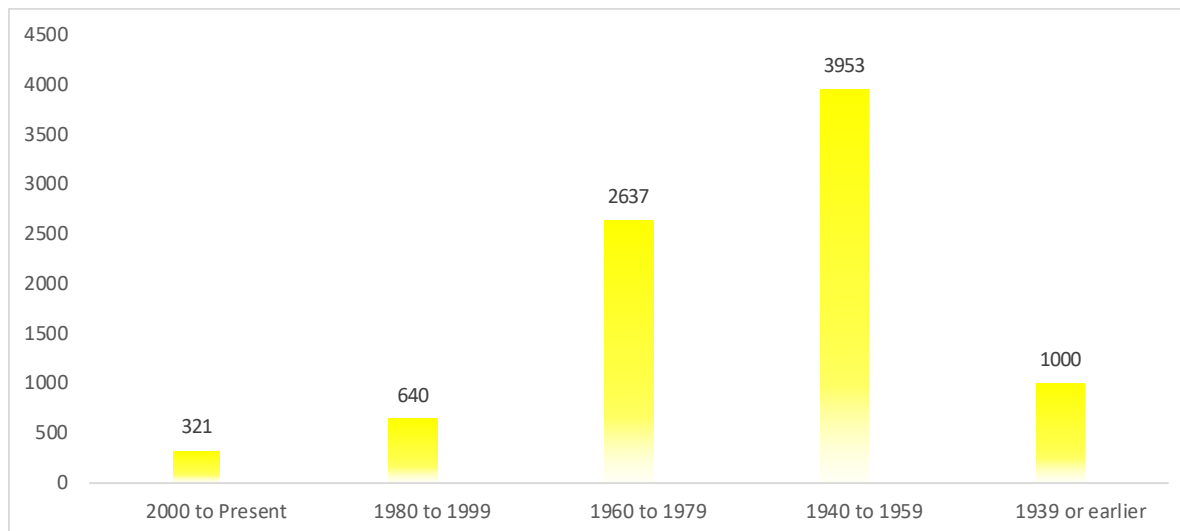
15.8%

Housing units are apartments

71.5%

Households have 2/3 Bedrooms

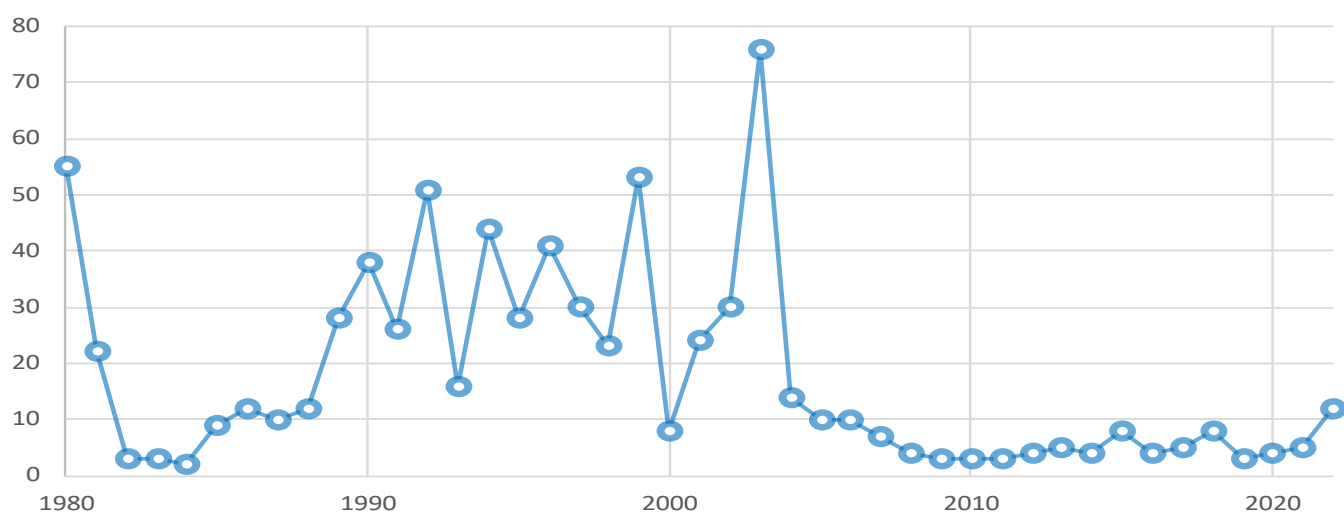
Year Structure Built



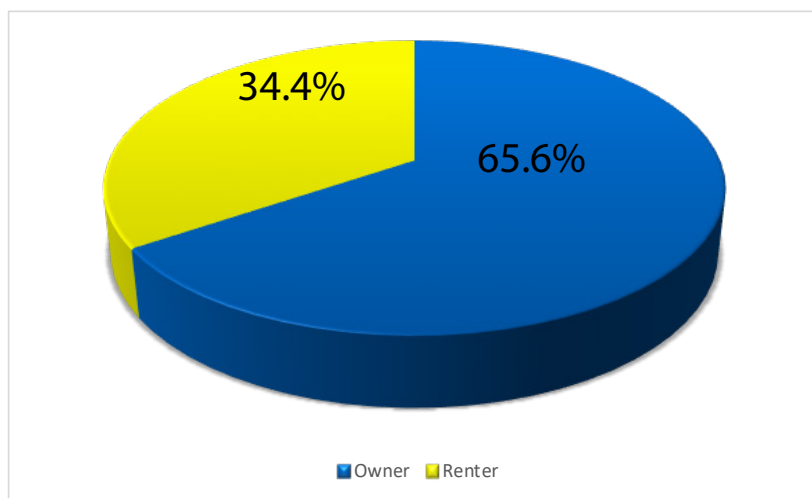
3.7%

Housing units built after 2000

Total Residential Building Permits



Homeowner Rate



9,515

Total units

842

Total vacant

8,523

Total households

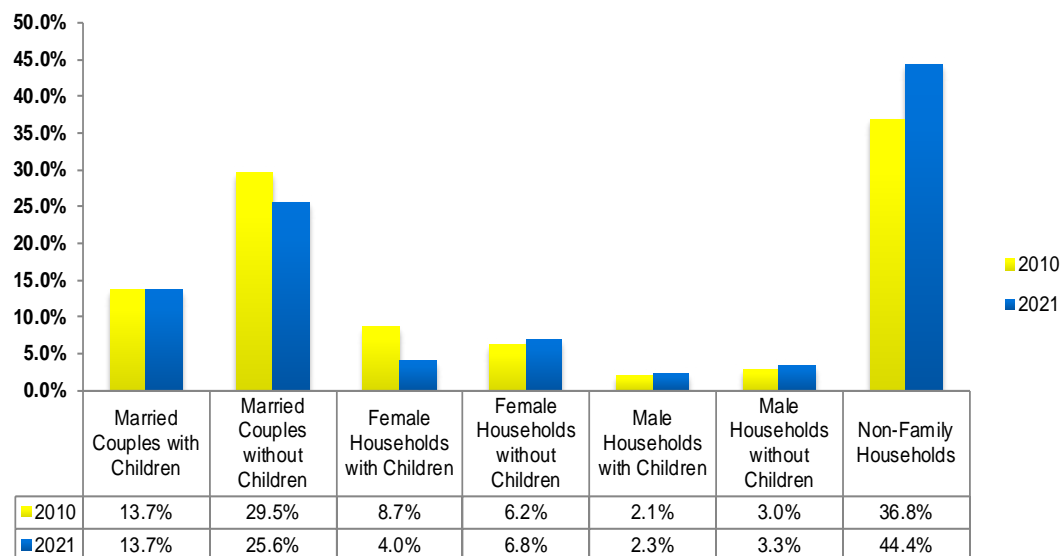
19.9%

Households that have children

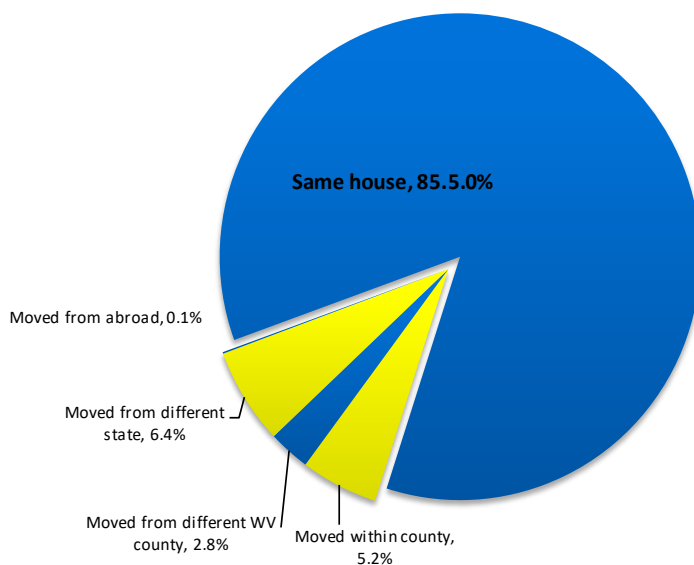
2.23

Persons per household

Household type



Migration Patterns

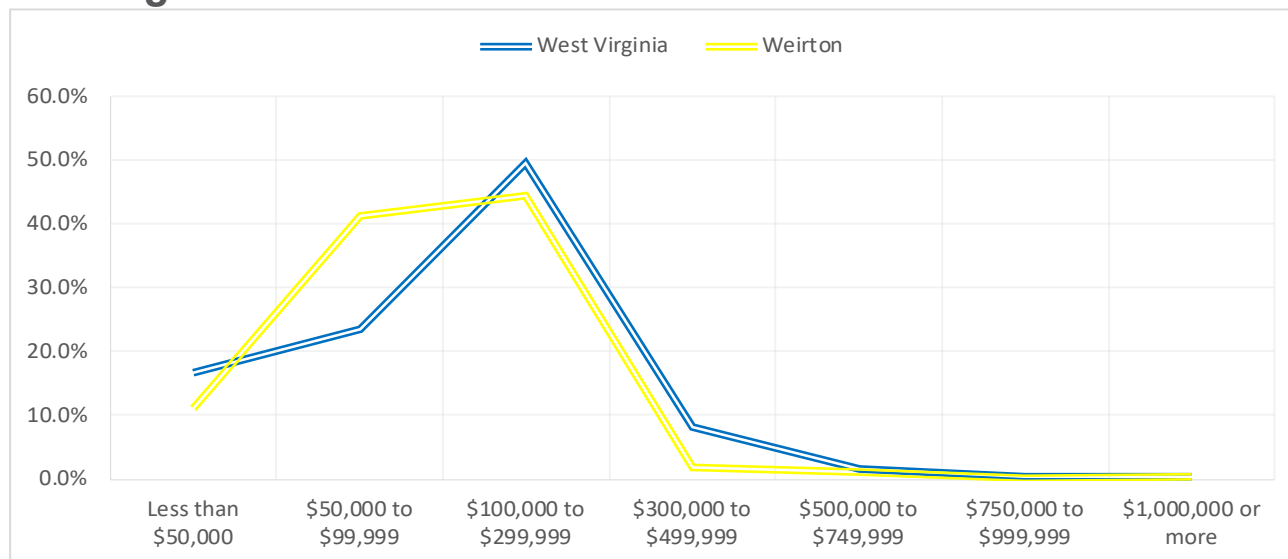


85.5%

Same house

85.5% of all Weirton residents have lived in the same house a year ago

Housing Value



\$98,400

Median value of owner-occupied units

\$504

Median rent value

- 47.1%

Less than West Virginia's Median value of owner-occupied units

Housing Affordability

\$71,500

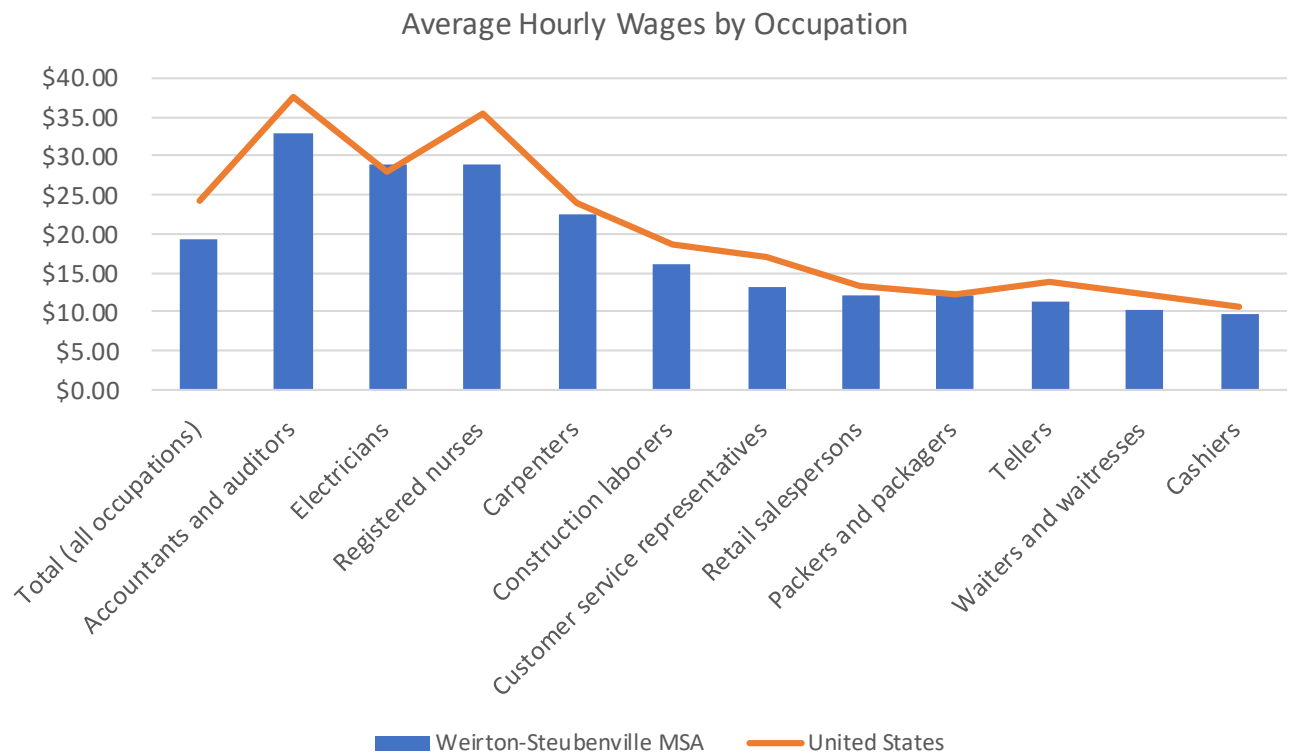
Median Household Income
Weirton-Steubenville
WV-OH MSA

	FY 2022 Income Limit Category	HAMFI Limits
Extremely low income	< 30% HAMFI	\$27,750
Very low income	30% to 50% HAMFI	\$37,050
Low income	50% to 80% HAMFI	\$59,300

Figures are for a family of 4. These limits change based on the number of persons in a family.

Source: huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/2020summary.odn

Note: HAMFI is HUD Area Median Family Income. HUD publishes this number for states, counties and large urban areas. Since the City of Weirton spans two counties (Brooke and Hancock), the Weirton-Steubenville WV-OH MSA was used, which includes both counties in West Virginia along with Jefferson County, Ohio.



Brooke County, WV - major employers in the City of Weirton (as of October 2023):

- Weirton Medical Center (Colliers Way)
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (Three Springs Drive)
- Rue 21 Distribution Center (Park Drive)
- The Kroger Company (Downtown & Three Springs Drive)

Hancock County, WV - major employers in the City of Weirton (as of October 2023):

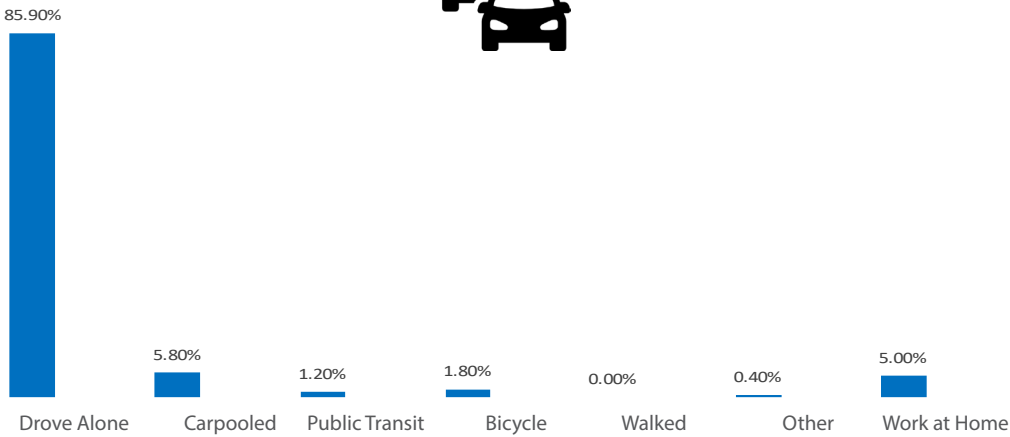
- Weirton Geriatric Center, Inc. (Pennsylvania Avenue)
- City of Weirton (Downtown)

23 minutes

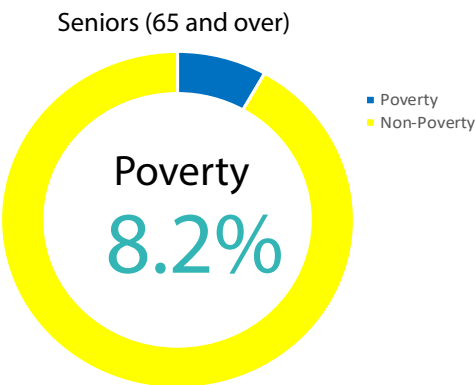
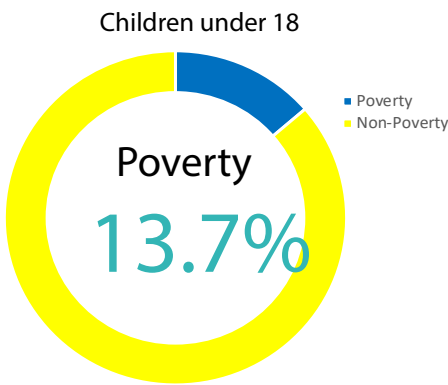
Mean travel time to work

44.9% of workers in Weirton travel less 14 minutes or less to get to work

Transportation to Work



Population for whom poverty status is determined



13.7%

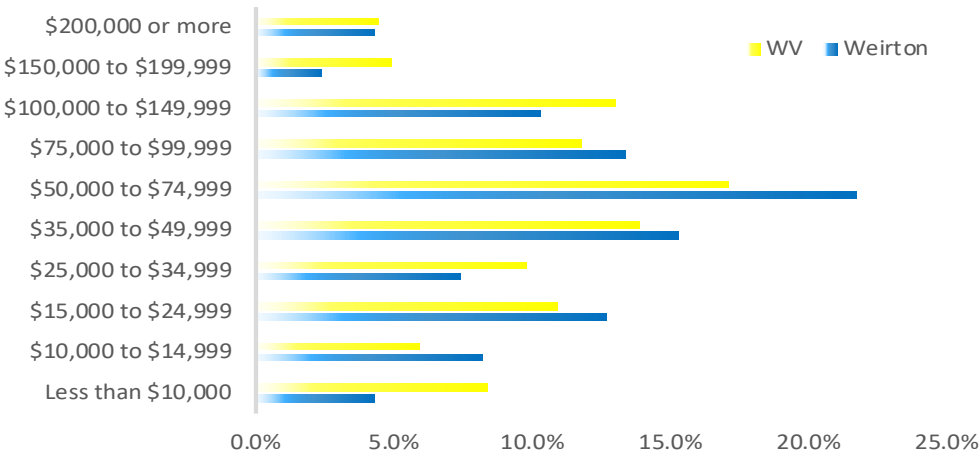
Persons below poverty line

Slightly lower than the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (15.7%) and less than West Virginia (17.7%)

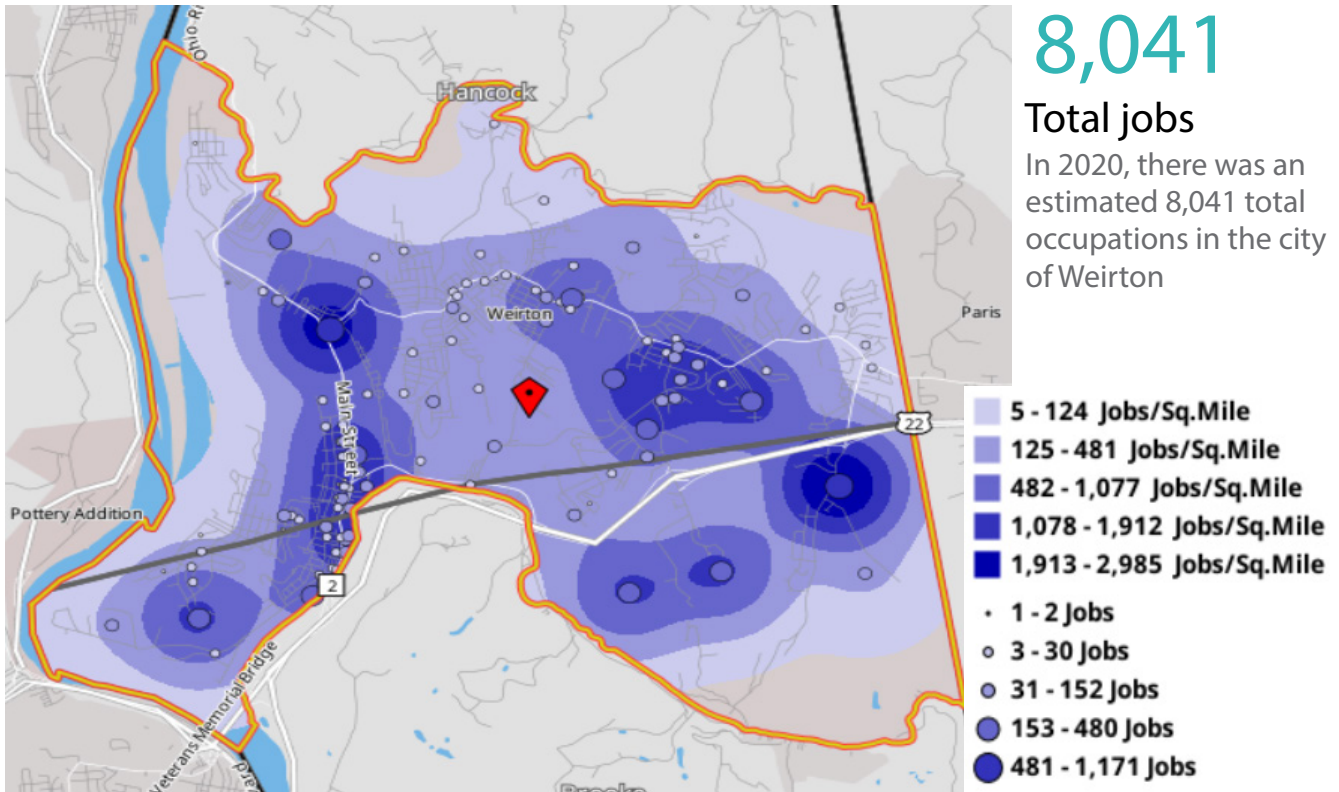
\$52,775

Median Household Income

Slightly higher than West Virginia (\$51,248)



Regional Job Distribution



Strongest sectors:

Health Care and Social Assistance (27.6%)
 Manufacturing (16.4%)
 Retail Trade (11.2%)
 Accommodation and Food Services (10.6%)



Weirton Neighborhoods:

Weirton is a City of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas that vary in size, style, age and density. They are the places that residents live, interact with neighbors and conduct their most frequent daily needs. Though the characteristics of each neighborhood vary, there are common elements that make every neighborhood complete. These include proximity to supporting neighborhood commercial areas, public parks and civic uses that are integrated into the neighborhood to help residents simplify their Neighborhoods: daily lives. It is important to offer a variety of types of neighborhoods to accommodate the needs and wants of the City's diverse population.

During the Comprehensive Plan, these neighborhoods were mapped (as shown on Figure 1. City Neighborhoods and described in Table 1. City Neighborhood Descriptions) and then classified as either a New Neighborhood, an Established Neighborhood or an Urban Neighborhood.

New Neighborhoods

New neighborhoods refer to areas that are either already emerging as a neighborhood or are planned to be a neighborhood in the future. They are primarily residential with a mix of housing types including single-family detached homes, attached homes and multi-family homes. New neighborhoods are in close proximity to parks, neighborhood commercial developments and centers. Housing types, though different, are designed to relate to each other to create vibrant and cohesive streetscapes. New neighborhoods will have a walkable layout with streets that connect in a logical manner throughout the neighborhood and to adjacent developments for seamless transitions. They are designed to safely accommodate bicycling and transit.

- Country Club Estates - a residential subdivision is in the planning stages that will feature single-family and duplexes
- Starvaggi Property North - one of the newer residential subdivisions in the City, close to Starvaggi Park
- Weirton Heights South - while the areas closest to Pennsylvania Avenue are older, there is additional land that can accommodate new housing

Established Neighborhoods

Established neighborhoods are existing residential areas that will be preserved and enhanced over time. Established neighborhoods may include a mix of single-family detached homes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments. Neighborhood serving commercial developments, schools, parks and civic uses are also common in established neighborhoods. The existing character of these areas should be protected when new development is proposed in order to

preserve the quality of life of existing residents. The majority of neighborhoods in the City are classified as Established. To better understand the nature of these neighborhoods, they were then classified as either Healthy, Stable or At-Risk.

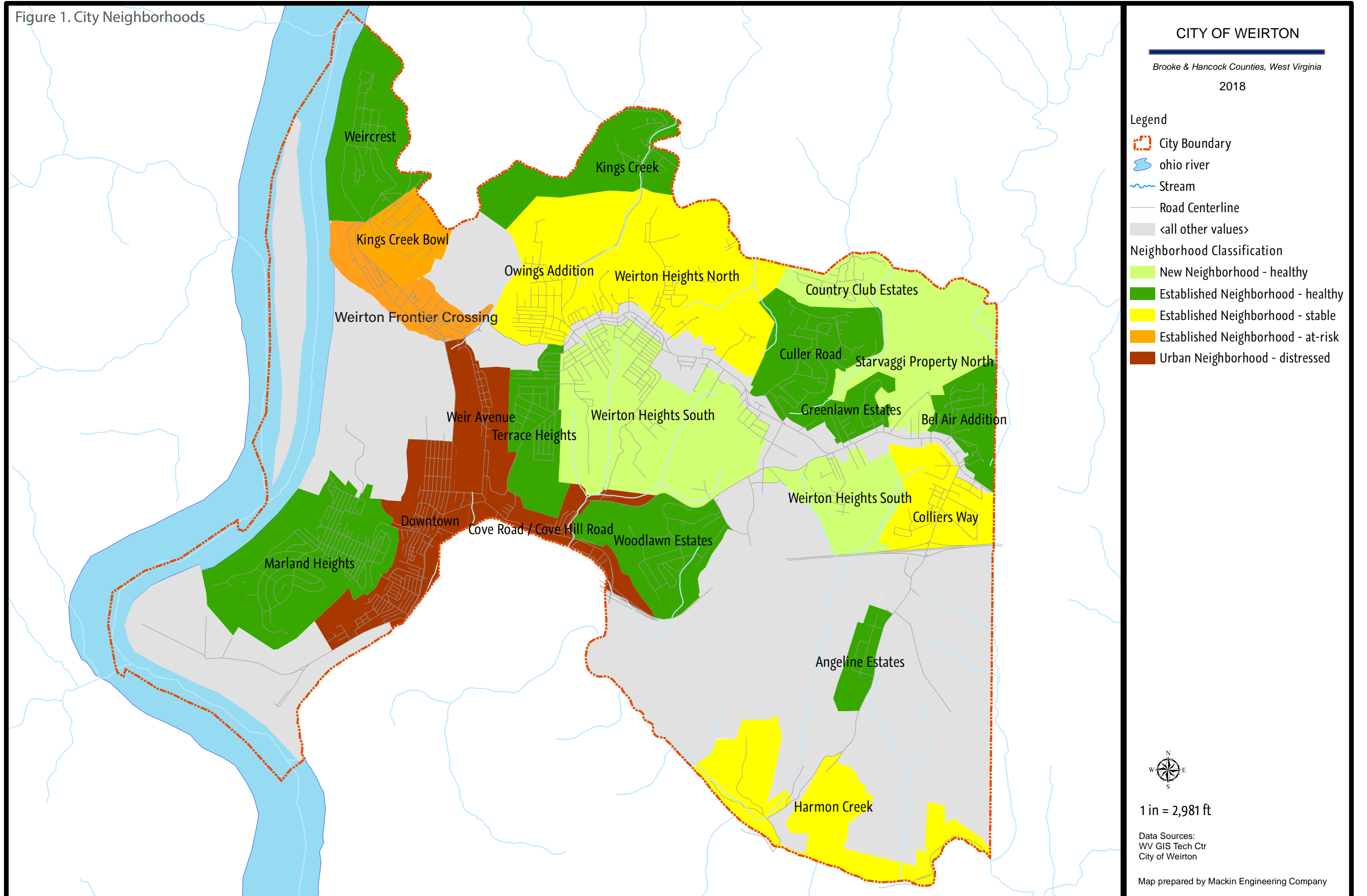
- Healthy Neighborhoods feature well-maintained homes with higher property values. These neighborhoods include Weircrest, Marland Heights, Kings Creek, Terrace Heights, Woodlawn Estates, Culler Road, Greenlawn Estates, Bel Air Addition and Angeline Estates.
- Stable Neighborhoods feature older homes that have some maintenance needs

Urban Neighborhoods

Urban neighborhoods are located in close proximity to downtown. They are primarily residential areas that are ideal for residents who wish to live within walking distance to employment or entertainment uses downtown. These neighborhoods mix existing homes with infill housing and include a range of densities that provide for a diverse range of housing types. Urban residences typically have smaller yards or shared open space areas. Buildings are scaled and sited with an emphasis on pedestrians to create a streetscape suited to regular walking and bicycling trips.

Urban Neighborhoods include Downtown, Weir Avenue and Cove Road / Cove Hill Road. All of these are classified as Distressed; property values tend to be low and many homes are older and in need of repair.

Figure 1. City Neighborhoods



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Table 1: City Neighborhood Descriptions

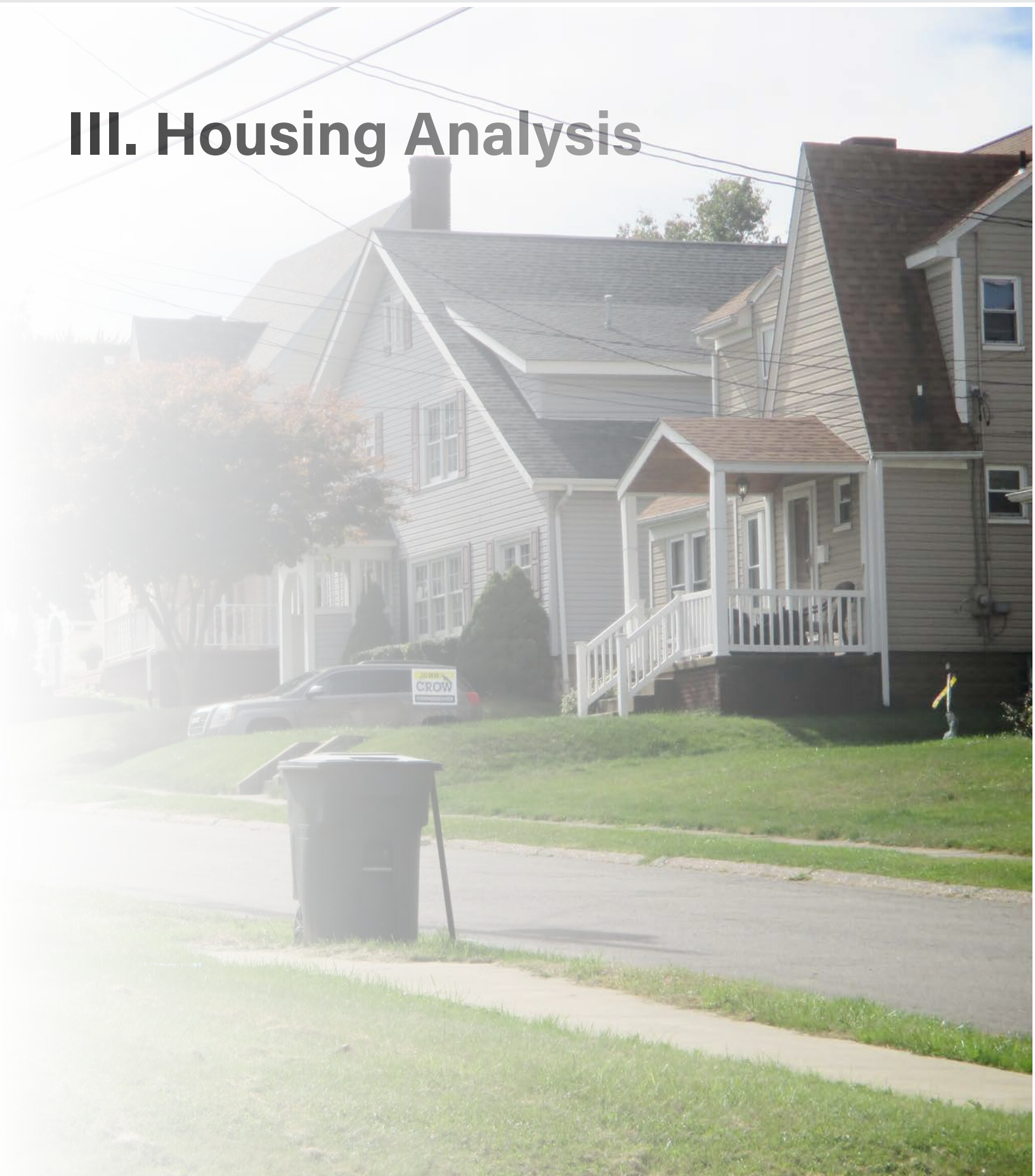
Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Weircrest	Mostly SFR; Duplexes and small-scale MFR (3-7 units)	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A secluded neighborhood located off County Road/ SR 2, the majority of homes were built between 1920 and 1980, with some infill since. The City owns a small playground at the corner of Bennett Drive and St Ann Way. Homes have sold for between \$60,000 (1,000 sq ft) and \$140,000 (2,400 sq ft).	Former hospital property - opportunity for redevelopment as SFR/MFR Infill residential development	Only access is from County Road Disconnected from City Large tracts mostly undevelopable - steep slopes"	Change to R-2
KingsCreek Bowl	Mostly SFR; Duplexes	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood - at-risk	A small neighborhood located on the other side of County Road from Weircrest, most homes were built between 1920 and 1980, with a handful of infill since. Smaller homes (800-1,000 sq ft) have sold for \$30,000 while larger homes (1,000-1,400 sq ft) have sold for \$80-\$130,000.	Infill residential development	Only access is from County Road Disconnected from City Large tracts mostly undevelopable - steep slopes Code enforcement issues	Keep R-1
Kings Creek	Mostly SFR, one duplex	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A medium-size neighborhood off North 12th Street and Kings Creek Road, mostly built between the 1950sand 1990s. Homes have sold between \$60,000-80,000 (1,000-1,200 sq ft) to \$140,000-\$210,000 (1,200-1,600 sq ft)	Infillresidentialdevelopment (City owns several properties along Willow Street), there are still undeveloped lots along Theresa Drive.	Some flooding along Kings Creek Road, causes landslides	Keep R-1
Owings Addition	Mostly SFR, 16 duplexes, 9 small-scale MFR (3-6 units)	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood - stable	A medium-size neighborhood off Pennsylvania Avenue between N 10th St and N 12th St, with the majority of homes built between the 1920s and 1970s, with some infill development in the 1980s to 2000s. Smaller, older homes have sold for \$20,000-60,000 (700-1,200 sq ft) while some of the larger homes (1,200-2,000 sq ft) have sold for \$60,000-100,000. City Park (Steve Dorich Memorial Park) is located at the end of Sunset Drive.	Limited infill residential development, some potential in the northern end off North 10th Street.		Change to R-2
Weirton Frontier Crossings	Mostly SFR, Light Industrial surrounding	M-1 Light Industrial & R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood - at-risk	A small sized neighborhood located on both sides of County Road encompasses 1st though 5th street and Avenue A H. A vast majority of homes were built between 1920 and 1970 and require major beautification/structural repair.	Redevelopment opportunities	Current buildings are depilated and blighted	Change to R-3 keep industrial property to industrial zone

Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Terrace Heights	"Mostly SFR, 6 duplexes, small-scale MFR (3-6 units)"	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	"Nice neighborhood, well-maintained homes; Some sidewalks, Home to Weir Middle & High School and City Park (Murphy Ave Playground)"	Limited infill residential development,somepotential in the northern end off North 10th Street.	Built-out	Keep R-1 (and include Bell Blvd in R-1)
Weirton Heights North	"Mostly SFR, 11 duplexes, 32 MFR (3-28 units)"	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood - stable	A large neighborhood located off Pennsylvania Avenue, from North 12th Street to Powers Road. A mixture of small lot single-family near Pennsylvania Ave and newer housing developments, along with the Serra Village Retirement Community. Most homes are sold between \$50,000 and \$100,000.	While the majority of homes were built prior to 2000, several homes have been built since and there is land available for new residential development.		Change to R-2
Weirton Heights South	"Mixture of SFR, 26 duplexes and MFR (3-51 units)"	"R-1 Single Family R-3 Two and Multi Family"	"Established Neighborhood & New Neighborhood - healthy"	"A large neighborhood located south of Pennsylvania Avenue to Cove Hill Road, it is a mixture of small lot single-family near Pennsylvania Ave to multi-family units near Cove Hill Road. Bell Blvd and Braxton Road are the newest (1990s) housing developments, with homes selling between \$160,000 (1,600 sq ft) to \$230,000 (2,300 sq ft). This neighborhood is also home to West Virginia Northern Community College / Madonna High School."	There is land available for development, mostly closer to Cove Hill Road.		Change to R-2
Country Club Estates	"SFR, 3 MFR (24-28 units)"	R-1 Single Family	"Established Neighborhood & New Neighborhood - healthy"	A small neighborhood built in the 1970s, with a handful in the 1980s-1990s along Sharon Drive, near the former Kings Creek Country Club, homes here have sold for \$97,000-\$317,000 (1,300-5,200 sq ft).	A new housing development is planned for the former golf course off Culler Road - SFR & Duplexes	Flooding issues	Change to R-2 (east of Culler Rd)
Culler Road	"SFR, 12 duplexes, 14 MFR (3-12 units)"	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A medium-size neighborhood along Culler Road, between Pennsylvania Avenue and Kings Creek Road. Smaller homes (900-1,200 sq ft) have sold for \$60,000-90,000 while larger homes have sold for \$110,000-170,000.	Limited infill residential development		Keep R-1
Greenlawn Estates	"SFR, 4 duplexes, 4 MFR (3-8 units)"	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A small neighborhood just off Pennsylvania Avenue. Homes in this neighborhood have sold for between \$96,000 and \$210,000. There are sidewalks in the development off Greenlawn Blvd.	Crosswalks @ Pennsylvania Ave? Walking distance to Elem School		Keep R-1

Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Woodlawn Estates	"SFR, MFR on Palamino Dr"	"R-1 R-3"	Established Neighborhood-healthy to at-risk (Palamino)	"A medium-sized neighborhood located between Cove Hill Road, US 22 and Potomac Avenue. Mostly built between 1950 and 1990, with some additional homes built between 1990-2000 off Beacon Drive Extension. A large City Park is located off Union Street."	"Park - improve access, room for new facilities (pot. dog park?) Vacant lots - opportunity for residential infill development. Land at the end of Palamino Drive could be developed"	Code enforcement issues along Palamino Drive	Change all to R-1
Starvaggi Property North	"Open Space SFR, MFR (6-12 units)"	PUD Planned Unit District	New Neighborhood	"A small neighborhood off Pennsylvania Avenue, home to Starvaggi Park and surrounded by open space. The homes along Phillips Street and Jenny Lane are older (1975-era) and have sold for \$90,000-\$200,000, while the newer housing development off Millsop Drive (2008+) ranges from \$210,000-610,000. There are also a few apartment buildings located along Starvaggi Drive/Millsop Drive across from the park."	Available land for new development		Change to R-1
Bel Air Addition	"SFR, 5 duplexes"	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A small neighborhood off Pennsylvania Avenue along the WV/PA border. Homes range in size between 1,200-2,300 sq ft and have sold for \$70,000-210,000.	"Limited infill residential development. Former school property - opportunity for redevelopment. Formalize the trail connection between this neighborhood and Starvaggi Park to avoid Pennsylvania Avenue-utilize old school property"		Keep R-1
Colliers Way	SFR, 8 duplexes, MFR (6-26 units)	R-2	Established Neighborhood - stable	A medium-sized neighborhood located south of Pennsylvania Avenue, off the US 22 Colliers Way interchange. A mixture of single-family homes, duplexes and apartments, homes have sold between \$30,000 (800 sq ft) and 155,000 (2,400 sq ft). Oakland Avenue Park	There are vacant lots available for development off Smith Street and Clearview Avenue.		Keep R-2
Angeline Estates	Entirely SFR	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A newer neighborhood (1990-2000's) located off Colliers Way, south of US 22, this is the most expensive neighborhood in the City, with larger homes (2,500-4,500 sq ft) selling between \$250,000 and \$500,000.	Surrounded by undeveloped property, the vacant Serbian Club (redevelopment potential) and across from the soccer fields		Keep R-1

Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Harmon Creek	SFR, A few commercial businesses and industrial	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood - stable	A small neighborhood located off Colliers way near Harmon Creek Road. Home to the Panhandle Trail	There is land available for development.		Keep R-1
Marland Heights	SFR	R-1 Single Family	Established Neighborhood-healthy	A large neighborhood overlooking the Ohio River above downtown, smaller homes (800-1,600 sq ft) have sold for \$30,000-100,000 while the larger homes (1,600-3,600 sq ft) have sold for \$100,000-\$345,000. This neighborhood is home to Marland Heights Park (the pool is closed) and the Williams Country Club.	There is a large parcel available for development. There are a handful of commercial establishments - Marland Hts Rd or Rothrock"	The only access is Marland Heights Road.	Change to R-2
Downtown	SFR, 58 duplexes, 20 MFR (3-8 units) Upper story residential apartments along Main Street	R-1 R-2 R-3	Urban Neighborhood - distressed	A large, older neighborhood surrounding Main Street. Most of these homes were constructed prior to 1970 and sell for less than \$60,000. Current rentals available range between \$500-700/month. Home to City Hall, State Office building, Community Center, Library.	Targeted demolition of substandard housing, encourage upper-story residential, market walkability.	Code violations, slum lords	Change to R-3
Weir Avenue	SFR, 6 duplexes, Small-scale commercial, Industrial	R-2	Urban Neighborhood - distressed	A linear neighborhood along Weir Avenue, sandwiched between the mill and a steep hillside. Mostly built between 1920 and 1940, the houses are small and sit on small lots. Lots have sold between \$8,000 and \$40,000.	Depending on what happens with the industrial property, this area could have redevelopment potential	Code violations, need to demolish substandard structures	Keep R-2, change industrial property to industrial zone
Cove Road / Cove Hill Road	SFR, 8 duplexes, MFR (3-50 units)	C-1 Highway Commercial	Urban Neighborhood - distressed	A gateway corridor that offers a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential.	Substandard structures along Cove Road need to acquire and demolish - create a greenway as a gateway to the City from US 22. Improve the "gateway" sign across from Weirton Lumber - welcome to Weirton. Extend the Panhandle Trail into downtown.	Many homes are in poor conditions	Create a mixed use district

III. Housing Analysis



What are the Needs:

In order to gain an understanding of housing needs in Weirton, a number of stakeholders were interviewed as part of the planning process. The stakeholders included city officials, real estate professionals, developers, and large land owners and business and housing organizations.

Current Housing Market

Housing scarcity has become an increasingly pressing issue in Weirton, driven by a combination of factors such as expected population growth due to new job opportunities with Form Energy (see next page), urbanization, limited housing development, and changing economic conditions.

One of the most striking factors is the phenomenon where properties seem to sell almost as quickly as they are listed on the market. This dynamic has created a competitive and frenzied atmosphere for prospective homebuyers and renters. According to real estate data for July 2022 to July 2023, most homes stay on the market for less than 30 days and the average selling price is \$134,595.

In markets characterized by housing scarcity, the imbalance between supply and demand plays a pivotal role in driving this rapid turnover of properties. With a limited number of available homes or apartments, potential buyers or renters often find themselves in fierce competition with others. As a result, they are compelled to make quick decisions and often make offers above the asking price, further fueling the rapid sale of properties. This can lead to affordability challenges for many individuals and families, as they may be forced to compromise on the quality or location of their housing in order to secure a place to live.

In addition, according to the Census data, the majority of homes in Weirton are traditional single family detached (77%) and were built prior to 1959. These homes do not necessarily have the amenities that the average buyer is looking for including 3-4 bedrooms, 2 car garage, open floor plan, etc.

Form Energy

In 2023 and upcoming in 2024, Form Energy Incorporated, a startup hoping to make long-duration storage batteries from materials including iron to store power from renewable energy, is partnering with West Virginia to build a manufacturing plant in Weirton. During initial discussions with the Frontier Group of Companies, and their purchase of the former Weirton Steel property, existing water and sewer capacity became a topic of conversation. As both an infrastructure upgrade and to facilitate future growth, the City of Weirton, Water Board, and Sanitary Board are beginning a large construction project. This undertaking will increase the water and sewer plants' capacity from 4MGD to 8MGD. Upgrades to both facilities are scheduled to begin in 2024.

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice and Form Energy, backed by supporters including Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy Ventures, said the plant will be built with a total investment of up to \$760 million. The goal is to be up and running in 2024 and to create at least 750 jobs in the state (primarily in Weirton). Company co-founder and chief executive Mateo Jaramillo said Weirton was chosen from among 500 locations across 16 states. Jaramillo said Weirton has "the rich heritage and know-how to make great things out of iron."



Potential Sites

As discussed with staff from the city and many stakeholders (realtors, developers, etc.), there definitely is a need for housing in the city of Weirton. In addition to housing selling quickly, as discussed on page 31, the current housing stock has been described as essentially “below standards” in terms of what is needed for potential new residents moving in as a result of the Form Energy job creation.

According to those invested in the city, the majority of the existing homes are older and outdated, creating a need for newer and more modern inventory. The current demand for housing is as high as its ever been according to a large portion of the stakeholders that were interviewed. If Form Energy meets their estimated employment growth, the demand for housing will only grow. Howard Hanna is currently partnering with Form Energy to assist with finding their current employees housing. Unfortunately many are moving to areas outside of Weirton to find the type of housing they desire.

A wide range of new types of housing is certainly needed ranging from more modern single-family homes, townhouses, and quality rental units. Creating housing options that will allow senior citizens to “age in place” as well as attracting younger families or professionals will be beneficial to a Weirton. There was also a need for redevelopment to the housing units (single-family & rental) that were located downtown as well. As a part of the planning process, potential sites have been identified that would be suitable for development which are listed below and on the following pages as well as shown on the map in Figure 2.

Starvaggi Properties

Starvaggi is one of the largest landowners throughout the entirety of the city. They own property primarily on the east side on both the north and south side of Route 22. Starvaggi has recently completed two housing developments:

- Angeline Estates – The most affluent housing community in Weirton
- Starvaggi Estates – Mid to upscale homes ranging from \$150,000 to \$250,000

Starvaggi has also expressed an interest in expanding further into the housing development sector in the near future. They currently own a large amount of land in Weirton including hundreds of acres that can be utilized for expanding housing options.

Three Spring / Park Drive Development

The Three Spring & Park Drive Development is located on the southeast side off of Route 22. The developers own the 72 acres set for the Three Spring/ Park Drive development, which has been planned for retail, residential, restaurants and other businesses, as well as the potential for office space or light industrial operations at a later time. The property to be used for streets and parking has been deeded to the City of Weirton. They currently have 2 buildings planned that will consists of commercial (retail/restaurants/etc.) on the first floor with residential units above.

Greenbriar Road Development

The Greenbriar Road Development is located in the center of the city off of Route 22 near Cove Hill Road. The developers currently have 3 lots that they are developing. One lot has already been completed and sold. They are working on the two additional lots. There is also interests in extending the road and utilities to add another 9 to 10 lots. The developers currently have a engineering preliminary master plan as well that has 41 potential developments, however they will probably plan to do around 35.

Harris Hill Site

Harris Hill located off of Route 2 on Steel Boulevard was originally established as a low-income housing development in the 1970s. Harris Hill still has a substantial potential for further housing development. There are over 60 acres of land available for development on this site which includes a significant amount of unused or underutilized land that can be repurposed for additional housing units or other related development projects.

Vance Steven Development

This potential site for housing developments is situated on the northwest side of Weirton, on Saint Johns Road. This location used to be the site of the former Old Weirton General Hospital, which has since been demolished or torn down. This site was purchased a few years ago with the intention of building new housing developments, however the plans were delayed due to infrastructure extension and access improvement needs.

Turtle Hill Site

Turtle Hill, located near Maryland Heights, is described as a piece of land with favorable characteristics for building single-family homes, suggesting that it is a desirable location for residential development. However, its attractiveness is counterbalanced by a significant constraint: the lack of adequate access roads. Currently, the only route in and out of Turtle Hill is Brightway Street. This implies that all traffic, including residents, services, and emergency vehicles, would rely on this single road for access and egress. To address these concerns, if Turtle Hill were to be developed, multiple access points would need to be created. This would involve planning and investment in new roads or alternative transportation infrastructure to improve accessibility and mitigate the potential problems associated with relying solely on Brightway Street.

Weirton Frontier Crossings

Weirton Frontier Crossing stands out as one of the area's most significant landholders, boasting ownership of approximately 1,300 acres situated north of downtown. While a portion of this land is earmarked for Form Energy's operations, there is still a sizable and suitable portion available for housing developments. This extensive landholding presents promising prospects for both industrial and residential growth within the city, with the involvement of Form Energy hinting at potential economic investment and activity in the region.

Downtown Redevelopment

The redeveloping of downtown has been mentioned as a priority to address the housing needs for the city of Weirton. Addressing and fixing blighted and damaged homes as well as creating more mixed use opportunities (commercial on bottom floor with residential units above) in the downtown can significantly increase the housing supply in an area where demand is currently high.

Route 22 Corridor

Through stakeholder interviews, there has been a interests in developing the Route 22 Corridor. Constructing housing developments along this corridor has been seen as a viable option to put housing due to its location and easy access to the highway.

Action Plan

The need for additional and updated housing is clear based on existing conditions, market conditions and anticipated population growth due to Form Energy. The following are actions the City should take to encourage additional housing development in Weirton.

Action 1: Ensure the City's zoning regulations allow a mix of housing types in appropriate areas.

Weirton is currently undergoing an update to its Zoning Ordinance. As part of this process, the City should ensure that housing types such as two-family and multi-family units are permitted in districts that cover the potential sites identified on Figure 2.

In order to ensure there is a balance between market rate and affordable housing, the City should also explore offering incentives through zoning that encourage workforce housing. These could include additional building height, increased lot coverage, faster approvals, etc.

Action 2: Work with large landowners to encourage housing development

As mentioned on the previous pages, there are various sites in the City that would be appropriate for housing development. The City should continue conversations with landowners of these properties to determine their future plans and to provide education about the need for additional housing.

Action 3: Continue efforts to revitalize downtown

A vibrant downtown can go a long way to entice additional development to Weirton. The City has been working on improvements to downtown. These efforts should be continued in order to increase quality of life for existing and potential residents.

Action 4: Assist with marketing available sites and the need for additional housing

The City should work with local realtors and other housing professionals to "get the word out" about sites that are available for development in addition to the increasing need for housing in the City.

Action 5: Promote Housing Rehab Programs

The City should promote housing rehabilitation programs which involves creating awareness, advocating, and facilitating initiatives that aim to improve and revitalize existing housing stock. These programs typically focus on renovating and upgrading residential properties to enhance their quality, safety, and energy efficiency. The West Virginia Recovery Housing Program has broad statewide backing as it works to bridge gaps in the existing recovery housing landscape. The program offers grants to West Virginia residents, helping them cover expenses associated with efforts to achieve compliance. This includes the rehabilitation of facilities to meet national standards and obtain certification from the West Virginia Alliance of Recovery Residences (WVARR).

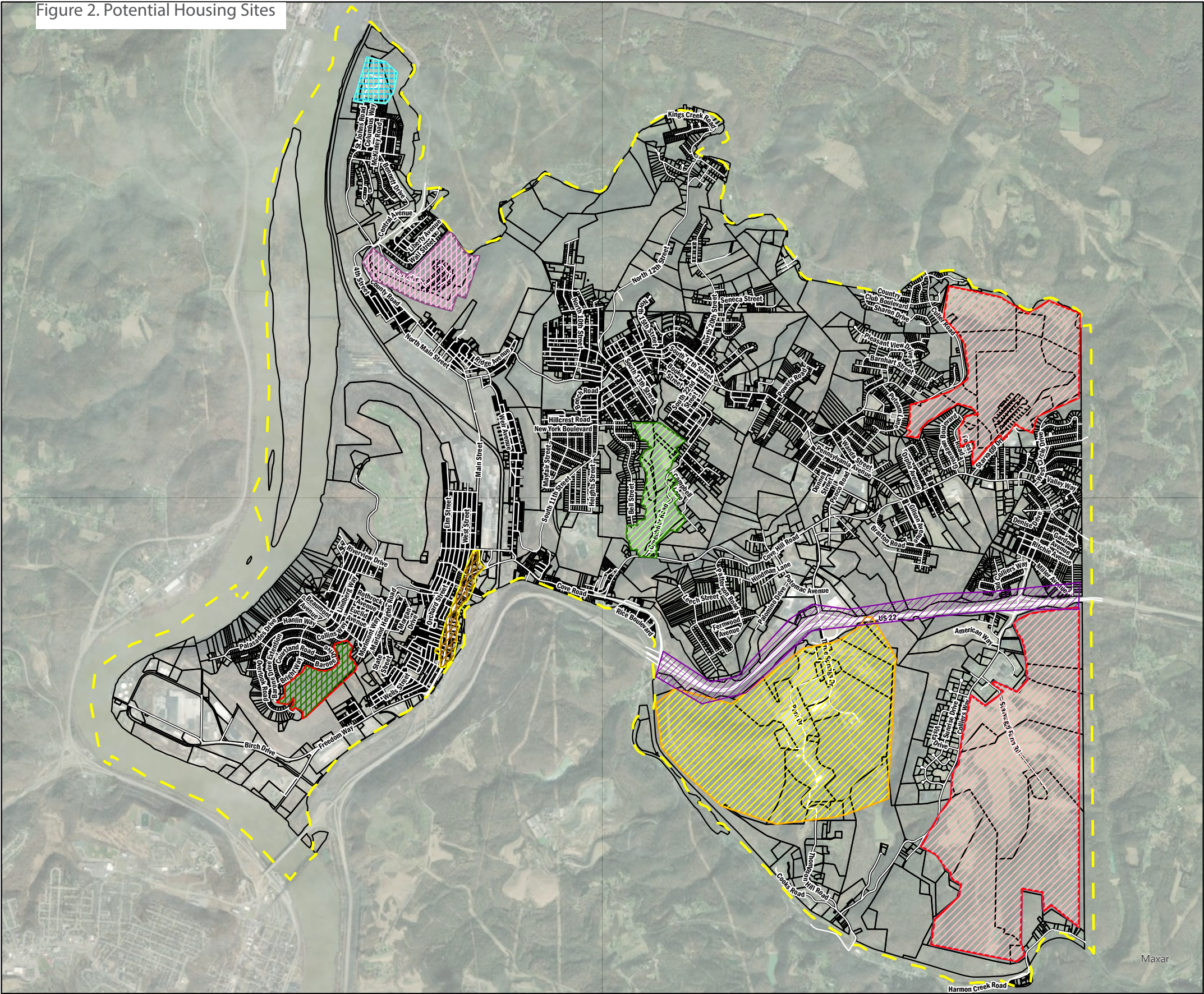
Action 6: Create Neighborhood Revitalization Programs

The City should collaborate closely with local residents, community leaders, and organizations to effectively address concerns and enhance the well-being of the individuals residing in each of the City's neighborhoods. Habitat for Humanity has a Neighborhood Revitalization Program which focuses on enhancing and rejuvenating communities. Through this initiative, the organization collaborates with residents, local partners, and volunteers to address specific community needs, ranging from housing improvements to infrastructure enhancements.

Action 7: Demolish Dilapidated Structures

The City should embark on a focused initiative to identify and demolish deteriorated structures within its boundaries. A comprehensive approach aims to eliminate blight, thereby improving the overall safety and aesthetics of the City. Successful models from other communities involve the establishment of a Blight Task Force, which may comprise representatives from various entities such as City government, the school district, residents, landlords, and other stakeholders.

Figure 2. Potential Housing Sites



	Starvaggi Properties
	Three Springs /Park Dr. Development
	Greenbrier Rd. Corridor
	Downtown Redevelopment
	Turtle Hill Site
	Harris Hill Site
	Vance Steven Development
	Route 22 Corridor
	City Boundary
	Parcels
	Roads

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Sources - City of Weirton

March 2024

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Financing

It is important to note that significant funding constraints currently impact all levels of government. Public financial assistance is increasingly competitive with a larger number of projects seeking less available dollars. With that in mind, the planning process included a detailed investigation into innovative and emerging development finance tools. We must continue to explore potential new funding mechanisms and strategies to fill the capital stack for priority projects. Specifically, the planning team reviewed tax increment financing, the Power of 32 Site Development Fund, New Markets Tax Credits, Impact Investing and the EB5 program. Detailed summaries and strategies are provided below.

A variety of funding tools exist to implement components of the plan recommendations -debt and equity - public and private. In some cases, it may be appropriate to utilize existing traditional funding resources. Implementing priority projects and programs will most likely require new and innovative funding approaches.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) allows for the capture of increases in real property taxes resulting from new development to pay for public improvements like necessary infrastructure. All or a portion of new tax revenues generated above the initial tax base can be diverted to fund eligible project costs. Nonrecourse debt, typically a revenue bond, is issued via an eligible authority of the sponsoring municipality to provide upfront financing. Alternatively, investments can be reimbursed from the flow of annual tax revenues diverted and captured within the district ('pay-as-you-go' method).

In 2002, West Virginia joined the growing list of states allowing the use of TIF to facilitate economic development and job creation. Amendment One to the West Virginia Constitution enabled the use of TIF, and the State Legislature subsequently passed the West Virginia TIF Act to implement the program. Weirton City Council passed an ordinance creating a TIF District in December 2004 following approval of the application by the state Development Office. Creation of the Three Springs Drive TIF District No. 1 was expected to facilitate development of vacant underutilized property to the south of U.S. Route 22. In 2015, City Council enacted an ordinance approving Public Infrastructure Project No. 1 – Park Drive Extension project plan to include paving, sidewalks and other road improvements.

The City is proposing Public Infrastructure Project No. 2 – Park Drive Development to fund construction and equipping of the new Weirton Conference and Event Center. It is

anticipated that the 20,000 square foot facility will include event space as well as a full service kitchen, lobby and break out meeting rooms. TIF proceeds will also be utilized to fund site preparation, road improvements, utilities and soft costs. A portion of project costs will also be funded through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and funds currently on deposit in the Three Springs Drive TIF Fund.

It is recommended the City pursue the following strategies with regard to the use of TIF:

- Three Springs Drive TIF:
 - » Implement Public Infrastructure Project No. 2 – Park Drive Development.
 - » Actively explore and pursue other funding sources to ‘jump-start’ priority redevelopment projects within the TIF District.
- Review feasibility of additional TIF Districts to facilitate investment in targeted areas.
 - » Market the TIF program benefits to property owners and developers.
 - » Determine potential TIF net proceeds, financing structures and eligible uses.
- Develop relationships with potential non-traditional TIF investors.

Power of 32 Site Development Fund

The Power of 32 visioning project identified common challenges and opportunities within the greater multi-state Pittsburgh region. The collaborative spans over 32 counties in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Maryland. Planned initiatives related to the economy, education, environment, community, government, transportation and infrastructure seek to create a thriving region.

The regional agenda recognizes that increasing the inventory of shovel-ready sites generates opportunities for greater business investment and job creation. The Allegheny Conference on Community Development led the effort to establish a fund to assist in the preparation of high-quality sites, emphasizing redevelopment of brownfields, to support business relocations and expansions in the region. Established in 2014, the Site Development Fund provides private investment to support site development.

To meet market demands, it is critical that sites are prepared for development including grading, infrastructure installation and environmental remediation. The Power of 32 Site

Development Fund closes critical infrastructure financing gaps by making patient mortgage loans to sites that have the potential for regional impact or that are identified as a priority for the greater region. The Fund targets larger sites over 25 acres with a planned industrial, commercial or mixed use. The governing board has identified a preference for facilitating the redevelopment brownfield sites or land in underserved communities targeted by the Community Reinvestment Act.

New Market Tax Credit

Established by Congress in 2000, the New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) aims to attract the private investment necessary to revitalize struggling local economies. It attracts private capital into low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities (CDEs). The credit totals 39 percent of the original investment amount and is claimed over a period of seven years. CDE's then provide subsidized financing to qualifying entities in low-income communities.

The US Department of Treasury CDFI Fund allocates tax credit authority to CDE's through a competitive application process. NMTC Program allocatees have approved service areas that range from local to national in scale. Below is a list of CDE's that currently service the state of West Virginia.

Awardee	City	State	Amount	Service Area
Boston Community Capital Inc.	Boston	MA	\$55,000,000	National
CAHEC New Markets, LLC	Raleigh	NC	\$45,000,000	Multi-State
Harbor Bankshares Corporation	Baltimore	MD	\$70,000,000	Multi-State
Midwest Renewable Capital, LLC	Grimes	IA	\$80,000,000	National
Oak Hill Banks Community Development Corp.	Jackson	OH	\$40,000,000	Multi-State
People Incorporated Financial Services	Abingdon	VA	\$65,000,000	Multi-State
The Business Valued Advisor Fund, LLC	Chicago	IL	\$45,000,000	National
The Rose Urban Green Fund, LLC	Denver	CO	\$45,000,000	National

The NMTC program is flexible with regard to project type and purpose. Recipients of NMTC investments can finance equipment, business operations or real estate. Each CDE has a specific investment strategy with regards to geography, project type and other factors. Eligible projects typically include community health clinics, charter schools and manufacturing facilities. The most recent report by The New Markets Tax Credit Coalition detailed that an increasing number of projects included the financing of businesses and shared entrepreneurial space.¹

Impact Investing

Unfortunately, public sector and philanthropic resources are insufficient to address the challenges faced by underserved communities. Impact investing is an emerging area of the capital markets that links desired societal outcomes to sources of capital. Beyond financial returns, investors seek to generate social and environmental benefits. These outcomes are measured and reported to investors. It should be noted that this is not a new source of capital for projects. However, it represents a strategy to attract additional investors and funding dedicated to sustainable development.

Foundations, governments and development finance institutions have started to collaborate in an attempt to leverage investments that will address society's greatest challenges. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation seeks to provide philanthropic risk capital to develop innovative financing mechanisms that will mobilize private sector capital in new and more efficient ways for projects that create a more resilient and inclusive world. The Kresge Foundation recently launched Kresge Community Finance, a \$30 million program-related investment offering available to development finance agencies working to expand opportunities for low-income people in America's cities. The Goldman Sachs Social Impact Fund is one of the first domestic impact investing vehicles sponsored by a major financial institution.

Impact investments can be made across asset classes, including but not limited to cash equivalents, fixed income, venture capital and private equity. Within Weirton, impact investment strategies could focus on neighborhood revitalization, job creation/small businesses development, green infrastructure and the provision of social/educational services.

It is recommended that stakeholders explore a partnership with the local foundation community and major financial institutions operating in the region. They can further leverage commitments in an effort to seek additional support from the large national foundations actively seeking to further innovative finance mechanisms tied to social, economic and environmental outcomes. Several of Weirton's priority projects closely align with the sustainable development policy goals of these organizations.

EB-5

The Employment-Based Immigration: Fifth Preference (EB-5) Immigrant Investor Program allows foreign investors to achieve legal U.S. residency as a result of financial investments that create domestic jobs. Participants receive an employment-based fifth preference visa if they make the necessary investment in a U.S. commercial enterprise (project) and plan to create or preserve 10 permanent full-time jobs for qualified U.S. workers. The EB-5 is administered by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The program provides flexible, relatively low cost capital that can facilitate a range of projects. Successful projects using EB-5 financing have included large commercial developments, transit infrastructure, manufacturing and the redevelopment of closed military bases. These foreign investments in an eligible project are made either directly or more commonly through a USCIS designated regional center. West Virginia is currently serviced by eleven approved regional centers, one of which focus exclusively on projects within the state. Investments may be used as debt or equity capital, and total amount of potential funding depends upon job creation estimates (direct or project spending).

Approved by USCIS in 2013, the West Virginia Regional Center (WVRC) seeks to conservatively invest immigrant investor funds into EB5 qualified projects that are located within the state or contiguous counties. WVRC's investment strategy focuses on the following project types:

- Mixed-Use Development
- R&D/Technology Center
- Energy Projects
- Infrastructure
- Manufacturing
- Entertainment Venues
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Hotels - Full Service and Flagged
- Rural Healthcare Centers

Preferred projects are between \$5-20 million, result in significant job creation (direct, indirect and induced) and meet standard underwriting criteria. Typical EB-5 investments are structured as 5-6 year interest only balloon loans. See <http://wvregionalcenter.com> for additional information.

Program Infrastructure

City's Role - CDBG/HOME program

- The City of Weirton has been an entitlement community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program since 1994.
- Weirton is a member of the Northern Panhandle HOME Consortium of West Virginia, which is administered by the City of Wheeling. The City undertakes specific initiatives to address its needs and objectives by promoting the rehabilitation and construction of decent, safe and sanitary housing, creating a suitable living environment, removing slums and blighting conditions, promoting fair housing, promote home ownership, improving public services, expanding economic opportunities, and principally benefiting low- and moderate- income persons.
- Change, Inc. offers a Home Ownership Program, which provides opportunities for low-income families to obtain safe, affordable and energy efficient housing throughout the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia. The homes are made possible through funding from local, state and federal programs.
- Single family dwellings are being extensively rehabilitated and single family and rental dwellings are being constructed throughout Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio and Wetzel counties with funding from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, Community Reinvestment Act and Community Housing Development Organization. The homes will be equipped with Energy Star appliances and energy efficient measures to obtain low costs and minimal upkeep.¹
- The City of Weirton Housing Authority manages a number of housing developments, senior high-rise rental apartments and operates the Housing Choice Voucher Program to assist families who need rental subsidy in privately-owned housing.

¹ <https://www.changeinc.org/home-ownership/>

Low Income Housing Complexes located in Weirton include:

- Chestnut Manor is a non-profit, subsidiary of Weirton Health Care. Chestnut Manor offers 19 one-bedroom apartments for low-income persons with physical handicaps, but are able to live independently. (<http://thechestnutmanor.com/>).
- Freedom Place I -& II - project-based rental assistance for senior citizens, offering 230 apartments (one-, two- and three-bedroom units) in a 7-story building on Main Street.
- Greenbrier Manor, Inc. - project-based rental assistance for disabled persons, offering nine accessible units.
- Heathermoor I & II - low-income housing tax credit apartment that offers 82 low income one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.
- Stone Brooke - low-income housing tax credit apartment that offers 42 low income one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.
- Wyles-Overbrook - owned and managed by the Weirton Housing Authority, there are 126 apartments.

Homeless Shelters

There are no homeless shelters in the City of Weirton. The closest shelters are as follows:

- Urban Mission Dormitory - located in Steubenville, Ohio. Urban Mission has been in operation since 1990 operates the Hutton House Homeless Shelter, which provides fully-furnished one- and two-bedroom apartments for families. Urban Mission assists families with finding permanent housing and sustainable jobs upon completion of the program. Another program offered is the JOSHUA Work Mission

Program, which brings volunteers in to help improve housing conditions for low income residents, such as painting, building handicap ramps, replacing windows and yard cleanup. (<https://www.urbanmission.org/>).

- Jefferson County Community Action Council - located in Steubenville. The Council operates Cathedral Apartments, a 30-unit building in Steubenville that provides low-cost efficiency apartments for low-income individuals, including those with disabilities. They also offer the Homelessness Crisis Intervention Program, which provides temporary rental assistance for individuals or families experiencing an emergency that may jeopardize their housing. (<https://jeffersoncountycac.doodlekit.com/>).

Rental Registration Ordinance

Weirton Council established a new rental registration program in July 2019. City Council enacted ordinances to establish a residential rental license fee and a commercial rental in order to improve housing conditions in rental properties throughout the City. The purpose of the Rental Registration program is to promote health and safety standards for residential rental housing and to secure and preserve the integrity and character of residential districts within the city. These standards relate to the condition, maintenance and occupancy of rental dwelling units and are intended to ensure that rental housing is safe, sanitary and suitable in accordance with applicable provisions of the State Building Code, 2018 ICC Property Maintenance Codes and other regulations adopted by the City of Weirton.

The rental requirements are that leasing residential and commercial rental property is a business activity requiring an annual City of Weirton business license. Landlords are required to have a West Virginia Business Registration Certificate with the state tax department upon filing for their business license. The fee for a rental business license is \$15.00.

