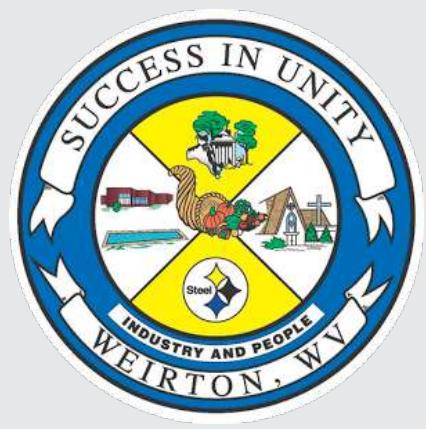


CITY OF WEIRTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NOVEMBER 2018





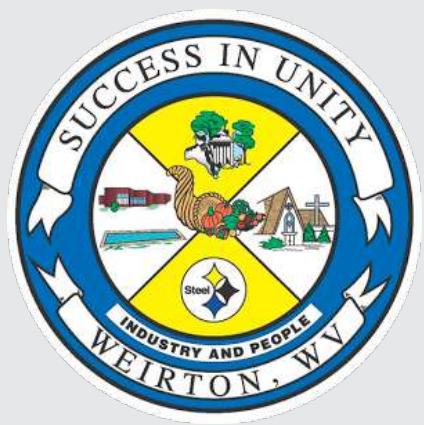
As a sincere thank you for his tireless advocacy for the City of Weirton, this plan is dedicated to the memory of our friend...



CHARLES WARREN "CHUCK" ROBINSON

An honest man here lies at rest,
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

*Robert Burns
1759-1796*



This plan was prepared by:
Mackin Engineering Company



www.mackinengineering.com
RIDC Park West
117 Industry Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15275

with assistance from Duane Morris
Government Strategies, LLC
on economic development and
financing strategies.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan was prepared on behalf of the Mayor and City Council:

Mayor Harold E. "Bubba" Miller

George E. Ash, Sr., Ward 4

Tim Connell, Ward 1

Douglas Jackson, Ward 5

Matthew S. Provenzano, Ward 2

Enzo Fracasso, Ward 6

Fred S. Marsh, Ward 3

Terry Weigel, Ward 7

Many thanks to the City's Planning Commission members, past and present, who dedicated their time and efforts:

Chuck Robinson, Chair

Mary Hannah Finton

Mike Adams

Nate Mazur

Jason Backel

John Porco

Tim Connell

Ken Fletcher, former Commissioner

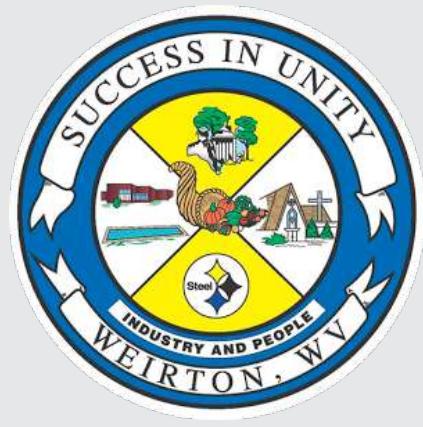
William Dalrymple

Tamara Green, former Commissioner

And to the City's Planning and Development Department:

Mark Miller, Planning and Development Director

Jessica Gumm, Program Manager



RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF WEIRTON ADOPTING THE UPDATE OF THE CITY OF WEIRTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Weirton City Council is responsible for the adoption of the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to Article 8A-3-11 of the West Virginia State Code; and

WHEREAS, the City's existing comprehensive plan had not been updated in more than 18 years and does not reflect the community's current vision and specific initiatives to help achieve that vision; and

WHEREAS, the City of Weirton City Council is responsible for the preparation of the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to Article 8A-3-3 of the West Virginia State Code; and

WHEREAS, the City desired to have a vision and plan for the community to refer to when addressing potential land uses and environmental impacts from the reuse of properties and the development of the vacant parcels in the City; and

WHEREAS, the City desired to be proactive in dealing with regional issues, protecting its resources, and planning for community and/or service needs; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the fact that the participation of citizens in an open, responsible and flexible planning process would be essential to the designing of the optimum Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission, along with Mackin Engineering, began work on the Comprehensive Plan in January 2017 at their regularly scheduled monthly meetings; and

WHEREAS, substantial opportunities for public input and comment were provided to the citizens of Weirton and included the April 2017 Town Hall meeting, a booth at the Fourth of July parade in 2017, a Public Arts Focus Group in January of 2018, and a second Town Hall meeting in March of 2018. Also, meetings were scheduled with local business and property owners and a community survey disseminated for additional public input. Citizens participated extensively throughout the planning process and public meetings were well attended. Community members contributed thoughtful comments and suggestions, providing continual to prepare an initial draft and then several re-drafts of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan is a vision document which identifies the important positive attributes and components which define Weirton and provides a blueprint for future growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance to decision makers, residents, property owners and organizations through its Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives, Implementation Strategies and Recommendations relevant to the subject matters of the built and natural environments, economic revitalization, public facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, after widely distributing drafts of the Plan and revising the document in response to issues and comments raised by the agencies and the public, the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan was finalized by the City of Weirton Planning Commission after the requisite Public Hearing on September 19, 2018; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Article 8A-3-7.C of the West Virginia State Code, a Public Hearing was held for public input and comments by City Council on November 13, 2018.

WHEREAS, the members of the Weirton City Council have carefully and thoroughly reviewed the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan as updated and is satisfied that it meets the needs of the City and requirements of applicable laws.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEIRTON, BROOKE, AND HANCOCK COUNTIES, WEST VIRGINIA, that the City Council hereby adopts the City of Weirton Comprehensive Plan, as an important planning tool which identifies a wide range of issues, initiatives, studies, projects and programs which can be undertaken by various entities in the short-term and the long-term.

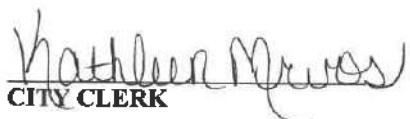
This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

Passed this 13th day of November, 2018.



MAYOR

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK

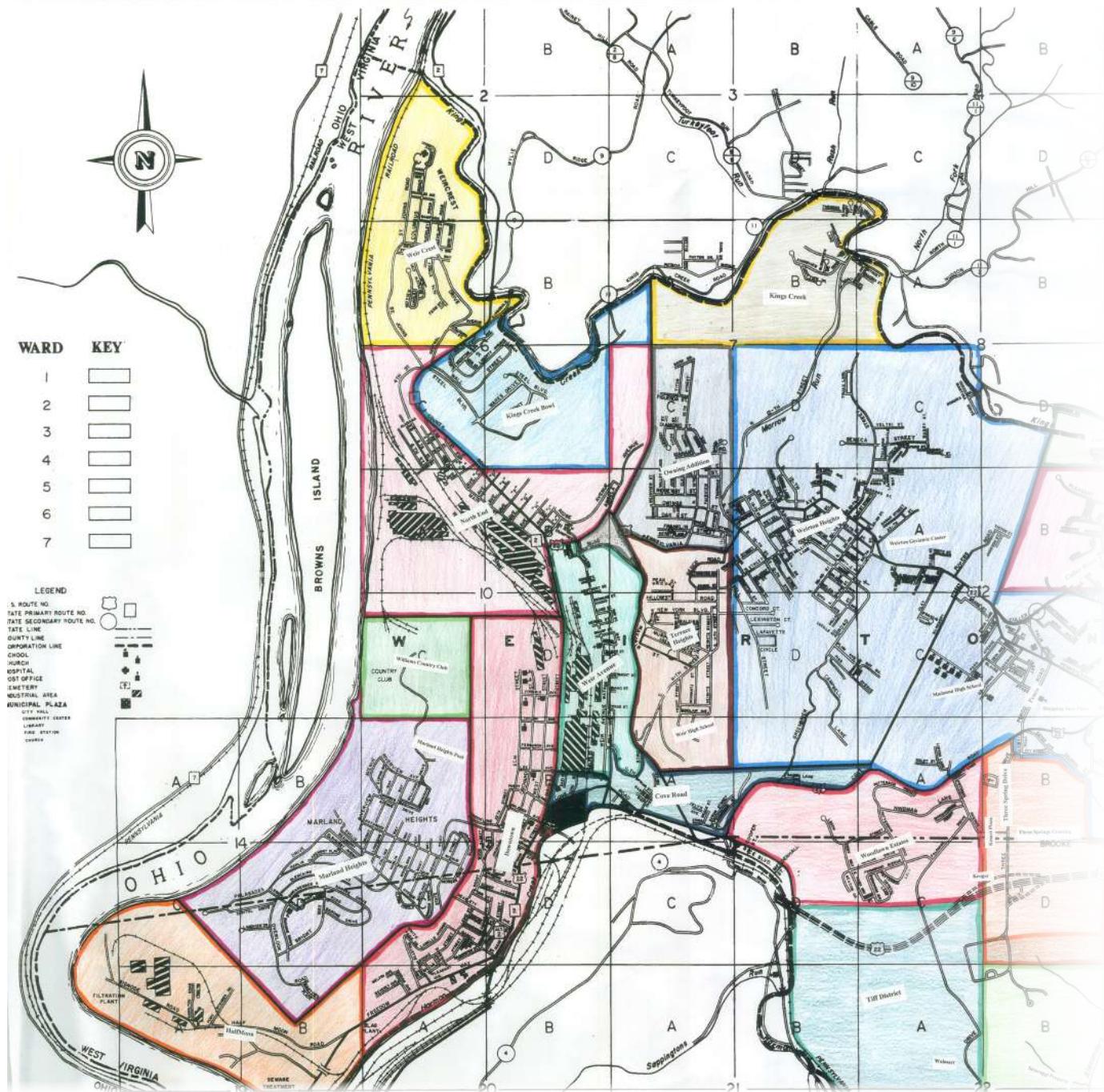
Sponsored by Weirton City Manager, Joseph B. DiBartolomeo



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chapter 1: introduction to planning



Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The West Virginia State Code Chapter 8A (Land Use Planning) defines a comprehensive plan as “a plan for physical development, including land use, adopted by a governing body, setting forth guidelines, goals and objectives for all activities that affect growth and development in the governing body’s jurisdiction.”

The City of Weirton last completed a Comprehensive Plan in 2000. The purpose of an update is to identify what has changed since the last plan. What has the City done to implement the vision, goals and actions identified in the 2000 Plan? What has changed in terms of who lives and works here? How have the needs changed, in relation to housing, parks and recreation, development, redevelopment and infrastructure? Has the quality of life changed? If so, how? These are all questions that a Comprehensive Plan Update will answer.

The City of Weirton was built predominately around the steel industry. This industry has undergone a decline in recent decades, which has had significant impacts on the City. Population decline and job loss are two of the most significant. The City does have a lot to be positive about, however, low crime levels; a very low cost of living; proximity to Pittsburgh, Cleveland and other metro markets; just to name a few. These are all aspects that can be built upon through the Comprehensive Planning Process to positively move Weirton into the future.

A Comprehensive Plan...

ESTABLISHES A COMMUNITY VISION

Each community has their own set of values that contributes towards their quality of life. Crafting a vision that captures these values is one of the most important components of the comprehensive plan.

ANTICIPATES THE FUTURE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

The exercise of preparing a comprehensive plan includes studying recent growth trends and other aspects of the community to help understand what the future needs may be.

PRESENTS THE STRATEGY FOR GROWING IN A RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER:

It is important for communities to be able to grow but it needs to be done responsibly and not diminish the quality of life. The comprehensive plan is an opportunity to describe how growth can be accommodated in the most efficient and sustainable way.



Mandatory Components of a Comprehensive Plan:

WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 8A: LAND USE PLANNING

Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning of the West Virginia Code provides municipalities with the authority to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans, defined as “a plan for physical development, including land use, adopted by a governing body, setting forth guidelines, goals and objectives for all activities that affect growth and development...”

The Comprehensive Plan is required to address 13 mandatory components, as listed to the right.

- ☞ **Land Use** - type and density of use; growth and/or decline management; development constraints
- ☞ **Housing** - projected needs; affordable housing; substandard housing; rehabilitating existing housing; adaptive reuse
- ☞ **Transportation** - movement of traffic and parking; pedestrian and bicycles; public transit
- ☞ **Infrastructure** - current and anticipated needs of future residents
- ☞ **Public Services** - medical, cultural, historical, community, social, educational and disaster needs
- ☞ **Rural** - designated rural area
- ☞ **Recreation** - recreational and tourism use
- ☞ **Economic Development** - opportunities; identifying sites and sectors; employment needs
- ☞ **Community Design** - sense of community, character and identity
- ☞ **Preferred Development Areas** - new, infill and redevelopment areas
- ☞ **Renewal and/or Redevelopment** - blighted areas; community renewal and revitalization
- ☞ **Financing** - short and long-term financing plans
- ☞ **Historic Preservation** - preservation plans & programs

Comprehensive Planning Process

The Comprehensive Planning process began in January 2017 with a kick off meeting with the Planning Commission. The process involved four parts: Community Snapshot, Vision, Action Plan and Adoption, as summarized below.



Public Input

An extensive public outreach effort was conducted throughout the planning process in an effort to reach as many people as possible.

Officials, consultants take tour of Weirton

Trip part of effort to update Comprehensive Development Plan



TOUR OF WEIRTON — City officials were joined by consultants Wednesday for a tour of Weirton as part of ongoing efforts to update the city's Comprehensive Development Plan. The tour included sites of ongoing and possible future development. — Craig Howell

Planning Commission Meetings

Meetings were held with the Planning Commission on a monthly basis, starting in January 2017. These meetings were advertised and open to the public and were covered by the Weirton Daily Times.

Focus Group Meetings

The Planning Commission identified a variety of stakeholders that were important to include in the planning process. As a result, several focus groups were organized to ensure that people representing various interests had an opportunity to participate. The following focus groups meetings were held:

- Main Street Businesses - August 16, 2017 @ Millsop Community Center - approximately 20 people attended this meeting to discuss the specific issues and goals for Main Street and the downtown area of Weirton.
- Economic Development - August 16, 2017 @ Millsop Community Center - approximately 12 people attended this meeting to discuss overall economic development opportunities and needs facing the City.
- Public Art - January 31, 2018 @ Sweet Temptations Pastry Shop - approximately 30 people attended this meeting to discuss the opportunities to use public art to help revitalize the City, particularly the downtown area.
- Large Landowners - a combination of meetings, surveys and phone calls were used to obtain input from the various individuals and companies that own large tracts of land in the City.

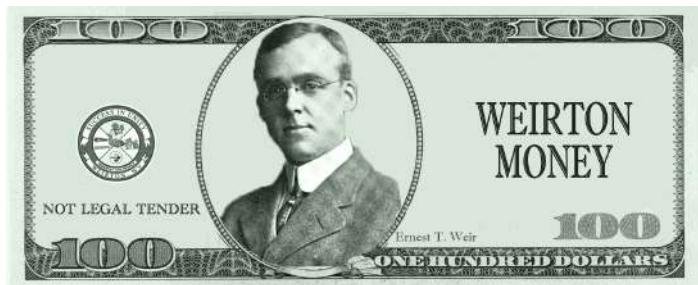


- City Department Heads - March 6, 2018 @ City Hall - Mackin attended a meeting with all of the City Department Heads to ensure that their input was included in the plan and discuss potential impacts that future development and policies may have on the ability of their departments to operate efficiently and effectively.

Public Meetings

- April 19, 2017 @ Millsop Community Center - approximately 75 people attended the meeting, identifying local and regional attractions and things that they would like to see for the future of Weirton.
- Red, White and Boom! July 1, 2017 @ Fourth of July Parade - Mackin staffed a booth during the parade and festival to talk to residents about the plan and obtain input and feedback. Copies of the public survey were made available for people to complete (47 were received) for a chance to win a basket; mapping and conceptual renderings of potential improvements to Main Street were also on display for review and comment.
- March 28, 2018 @ Millsop Community Center - a final public meeting was held to present the draft recommendations and attendees were given "Weirton Money" and asked to rank the objectives in terms of how the City should prioritize implementation. Approximately 40 people were in attendance.

Planning the future



Public Survey

- A public survey was made available online (and hard copies were provided at the Fourth of July festival) during July and August of 2017. Overall, the survey had 690 responses. It was publicized through the newspaper as well as the City website.

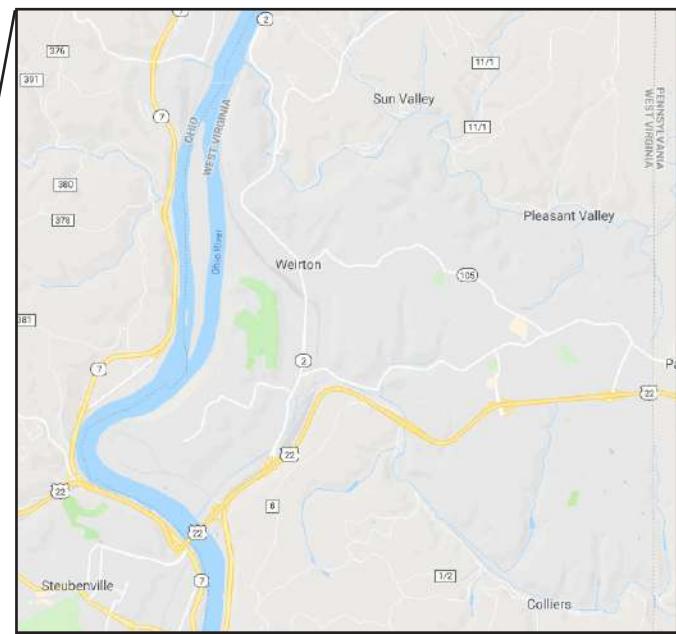
chapter 2: community snapshot



Location

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, the others being Hancock, Maryland and Pittsburg, New Hampshire.

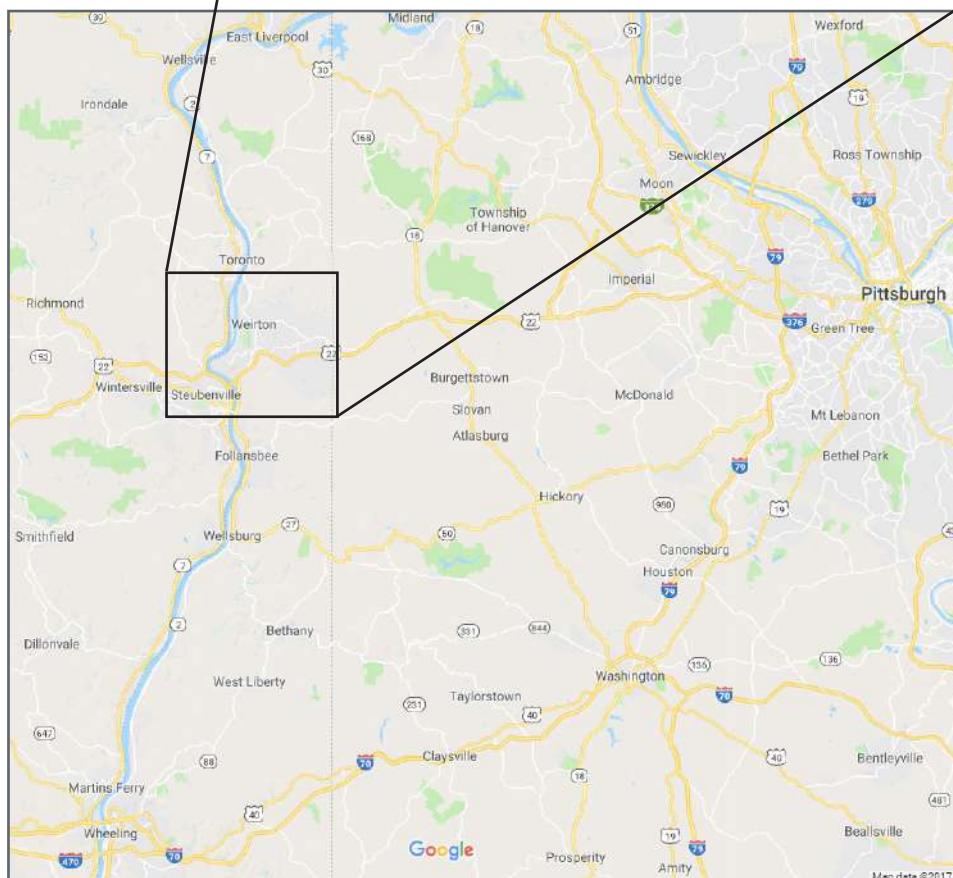
Weirton lies just across the Ohio River from Steubenville, Ohio, and about 35 miles west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, along U.S. Route 22. With the opening of PA Route 576 in 2006, the Pittsburgh International Airport is less than 25 miles away.



Fun Fact:



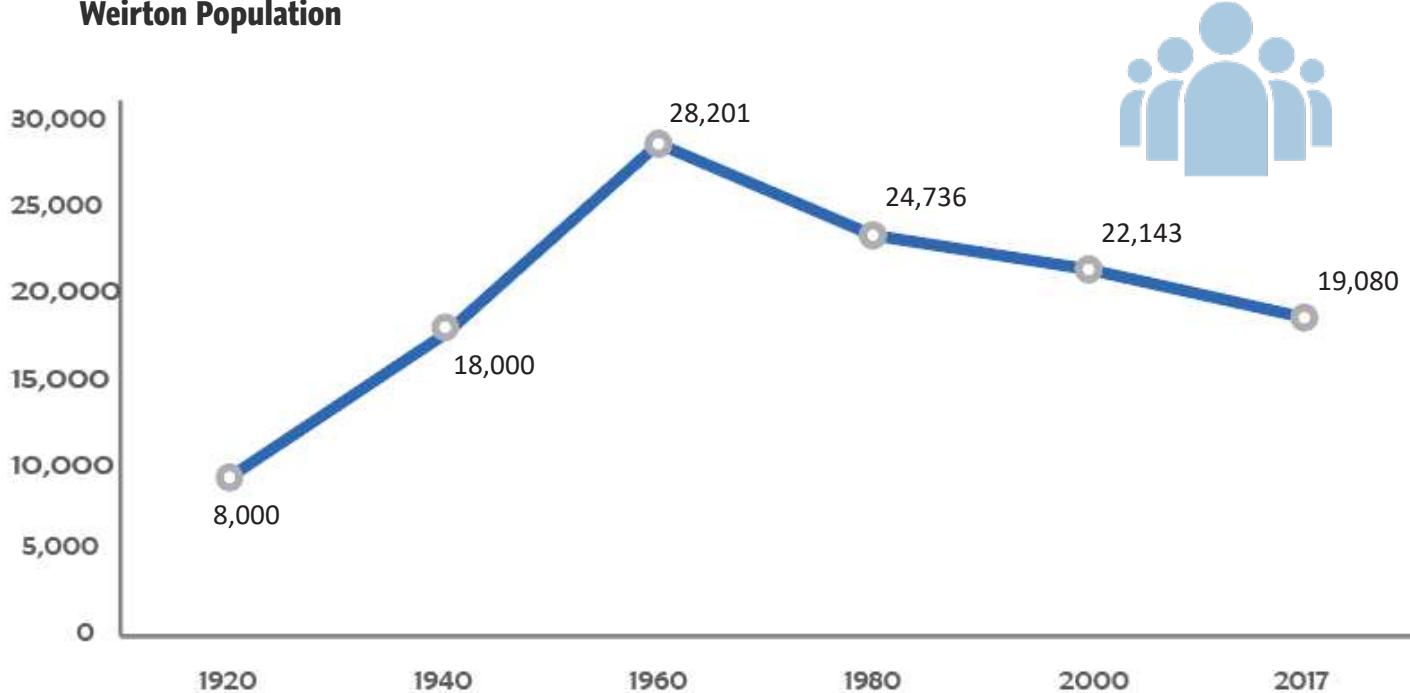
Weirton is one of only three cities in the United States that borders two other states on two sides and its own state on the other two sides.



A Brief History of Weirton

Early European settlement of the City of Weirton began in the late 1700s, when pioneers discovered the rich Alluvial soils that provided favorable farming lands. Other pioneers identified additional value in the lands natural resources like coal, clay, iron ore, gas, limestone, flagstone and trees. These early settlers first identified the area as Holliday's Cove. In 1776, Fort Holliday was built in the vicinity of Cove Road and Harmon Creek. During the American Revolution Fort Holliday was a supply depot for the Continental Army. Following the American Revolution, Holliday's Cove became a small hamlet that served the needs of local farmers. Some of the popular crops grown by early settlers like Harmon Greathouse included wheat, rye, corn, oats, and Irish potatoes. Important by-products of these crops included whiskey, maple syrup, and sugar. The first to realize the value of the natural resources was Peter Tarr, who in the 1790s used the iron ore, limestone, and wood to make iron for cannon balls and pots and pans. Holliday's Cove was located in the heart of the "Sheep Belt." Consequently, in the 1860s entrepreneurs surrounding Holliday's Cove turned to wool to replace corn whiskey as the primary commercial enterprise. By the 1870s wool prices began to fall and these same entrepreneurs turned again to the agriculture industry producing grains, corn, and fruit. Because of the geography of the region, apple orchards became a popular crop. With the advent of the steamboat and railroads in the mid- to late 1800s, the Holliday's Cove area began its transformation from a farming and agricultural community into an industrial giant.

Weirton Population



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. In 1958 the Mary H. Weir Public Library opened, a gift to the City from Ernest T. Weir's widow.



Source: Weirton Area Museum: 100 Years of Making Steel

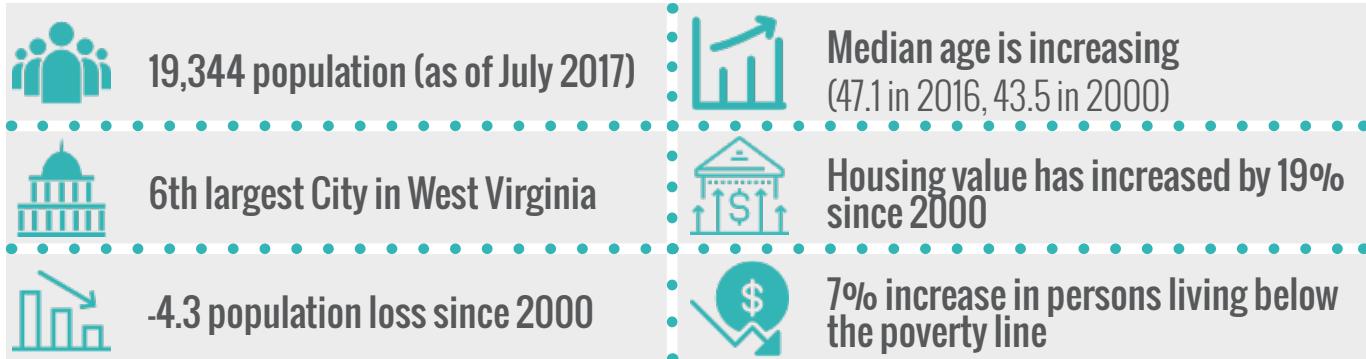
By 1978, Weirton Steel operations had grown to be so large that many northern neighborhoods in the City had been purchased by WSX for additional parking and new facilities. Consequently, many of these residents moved to Marland Heights and Pleasant Valley, a small community just north of Weirton. At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

Beginning with the energy crisis of the 1970s, much of the American steel industry has been besieged by 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. In 2003, Weirton Steel (then owned by National Steel) was the state's 5th largest employer and entered into bankruptcy. By 2005, the company 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. The Weirton plant is ArcelorMittal's only tin plating plant in the USA.

Throughout much of the 20th Century Steubenville, Ohio was considered the commercial and financial center, while Weirton played its part as the industrial force. However, in recent times Weirton has become recognized as the commercial center with new 1990s-style developments such as Wal-Mart, Kmart and the Kroger grocery chain along the Three Springs Drive corridor. Much of this recent development has been the result of the construction of Veteran's Memorial Bridge in 1990, and then in 1993 the opening of U.S. Route 22, which provided an easy automobile connection between the City of Weirton and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Both U.S. Route 22 and Veteran's Memorial Bridge will certainly play a significant role as the City of Weirton begins to redefine its future.

Housing construction in the Weirton area fluctuated with the events of the times. The majority of the earliest housing was constructed in close proximity to the mill. However, many of the Weirton Steel executives lived across the Fort Steuben Bridge in Steubenville, Ohio. Then, when the automobile became affordable, increased housing development began to spread east to more suburban neighborhoods, especially in areas along main routes of travel, like Pennsylvania Avenue, Penco Road and more recently, Three Springs Drive and Colliers Way.

Demographic Snapshot - who lives here?



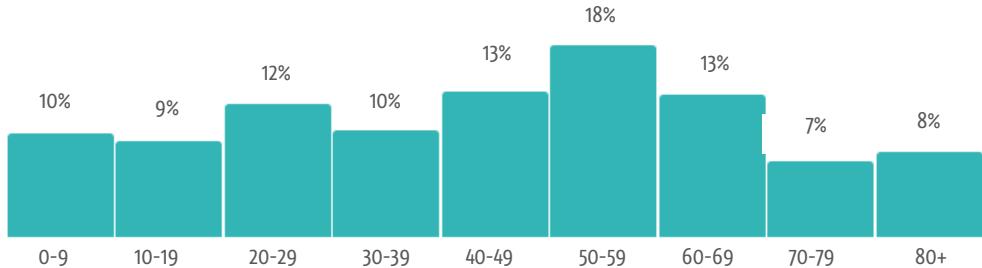
Current population statistics

47.1 years

Population by age range

Median age

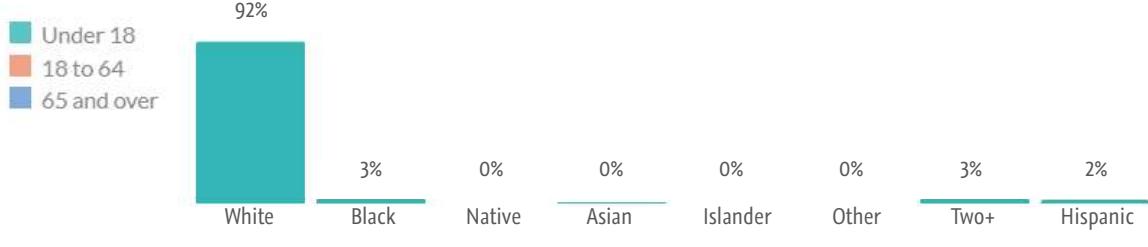
Slightly higher than the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (45.1) and 10% higher than West Virginia (41.9)



Population by age category



Race & Ethnicity



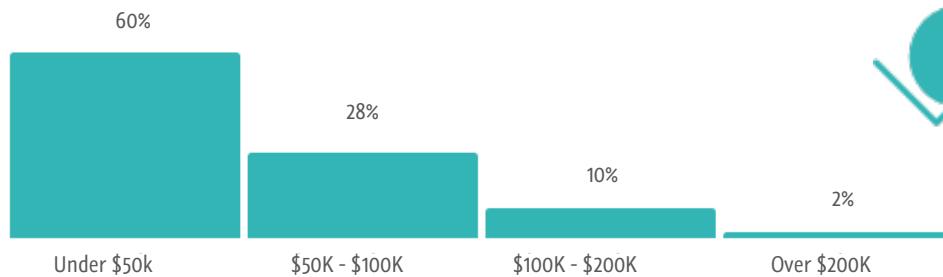
Source: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US5485156-weirton-wv/>

\$39,832

Median Household Income

90% of the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (\$42,319) and West Virginia (\$42,644)

Household Income

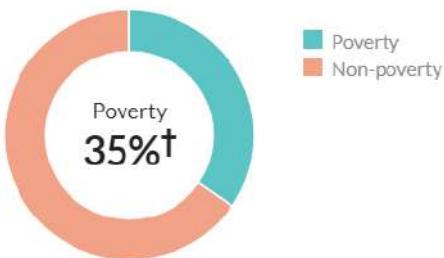


16.6%

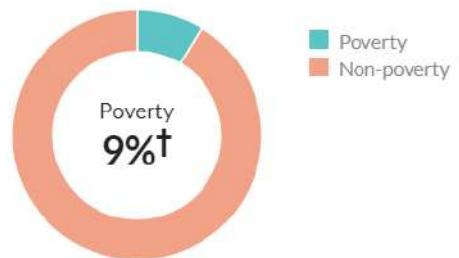
Persons below poverty line

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

Children under 18



Seniors (65 and over)

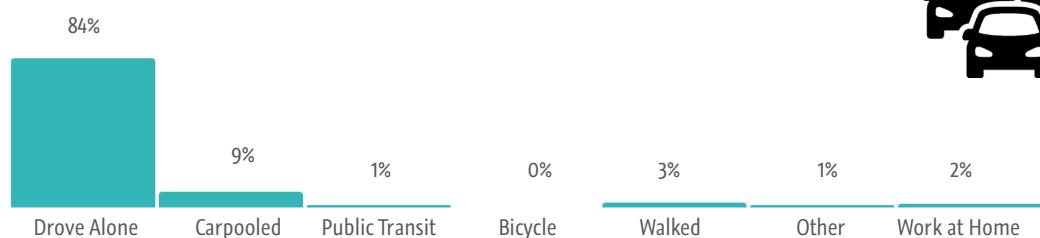


23.1 minutes

Mean travel time to work

90% of the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (24.9) and West Virginia (25.6)

Transportation to Work

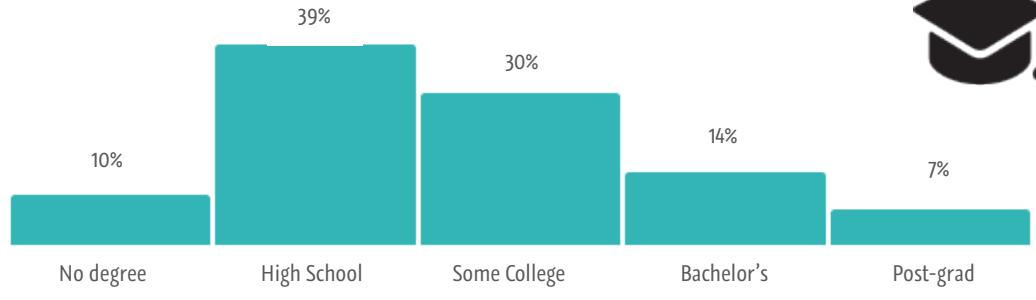


21.2%

Bachelor's degree or higher

25% higher than the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (17%) and 10% higher than West Virginia (19.6%)

Population by minimum level of education





9,490

Housing units

Owner-occupied is 90% of the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (71%) and West Virginia (72%)

Occupied vs. Vacant



Ownership of occupied units



79%

Single family home

There are 1.5 times as many multi-family units than the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (14%) or West Virginia (12%)

Housing type



34%

Moved in home since 2000

17%

Moved since previous year

\$87,400

Median value of owner-occupied units

Similar to the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (\$87,300) but 80% of West Virginia (\$107,400)

Value of owner-occupied housing units



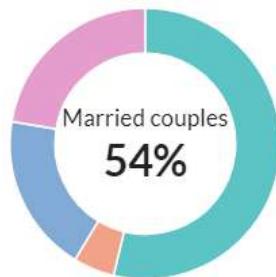
8,665

Total households

2.2

Persons per household

Population by household type



2.4%

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

Half the rate of the Weirton-Steubenville Metro Area (4.6%) and West Virginia (4.7%)

A great city offers a variety of neighborhoods that are suitable to different lifestyles and life phases - neighborhoods that meet the needs of young professionals, families as well as older, retired residents.

What makes a neighborhood great?

- Pride in ownership
- Low crime rate
- Great schools
- Outdoor activities
- Tree-lined streets
- Access to medical care
- Public transportation
- Nearby shopping & restaurants
- Walkability

Weirton Today

Weirton is a City of neighborhoods; from its beginning, Holliday's Cove, Marland Heights and Weirton Heights merged with the unincorporated town of Weirton to form the City of Weirton. Today, Weirton is comprised of approximately 20 different neighborhoods. The key to a great City is to offer a variety of different TYPES of neighborhoods, that cater to different lifestyles. A Forbes article identified various components that make a neighborhood truly great.¹ Under each component is a summary of how Weirton meets the needs of residents looking for great neighborhoods.

Pride in ownership



Pride in ownership - all great neighborhoods have this in common. Pride in ownership is obvious when the residents, whether renters or owners, maintain their homes and care about their neighborhoods.

Property maintenance is vital to a thriving neighborhood, it is one of the first things a prospective resident sees when looking for a new home.

The City of Weirton Inspections Department is responsible for the City-wide plan review and inspection to assure compliance with the State of West Virginia and City of Weirton Building and Property Maintenance Code, as well as inspection and enforcement of the City of Weirton's Codified Ordinances.

¹ "12 Things that Make a Neighborhood Truly Great." Forbes Magazine. November 29, 2014. Retrieved online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trulia/2014/11/29/12-things-that-make-a-neighborhood-truly-great/#7c2b72ba35f6>.

Low crime rate



Low crime rate - safety and security are important; transitional and improving neighborhoods are reflective of associated crime rates.

The rate of crime in Weirton averages 50% lower than the rest of West Virginia, while the rate of crime on a national scale is 57% lower. Crime statistics are divided into two distinct categories (violent crimes and property crimes) to provide insight to how prevalent crime is in the area. The occurrence of violent crime in Weirton, WV is 68% lower than the average rate of crime in West Virginia and 70% lower than the rest of the nation. Similarly, crime involving property stands 46% lower than the remainder of the state of West Virginia and 55% lower than the nation's average. Both of these statistics relate to how safe residents and businesses are while performing everyday activities in the Weirton area.²

Weirton, WV Crime



"The overall crime rate in Weirton is 57% lower than the national average.

Weirton is safer than 73% of the cities in the United States."

Great schools



Great schools - families with young children often choose an area based on schools. Great schools keep property values high and attractive to people of all ages.

Weirton spans school districts: Hancock County School District and Brooke County School District. The majority of residents are within the Hancock County School District. Within the City, there are four public schools: Weirton Elementary (Hancock SD), Lauretta B Millsop Primary School (Brooke County SD), Weir Middle School (Hancock County SD) and Weir High School (Hancock County SOD).

Hancock County Schools



Brooke County Schools



² <http://www.areavibes.com/weirton-wv/crime/>

Source: schooldigger.com

Outdoor activities



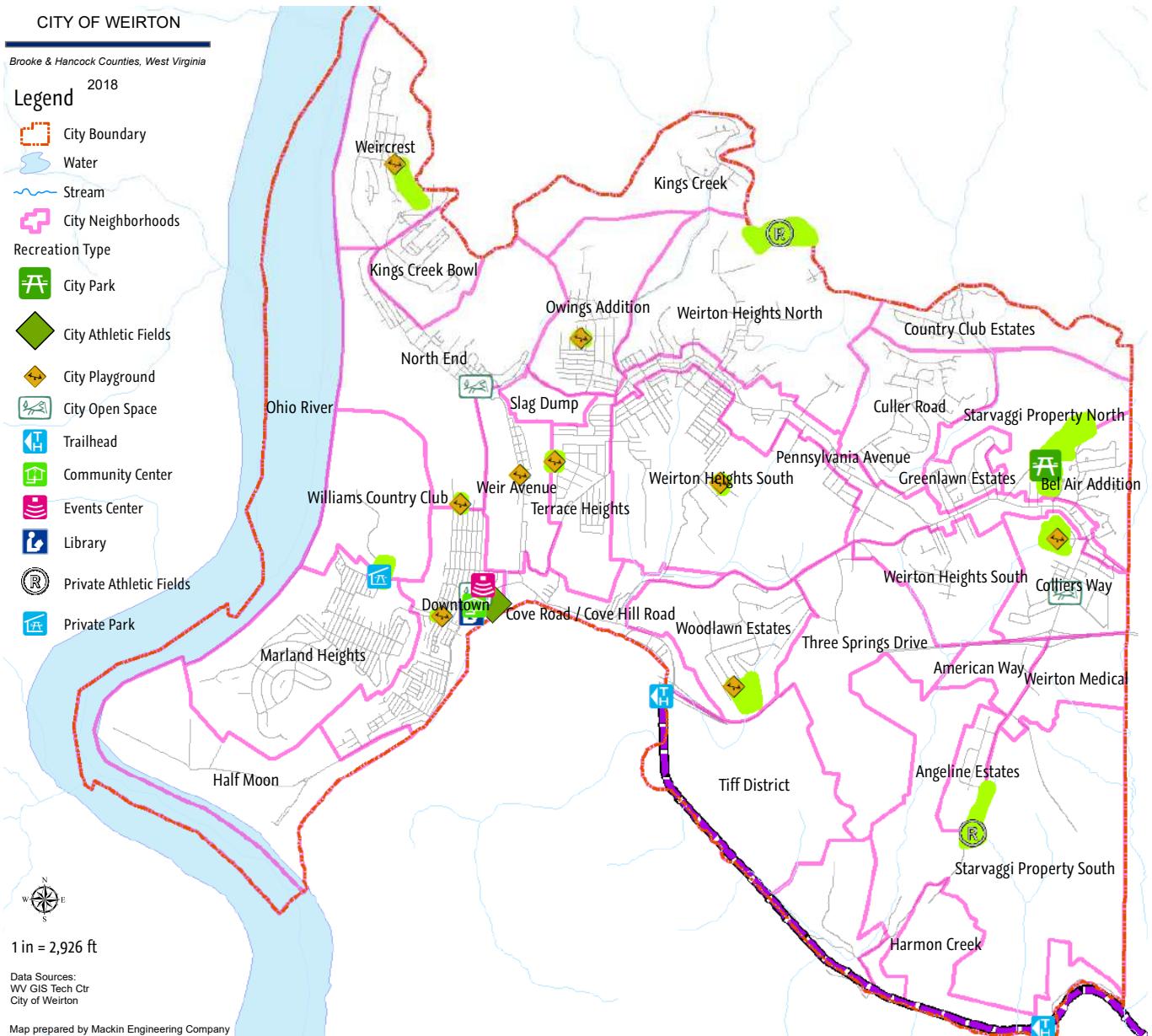
Starvaggi Memorial Pool & Park is the City's recreation hub, located at 136 Starvaggi Drive. The park and pool were donated to the City in 1968 by Starvaggi Charities, Inc.

The pool area offers an Olympic-size pool with water slides and a water volleyball court. The park features tennis courts, basketball courts, roller hockey court, volleyball court, bocce courts and picnic shelters.

Outdoor activities - accessible parks and recreation, whether public or private, make neighborhoods more appealing.

It is the mission of the City of Weirton Board of Park & Recreation Commissioners to provide quality recreation opportunities at affordable prices, and to enhance the lives of Weirton residents and promote healthy lifestyles through the benefits of recreation. Staff plans and provides a variety of enjoyable and cost-effective recreational, fitness, sports and wellness programs. The Commission maintains a system of parks and recreation facilities which will assure quality leisure opportunities for all Weirton residents.

- City Parks: Starvaggi Park and Pool
- City Playgrounds: 9 playgrounds throughout the various neighborhoods
- City Athletic Field: Senator Bowman Field - baseball field by City Hall)
- Millsop Community Center - nonprofit community center
- Mary Weir Public Library
- Weirton Events Center
- Panhandle Trail
- Marland Heights Park - Marland Heights Community Association
- Private Recreation (JC Williams Soccer Complx and Weirton Baseball Association)



T tree-lined streets

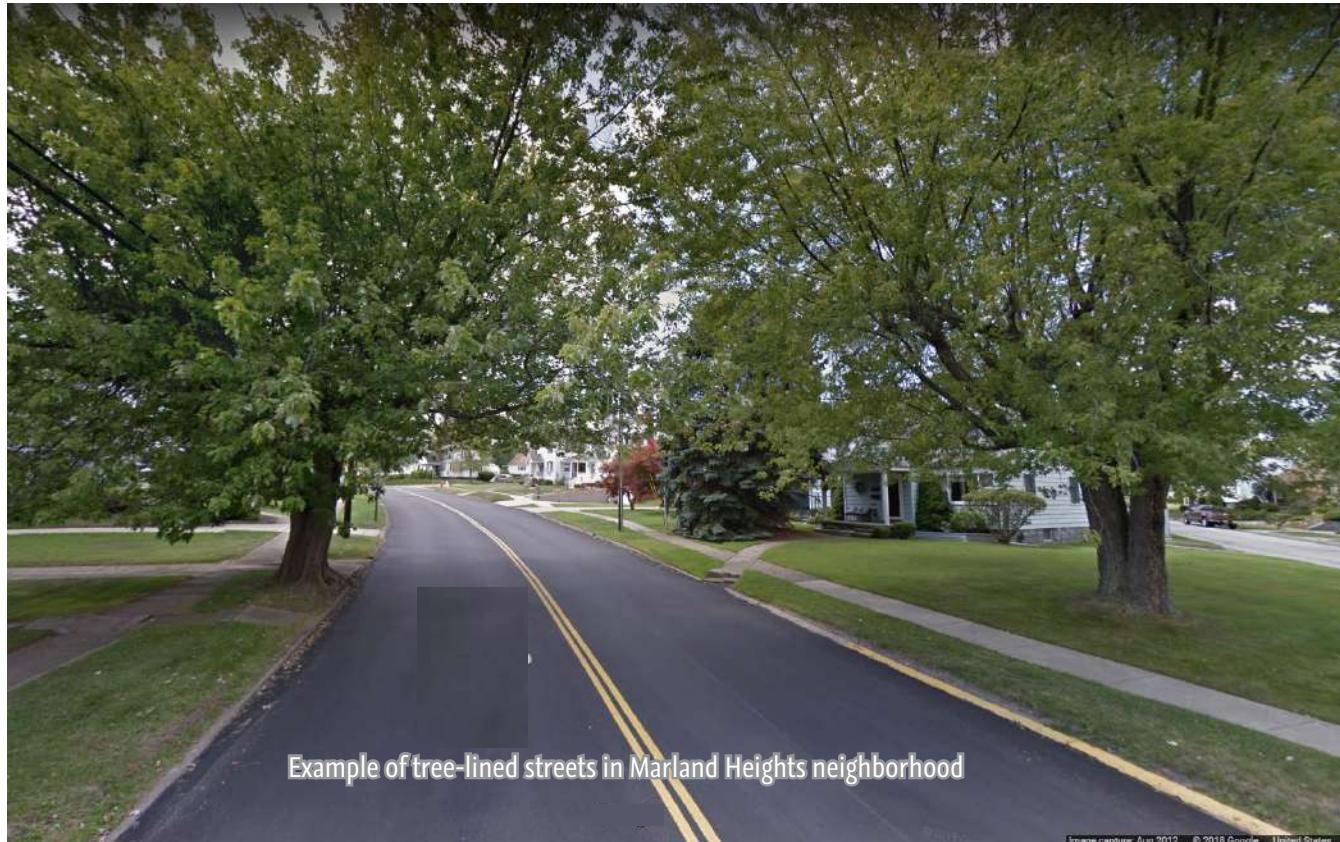


Benefits of Street Trees:

- Reduce costs for energy, stormwater management and erosion control.
- Cut energy consumption by up to 25%
- Boost property values across communities.

Tree-lined streets - street trees give a feeling of older, established neighborhoods with charm and stability that is associated with safety and low crime rates.

Most of the City neighborhoods are filled with tree-lined streets, particularly the older neighborhoods like Marland Heights.



Example of tree-lined streets in Marland Heights neighborhood

Image capture: Aug 2012. © 2018 Google. United States

Access to medical care

Access to medical care - especially important to older residents and families with young children, easy access to quality healthcare is important.



Weirton Medical Center (then Weirton General Hospital) was founded in 1953 by a group of community leaders in the City of Weirton. The Hospital was initially located in the Weircrest neighborhood. A new facility, renamed Weirton Medical Center (WMC), was built on a 20-acre campus located near the US Route 22 corridor adjacent to the West Virginia/Pennsylvania border.

In 2002, WMC completed construction of a \$10 million four-story medical office complex annexing the main hospital. Since mid-2012, WMC has proven itself a true tri-state medical network by growing its reach from the 238-bed acute care facility on Colliers way in Weirton and one off-campus location to now operating 38 sites in 3 states.

WMC offers various health screenings each year, at no cost, to City residents and offers (for a small fee) a bi-yearly Comprehensive Blood Analysis, Prostate Screenings and more. WMC partners with Weir High Schools, Oak Glen High School, and Madonna High School, providing nearly \$80,000 each year to education and health initiatives. In addition, WMC offers a variety of community events, including various support groups, educational classes / programs, fitness programs and blood drives.



Weirton Medical Center has seen an increase in jobs, an opening of new facilities, expansion of services and revenue growth. Between 2012 and 2016, it has grown from a 238-bed acute care facility with one off-campus location to an operation spread across 40 sites in three states. WMC has seen a 39 percent increase in employment – creating approximately 350 new jobs – in the last two years, and grown its revenue by 64 percent.

Public transportation



Public transportation - easy access to public transportation is particularly attractive to commuting millennials and retirees.

The Weirton Transit Corporation offers bus services throughout the City of Weirton. The Weirton Transit Corporation (WTC) operates bus service on a route deviated basis. The route buses will follow the set route schedule. If necessary along the route, the buses will deviate from the set route to accommodate passenger needs, and then return to the route and continue along the set route. This bus will operate on a curb-to-curb basis.

WTC provides three routes. The regular route serves Downtown, Pennsylvania Avenue, Weirton Medical Center and Three Springs Drive. The second is a school route, providing access to the schools within the City. The third route provides service to Steubenville, Ohio.

Nearby shopping & restaurants



Nearby shopping and restaurants - whether within walking distance or a short commute away, people want to live close to retail, restaurants, nightlife and entertainment. These amenities are primarily located on Main Street, Pennsylvania Avenue and Three Springs Drive. According to Walk Score, there are approximately 97 restaurants, bars and coffee shops in the City; people can walk to an average of 0.3 in 5 minutes (Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/WV/Weirton>).

Walkability



Walkability - people choose to live in cities and towns for their walkability.

Walk Score rates the 10 largest cities in West Virginia and Weirton comes in last with a Walk Score of 25, making it a car-dependent City. Morgantown (population of 29,660) and Martinsburg (population of 17,227) rate the highest with scores of 54 and 47 respectively.



Existing Land Use

Existing land use looks at how the land is being used today. Land use data was collected and mapped using available tax assessment information through GIS and conducting a windshield survey to verify current land uses.

Approximately 40% of the land is classified as “undeveloped.” However, much of this land is steep slopes, limiting future development potential. Another 3.5% is classified as vacant, which includes vacant buildings and vacant lots that have been previously developed.

Residential is the most dominant land use (almost 25%), with the majority being single family residential. The second highest land use is industrial (12%), with the vast majority being related to the mill and Half Moon Industrial Park. Commercial represents another 6%.

To help identify development patterns and trends, current land use data was compared to previous land use data collected as part of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that there are some differences in the way land was classified; primarily between undeveloped vs. vacant land; in addition, some land is currently classified as industrial that was previously classified as vacant land despite no real change in land use. The following highlight the major development patterns and trends between 2000 and 2018:

- Continued commercial development along American Way, Three Springs Drive and Park Drive (previously classified as vacant land). Commercial land use has increased from 2% to almost 6%.
- Residential development has not changed much. While there has been some single and multi family residential development, building permit data shows very little activity since 2004.
- Recreation has decreased as a result of the Kings Creek golf course closing. While classified as vacant, this area is planned for a residential subdivision.

Figure 1. Existing Land Use Map - 2018

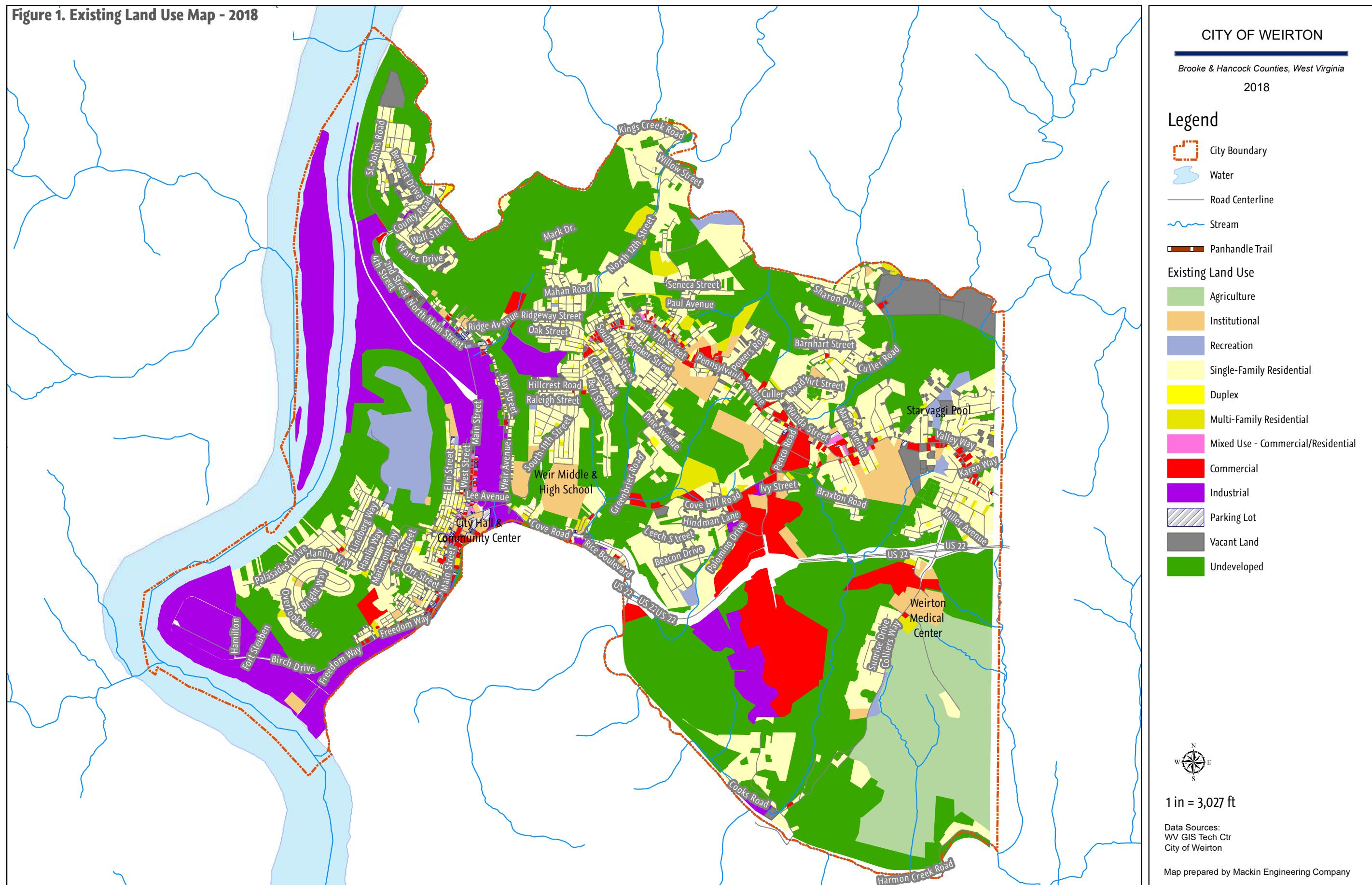
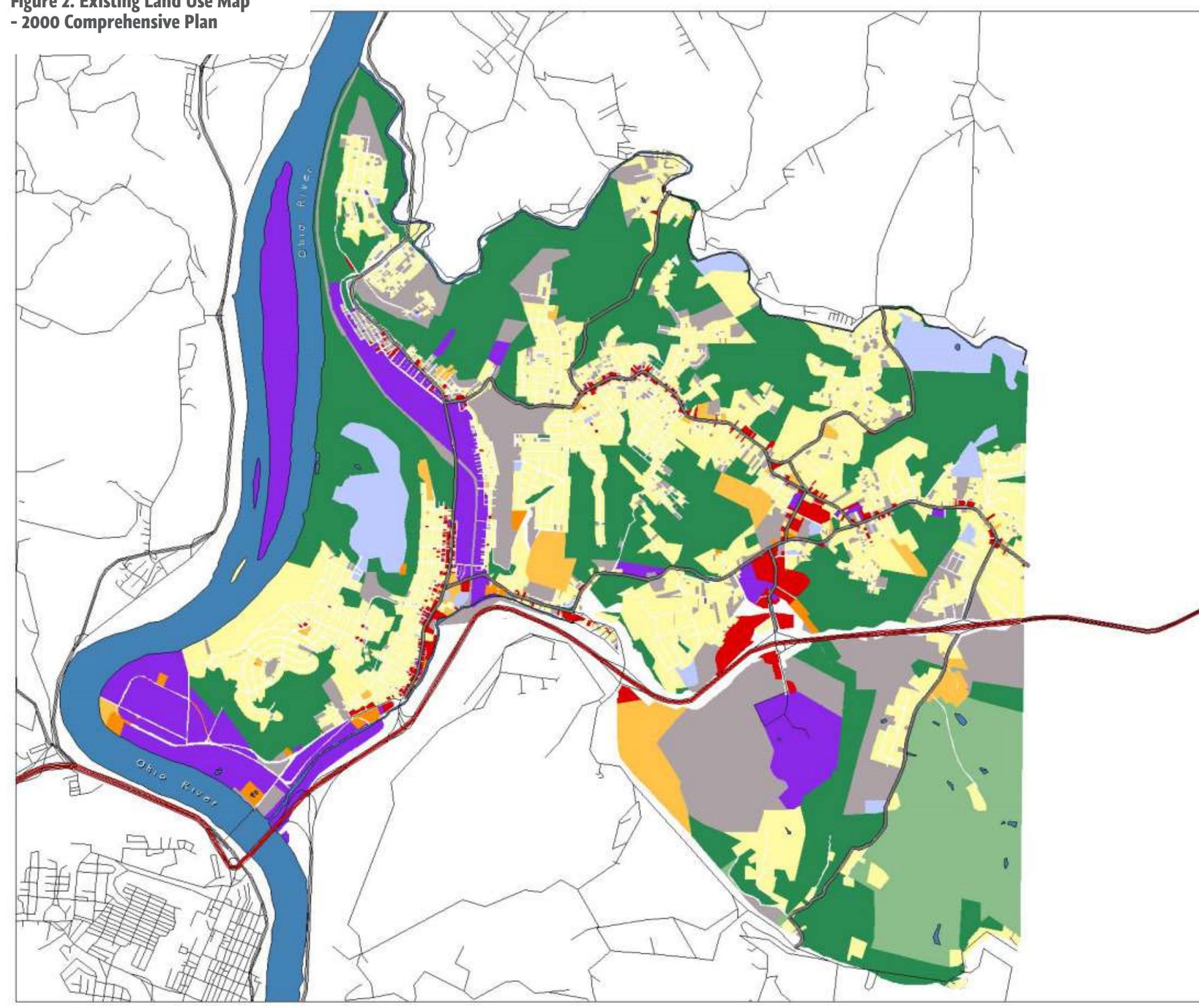


Figure 2. Existing Land Use Map
- 2000 Comprehensive Plan

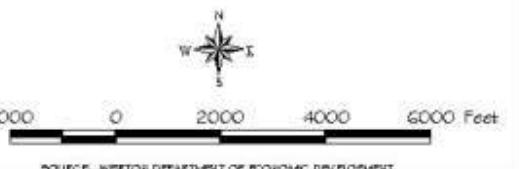


CITY OF WEIRTON
Comprehensive Plan

Land Use

- Underutilized Parcels
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant Land
- Commercial
- Recreation and Entertainment
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Forested Lands

- City Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- State Boundaries
- Railroad
- Local Roads
- Primary Local Roads
- State Roadways
- U.S. Route 22
- Streams, Creeks
- Rivers, Lakes



THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, AND PLANNERS P.C.
SARATOGA SPERDOS NEW YORK CITY BUFFALO BOSTON

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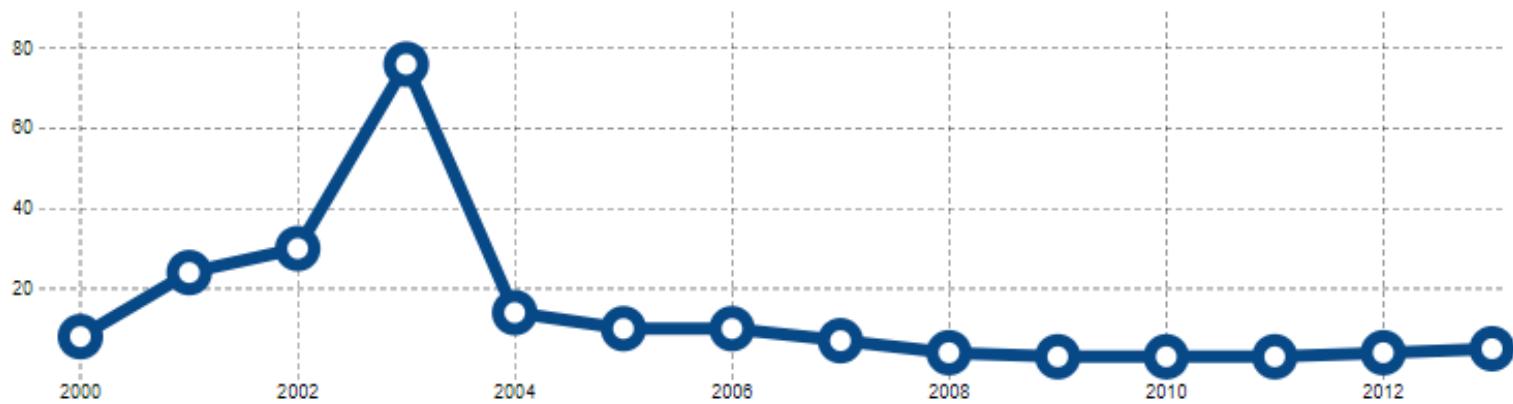
WEIRTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Table 2.1: Land Use Comparison: 2018 vs. 2000

	Acreage	% of Land Use 2018	% of Land Use 2000 Comp Plan
Agriculture	769	7.44%	7.85%
Institutional	388	3.76%	3.72%
Recreation (public/private)	249	2.41%	3.68%
Single Family Residential	2,310	22.36%	24.75% Residential
Duplex	43	0.42%	
Multi Family Residential	154	1.49%	
Mixed Use - Residential/Commercial	12	0.12%	N/A
Commercial	593	5.74%	2.10%
Industrial	1,245	12.06%	10.54%
Parking Lot	37	0.36%	N/A
Vacant Lot/Building	363	3.52%	14.4%
Undeveloped	4,165	40.32%	32.94%
Total	10,329	100.00%	100%

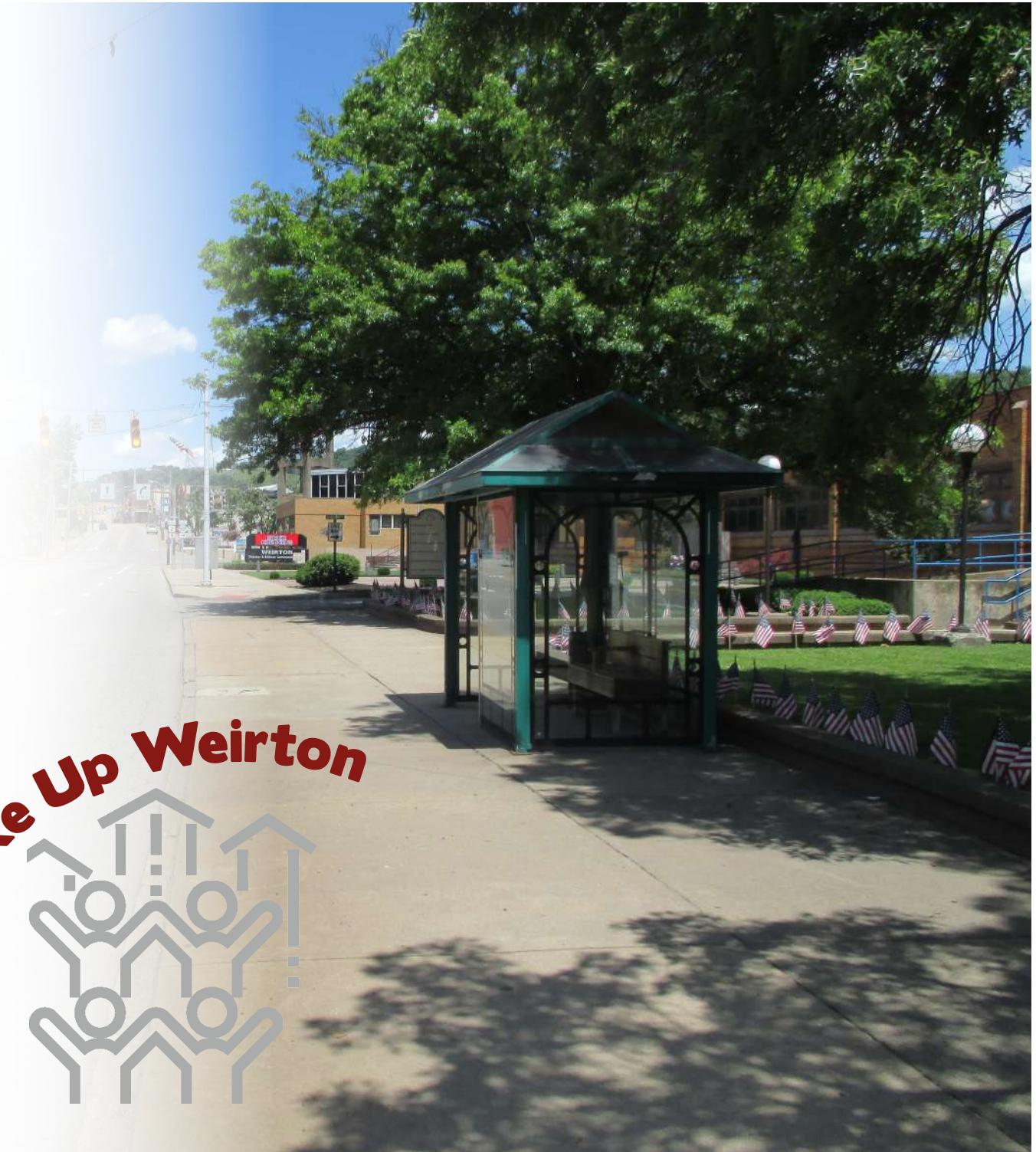
Total Building Permits in Weirton over years

■ Weirton city



Source: http://www.civicdashboards.com/city/weirton-wv-16000US5485156/total_building_permits

chapter 3: the vision



Weirton is a steel town physically and economically dominated by the Weirton steel plant. The continued downsizing of the plant within the last 15 years has exacerbated unemployment, population decline and limited local job growth prospects.

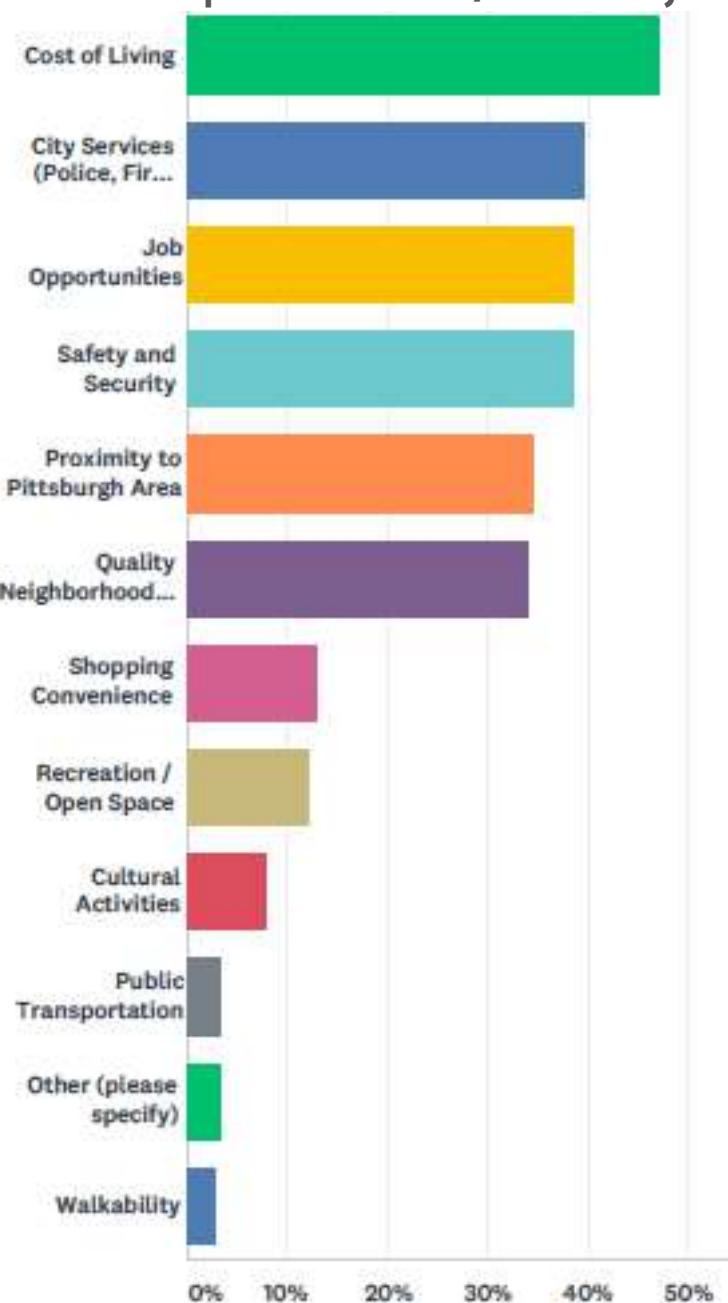
Industrial jobs centered around the former Weirton Steel plant have given way to lower-wage service sector jobs. The plant filed for bankruptcy in 2003 and, after a series of mergers, is owned by ArcelorMittal. It has downsized operations, sold off some of its real estate holdings and now employs more than 90% fewer than the plant did at its peak decades ago.

However, there is local optimism for a turnaround, given the area's low cost of living, quality of services, job opportunities and the availability and quality of labor, safety and security, quality neighborhoods and advantageous location to the Pittsburgh (see survey results to the right).

Over the last several years, development has moved away from the City's downtown and spread out along Pennsylvania Avenue, Three Springs Drive and Colliers Way.

So what now?

What are the top contributors to the quality of life in Weirton? Responses from the 2017 Public Survey.





What would you like Weirton's IDENTITY to be in 2030?

The 2017 public survey, completed by 690 residents, asked the question "what would you like Weirton's identity to be in 2030" and the following answers are some that were offered:

Better education, improved downtown area, business and restaurant growth

An integrated town that came back and became a vibrant, growing town.

Growing community with new jobs

A safe place to raise my children with opportunities for cultural, academic, social and economic growth

Gritty past, bright & hopeful future

A suburb of Pittsburgh that has affordable housing, and low taxes.

A vibrant community

Establishing a Community Vision

Community visioning is the process of developing consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. A vision statement captures what community members most value about their community, and the shared image of what they want their community to become.

The comprehensive planning process spent a lot of time talking to residents, stakeholders, businesses and property owners about what the vision for the City of Weirton should be. Ultimately, the following vision statement was established:

“In 2030, Weirton is a city featuring economic and cultural centers and safe and vibrant neighborhoods that attract young families to live and work here.”

Goals

In order to achieve the vision, the following five goals were created to help guide future development, policies and investment in Weirton:

1. Revitalize Downtown
2. Be a Center for Commerce and Employment
3. Create Complete Neighborhoods
4. Improve Connectivity
5. Plan for a Sustainable Future



goal 1:

revitalize

downtown

Wake Up Weirton



Current Snapshot:

Downtown Weirton was originally a small village called Holliday's Cove, which was founded in 1793. Downtown is bounded by the Marland Heights neighborhood to the west, the Arcelor Mittal Steel Mill to the north, Harmon Creek to the east and Freedom Way to the south.

Main Street doubles as Route 2, which is a state highway that generally parallels the Ohio River along the western state border from Parkersburg to Chester. The section between Marland Heights Road and Cove Road is four lanes, with two travelling lanes in both directions. North of Cove Road, the outer lanes become parking lanes for the most part; however, they are used as turning lanes near intersections. The southern section of Main Street between Freedom Way and Marland Heights Road is 5 lanes, with two travelling lanes in both directions and a center turning lane.

Downtown Weirton does not have a large business district dominated by historic buildings. Rather, Weirton is a "company town," whereby many of the homes were built by Weirton Steel, which also provided the utilities, police and fire protection. At its height, Weirton Steel employed more than 12,000 people. As a result, many businesses located along Main Street to serve the mill workers.

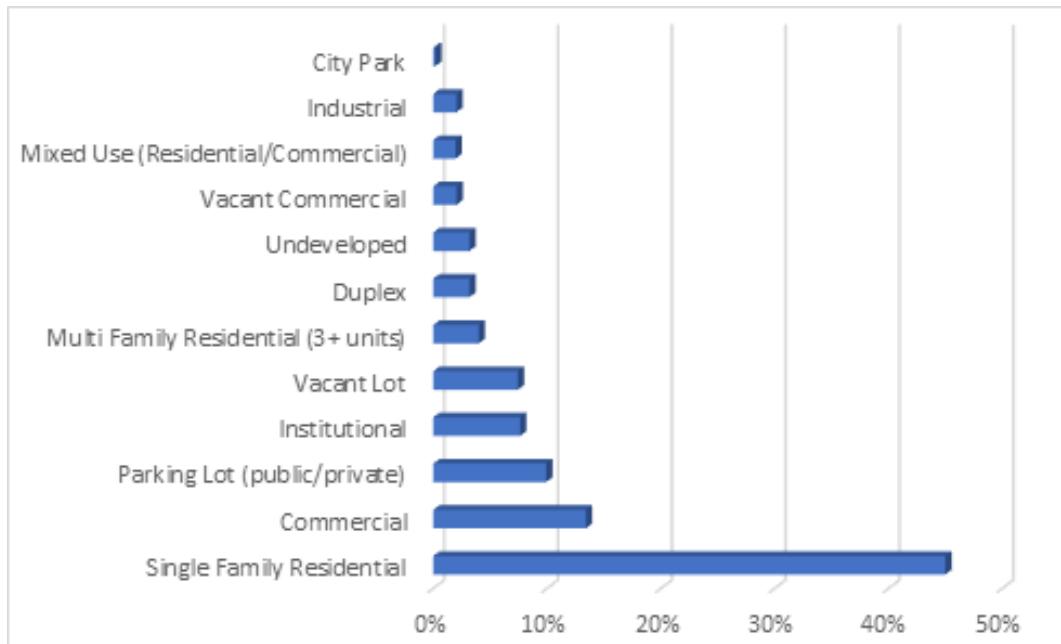
The section of Main Street between Marland Heights Road and Virginia Avenue serves as the "central business district." This area is home to several banks, a grocery store, retail and professional offices. The buildings are older and for the most part, built to the sidewalk. Many are two stories or more, accounting for the mixed use development, with commercial on the ground floor and upperstory residential.

However, as the mill went, so did the businesses along Main Street. Today, vacant commercial buildings account for 2% of all land use; which equates to a sizable percentage of the buildings along Main Street. In addition to the vacant buildings, many buildings have been demolished and replaced with surface parking lots, which account for almost 10% of all land use.

The intersection of Main Street and Cove Road serves as the civic hub of Weirton, with numerous institutional uses including City Hall, the Library, the Millsop Community Center, VFW, Senior Citizens Center, Events Center and Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau. In fact, many of these institutions were built by Weirton Steel, including the library and the community center.

Southern Main Street (south of Marland Heights Road) has a completely different feel than the northern section, dominated by highway commercial uses; gas stations, cafes and fast food restaurants. Although there are sidewalks, many of the businesses are set back off the road and there are expansive surface parking lots and wide curb cuts that break up the fabric.

Figure 3. Existing Land Use - Downtown Weirton



Over half of the Downtown Neighborhood is occupied by residential; 45% of all land use is single-family residential with another 7% comprised of a mix of duplexes and multifamily residential. Single family lots are generally small, less than 5,000 square feet. The housing stock is the oldest in the City, with more than half built prior to 1950, and has the lowest median values (between \$30,000 and \$35,000). Vacancy rates are highest in the blocks from Main Street and Elm Street, between Lee Avenue and Taylor Avenue.

Downtown is home to three large housing complexes: Freedom Place, Stone Brooke and Wyles-Overbrook. Freedom Place is two building complex, housing 109 units, on Main Street for low income and seniors/disabled residents. Stone Brooke is an apartment community offering 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments, located off Freedom Way. The Weirton Housing Authority also owns an apartment complex with 126 units for low income and senior/disabled residents on Cove Road. As a result, Downtown has the highest rental rates in the City; with many blocks in the 70-80% range. Poverty rates are also high; between 28% and 32% are living below the poverty line.

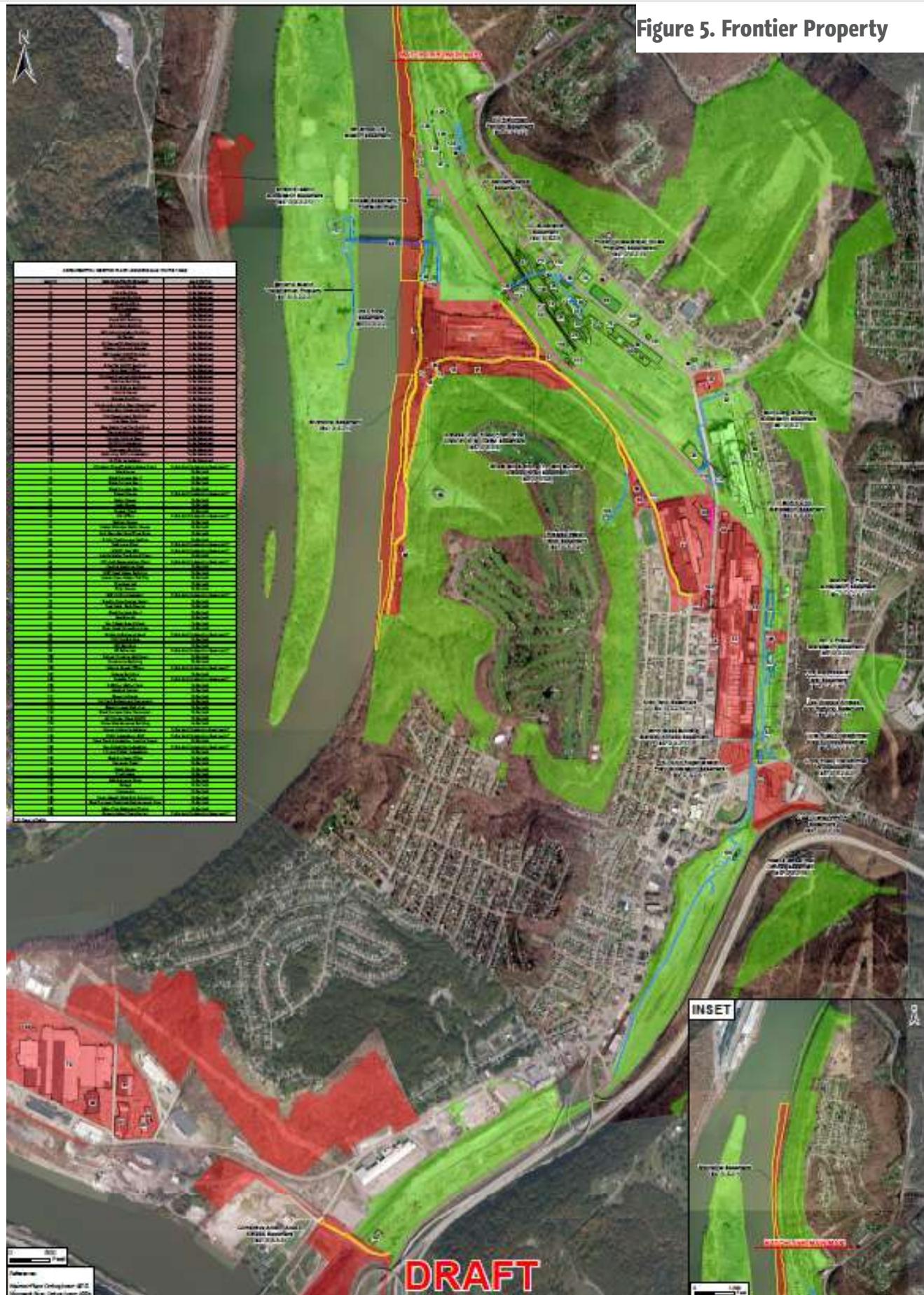
In 2017, The Frontier Group of Companies, a leader in the redevelopment of large-scale industrial and commercial property, purchased 1,100 acres of the former Weirton Steel site from ArcelorMittal (see "Figure 5. Frontier Property" on page 47; property shown in green was purchased by Frontier). The U.S. Economic Development Administration has recently awarded a grant to fund a master plan that will include strategic recommendations for the property. It is anticipated the redevelopment will provide shovel-ready sites for industrial and manufacturing businesses.

A unique opportunity exists to recreate the 'mill town' for the 21st century. Redevelopment of the surplus Weirton Steel property is expected to generate hundreds of new jobs in the heart of the urban core. Downtown Weirton can once again provide shopping and entertainment options for the 'mill' workforce.

Figure 4. Existing Land Use - Downtown Weirton



Figure 5. Frontier Property



What We Heard:

The following assets and issues were identified by the various stakeholders, businesses and residents that provided input during the planning process, as related to the goal of revitalizing downtown.

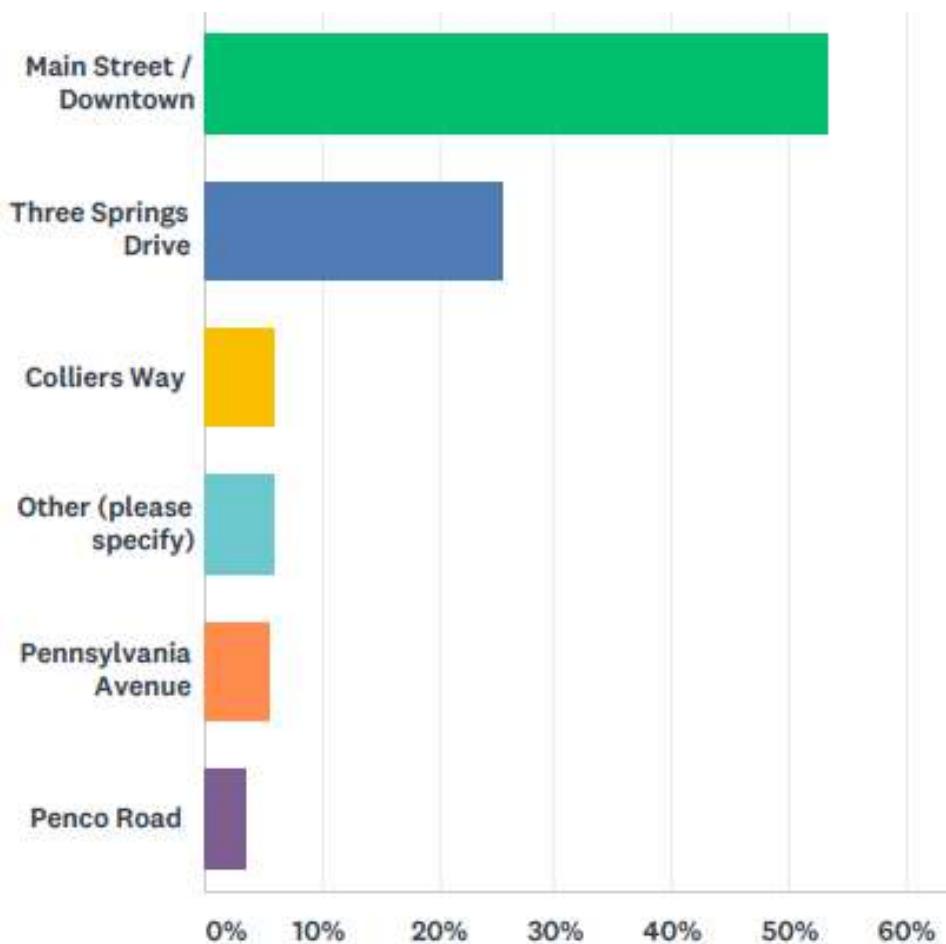
Assets:

- Centralized location – spans two counties, close to PA and Ohio
- Access to US 22
- Many homes and apartments located in/near Downtown
- Attractions – library, museum, theater, community center
- Grocery store
- Walkable – sidewalks
- Low crime
- Local restaurants and businesses (i.e. J Jones Evening Wear)
- Transit service
- Employment – state office building

Issues:

- Lack of identity / street appeal
- Appearance of buildings/lots, many are dilapidated
- Empty storefronts
- Absentee landlords
- Property owners overvalue – rents too high
- Lack of parking
- Regional competition – Steubenville OH, Robinson Twp PA, commercial development on Three Springs / Colliers Way
- Need more variety
- Main Street – state route, many lanes, traffic – makes pedestrian crossing difficult
- Lack of greenspace

Figure 6. 2017 Public Survey: What area do you think the city should focus on for new commercial development?



In 2016, the Mary H. Weir Public Library and community partners received planning assistance through the Cool & Connected technical assistance program, a workshop series designed to help rural communities find new economic opportunities by leveraging investments in broadband, or reliable, high-speed internet access. This initiative is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service (USDA/RUS), the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities (EPA/OSC), and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The Plan identified five goals to revitalize Downtown Weirton, focusing on recasting the City's steel legacy to attract new businesses through increased broadband services and Wi-Fi zones. These strategies are incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan where appropriate..

goal 1: revitalize downtown

Objective 1.1: Create an identity for Weirton that increases the ability to attract new residents and visitors.

One of the initial issues raised is that the City of Weirton, particularly the Downtown, lacks an identity, or a sense of place. Once dominated by the steel mill, Downtown businesses existed to serve the mill and housing was for employees. While the mill still physically dominates Downtown, it no longer drives the local economy and the City is looking at ways to create a new sense of place for Downtown.

What is placemaking? The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) defines placemaking as “Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”¹

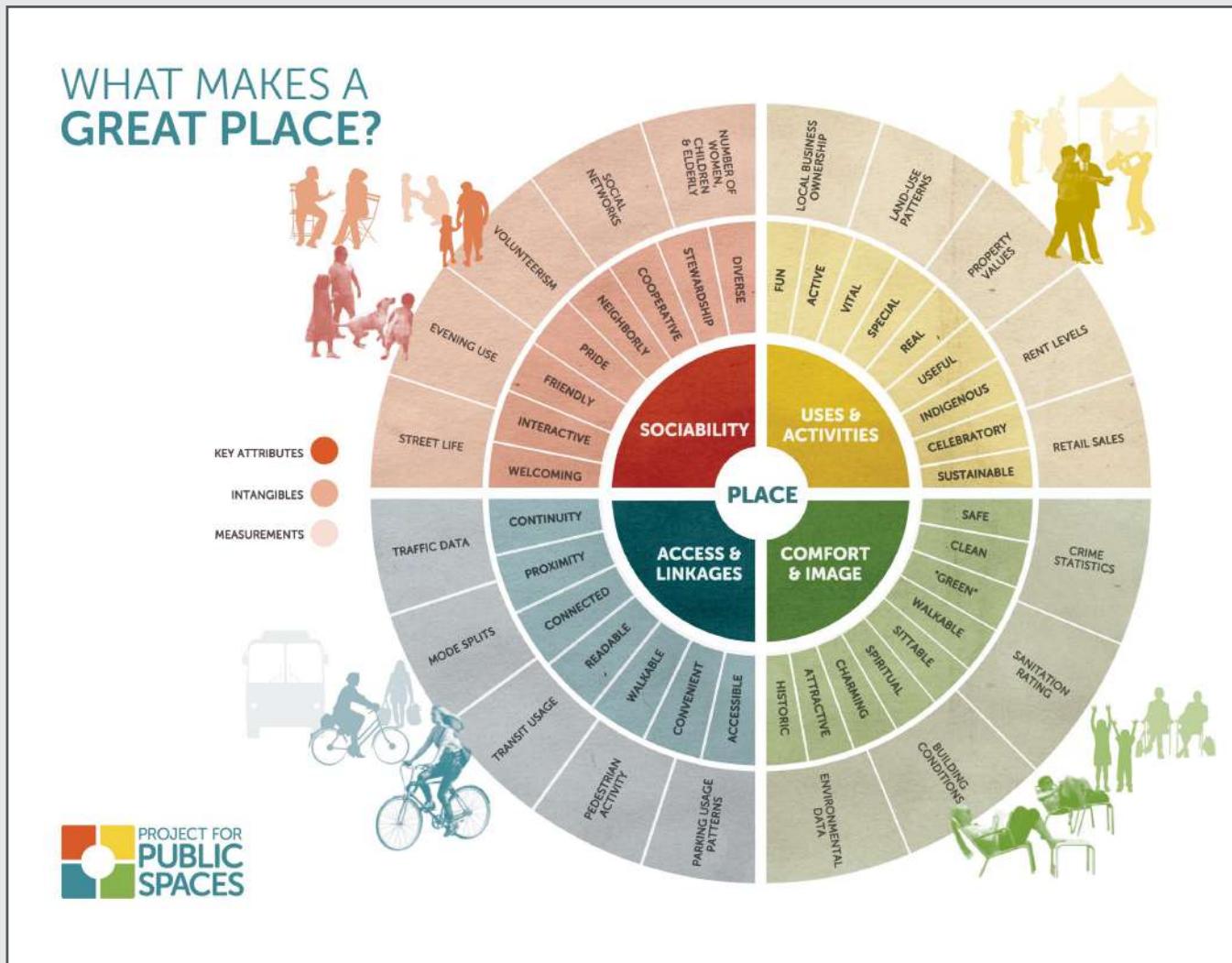
Weirton can utilize the placemaking concept to revitalize the Downtown and create an identity. The Cool and Connected report generally follows this concept (although not explicitly stated), whereby its vision for Weirton is “a connected community, featuring an active downtown that promotes small business development, featuring walkable streets, the arts, recreational access, and attractive destinations. Weirton’s broadband network fosters innovative businesses and connects families, students and visitors to opportunity.”

¹ “What is Placemaking?” Project for Public Spaces. Retrieved online <https://www.pps.org/category/placemaking>.

PLACEMAKING...what makes a successful place?

In evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has found that to be successful, they generally share the following four qualities: they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. PPS developed The Place Diagram below as a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad.

PPS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. PPS is the central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise, and partners who see place as the key to addressing our greatest challenges.





Action 1.1A: Enhance the gateways into Downtown.

There are three main gateways into Downtown Weirton. From US 22, travellers access Downtown either from Exit 3 / Harmon Creek Road / Cove Road or the Downtown exit. WV Route 2 is the other major entryway into Downtown from points north.

- Cove Road / Cove Hill Road Intersection - the existing gateway has a welcome sign that is older and does not match the other signs throughout the City. A new sign as well as enhanced landscaping are recommended for this area.
- Main Street / Freedom Way / US 22 - the existing gateway has two signs, one on either side of the road. The sign on the west side of the road is the “Forged by Steel” sign while the one on the east matches the other wayfinding signs in the City. The City should consider moving the “Forged by Steel” sign to a different, more visible location. The area around the sign on the east should be landscaped.
- WV 2 / Main Street near Virginia Avenue - the existing gateway is the steel mill followed by the commercial area on Main Street. There is an overpass that is part of the mill that could be used for a “Welcome to Weirton” sign. In addition, the concrete walls that align both sides of Main Street could be painted and/or aesthetically improved with the addition of street trees.

Action 1.1B: Improve wayfinding.

Weirton has some wayfinding signs throughout the City, directing motorists to local and regional attractions. These signs are wooden and mostly blue and white with both Brooke and Hancock Counties’ logos. These signs should be expanded to more locations; in particular, to direct visitors and users to and from the trailheads / public access areas for the Panhandle Trail. In addition, the trailheads should have signage that directs trail users to local amenities to help spur economic development and better connect the trails to the local shopping/retail areas.

Wayfinding is not just signage; architectural clues are also part of it. Examples include banners on light poles, illuminated street signs, or sign posts in each block that provide information regarding block activities and addresses, landmarks and historical information.

Enhance the gateways into Downtown Weirton...

Gateways are the entrances to a community and quickly help to establish a sense of place. The use of thematic

A conceptual rendering was developed to show how Main Street / WV Route 2 could be improved to welcome visitors into Downtown Weirton; it includes a welcome sign painted on the mill overpass, along with street trees, painted concrete walls and a road diet to include bike lanes.



 Mackin

Action 1.1C: Improve the streetscape of Main Street.

Streetscape elements should reflect and enhance the identity of an area. Pedestrian enhancement plans make sure walkers are taken care of and increase pedestrian flow for area businesses. Examples of improved streetscape elements include mosaicked sidewalks or other public art, human scaled lighting and attractive lightposts, street furniture, adequate trash receptacles, flower beds or planters and awnings.

The priority area should be between Marland Heights Road and Virginia Avenue. This area functions as the Central Business District and improvements should be targeted at making it more inviting to pedestrians.

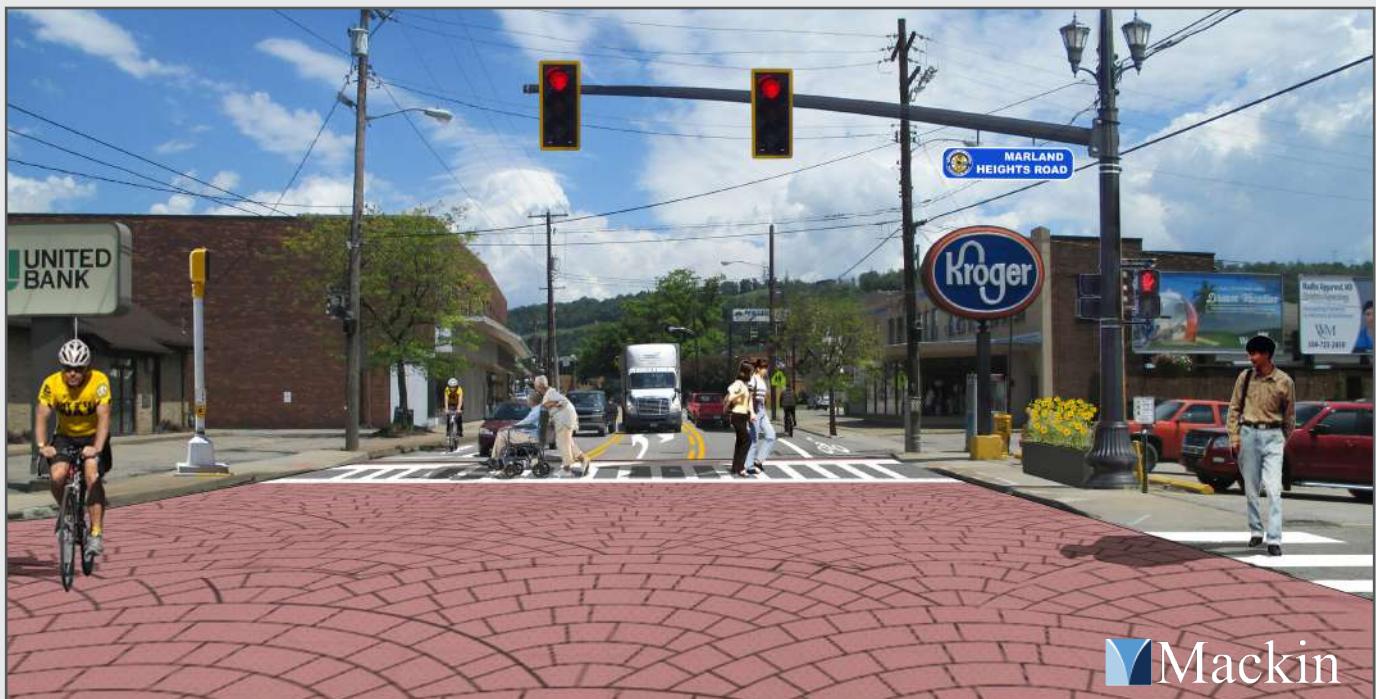
Action 1.1D: Develop architectural and streetscape standards for the Downtown.

Guidelines can help a community maintain or enhance its identity or brand. For instance, encouraging storefronts or restaurants to incorporate warehouse garage doors would promote the industrial history of the area. The guidelines should also work to promote pedestrian usage of the area through encouraging human scale design and discouraging drive-through uses.

- Incorporate urban design standards such as designating important intersections for prominent buildings of higher intensity and better design to create a sense of place.
- Promote connected buildings where appropriate and incorporate design standards to visually and functionally integrate freestanding buildings.
- Revise the zoning code to require a “build-to” line instead of a setback along Main Street. If the building sits farther back, a wall or fence would be required at the build-to line.
- Revise the zoning code to incorporate improved landscaping requirements.



Conceptual renderings were prepared to show examples of improvements to Main Street. The example below depicts potential improvements to the Main Street / Marland Heights Road intersection, with new street signs, lamp posts, pedestrian crossings, intersection treatments and planter boxes.



 Mackin

Outdoor Recreation BY THE NUMBERS

Nationally...

- Active outdoor recreation employs five times more Americans than Walmart, the world's largest private employer and accounts for \$821 billion in revenue and 6.5 million jobs.
- Overnight trail users spend on average \$98/day; day trippers spend on average \$13/day.

Regionally...

- A 2013 study by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) of six trails in the Oil Heritage Region of Pennsylvania along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail found:
 - » Total economic impact of approximately \$7.5 million
 - » Annual hard good purchases (bicycle, shoes/gear, clothing) = \$337.50
 - » Consumable purchases per trip = \$21.62



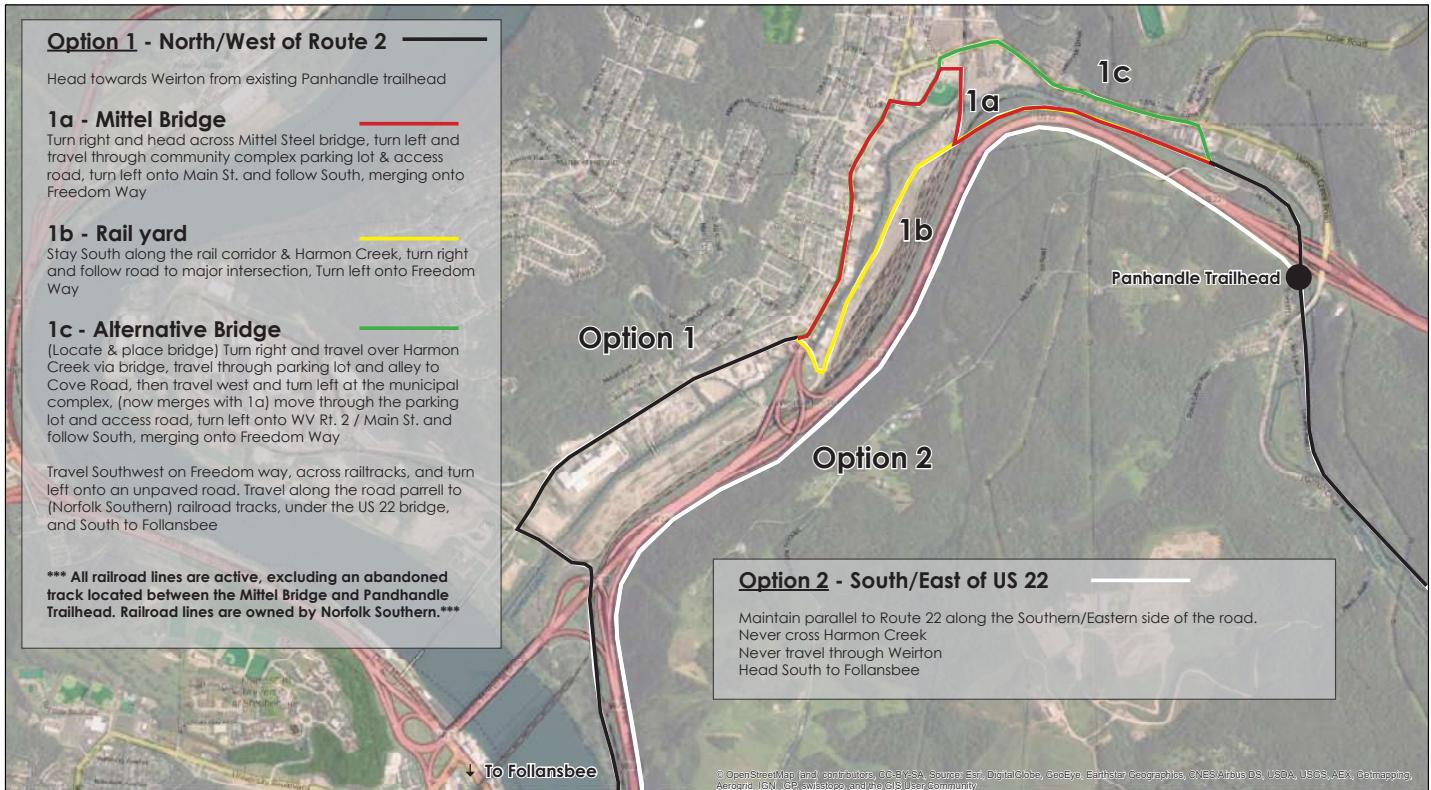
Action 1.1E: Extend the Panhandle Trail into Downtown.

The Panhandle Trail follows an old Conrail line, known as the Panhandle Railroad, which once connected Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. The trail is a multi-use, non-motorized trail stretching nearly 29 miles, from Weirton, West Virginia, to Carnegie, Pennsylvania. It connects with the Montour Trail near McDonald, PA, which is part of the Great Allegheny Passage, a trail that connects Pittsburgh to Washington DC.

The trail has been identified has the link westward by the National Park Service and the National Planning Group charged with linking Ohio's trail system to the National network eastward. The Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center prepared a study that identified two options to extend the Panhandle Trail. Option 1 heads west from the trailhead into Downtown Weirton via three options while Option 2 parallels US 22 outside of Weirton to Follansbee.

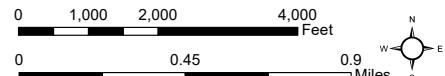
The City needs to work closely with the Trail Group to extend the trail into Downtown Weirton. Many studies have been done that demonstrate the economic impact of trails on local businesses. The Progress Fund created the Trail Town Program® for communities along the Great Allegheny Passage and their model can be used by other communities along trails. The Program is a community revitalization and economic development initiative that positions communities as visitor destinations and drives individualized business attraction strategies to fill service gaps with businesses with the greatest chance of growth and sustainability. Short-term strategies tend to deal with signage, minor infrastructure, facilities, storefronts, community readiness and small events. Longer-term strategies often deal with major infrastructure, business development and attraction, branding and major events..

Until a permanent connection is made, signage needs to be installed at the trailhead to direct trail users to Downtown Weirton. Once the trail is formally connected to Downtown, a trailhead should be constructed Downtown.



Phase IV: Weirton Rail-Trails

Page 1 of 7



One of the most thoroughly researched trails in the country is the **Great Allegheny Passage (GAP)**, a 138-mile rail trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD where it joins the C&O Canal Towpath, a 182-mile trail to Washington D.C. A market research study credited the GAP Trail with over **\$40 million in direct spending by trail-users** and \$7.2 million in employee wages at trail-related businesses for the 2008-2009 seasons. The **eight small rural towns** along the GAP have noted **over 50 new businesses**, resulting in more than 80 new jobs. Business owners indicated 25% of gross revenue is **directly attributed to trail users** and 2/3 of owners reported some increase in revenue **due to the proximity of the trail**.

— “Economic Benefits of Outdoor Recreation.” Pennsylvania Environmental Council. (Retrieved online http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Economic_Impacts_of_Outdoor_Recreation.pdf)

Action 1.1F: Improve public space in the Downtown.

Public spaces often provide the identity of a downtown. As such, they need to be inviting, vibrant places that encourage people to use them. Currently, the City owns two public lots that front Main Street - one is Cove Commons, located at the corner of Main Street and Cove Road, and the second is at the corner of Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Both of these spaces offer opportunities to provide improved public spaces that reflect the City's identity. This could be as simple as adding themed elements such as sculptures and signing.

Additional public space within Downtown is also needed. Main Street is littered with surface parking lots that could be enhanced to accommodate a variety of uses, or at the very least, improve the aesthetics.

GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

These are the places we remember most vividly, the places where serendipitous things happen, the places we tell stories about.

Source: <https://www.pps.org/places>



Cove Commons, located at the corner of Main Street and Cove Road, is a City-owned underutilized pocket park. Potential improvements could include pervious pavers to limit the amount of concrete/asphalt; additional plantings; and signing that includes the name and wayfinding for the civic and cultural attractions located nearby.

There is a vacant lot along Main Street and Heaslett Avenue that presents an opportunity for a park-n-ride. Located in a floodplain, this lot could also be used for stormwater best management practices, such as bioswales, raingardens and pervious pavers. It can also serve as the official gateway to Downtown Weirton from the US 22 / WV Route 2.



A parking lot is located next to H&R Block on Main Street (between Cove Road and Lee Avenue) that could be enhanced with landscaping and signage for the Weirton Events Center, which is located on the backside of the lot.

Objective 1.2: Embrace Downtown as the cultural center of the City.

Culture, long overlooked as tools for garnering quality of life, is now being recognized as a means to community building, encouraging outdoor activity, healthy lifestyles, life-long learning, increasing accessibility to programs for all levels of society, and celebrating diversity and cultural differences.

Action 1.2A: Create a “Cultural Cove” (mini cultural district) Downtown.

Arts and cultural development are significant in the creation of neighborhood identity. There is an abundance of civic and cultural attractions in the small area surrounding the Main Street and Cove Road intersection, see “Figure 7. Map of Proposed Cultural Cove” on page 61. The public arts focus group identified this area as a potential mini cultural district called the “Cultural Cove,” playing off the historic name “Holliday’s Cove” of the area.

- Create signage to direct visitors
- Create pamphlets/maps of District/attractions
- Use to cross-promote events/attractions

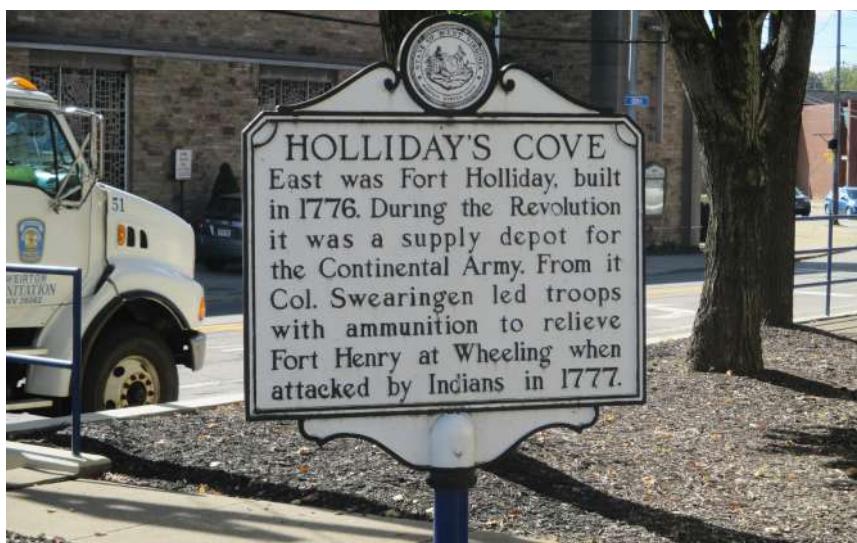
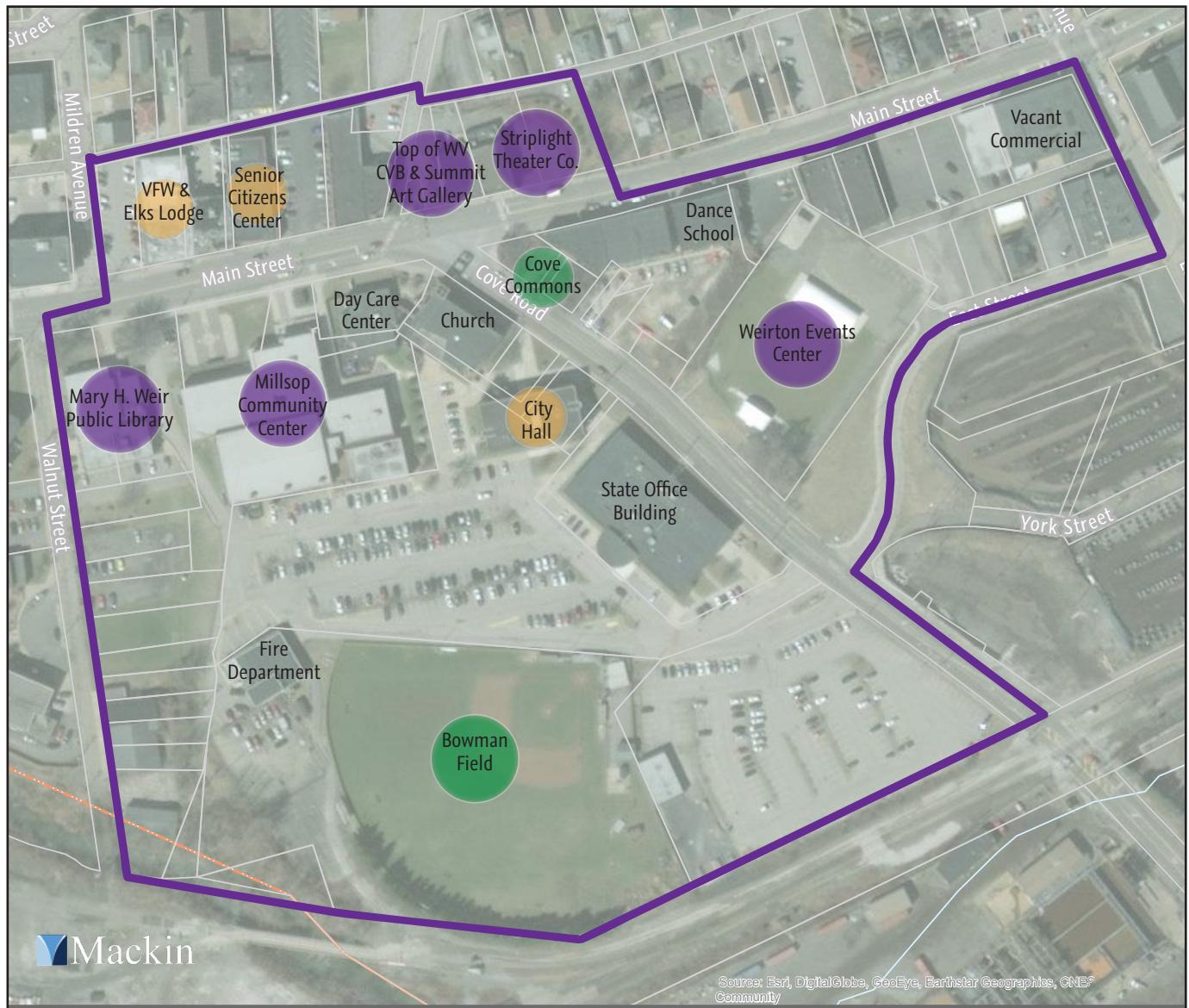


Figure 7. Map of Proposed Cultural Cove



Action 1.2B: Create a public art program.

Public arts and community revitalization go hand-in-hand.

- The arts help to facilitate social cohesion.
- Arts and culture can be used to brand a community and set it apart from others.
- The arts can help foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride within a community.
- The arts help to preserve a collective memory and foster a continuing dialogue about the past.¹

“Materials came in the Strip Steel operation behind the No. 5 Gate were transformed into cold rolled, hot rolled and rolled coils for galvanized steel. Employees entered through Gate 5 and learned valuable skills that many of them still use today, but in new and interesting ways. A festival that honors the materials and skills used in manufacturing is a way to honor our history and our families’ heritage.”

- Harold Miller, City of Weirton Mayor, 2018

Public art can be used to spruce up sidewalks, blank walls and even intersections. Competitions can involve local students, galleries, residents or businesses and their employees. Examples include competitions to create murals, street banners or tiles for planter boxes.

The public arts focus group discussed the need to and benefit of incorporating the City’s steel heritage into the revitalization process for Downtown. A great start is that the Renaissance Weirton Corp. is launching a new fall event in 2018 called the Gate 5 Industrial Art Festival. The festival was named by Mayor Harold Miller in honor of the No. 5 Gate on Main Street, which was the entrance into Weirton Steel’s Strip Steel shop. Celebrating the skills and materials that were crafted during the peak of manufacturing in Northern West Virginia, Gate 5 will celebrate art created using metal, clay, glass and repurposed scrap.

Artists who bend, cut, weld and fuse their work together – especially those that use metal, ceramic, glass or scrap, will be invited to show and sell their work at the Gate 5 Industrial Art Festival. Festival events will also include a Steam Punk Fashion Show, Great Gate 5 Puzzle Hunt, Tin Man Run, Food Vendors, and more.

¹ <https://www.creativecity.ca/publications/making-the-case/>

Action 1.2C: Enhance / Expand the Events Center.

In 2011, the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau opened the Weirton Events Center, one of Downtown's biggest attractions. Located on the site of the former Cove School, on Cove Road at East Street, across from the municipal complex, the outdoor facility hosts a variety of events, including free summer concerts and community festivals. The City would like to see the Events Center enhanced and expanded to become an even bigger asset to the City. Potential improvements may include:

- Improve Cove Road entrance - landscaping, staircase entrance, lighting, sidewalks
- Improve visibility from Main Street - provide wayfinding signage
- Potential for expansion to vacant lots and/or deteriorating buildings



Figure 8. Potential Improvements for Weirton Events Center



Objective 1.3: Encourage Downtown reinvestment.

Unlike many cities, Weirton's historic central business district has been dominated by heavy industrial use. The City's Main Street is conjoined with WV Route 2 a major thoroughfare that generates a relatively high volume of truck traffic. Downtown Weirton emerged primarily to service employees of Weirton Steel and pass through traffic visiting the civic core. Nearby Steubenville, OH served as the historical commercial and financial center of the region. Eventually, the Three Springs Drive area developed to meet the needs of large footprint retail and auto-dependent land uses.

Revitalization efforts face significant challenges. Today, employment at ArcelorMittal Weirton has dipped below 1,000. The significant decline in the number of mill employees has greatly impacted the vitality of Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Main Street faces continued competition from Three Springs Drive, Colliers Way and retail centers in the Steubenville area. Further, many residents often frequent the western suburbs of Pittsburgh for shopping and entertainment.

The City should seek to create a formal downtown commercial district along Main Street between Marland Heights Road and Virginia Avenue. Along West Street, the strategy should focus on facilitating a mix of uses including new multi-family residential development.

Action 1.3A: Establish a Main Street Program.

Downtown can greatly benefit from more active promotion of local assets and increased community involvement. Not only will existing businesses benefit, but new commercial activity will be attracted to the district as well. The City currently lacks the organization necessary to manage a formal Main Street revitalization strategy. A strong foundation is necessary to sustain efforts, cultivate partnerships and provide resources for the downtown commercial district.

Successful downtowns have multiple attractions that generate traffic and create activity. These anchors in turn support the growth of additional small retail and service businesses. The Main Street organization would be responsible for marketing business opportunities and available space in downtown Weirton. Further, this organization could take the lead on implementation of planned physical improvements in the district, including streetscape enhancements.

- Complete ON TRAC program and participate in Main Street West Virginia.

The City should participate in the Main Street West Virginia program to obtain technical assistance and customized training. This state initiative focuses on consulting local communities in business retention and recruitment, market analysis, fundraising, strategic planning and property development. Weirton must first complete at least two years in the state's ON TRAC (Organization, Training, Revitalization and Capacity) program.

- Determine feasibility of a Business Improvement District.

The West Virginia Code (Chapter 8, Article 13A) enables the creation of business improvement districts (BID) to "promote the vitality of commercial business areas within municipalities, while serving as an effective means for restoring and promoting commercial and other business activity within the business improvement districts created herein." The only city in West Virginia with an approved BID is Morgantown, although the City of Charleston's Strategic Urban Renewal Plan recommends one. A BID may provide any of the following (but not limited to) services :

- » Beautification of the district, by means such as landscaping and construction and erection of fountains, shelters, benches, sculptures, signs, lighting, decorations and similar amenities;
- » Provision of public services, such as sanitation, security for persons and property and the construction and maintenance of public facilities including sidewalks and other public areas;
- » Making principal or interest payments on bonds issued by the municipality for public improvements located within and designated to improve the economic viability of the district;
- » Providing financial support for public transportation and vehicle parking facilities open to the general public;
- » Constructing, operating and maintaining parking facilities;



The West Virginia ON TRAC (Organization, Training, Revitalization and Capacity) program was created by Main Street West Virginia and endorsed by Governor Joe Manchin to assist West Virginia communities in their efforts to boost economic and community growth. The goals of the program are to evaluate, educate and assist communities in these efforts and to prepare them for more advanced technical services through the Main Street program. Communities selected as ON TRAC participants receive the following during the two-year participation period:

- Participation in the mentoring program
- An assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Access to an online library of databases and resources
- Attendance to training workshops
- Action-planning services
- Telephone consultation
- Scholarship and grant information
- Technical design visit(s)
- Training on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach®

- » Developing plans for the general architectural design of public areas and developing plans and programs for the future development of the district;
- » Developing, promoting and supporting community events and activities; and
- » Providing the administrative costs for a district management program.

To establish a BID, at least four owners who own commercial property in the proposed district must formally petition City Council. The properties initiating the designation must have an assessed value of not less than fifty-one percent of the value of all commercial property in the proposed district. The petition must include a general boundary of the proposed BID and description of the services needed within the district.

Following receipt of the petition, the City shall form a planning committee to develop preliminary plans for the establishment and operation of the proposed district. The committee then provides recommendations to City Council who must hold a public hearing to review the report findings. Creation of the BID requires an ordinance that also establishes the district management structure.

The services provided within the BID are funded via a special levy imposed on commercial property within the district. The amount of annual fees may be based upon gross leasable square footage, street front-footage, total gross building or land square footage, or any combination thereof. City Council would determine the business improvement service fee based upon the BID governing board's annual recommended program of services and proposed budget. Commercial property owners within the district are subject to the levy in addition to any other fees, charges or other taxes levied for the general benefit and use of the City.

Action 1.3B: Encourage in-fill development and revitalization of underutilized properties.

Despite weak market conditions, the City can work to address blight and recruit new businesses by leveraging redevelopment of the former Weirton Steel site. Vacant spaces can be filled with retail, services and entertainment that once again accommodate the local workforce. Attracting new residents in proximity to Downtown will provide additional demand to further support local businesses. The City should prioritize in-fill and redevelopment opportunities to improve the vitality of the urban core and preserve greenfield land.

- Revise zoning surrounding Main Street to R-3 to encourage the development of multi-family residential.
- Seek funding for a new façade improvement initiative.

Many Downtown and Main Street revitalization efforts include incentive programs that encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts. The City should seek to provide matching funds to facilitate private investment in the central business district. The new Main Street organization recommended for Weirton can likely develop and manage this program.

- Determine feasibility of a land bank to facilitate assembly of smaller parcels

Site control is a critical component of any approach to repurposing of vacant, dilapidated and underutilized properties. Often, the private market cannot feasibly rehabilitate properties that are too deteriorated, undervalued, or face environmental, legal, and/or financial constraints. Land banks are locally controlled single-purpose entities that specialize in the acquisition, redevelopment, and sale or lease of blighted properties for the purpose of returning them to the market and tax rolls. These entities have power to clear title issues, address contamination issues, redevelop the property, or take other action to make the property more desirable to responsible purchasers. Two West Virginia statutes authorize the creation of independent public entities intended to convert neglected properties to productive use: the Urban Renewal Authority Law of 1951 and the West Virginia Land Reuse Agency Authorization Act of 2014.¹

Action 1.3C: Conduct a Central Business District parking study.

Although parking is an important feature that supports the livelihood of any downtown, it should be used strategically. Too much parking is a waste of valuable real estate. On the contrary, a lack of availability or inaccessible facilities can frustrate visitors. Parking options should allow people to park once and then walk to multiple destinations, and ideally spaces can be utilized by multiple people throughout the day.

The City should determine if existing public parking is adequate to meet current and projected demand. Parking facilities should be reviewed to ensure appropriate access to Downtown businesses and attractions. The study should also assess the need for directional signage, lighting and other necessary infrastructure improvements.

¹ <https://wvleap.wvu.edu/land-banks>

goal 2:

be a center for
commerce &
employment



CURRENT SNAPSHOT

Known as the city “forged by steel,” Weirton’s economic fortune has long been tied to heavy industry and manufacturing.

Regional employment was historically concentrated in primary and fabricated metals. The City continues to recover from reorganization of the steel industry in the 1990’s. Today, the education and medical sectors play an increasingly large role in supporting regional economic vitality.

Weirton seeks to remain a center for commerce and employment with a diversified economic base. A balanced strategy targeting multiple sectors is necessary to reduce the impact of external shocks and foster resilient long-term growth.

Weirton is located approximately 35 miles from Downtown Pittsburgh and just over 20 miles from Pittsburgh International Airport. It is approximately two hours from Cleveland, Oh and Columbus, OH. The City is within a 500-mile radius of most major metropolitan areas on the east coast.

The City must continue to work with stakeholders to attract new companies while supporting the growth of existing businesses. Economic development initiatives should focus on providing opportunity to existing residents while also attracting the additional workforce necessary to sustain prosperity.

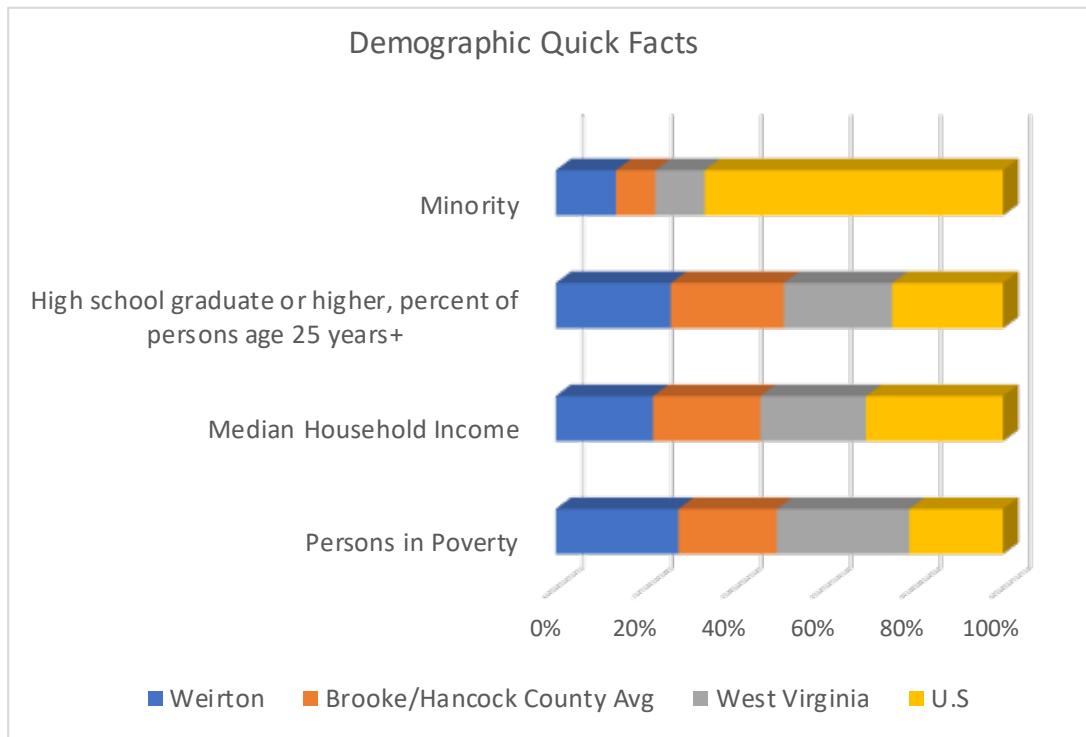
In addition, Weirton seeks to facilitate the mixed-use, pedestrian friendly commercial development. More recent auto-centric, big box style growth along the U.S. Route 22 interchanges has resulted in traffic congestion and other issues. Modern retail trends and e-commerce severely threaten the sustainability of this development style. Downtown and older commercial corridors continue to face the realities of decades of disinvestment. By containing future growth and encouraging in-fill redevelopment, the City can ensure vitality while reducing costs, improving public health and preserving open space.

Brooke County, WV - major employers in the City of Weirton (as of March 2016):

- #1 Weirton Medical Center (Colliers Way)

Hancock County, WV - major employers in the City of Weirton (as of March 2016):

- #2 Arcelor-Mittal Weirton Inc. (Downtown)
- #5 Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (Three Springs Drive)
- #6 Weirton Geriatric Center, Inc. (Pennsylvania Avenue)
- #8 City of Weirton (Downtown)
- #10 The Kroger Company (Downtown & Three Springs Drive)

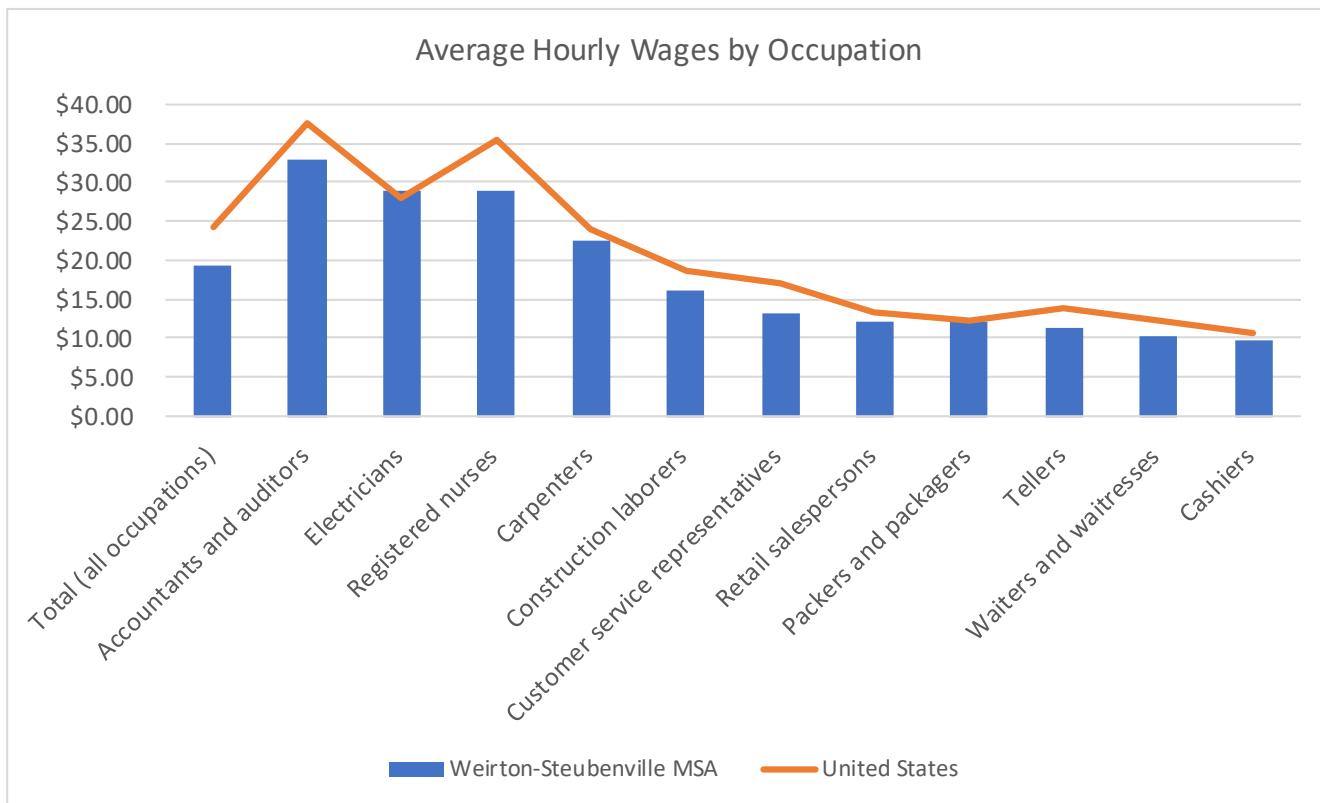


Local and regional demographics are a key determinant of Weirton's economic potential. Companies seek access to a skilled workforce. Retail establishments seek a market for their goods and services. The regional population, employment and labor force statistics continue to signal economic challenges. Weirton needs to attract new residents to create climate for investment.

Significant population losses have hindered economic performance. The City has struggled to advance revitalization efforts due to weak demographics and market conditions. Despite its location in proximity to the growing Pittsburgh region, several obstacles limit opportunity and prevent greater prosperity.

The City is slightly more ethnically diverse than the state and surrounding counties, but lags national population trends by a significant margin. The educational attainment of local residents has improved in recent years, but a lower percentage of the population possess either a bachelor's or graduate degree. Median household income in the City trails regional, state and national figures. Further, Weirton continues to experience high levels of poverty, with rates climbing since 2000.

The regional unemployment rate for the Weirton–Steubenville Metropolitan Statistical Area has fallen from 13% in 2010 to under 7%. During this same period; however, the total number of nonfarm employees has declined by approximately 6% and the region has lost another 1,000 manufacturing jobs. The largest employment sectors in the greater Weirton



area include Education and Health Services; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Government; and Manufacturing. Average hourly wages for the region have lagged the national figures as illustrated above.¹

The City's strategic location in the West Virginia Northern Panhandle region can enhance revitalization efforts. Quality of life issues are increasingly important not only to businesses, but to their workforce as well. The City and other stakeholders should strive to further capitalize on these assets over the next 10 years.

A small number of landowners, most notably Weirton Steel, have historically controlled much of the developable property in Weirton. The massive mill site covered thousands of acres and miles of the City's riverfront. It remains a major employment center where ArcelorMittal Weirton produces cold-rolled and tin plate products. Over the past several decades however, the downsizing of steel operations resulted in idled and abandoned facilities. The Frontier Group of Companies recently purchased 1,100 acres of the surplus mill property. A master planning effort is underway to examine future development and reuse possibilities that will provide an economic catalyst for the entire region.

¹ Defined as Brooke County, West Virginia; Hancock County, West Virginia; and Jefferson County, Ohio
<https://data.bls.gov>
https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/summary/blssummary_weirton.pdf

In addition to the steel mill, industrial development in the City is concentrated in Half Moon Industrial Park and Three Springs Industrial Park.

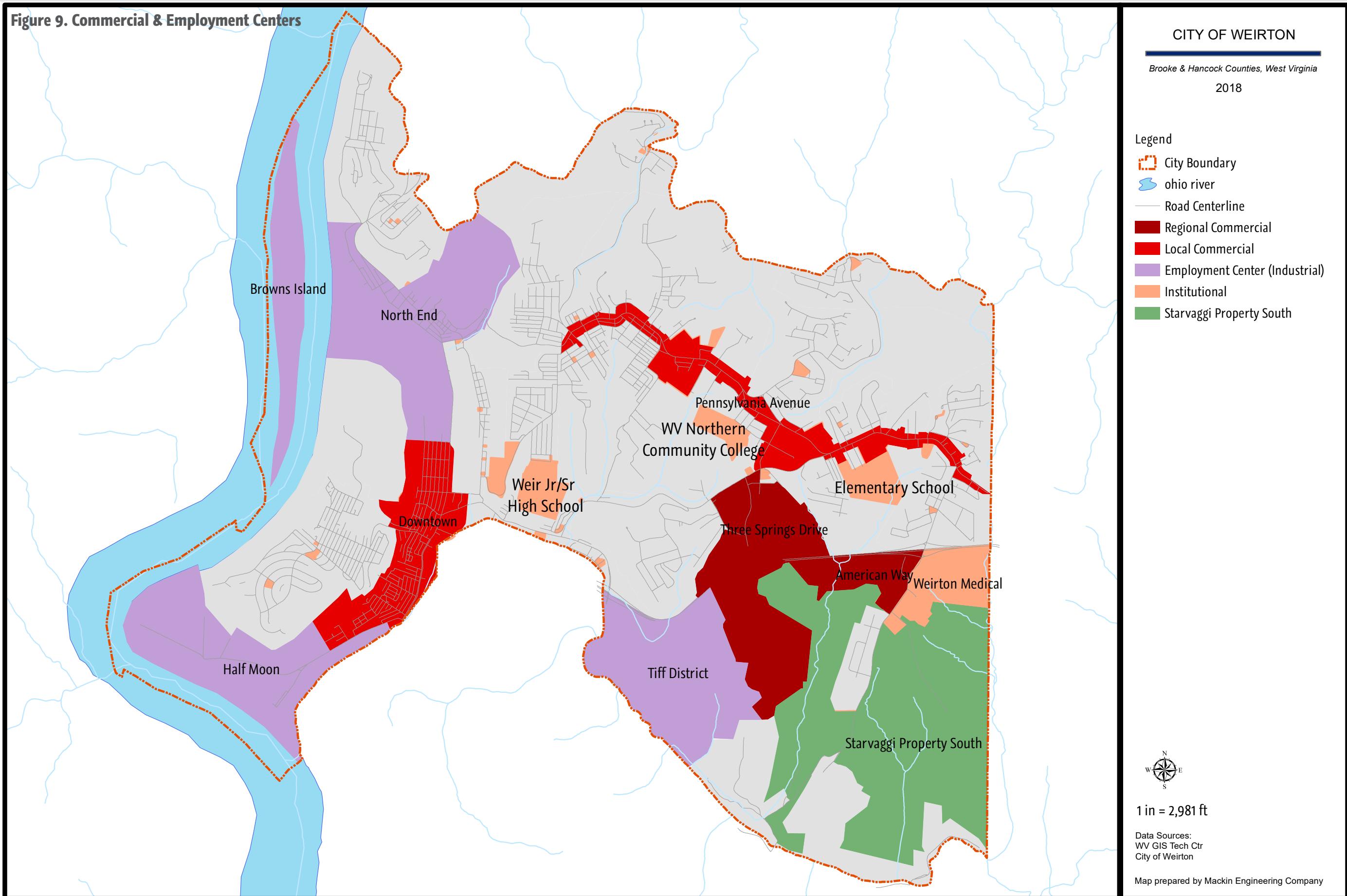
Originally developed to support the end users of Weirton Steel products, the Half Moon Industrial Park includes over 1.5 million square feet of industrial space that houses hundreds of employees. The Starvaggi terminal remains a significant regional inland port along the Ohio River. The park's access and infrastructure presents an opportunity given the demands of transportation logistics.

The Three Springs Drive Industrial Park houses major tenants including Rue21, Barney's Bakery, North American Industrial Services and Pietro Fiorentini USA. In 2004, a tax increment financing district was established to facilitate development of the 800-acre site. It is anticipated that the next phase of the park's expansion will include another 50 acres of light industrial and manufacturing development at full build-out.

Weirton's non-traditional downtown commercial district historically catered to mill employees and pass through traffic visiting the civic core. The Pennsylvania Avenue corridor provided additional shopping opportunities for City residents. Eventually, contemporary suburban style commercial development emerged on parcels near U.S. Route 22. The areas around Three Springs Drive and Penco Road now include large footprint, auto-centric uses such as big box retail and fast food establishments.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration recently awarded a \$1.2 million grant to develop 72 acres of land within the Three Springs Industrial Park. Phase I is expected to include a planned conference and event center in addition to several commercial outparcels. The mixed-use redevelopment project will also include future industrial and manufacturing uses discussed above.

Figure 9. Commercial & Employment Centers



Center	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Downtown	Commercial, Mixed Use C/R, Parking Lots	C-3 Mixed Commercial / Professional High Density	Downtown	There are two distinct sections of Main Street downtown - the section from Freedom Way to Marland Heights Road is vehicle-oriented, with lots of curb cuts and on-site parking. The section between Marland Heights Road and Virginia Avenue has more of a traditional Main Street appeal with no setbacks.	"Create more of a pedestrian-oriented environment and streetscape between Marland Heights Rd and Virginia Ave Reduce traffic lanes and create bike lanes along Main Street Create a park-n-ride/green space along S Main Improve public spaces (i.e. Cove Commons, more green space)"	"There are a lot of vacant buildings and underutilized sites (i.e. surface parking lots that occupy entire parcels) Need improved pedestrian crossings along Main Street, Need more parking at Events Center Flooding along Harmon Creek"	"Create a ""CBD"" between Marland Heights Rd & Virginia Ave, Highway Commercial along Main Street to Marland Heights Rd, Create a mixed use district along West Street"
Half Moon	Industrial	PUD Planned Unit District	Employment Center	Half Moon is an active industrial park, in which businesses are continuing to expand.	"Riverfront - marina? Potential trail connection Continued business expansion"		Change to industrial
North End	Industrial, Undeveloped land, some SFR	PDD Planned Developed District	"New Neighborhood? Employment Center?"	Mixture of heavy industrial (steel mill), undeveloped/vacant lots, City-owned land (Public Works), some working class residential, limited commercial	"Redevelopment of former steel mill property; possible redevelopment of the ""Avenues"" - 242 parcels: 58 undeveloped 57 single-family homes 44 vacant lots 29 institutional (public works/fire dept) 29 parking lot (steel mill) 11 commercial 4 industrial"	Code enforcement issues - City has been actively acquiring property and demolishing houses	
Pennsylvania Avenue	Commercial, Mixed Use, SFR/MFR	"C-1 Highway Commercial, R-3 Pennsylvania Avenue Overlay District"	Community Commercial Center	A long, linear corridor that offers a mixture of single-family homes, multi-family residential, commercial buildings, mixed-use buildings and institutional uses (schools, churches, etc.)	Continued commercial and mixed use (residential/commercial) conversion of single-family homes	Sidewalks not continuous - need to extend along entire length.	Create a mixed use district
Penco Road	Commercial	PUD Planned Unit District	Community Commercial Center	A commercial corridor that connects Pennsylvania Avenue to the Three Springs Drive area.	The Weirton Shopping Plaza is underutilized, lots of vacancies. Opportunity for redevelopment.		

Center	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Three Springs Drive	Commercial	"PUD Planned Unit District PDD Planned Development District"	Regional Commercial Center	Located off Three Springs Drive US 22 Interchange, this area mostly large-scale commercial/retail, with hotels on the south side of US 22.	Land available for continued development	"A road connection between Three Springs and American Way is desired. There are no sidewalks - many hotel guests are long-term stays and would like to walk to retail areas. Need better lighting - some areas are not well-lit, more greenspace."	Change to commercial, flex commercial/ industrial south of US 22
American Way	"Commercial, Institutional, MFR "	PUD Planned Development District	Regional Commercial Center	Located off Colliers Way and close to the US 22 Interchange, American Way is a new commercial development that is home to restaurants and other retail/medical services.	Land available for continued development	A road connection between Three Springs and American Way is desired.	Create a mixed use - commercial and residential (SFR/MFR)
Weirton Medical	Hospital	PUD Planned Unit District	Regional Commercial Center	Located off Colliers Way near the US 22 Interchange, home to Weirton Medical Center and the Wyngate Senior Living Community, this area is adjacent to American Way and surrounded by undeveloped property.	Land available for continued development		Create a flex district for medical supporting uses and MFR
Tiff District	Industrial and undeveloped open space	PDD Planned Developed District	Employment Center	A growing area consisting of industrial uses, such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution centers.	"Land available for continued development Proposed area for conference center and offices Create walking paths"		Create a flex commercial/ industrial district
Starvaggi Property South	Undeveloped open space	PUD Planned Unit District	New Neighborhood & Regional Commercial Center	This neighborhood surrounds Angeline Estates and Weirton Medical Center, including the land between Three Springs Drive and American Way.	There is opportunity to develop a portion of this as commercial, between Three Springs Drive and American Way. There is also opportunity for residential development near Weirton Medical.	The road connection between Three Springs and American Way requires property acquisition in this area.	Change to R-1 east of Colliers Way and Commercial west. Create a PUD/PDD overlay district. Include vacant Serbian Club in the flex district

What We Heard:

The following assets and issues were identified by the various stakeholders, businesses and residents that provided input during the planning process, as related to the goal of being a center for commerce and employment.

Assets:

- Location to the Pittsburgh, PA and Cleveland, OH metro areas
- Proximity to the Pittsburgh International Airport via the Findlay Connector
- Proximity to the Cracker Plant in Beaver County
- Weirton Medical Center
- Regional hub
- Ohio River
- Quality of Life
- Community
- Affordability
- Neighborhoods

Issues:

- Lack of Shovel-Ready Sites
- Concentrated ownership of available land
- Need to extend / replace infrastructure
- Traffic...signage....connectivity...
- Need for commercial retail and entertainment
- Lack of traditional downtown
- Need to travel for arts/entertainment.
- Services for aging population.

goal 2: center for commerce & employment

Objective 2.1: Generate high quality employment opportunities

To sustain long-term prosperity, residents of Weirton need access to jobs that pay a sustainable 'living wage.' Weirton seeks to grow employment in skilled labor and professional services. Employment opportunities can also attract new residents to help stabilize residential neighborhoods and increase the local tax base. The public has identified job creation as a major issue that impacts quality of life in the City.

Action 2.1A: Attract targeted industry clusters

In 2011, the Business Development Corporation (BDC) of the Northern Panhandle commissioned a regional investment strategy with assistance from a U.S. Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance grant. The plan includes a targeted economic development strategy that leverages the core competencies of Brooke and Hancock counties. It recommends local stakeholders seek to attract key industry clusters that have the greatest opportunity to generate economic impact and community revitalization. The BDC continues to implement a marketing strategy that targets these clusters. By focusing on these regional economic drivers, Weirton can also attract additional investment and growth.

- Facilitate redevelopment of the former mill site and continue build-out of Half Moon Industrial Park.

The presence of shovel-ready sites will position Weirton to compete for these industry clusters. As previously discussed, the master planning effort for the Frontier property will include strategic recommendations to attract industrial and manufacturing businesses. There is also an opportunity to attract companies to the nearby Half Moon Industrial Park. The City should work with the BDC and other stakeholders to determine potential funding opportunities available for remediation, site preparation and public infrastructure.

Action 2.1B: Encourage business retention and expansion

The City can also facilitate job creation and capital investment by focusing on existing businesses. A retention and expansion strategy entails proactively connecting with local businesses to evaluate and address their needs. Special attention should be given to small businesses that employ less than 100 workers.

It is critical to provide access to financial and other resources necessary to support business formation and continued growth. Analysis by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that all counties in West Virginia could be considered small business lending 'deserts' with low access to loans from both the private sector and federally supported lending. Affordable and flexible financing options are needed to support small businesses in the region. The City should work with the Chamber and BDC to develop a business survey and to promote available incentives and public financing opportunities.

A cluster is a group of similar or related businesses that gain competitive advantage when concentrated together in a region. These firms are often linked by buyer-seller relationships and/or share common markets. Typically, they also have similar workforce, infrastructure and technology needs. Upon review of the region's strengths and weaknesses, the study identified six clusters have been identified as having the greatest opportunity for future development in the Brooke-Hancock Region:

1. Health Care and Social Assistance
2. Energy
3. Manufacturing
4. Education and Knowledge Creation
5. Transportation and Logistics
6. Business and Financial Services

Action 2.1C: Promote continued investment in workforce development initiatives

Site selection experts continually identify the importance of workforce development as a critical locational factor. According to Area Development's 2018 annual Corporate Survey, 53% of the respondents noted that the availability of skilled labor is having an effect on new facility and expansion plans. More than half the respondents cited concerns over the lack of basic reading and math competency skills. A majority also believe workers lack the advanced skills, including critical STEM skills, pertinent to advanced manufacturing industries.

The City can attract more employers by boasting a qualified and prepared work force by developing training programs linked to industry needs. A skilled workforce is also necessary to retain existing businesses and facilitate their growth. The local labor market must adapt to changing industry forces, which often requires access to specialized training or counseling. Potential partners include the Northern Panhandle Workforce Development Board, Inc and West Virginia Northern Community College.

Objective 2.2: Enhance the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor

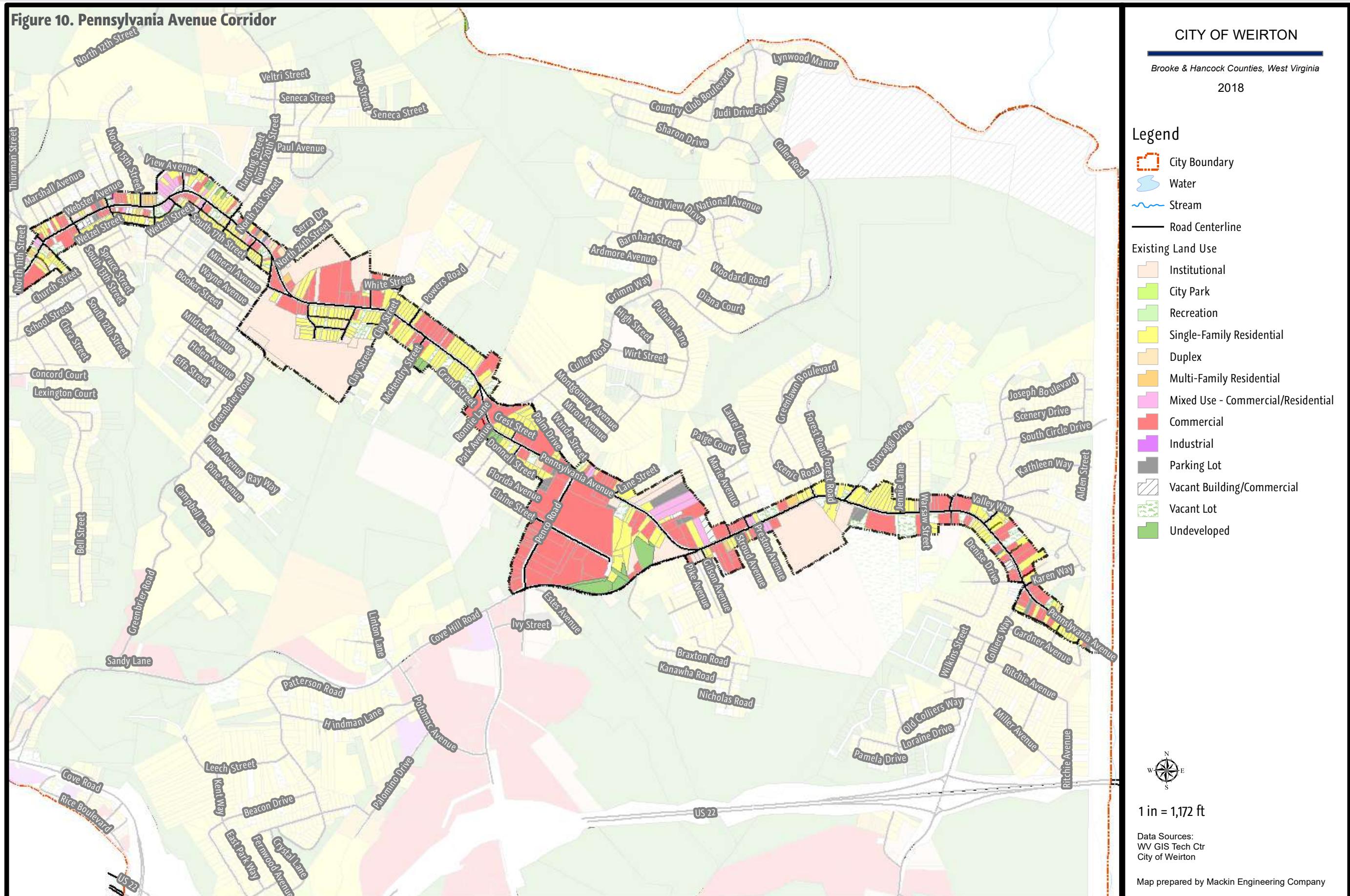
Pennsylvania Avenue is the primary east-west corridor through Weirton. It serves as one of the City's major commercial areas, especially for residents of the adjoining neighborhoods. The corridor includes automobile-oriented commercial uses intermingled with residential development and major institutional uses, such as the West Virginia Northern Community College and the Weirton Elementary School.

Action 2.2A: Develop a mixed-use zoning district along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor.

The current zoning for the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor is one of the priorities to address. The base zoning district is Highway Commercial (C-1) and there is a Pennsylvania Avenue Development Overlay District, extending from 11th Street to the Pennsylvania State Line. As is, it is confusing as to what is permitted and it is recommended that the City get rid of the overlay and revise the base zoning district to a mixed use district. This will allow for more flexibility in terms of accommodating both residential and commercial uses. The mixed use district should be developed with the following in mind:

- Create 'nodes' at major intersections that allow more intense commercial uses (ie gas stations) than the rest of the corridor.
- Encourage home occupations and residential to commercial conversions.
- Incorporate streetscape standards into revised zoning. Promote street trees, commercial greening and landscaped setbacks.
- Specific design standards should be developed to regulate shopping centers .
- Promote small-scale gathering spaces such as outdoor dining on a lot-by lot basis. Require shopping centers to include public gathering space.

Figure 10. Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor



Action 2.2B: Improve the walkability of the Corridor.

Improvements should encourage pedestrian activity and provide connection to adjacent neighborhoods. Enhancements along this corridor will not only support existing businesses, but attract new investment as well.

Projects to improve Pennsylvania Avenue are in several stages of development. Overall, WVDOT has developed this project in several phases, divided into three stages of construction beginning with: (1) Cove Road to the Pennsylvania State Line, (2) Cove Road to 12th Street, and (3) 12th Street to Main Street. Each construction phase should improve drainage, traffic flow, and pedestrian safety. The first two projects include the addition of a center lane for left turn movements, while the third project eliminates a dangerous sharp curve 0.15 miles east of Weir Avenue.

Action 2.2C: Complete a master plan for the Weirton Shopping Center on Penco Road and area around the West Virginia Northern Community College.

The aging Weirton Shopping Center is an open-air neighborhood retail plaza anchored by a grocery store with several outparcels. The large parking lot surface is poorly maintained and underutilized. Located at a high volume intersection, the plaza is adjacent to several single-family residential neighborhoods and the West Virginia Northern Community College. It represents an opportunity for in-fill development to include a mix of retail, services and entertainment. An opportunity exists to encourage compatible development near the Community College as well. The City should work with property owners to complete a master plan for the area and explore available funding opportunities.



Objective 2.3: Facilitate the build-out of Three Springs/Park Drive area as a mixed-use commercial hub.

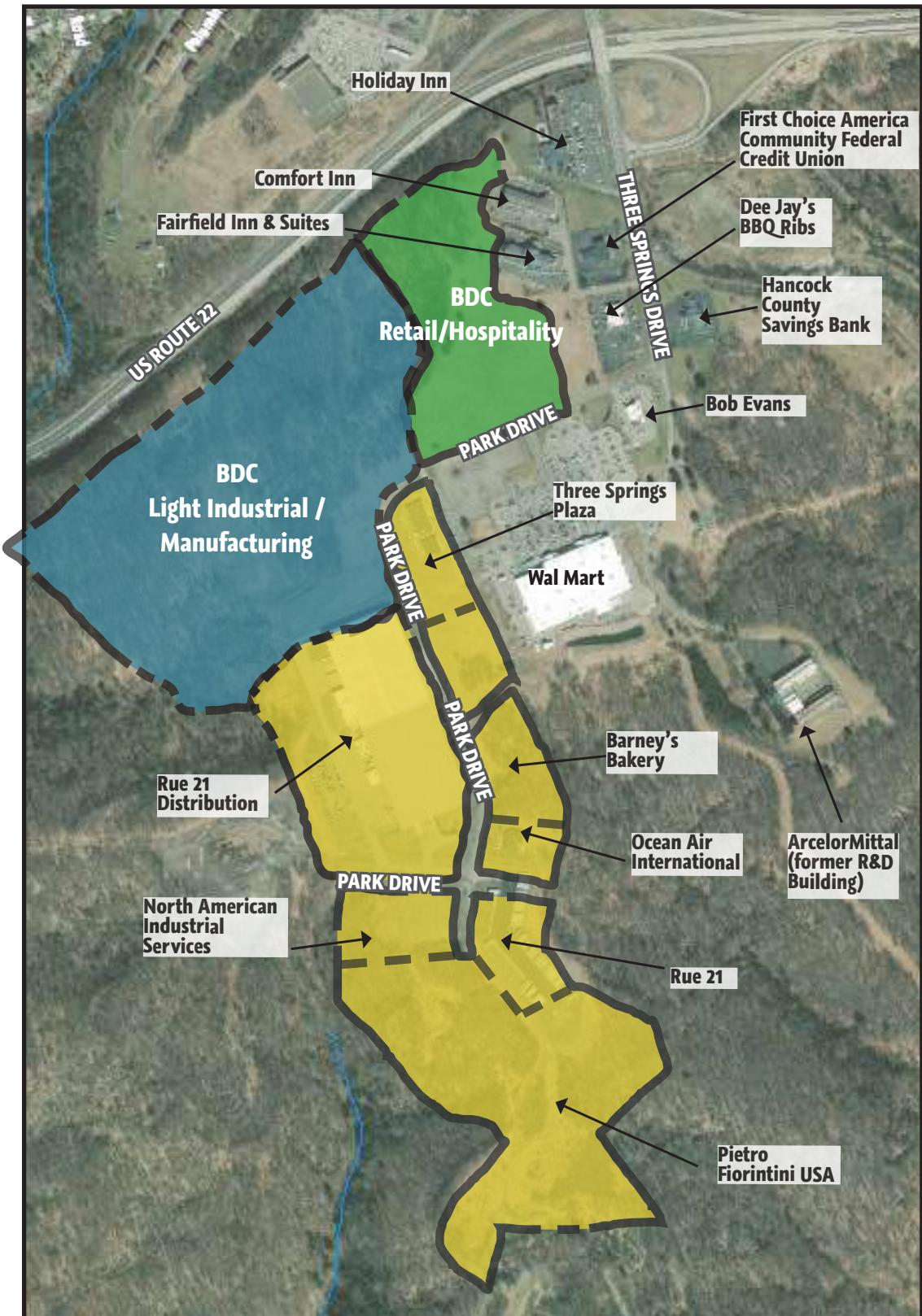
Located at the interchange with U.S. Route 22, Three Springs Drive emerged as an automobile-oriented district that includes large footprint retail and various fast food establishments. Buildings are significantly set back from the road and fronted by large parking surfaces. The road was eventually extended to access parcels to the south of U.S. Route 22 including the site of the former Weirton Steel general office complex. Walmart relocated to the site and opened a new 150,000 square foot Super Center in 2010. Several hotels have been developed in the areas as well. Construction of Park Drive facilitated development of the Three Springs Industrial Park which houses facilities for rue21, Barney's Bakery, North American Industrial Services and Pietro Fiorentini USA.

In late 2017, the BDC acquired 72 acres adjacent to the Three Springs Industrial Park and commenced development of a master plan for the property. The U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded a grant to assist with infrastructure development as detailed above. Additional matching funds for the redevelopment project will be provided by the existing tax increment financing district. Phase I is expected to include a planned conference and event center in addition to several commercial outparcels. Future phases will focus on preparing sites for light industrial, distribution and manufacturing uses.

Changing retail patterns, most significantly the rise of e-commerce, are affecting communities across the country. Given the limited future for big box retail, the City should encourage mixed-use to remain competitive. The strategy for build-out of the Three Springs area should encourage a diverse mix of entertainment, retail, hospitality and high density residential. The City should continue to work with the BDC and other stakeholders to expand the industrial park. Sites should be prepared to attract major tenants that will provide quality employment opportunities for residents and attract new workers to the City. Future development should be managed to avoid worsening traffic congestion and additional stress on other existing infrastructure.

Figure 11. BDC Property - Three Springs Business Park

The Business Development Corporation (BDC) of the Northern Panhandle has acquired 72 acres of property, with plans to undertake a multi-million dollar redevelopment project in the Three Springs Business Park in Weirton.



Action 2.3A: Enhance the US 22 Exit as a gateway to Weirton.

The Three Springs Drive Exit on US 22 is a major gateway into the City of Weirton, only there is nothing to indicate that you are in Weirton at the interchange. Signage and landscaping should be added to the exit in order to establish it as a prominent gateway into the City of Weirton.

Three Springs
Drive Exit heading
west from US 22 /
Pennsylvania

Image credit:
Google Maps



Action 2.3B: Review infrastructure upgrades to improve traffic / pedestrian circulation and mitigate congestion.

The BHJ 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan identifies the need to improve Three Springs Drive from US Route 22 to Cove Road. Three Springs Drive is an urban collector street that directs traffic through a regionally significant commercial activity center. The excessive number of commercial driveways along this route severely restricts street capacity. Traffic model projections indicate vehicle miles traveled on Three Springs Drive will increase by roughly 1.2% annually over the next twenty-five years. At this rate, projected traffic volumes will be severely compromised all capacity on Three Springs Drive within the next ten years and the entire route will be operating at LOS F. Several suggestions that should improve capacity problems on Three Springs Drive are:

- Formulate an access-management plan to minimize the number of commercial driveways and reduce the number of left turn conflict.
- Develop a pedestrian plan to interconnect all the commercial centers to reduce automobile dependency within the retail district.
- Encourage shared parking lots among all the individual business centers by creating frontage roads parallel to Three Springs Drive.

Objective 2.4: Encourage development of a Medical Campus and unique residential community near the Weirton Medical Center.

Weirton Medical Center sits on a 20-acre campus located off Colliers Way near U.S. Route 22. Over the past several decades, Weirton Medical Center has invested over \$10 million in expansion and renovations and this includes the four-story medical office complex annex constructed in 2002.

The City should encourage compatible development on the large tracts near the Weirton Medical Center. An opportunity exists to for complimentary and ancillary medical uses in the area off Colliers Way. Employment in the health care sector continues to climb in the region. Further, it is recognized as an industry cluster with the potential to drive future growth. Additional property nearby can accommodate a diverse mix of planned residential uses including senior/assisted living, workforce housing and creation of a higher-end community to attract new residents.





goal 3:

create
**complete
neighborhoods**



Current Snapshot

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.

With the help of the City Planning Staff and Planning Commission, these neighborhoods were mapped (as shown on "Figure 12. City Neighborhoods" on page 91) 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.

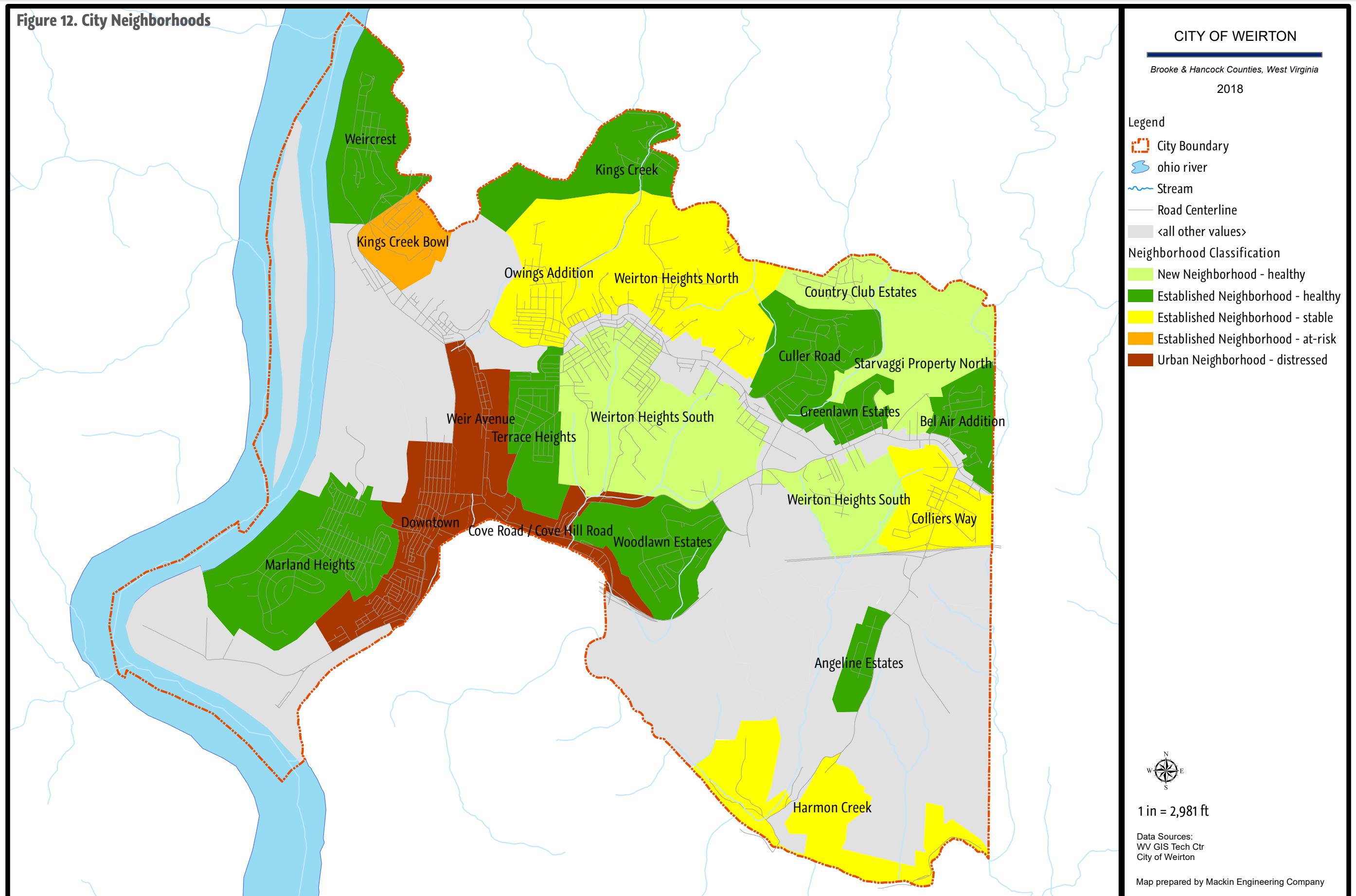
- Healthy Neighborhoods feature well-maintained homes with higher property values. These neighborhoods include Weircrest, Marland Heights, Kings Creek, Terrace Heights, Woodlawn Estates, Culler Road, Greenlawn Estates, Bel Air Addition and Angeline Estates.
- Stable Neighborhoods feature older homes that have some maintenance needs; property values tend to be lower than that of the Healthy Neighborhoods. These neighborhoods include Owings Addition, Weirton Heights North, Colliers Way and Harmon Creek.
- At-Risk Neighborhoods feature older homes that are in need of maintenance and have lower property values. Kings Creek Bowl is the only neighborhood classified as At-Risk.

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 12. City Neighborhoods



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
Kings Creek 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 1950s and 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)	Infill residential development (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
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, some potential 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

Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
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
Woodlawn Estates	"SFR, MFR on Palamino Dr"	"R-1 R-3"	Established Neighborhood - healthy to at-risk (Palamino)	"A medium-size 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

Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
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
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

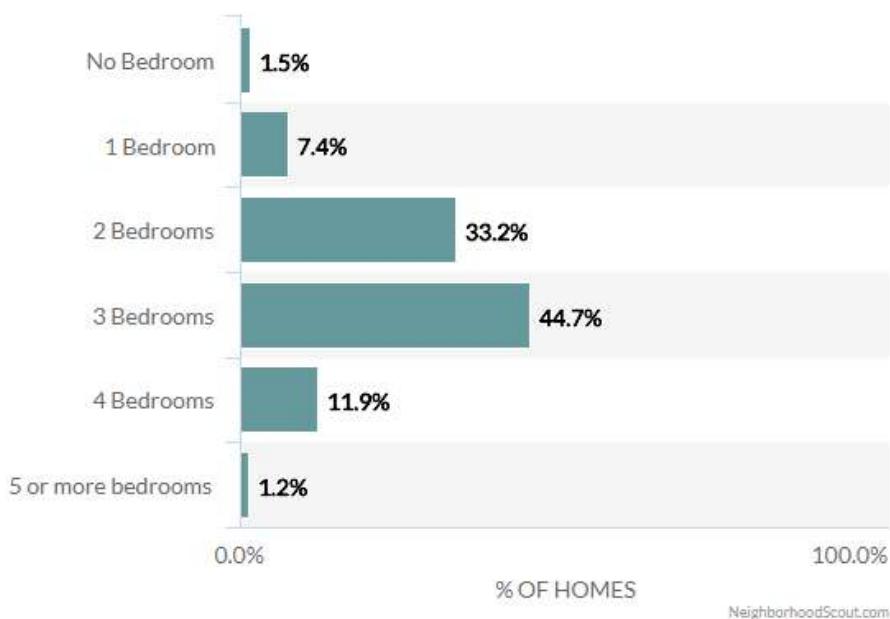
Neighborhood	Predominant Land Uses	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Classification	Neighborhood Description	Opportunities	Needs/Issues	Zoning Recommendations
Weir Avenue	SFR, 6 duplexes, Small-scale commercial, Industrial	R-2	Urban Neighborhood - distressed	A linear neighborhood along Weir Avenue, sandwiched 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

goal 3: create complete neighborhoods

Objective 3.1: Provide for new, modern neighborhoods.

Weirton has not had an increase in population since 1960. Although losses have stabilized since 2010, no new housing units will be needed to accommodate expected growth. However, with a declining population and increasing median age, Weirton needs to focus on attracting new residents. Residential development was the highest priority in terms of new development per the 2017 public survey. While there is a diversity of housing type (almost 25% is townhomes or apartments), the majority of housing is older (65% was built 1940-1969; 20% 1970-1999; 11% 1939 or older; 4% 2000 or newer) and the vast majority are either two- or three-bedroom homes. The City needs to provide for new neighborhoods that feature the modern amenities that young people, young families and seniors are attracted to. New housing developments should feature parks / open space, attractive streetscapes and be well-connected to surrounding areas.

HOME SIZE



goal 3: create complete neighborhoods

Action 3.1A: Revise zoning ordinance to provide for new, diverse neighborhoods in designated areas.

The zoning ordinance should be updated to implement the vision established by the Comprehensive Plan. Recommended zoning changes for each neighborhood are included in the tables on pages 91-94.

Action 3.1B: Ensure that the new residential zoning districts to encourage residential form and scale that matches the desired neighborhood character.

New neighborhoods should generally incorporate the following design expectations:

- Walkable lot layout with connected streets.
- Presence of street trees, street lights and sidewalks along all streets.
- ‘Complete Streets’ that accommodate autos, transit, pedestrians, bicycles and users with limited mobility.
- Trail connections and neighborhood parks.
- Provisions for outdoor plaza space in neighborhood commercial areas.
- Low-impact, naturalized stormwater management.
- Variety in home styles, sizes and types to accommodate changes in age and lifestyle.
- Densities should increase as development moves closer to centers and neighborhood commercial areas.

Action 3.1C: Require that sidewalks be installed in all new developments by the developer prior to selling lots.

Objective 3.2: Preserve established neighborhoods.

Neighborhood character is based upon qualitative input derived from the planning process and the analysis of the larger context in which the City's single-family residential neighborhoods exist. Demographic, housing and quality of life data indicates that the City's single-family residential neighborhoods are great places to live and that they have great value to the people who reside within them.

Preserving and enhancing the City's established neighborhoods is a prime objective. In order to achieve this objective it is recommended that a series of preservation and infill strategies be enacted to maintain the unique and high quality character of the City's single-family residential neighborhoods.

Preservation and infill strategies are not intended to stop future development in single family neighborhoods but rather to ensure that new development complements the essential characteristics of each neighborhood.

Action 3.2A: Revise zoning in established neighborhoods to preserve single-family neighborhoods.

The zoning ordinance should be updated to implement the vision established by the Comprehensive Plan. Recommended zoning changes for each neighborhood are included in the tables on pages 89-92.

Action 3.2B: Encourage residential form and scale that matches the existing and desired neighborhood character.

Just as the zoning ordinance should encourage residential form and scale that matches the desired characteristics of new neighborhoods, it should also ensure that it matches the vision for existing neighborhoods. Considerations should include lot sizes, dwelling sizes, setbacks and housing types.

Objective 3.3: Revitalize at-risk and distressed neighborhoods.

Weirton would benefit from establishing a framework for making investment decisions that reflect a big-picture vision for its future. Investment decisions should work in concert with other City policies to address neighborhood needs as well as serve the well-being of the community as a whole. While disinvestment affects the housing market for the entire City, it should be analyzed at the neighborhood level.

Concentrating investment in targeted areas would allow the City to stretch the impact of their dollar. In addition, coordinating housing demolition and rehabilitation with street, sidewalk and park improvements would increase the overall value of the investment.

Action 3.3A: Evaluate current zoning dimensional standards to address potential obstacles to modernizing aging housing.

Too often zoning ordinances effectively prohibit the “missing middle” of density between single-family detached homes and walk-up apartments. The City may want to look at expanding where it allows uses such as ground-level accessory dwelling units; cottage housing (small detached clustered around a common open space); townhouses; and/or low/mid-rise apartments.

Action 3.3B: Address demolition by neglect.

- Increase code enforcement
- Offer a residential rehabilitation program.
- Adopt a Rental Registration program
- Adopt a Vacant Property Registration program

Action 3.3C: Encourage home-ownership by publicizing local and regional programs.

The City should encourage home ownership in at-risk and distressed neighborhoods by publicizing local and regional programs. 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

HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE



Action 3.3D: Ensure that there are no local barriers to providing affordable and supportive housing to disadvantaged persons.

In addition to revising the zoning ordinance to encourage infill development on smaller lots, there are other steps that the City can take to reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing, such as the following:

- Only require a final plan approval process for small subdivisions, as long as it meets certain criteria (no new streets, utility extensions, etc.)
- Reduce the timeframe for the approval process of small projects (i.e. up to 20 units) within 8-10 days of submission.

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

Objective 3.4: Ensure that neighborhoods are well-served by parks, recreation and open space.

Action 3.4A: Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan to ensure that current and future recreation needs are being met.

Weirton completed a Neighborhood Parks Study in 2003. It is recommended that the City undertake a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan that will analyze existing conditions related to parks and recreation administration, facilities and programming; identify needs and opportunities; and provide recommendations and an implementation plan to use as a guide for the next 10-20 years.

In particular, the plan should look at the existing neighborhood parks and playgrounds to determine their current function and maximize their potential. Some of the identified issues during the planning process include:

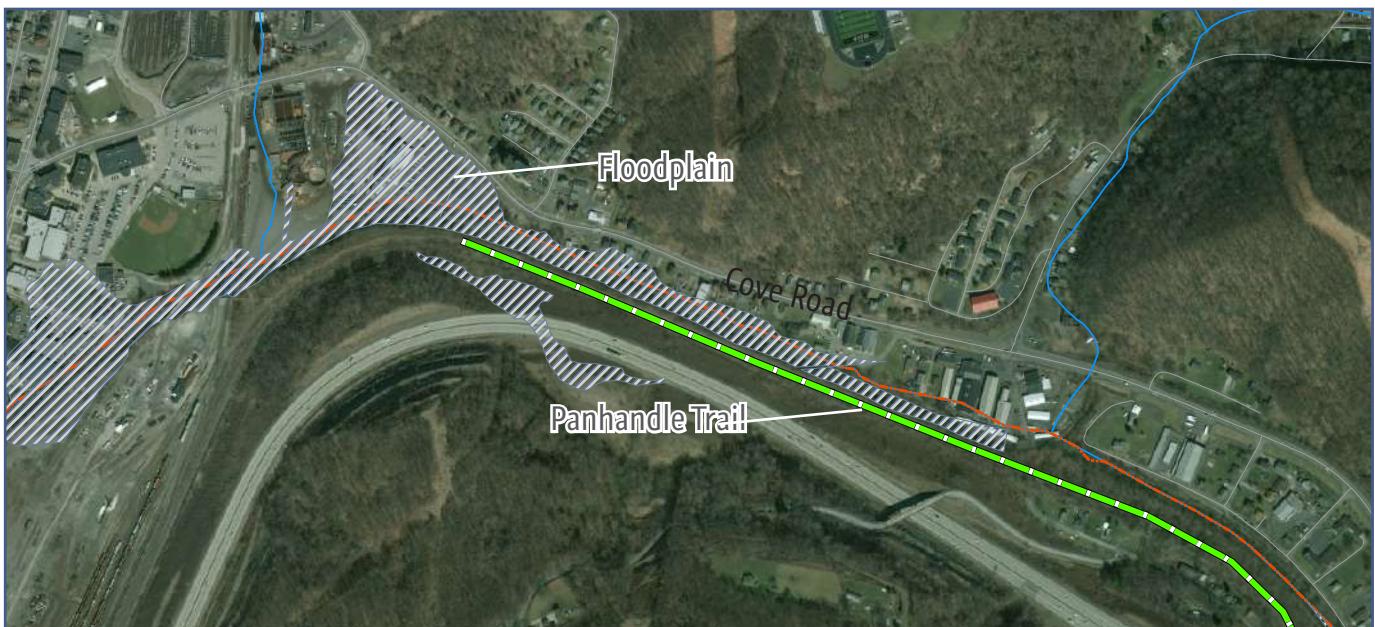
- Many playgrounds are not being used; cost of maintenance is high
- Some parks / playgrounds have deed restrictions (land conservation) that will impact future use
- Need to identify a suitable location for a dog park (possibly Woodlawn Estates)

Action 3.4B: Connect Starvaggi Park to the surrounding neighborhoods via pedestrian/bicycle pathways.

Starvaggi Park is surrounded by established neighborhoods, but many lack a pedestrian or bicycle connection. The City should look to establish public trails and pathways to better connect the park to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Action 3.4C: Create a greenway along Cove Road.

The Panhandle Trail runs parallel to Harmon Creek and future extensions will need to utilize the Cove Road corridor. With many of the structures south of Cove Road in deteriorating condition in a floodplain, the City has an opportunity to create a greenway along Cove Road.



Action 3.4D: Acquire riverfront property to offer public river access.

One of the priorities identified early on in the planning process was the need for public river access. At this time, almost all of the accessible riverfront property is owned by ArcelorMittal. A priority moving forward should be to acquire riverfront property to provide public river access.

goal 4:

improve connectivity

ArcelorMittal

Railroad Yard Office

Walnut Street Scrap Yard

◀ Train Repair

Wake Up Weirton



Current Snapshot

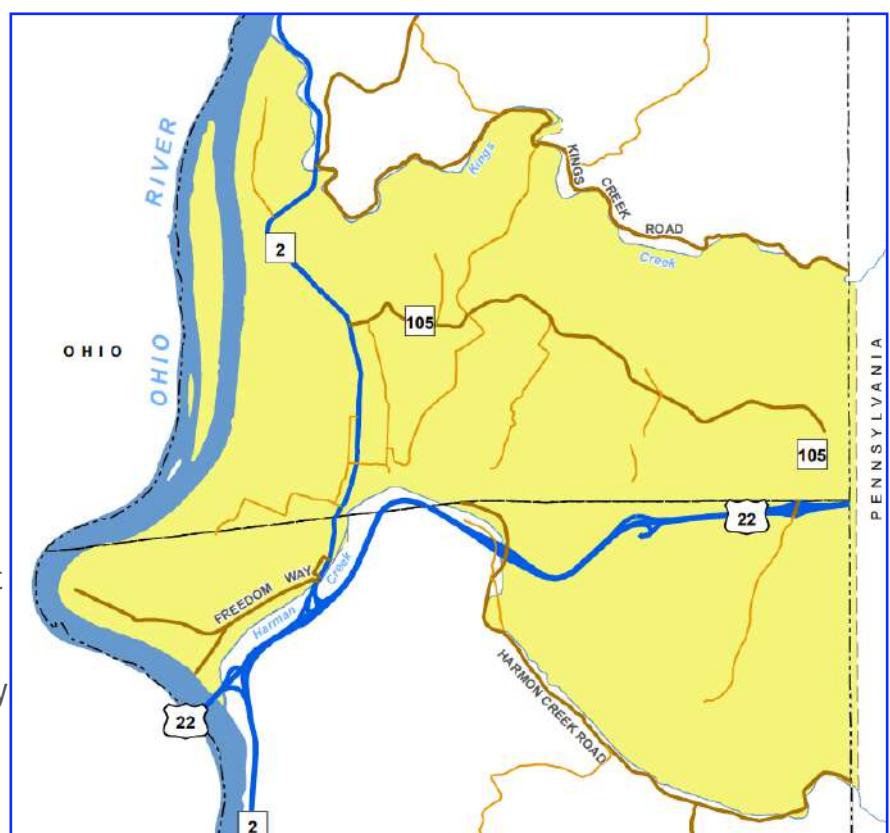
Road Network

States assign functional classifications to all roads based on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal-aid system to determine eligibility for funding. Generally speaking, all roads fall into one of three main categories: Arterial, Collector and Local. Within the City of Weirton, the highest level of Arterial Roads are classified as Other Freeways & Expressways and include United States Route 22 (US-22) and West Virginia State Route 2 (WV-2).

Ohio and West Virginia completed construction of United States Route 22 as a four-lane interstate-type highway in 1993. US-22 generally follows the Brooke/Hancock County Line through Weirton and connects the Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH Urban Area to Pittsburgh, PA in the east and to Columbus, OH in the west. Daily traffic traveling along US-22 in Brooke and Jefferson counties range from 9,270 vehicles at the Harrison/Jefferson County Line to 24,000 vehicles at the Pennsylvania / WV State Line in Weirton.

West Virginia State Route 2 is the principal north/south corridor route, running parallel to the east shores of the Ohio River Valley, through the northern panhandle of West Virginia directing intra-regional traffic south to Interstate 70 in Wheeling, WV and north to Ohio and Pennsylvania. WV-2 is primarily as a two-lane road throughout Brooke and Hancock counties with the exception of four segments, one of which is Main Street in Weirton. Presently, traffic volumes range from 7,900 vehicles daily with 8.5% trucks at the Brooke/Ohio County Line to 21,000 vehicles daily through the north end of Follansbee.

Figure 13. Road Classification Map



Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system. In an urban context, they interconnect and augment the higher Arterial system, provide intra-community continuity and may carry local bus routes. WV Route 105 / Pennsylvania Avenue, Kings Creek Road, Harmon Creek Road and Freedom Way are all Minor Arterials. Collectors are the roads that feed into the Arterials.

River Navigation

Weirton falls within the New Cumberland Pool of the Ohio River Navigation System, which stretches 14.3 river miles along the shores of Hancock County, WV and Columbiana County, OH beginning at Mile 40, the Pennsylvania Stateline, and ending at River Mile 54.3, the New Cumberland Locks & Dam. There are 10 privately owned docks located on the Ohio River in the City of Weirton. The BHJ 2040 Transportation Plan identifies improved intermodal facilities that link rail and barge operations as an opportunity for the greater Steubenville-Weirton area.

Railroad

Weirton is served by Norfolk Southern Class I Railroad, part of its Pittsburgh Division, which includes lines in and near West Virginia's northern panhandle and southwest Pennsylvania. The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) has developed a state rail plan which is intended to serve as a framework for the state's rail freight and passenger transportation planning activities and project development plan over the next 20 years.¹ The plan highlights the interaction between rail and port facilities in West Virginia as long established and successful. The Weirton river port district is served by a Class I railroad. The combination of rail and the intercoastal and intracoastal waterways provide a cost-effective, intermodal means of moving the bulk commodities which comprise a major portion of the state's economy. Improvements to both the rail freight and passenger networks, and to intermodal connections and coordination, is a key emphasis area for rail planning and development in the future.

As such, the plan identifies a long-range recommendation to revitalize the Weirton Rail Yard for the purpose of attracting additional rail-served development in the area. The plan recommends to conduct engineering and marketing analyses as necessary to determine the benefits of upgrading the Weirton Yard as a prospective intermodal hub or to serve additional local businesses.

¹ West Virginia State Rail Plan. December 2013. Retrieved online at: https://transportation.wv.gov/rail/Documents/WV_RailPlan.pdf

Airports

The closest major airport to Weirton is the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT). This airport is located off I-376 west of Pittsburgh and is 28 miles from the center of Weirton.

The Jefferson County Airpark is located just outside of Steubenville, Ohio. The most frequent general aviation operations at Jefferson County include daily emergency medical services and recreational flights. On a weekly basis, the airport accommodates corporate users primarily related to the oil and gas industry as well as activities such as power line and pipeline control operations, and flight training operations.

Trails

The Panhandle Trail in Weirton, WV is a 4-mile rail trail running under U.S. 22 Harmon Creek Exit to the Pennsylvania State line near Colliers WV. This rail trail will link Weirton WV to the national network of trails. The Panhandle Rail Trail is a 29-mile pathway linking two states, three counties, and 14 municipalities. The trail connects with the Montour Trail in McDonald, PA and brings the Panhandle into a network of trails that lead to Washington, D.C. that includes the Great Allegheny Passage.

Transit

The Weirton Transit Corporation (WTC) is the program manager for FTA §5307 Urbanized Formula funds for public transportation in the City of Weirton, WV. The City of Weirton, though, is the official recipient of the FTA funding and then, by agreement, sub-allocates the federal funds to the WTC. In turn, the WTC provides public transit services for the City and eligible surrounding areas. Under the FTA §5307 Program, the transit corporation recovers 50% of its operating costs less fare revenues and 80% of its capital improvement and preventive maintenance expenses as well as planning expenditures. The City as well as Brooke and Hancock County Commissions provides the WTC with cash funds and in-kind services for the remaining expenses as required for local match of the FTA program.

goal 4: improve connectivity

Objective 4.1: Increase the accessibility of neighborhoods and centers.

Weirton falls within the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is responsible for developing the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a four-year transportation planning document that represents a fiscally-balanced, multimodal transportation program of federally-funded and regionally-significant state-funded projects scheduled for some phase of implementation. The FY 2018-2021 TIP was adopted in 2017; there are no funded projects in the City of Weirton; the Freedom Way / Birch Drive is an unfunded project.

In addition to the TIP, the BHJ is required to update its regional Long Range Transportation Plan for the region every four years. This Plan examines the overall intermodal transportation plan for the area, including roads, freight, air, river, trail and transit. The current is the 2040 Transportation Plan, which was adopted in 2016. The Plan identifies the following projects within the City of Weirton:

- WVH-01 CR 13 (Three Springs Drive) from US Route 22 to CR 507 (Cove Road) - this project is discussed more under Objective 2.3.
- WVH-10 Improvements to State Route 105 (Pennsylvania Avenue) from State Route 2 (Main Street) to Pennsylvania State Line - this project is discussed more under Objective 2.2.
- New Park and Ride locations to expand ridesharing opportunities - two locations in Weirton are being evaluated by the BHJ (the US 22 and Harmon Creek Interchange and the US 22 and Colliers Way Interchange).
- The BHJ is seeking funds to connect the Brooke Pioneer Trail with the Weirton Panhandle Trail

Action 4.1A: Support WV DOT efforts to redesign the Freedom Way / Birch Drive intersection.

The intersection of Freedom Way and Birch Drive is an unfunded project in the 2018-2021 TIP. The project description is to remove traffic signal and re-align Freedom Way with Birch Drive. This is one of several freight-related projects that the BHJ is working on to address freight transportation needs in the region (the only one in Weirton). US 22, WV Route 2 and OH Route 7 are all designated BHJ freight network routes near Weirton.

With the Fort Steuben Bridge removed from the traffic network, traffic has significantly declined on Freedom Way in Weirton west of the Birch Drive intersection. In addition, recent traffic studies have revealed that the traffic signal at the intersection is unwarranted requiring that the signal be removed. Before removing the signal, the West Virginia DOH needs to reconfigure the intersection to accommodate the heavy traffic flow travelling onto Birch Drive into the Half Moon Industrial Park to the west. The project estimated is \$527,000, which includes design and minor right-of-way.

Figure 14. Possible Reconfiguration of Freedom Way & Birch Drive Intersection





Action 4.1B: Work with the WV DOT to rehabilitate and reopen the Lee Avenue bridge.

The Lee Avenue Bridge, which carries traffic over an industrial rail line located between East Street and Weir Avenue, has been closed since April 2012. City officials have identified it as a transportation improvement priority, as its closing has limited emergency response routes within the City. Currently, the WVDOT is evaluating the bridge to determine the potential to either rehabilitate or reconstruct the bridge.

Action 4.1C: Work with the BHJ to include additional road improvements into the Long Range Plan and TIP.

- Determine the feasibility of a second access road to Marland Heights neighborhood. The Marland Heights neighborhood has only one access road: Marland Heights Road. Many residents and City officials have expressed concern over this as both a safety issue and traffic congestion issue.
- Determine the feasibility of a private access road to alleviate heavy truck traffic on Main Street.
- Increase the height of the East Colliers underpass (Harmon Creek Road - near trail) to allow for fire trucks and emergency vehicles to pass through.
- Replace the Martina Drive access bridge (from Kings Creek Road) to increase the weight capacity to allow for fire trucks and emergency vehicles.
- Request a traffic study be conducted on Cove Road (WV DOT) to analyze the placement of existing traffic signals.

Objective 4.2: Enhance the active transportation and multimodal options within the City.

As discussed previously, the Weirton Transit Authority and Panhandle Trail are major assets for the City of Weirton. Providing residents and visitors with alternative transportation options is a vital component to vibrant cities.

Action 4.2A: Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance to ensure that roads accommodate all types of users.

Complete Streets policies “formalize a community’s intent to plan, design and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities.”¹ These policies can be implemented through updated ordinances and resolutions, inclusion into comprehensive plans and adopted policies by the governing body. According to Smart Growth America, there are ten elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets policy:

1. Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
2. Specifies that ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles.
3. Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance and operations, for the entire right of way.
4. Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
5. Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
6. Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
7. Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.

¹ “Complete Streets.” Smart Growth America. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>. Retrieved online October 2016.

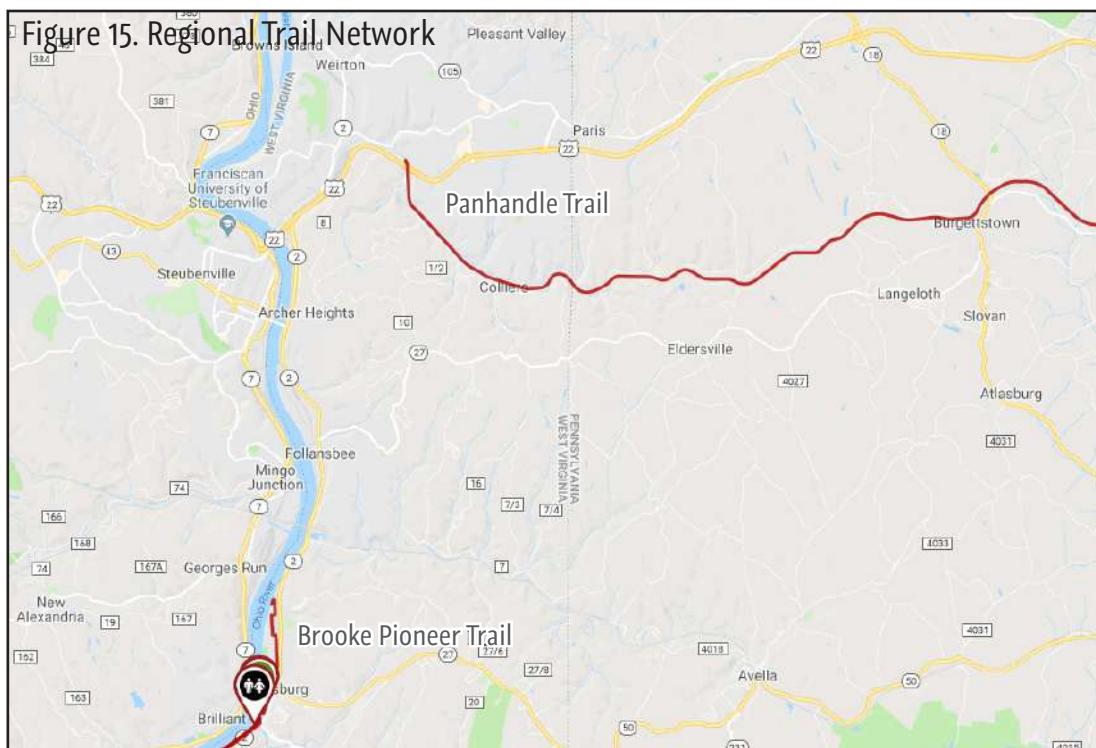
8. Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
9. Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
10. Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

Action 4.2B: Extend the Panhandle Trail.

One objective in the BHJ 2040 Transportation Plan is to “create a bicycle and pedestrian facility across the Ohio River connecting Eastern Ohio to the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia through Steubenville and Weirton that ties into a developing national trail network in Ohio and Pennsylvania outside the three-county area.” (pg 1-4 under Factor #5).

The BHJ is seeking funds to connect the Brooke Pioneer Trail with the Weirton Panhandle Trail. One option would use the existing railroad corridor between Weirton and Tomlinson Run should the operator ever abandon parts of the active rail line. The trail would use existing roadways where rail lines are still active.

Recommended under Goal 1: Revitalize Downtown, the extension of the Panhandle Trail from its current endpoint south of Harmon Creek / Cove Road into Downtown



is crucial to capitalizing on its economic impact for local businesses. Extending the trail will also provide residents with an active transportation corridor that connects to park and rides, which can help mitigate traffic congestion. One idea is to work with the WV DOT on a road diet for Main Street (Route 2) that would reduce the lanes from 5 to 4 and add bike lanes. While current traffic counts may allow for a road diet, the future development of the Frontier property along Main Street may increase traffic to the point where this option is not viable. The City should work with the BHJMPO to conduct traffic counts and preliminary studies. Alternative routes should be explored to provide either an off-road trail or bike lanes within Downtown.

Action 4.2C: Prepare a detailed sidewalk assessment and plan to prioritize areas to improve when funds become available.

According to Walk Score, Weirton is a car-dependent City where most errands require a car. It received a Walk Score of 25 (out of 100). The Downtown is the most walkable, with the scores dropping significantly as one moves farther away. Walkability was identified as one of the biggest priorities that residents want to address through the Comprehensive Plan. There is a lack of sidewalks in many areas of the City, particularly in the newer developed commercial areas such as Three Springs Drive and Colliers Way.

Action 4.2D: Construct new park-and-ride lots.

CommuteInfo® is a coordinated partnership of transportation management agencies and providers, as well as businesses and non-profit service organizations throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH Metropolitan Area, specifically the BHJMPO. The partnership provides commuter information and services for persons who desire commuter travel alternatives to driving alone to their jobs and/or school primarily into Southwestern Pennsylvania. With the growing number of single occupancy commuters starting in the Weirton-Steubenville, OH-WV Metropolitan Area and ending in Southwest, PA, the BHJMPO desires to continue its Vanpool/Rideshare Program in partnership with CommuteInfo. Existing Park and Ride Facilities in the BHJ area are inadequate to handle increased interest in shared options. Therefore, BHJ is reviewing suitable locations in Jefferson and Brooke counties to site new Park and Ride locations to expand ridesharing opportunities. To date four locations are under review: Toronto, OH at the SR 7 and Franklin Street Interchange, north of Steubenville, OH adjacent to an existing Park and Ride lot at SR 7 & 213, and two in Weirton, WV the US 22 and Harmon Creek Interchange and the US 22 and Colliers Way Interchange.

Action 4.2E: Install bike racks on all buses and at public parks and spaces.

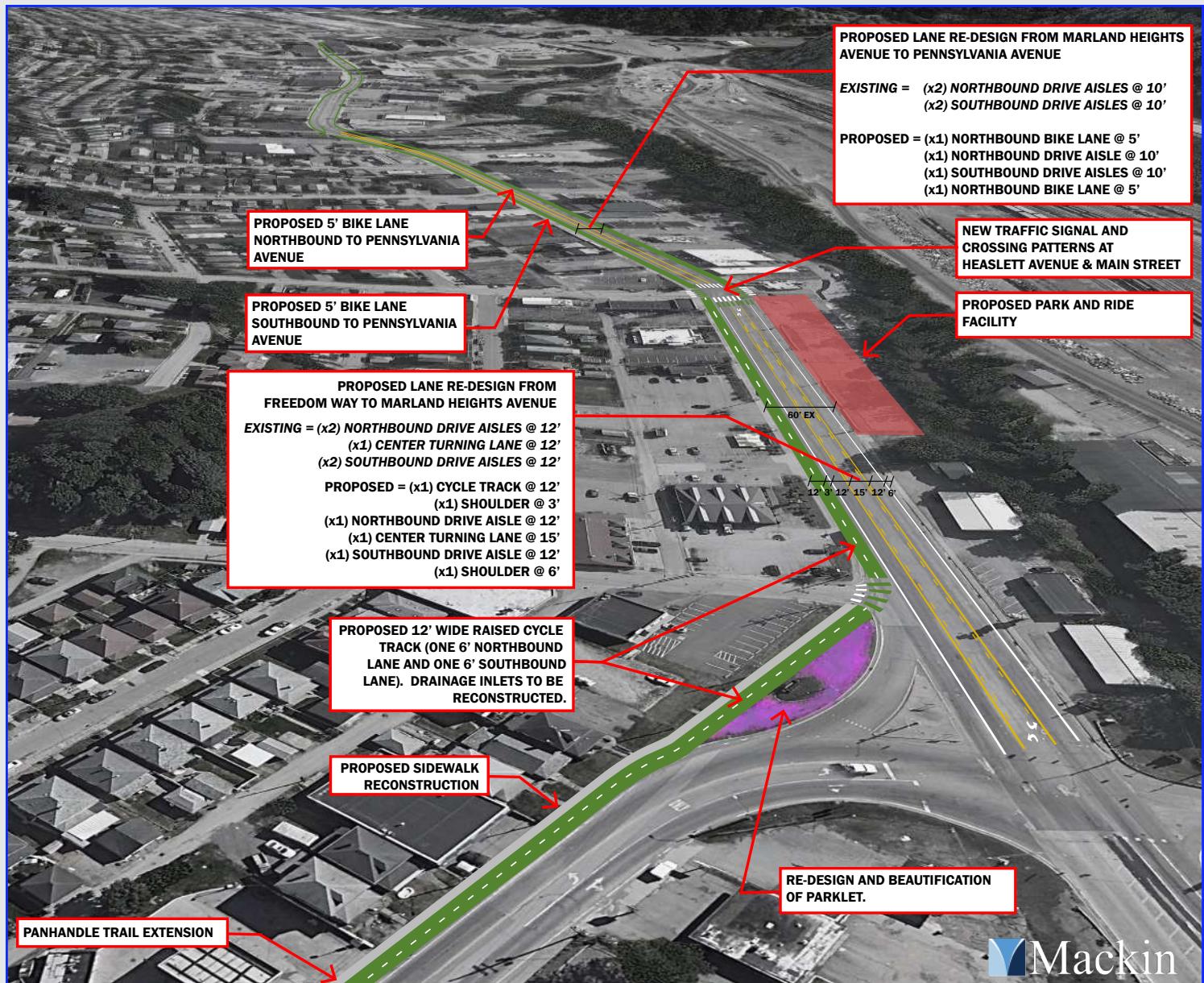
One fairly simple and inexpensive method of integrating bicycling and public transportation is installing bike racks on buses. Bike racks have been shown to increase the use of transit, as it increases the catchment area of the bus (people will bicycle farther to a bus stop than walk). In addition, all public parks and spaces should have bike racks.

Action 4.2F: Expand transit service.

To ensure that City residents are being best-served by public transportation, the City should coordinate with the Weirton Transit Authority to expand service.

- » Expand/revise fixed routes to provide an express route between Downtown and Three Springs Drive; provide service to the Panhandle Trail access areas, to better connect trail users to the Downtown.
- » Connect with the Steel Valley Regional Transit Authority (SVRTA) to expand transit service within the region.
- » Connect with the Allegheny County Port Authority to connect with service to the Pittsburgh International Airport and the Robinson Township area. Weirton has an opportunity to serve as a bedroom community to this area, particularly if public transit is an option for residents to access jobs.
- » Identify locations for new bus shelters. Additional bus shelters throughout the City will increase the visibility of public transit,

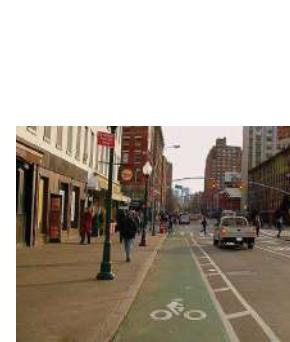
Improve Connectivity: Possible Improvements for South Main Street



A conceptual rendering of possible improvements to South Main Street include a bike lane (options include a bike lane, buffered bike lane or two-way cycle track) to extend the Panhandle Trail; a park-and-ride lot; and an improved gateway / parklet at the intersection of South Main Street and Freedom Way.



BIKE LANE



BUFFERED BIKE LANE



TWO-WAY CYCLE TRACK

goal 5:

plan for a

sustainable future

MUNICIPAL PLAZA

WEIRTON CITY BUILDING

WEST VIRGINIA STATE BUILDING

THOMAS E. MILLSOP COMMUNITY CENTER

MARY H. WEIR PUBLIC LIBRARY

WEIRTON FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

EDWIN J. BOWMAN BASEBALL FIELD

Wake Up Weirton



Current Snapshot

Overall, the goal of a City needs to be planning for a sustainable future. Future land use policies and financing decisions will impact what the City looks like in 10-20 years and so overall, Weirton needs to be cognizant of ensuring that the policies, programs and investments it makes today provide for a sustainable future.

City Organization

The City of Weirton is governed by a Mayor and City Council, whose members are elected at-large to represent each of the seven wards. To assist City Council with planning decisions and policy recommendations is the Planning Commission, whose nine members are appointed by Council. In addition, the City operates the following departments:

- City Manager's Office - responsible for implementing City Council policies and for overseeing all operational departments.
- City Clerk's Office - provides notice of City Council meetings, prepares the agenda and records proceedings. The Clerk is custodian of all permanent City records, is the Chief Election Officer for municipal elections, and is the ex-officio secretary of multiple boards and commissions.
- Building Inspections & Code Enforcement - reviews plans, issues permits, and city business licenses. Code Officials ensure that construction complies with the cities codes and ordinances. The Code Enforcement staff's purpose is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare in existing buildings. They enforce the city ordinances regarding structural issues, trash and high grass along with following the ICC codes. The Code Enforcement's staffs purpose is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare in existing buildings. They enforce the city ordinances regarding structural issues, trash and high grass along with following the ICC codes.
- Finance - responsibilities include budgeting, financial reporting, accounting, debt administration, payroll, utility billing and collections.
- Fire Department - maintain safety and ensure a high quality of life by educating, protecting, and serving our community with the resources provided.

- Human Resources - advises management on recruitment and hiring. Responsibilities include classification and pay, employee relations, equal employment opportunities, training, benefits and employee safety.
- Legal Department & Municipal Court - handles cases processed by the Weirton Police Department and Code Enforcement Department
- Mary H. Weir Public Library - provides access to information, materials, programs, technology, and a space serving the information and entertainment needs of the citizens of the Weirton community.
- Parks & Recreation - provides a variety of recreation, sports, fitness and wellness programs. It develops and maintains a system of parks, the community center, the athletic fields and other facilities.
- Planning and Development - responsible for current planning, which involves zoning and land use regulations, as well as comprehensive planning, which establishes guidelines for the future growth of the City by addressing broad community issues. The department oversees the development, updating, and implementation of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the Comprehensive Plan, as well as CDBG administration and various projects, programs and grants.
- Police Department - protect life and property through enforcement and prevention with programs including animal control and school resource officers.
- Public Works - responsibilities include solid waste collection, conservation programs, electrical, sign shop, and the maintenance of the City streets, parks, buildings and vehicles.
- Utilities - responsibilities include water and wastewater treatment.
- Weirton Transit Corporation - offers bus services throughout the City of Weirton.

goal 5: plan for a sustainable future

Objective 5.1: Implement sustainable policies and practices.

Sustainable cities, urban sustainability, or eco-city (also “ecocity”) is a city designed with consideration for social, economic and environmental impact. So, what makes a city sustainable? Here are ten ways that the City of Weirton can become a more sustainable city in the future:

1. Communication - making sure City departments are working together.
2. Political support - having the elected officials support and promote sustainability.
3. Financing - providing the funding to implement sustainable projects.
4. Auditing - tracking sustainable measures to document the outcomes.
5. Networking - implementing new and innovative ideas from around the country/world.
6. Alternative transportation - promoting walking, bicycling and public transit.
7. Collaborative partnerships - working with local community organizations.
8. Climate resiliency - planning ahead for extreme weather (flooding, storms, etc.).
9. Alternative energy - permitting and encouraging the use of alternate forms of energy (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.).
10. Urban growing - encouraging community gardens, urban farming, etc.¹

¹ Smart Cities (<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/21-features-future-sustainable-city/285946/>)

Action 5.1A: Implement sustainable future land use and development policies.

Chapter 8A requires that municipalities set goals and programs for the proposed general distribution, location and suitable uses of land and identify constraints to development, including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas. Development constraints (steep slopes and floodplains) are shown on “Figure 16. Development Constraints” on page 121. Areas that are classified as a 0.1% chance of annual flood include land along Kings Creek and Harmon Creek. Steep slopes can be found throughout the City, limiting development potential in many areas.

Subsidence is the differential settlement of land and may be accompanied by frost heaving, shrink-swell of clay materials and sometimes landslides. Three types of subsidence common to West Virginia are related to mines, karst topography, and fills.

The Future Land Use Plan is shown on “Figure 17. Future Land Use Plan” on page 123. There is no land in the City of Weirton that is designated rural; it is a built-out. While there is no rural land in the city limits of Weirton that requires preservation planning, proposed redevelopment sites are recommended to include green technology and sustainable development practices.

- Preferred development areas are where incentives may be used to encourage more efficient well-designed development either through infill or redevelopment. These areas include the new neighborhoods, commercial centers and employment centers.
- Renewal and/or redevelopment areas are blighted areas proposed for community renewal, revitalization and/or redevelopment. These areas include the at-risk and distressed neighborhoods, including Downtown.

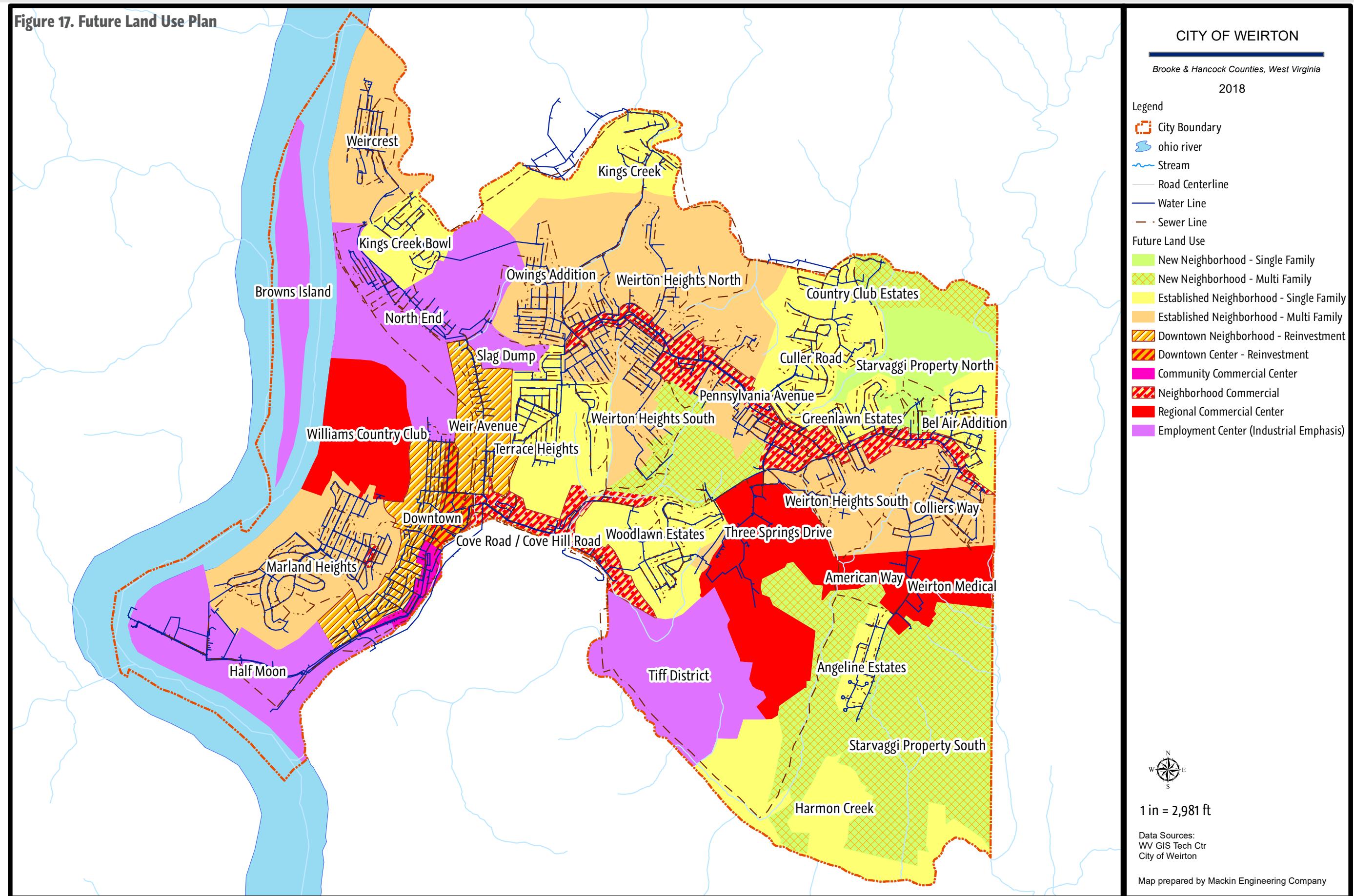
Action 5.1B: Update the City’s Unified Development Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

After updating a Comprehensive Plan, the next logical step is to update the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to ensure that it is implementing the vision established in the Plan. The UDO was last adopted in 2005, although several amendments have been adopted over the years.

Figure 16. Development Constraints



Figure 17. Future Land Use Plan



Action 5.1C: Incorporate environmental responsibility and sustainability into planning and public / private decision-making.

The City should incorporate sustainable practices into all public policy and decision making while encouraging / incentivizing it for private decision-making. Some methods to employ include:

- Incorporate green infrastructure where feasible on City-owned property (permeable surfaces on courts, rain gardens and bioswales, rain barrels on buildings to collect rain water and re-use for watering plants, composting toilets, etc.).
- Plant more street trees and use native plants in City parks and public spaces.
- Utilize energy-saving methods such as switching to LED light bulbs, automatic light switches in public restrooms and other areas, constructing green buildings, etc.
- Identify possible incentives that the City can offer to encourage private developers to incorporate green technology into their buildings and site plans.
- Update the City's website to provide additional information for residents and businesses on how they can provide best management practices for on-lot stormwater management, such as rain barrels, rain gardens and permeable pavers.
- Provide recycling bins in all City buildings, parks and at all events.
- Update ordinances to permit alternative energy, such as windmills, solar energy, geothermal energy, etc.
- Update ordinances to allow compatible types and scales of urban agriculture.

Objective 5.2: Ensure that City Departments can operate efficiently and effectively.

As public officials are well aware, residents and other taxpayers expect local government to responsibly steward public resources in the provision of public services and amenities. Effective and transparent local government is key to public confidence, which can impact the extent to which taxpayers feel well invested in the community and care about its welfare. City government should continue to strive to provide the highest-quality level of public services.

Action 5.2A: Address capacity issues.

City Departments were interviewed to identify any current issues and a “wish list” of things that would help them provide the highest level of service. It should be noted that these should be addressed as funding and capacity may allow.

- Staffing Needs:
 - » Dedicated staff person for trail maintenance
 - » Dedicated staff for fire inspections
 - » Additional police officers / staff
 - » Increase Public Works staff to allow for in-house paving (reduce costs)
 - » Planning & Development staff to combine with Building Inspectors / Code Enforcement to better handle permits and applications
- Conduct a feasibility study to look at current building capacity and determine options.
 - » The Police Department needs a secure facility for evidence / records
 - » The Public Works Department has outgrown their current facility and needs a secondary salt storage facility

- » The Planning and Development Department and Building and Inspections Department would be more efficient if located in the same office
- » Transit needs their own storage / vehicle garage
- Equipment and Training Needs:
 - » EMS equipment/staffing/training
 - » Automatic chest compression
 - » Security cameras and SWAT robot
 - » Bike racks on transit buses
 - » Updated / coordinated GIS software throughout City Departments

Action 5.2B: Upgrade infrastructure .

The following infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, storm sewers) needs were identify by City Department Heads:

- Adopt a multi-year paving plan for City-owned roads
- Extend water and sewer lines near Colliers Way / Three Springs Drive / Park Road to accommodate new development
- Replace aging infrastructure in Downtown
- Install an automated valve and leak detection program and water flow monitoring system
- Map the existing storm sewer system to comply with the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) program
- Consider billing stormwater as a utility - flat rate or impact-based

chapter 4: implementation plan



Implementation Plan

To assist the City of Weirton with implementing the Comprehensive Plan, a matrix was developed that includes the following information:

- Priority - the objectives are ranked as either high, medium or low priority. The rankings are based on input received at the public meeting in April of 2018 as well as input from the Planning Commission.
- Timeframe - each action item is assigned a timeframe for implementation. Short-term actions should be started in the next 1-5 years and long-term actions should be started within 6-10 years. Ongoing actions are those that the City should be working on annually.
- Action Required for Implementation - every action will require some type of action by the City in order to implement it.
 - » Regulatory Action - items that will require the involvement of City Council, either through a policy change, resolution or ordinance.
 - » Capital Project - items that will require funding, either through the municipal budget or grants/loans.
 - » Additional Plans / Studies - items that will require further research and planning, such as master plans or ordinances.
 - » Staff Time and Resources - items that will require substantial time and/or resources of the City's Planning and Development Staff.
 - » Educational Outreach - items that the City may not be the lead implementing party, but can provide education and/or outreach to ensure that the public is aware of the programs or opportunities.
- Potential Partners - other organizations that the City will either need to coordinate with or could potentially partner on for implementation.

Priority Level		Timeframe for Implementation	Action Required for Implementation					Potential Partners
			Regulatory Action (policy/ordinance)	Capital Project (\$\$ required)	Additional Plans/ Studies Required	Staff Time/Resources	Education/Outreach	
		Short-term = 1-5 years; Long-term = 6-10 years; Ongoing = continuous						

Goal 1: Revitalize Downtown.

HIGH	Objective 1.1: Create an identity for Weirton that increases the ability to attract new residents and visitors.							
	Action 1.1A: Enhance the gateways into Downtown.	Short-term		X	X			WV DOT, private property owners
	Action 1.1B: Improve wayfinding.	Short-term		X	X	X		WV DOT
	Action 1.C: Improve the streetscape of Main Street.	Short-term		X	X			WV DOT, private property owners
	Action 1.D: Develop architectural and streetscape standards for the Downtown.	Long-term	X		X	X	X	
	Action 1.E: Extend the Panhandle Trail into Downtown.	Long-term		X	X	X	X	Weirton Rail Trail Committee, Parks Board, BHJ, property owners
	Action 1.F: Improve public space in the Downtown.	Short-term		X	X	X		Park Board, Arts Commission

HIGH	Objective 1.2: Embrace Downtown as the cultural center of the City.								
	Action 1.2A: Create a "cultural cove" (mini-cultural district) Downtown.	Short-term	X				X	X	Top of West Virginia, Arts Commission
	Action 1.2B: Create a public art program.	Short-term	X	X			X		Arts Commission
	Action 1.2C: Enhance / expand the Events Center.			X	X		X		Top of West Virginia

HIGH	Objective 1.3: Encourage Downtown reinvestment.							
	Action 1.3A: Establish a Main Street Program.	Long-term	X	X	X	X	X	WV Main Street Program
	Action 1.3B: Encourage infill development and revitalization of underutilized properties.	Ongoing	X		X	X		Property owners
	Action 1.3C: Conduct a Central Business District parking study.	Short-term			X	X		

Priority Level		Timeframe for Implementation	Action Required for Implementation				Potential Partners
			Regulatory Action (policy/ordinance)	Capital Project (\$\$ required)	Additional Plans/ Studies Required	Staff Time/Resources	
		Short-term = 1-5 years; Long-term = 6-10 years; Ongoing = continuous					

Goal 2: Provide an appropriate mix of commercial and industrial land uses to allow Weirton to continue serving as an economic hub in the region.

HIGH	Objective 2.1: Generate high quality employment opportunities.						
	Action 2.1A: Attract targeted industry clusters.	Ongoing		X		X	BHJ, BDC, Chamber, WV Development Office
	Action 2.1B: Encourage business retention and expansion.	Ongoing		X	X	X	BHJ, BDC, WV Development Office
	Action 2.1C: Promote continued investment in workforce development initiatives.	Ongoing		X	X	X	BHJ, BDC, West Virginia Northern Community College, Workforce Development Board

MEDIUM	Objective 2.2: Enhance the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor.						
	Action 2.2A: Develop a mixed-use zoning district along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor.	Short-term	X		X	X	
	Action 2.2B: Improve the walkability of the Corridor.	Long-term		X	X		WV DOT
	Action 2.2C: Complete a master plan for the Weirton Shopping Center on Penco Road and area around the West Virginia Northern Community College.	Short-term			X		Property owners

HIGH	Objective 2.3: Facilitate the build-out of Three Springs/Park Drive as a mixed-use commercial hub.						
	Action 2.3A: Enhance the US 22 Exit as a gateway to Weirton.	Long-term		X	X	X	WV DOT, property owners
	Action 2.3B: Review infrastructure upgrades to improve traffic / pedestrian circulation and mitigate congestion.	Short-term		X	X		BHJ, BDC

HIGH	Objective 2.4: Encourage development of a Medical Campus and unique residential community near the Weirton Medical Center.						
	Action 2.4A: Review infrastructure upgrades needed(water/sewer, traffic / pedestrian circulation)	Short-term		X	X		Weirton Medical Center, property owners

Priority Level		Timeframe for Implementation	Action Required for Implementation				Potential Partners
			Regulatory Action (policy/ordinance)	Capital Project (\$\$ required)	Additional Plans/ Studies Required	Staff Time/Resources	
		Short-term = 1-5 years; Long-term = 6-10 years; Ongoing = continuous					

Goal 3: Create complete neighborhoods.

Objective 3.1: Provide for new, modern neighborhoods.							
LOW	Action 3.1A: Revise zoning ordinance to provide for new, diverse neighborhoods in designated areas.	Short-term	X		X	X	
	Action 3.1B: Ensure that the new residential zoning districts to encourage residential form and scale that matches the desired neighborhood character.	Short-term	X			X	
	Action 3.1C: Require that sidewalks be installed in all new developments by the developer prior to selling lots.	Short-term	X			X	

Objective 3.2: Preserve established neighborhoods.							
MEDIUM	Action 3.2A: Revise zoning in established neighborhoods to preserve single-family neighborhoods.	Short-term	X		X	X	
	Action 3.2B: Encourage residential form and scale that matches the existing and desired neighborhood character.	Short-term	X			X	

Objective 3.3: Revitalize at-risk and distressed neighborhoods.							
MEDIUM	Action 3.3A: Evaluate current zoning dimensional standards to address potential obstacles to modernizing aging housing.	Short-term	X		X	X	
	Action 3.3B: Address demolition by neglect.	Short-term	X			X	X
	Action 3.3C: Encourage home-ownership by publicizing local and regional programs.	Ongoing				X	Housing Authority
	Action 3.3D: Ensure that there are no local barriers to providing affordable and supportive housing to disadvantaged persons.	Ongoing				X	Housing Authority

Priority Level		Timeframe for Implementation	Action Required for Implementation					Potential Partners
			Regulatory Action (policy/ordinance)	Capital Project (\$\$ required)	Additional Plans/ Studies Required	Staff Time/Resources	Education/Outreach	
HIGH	Objective 3.4: Ensure that neighborhoods are well-served by parks, recreation and open space.	Short-term = 1-5 years; Long-term = 6-10 years; Ongoing = continuous						
	Action 3.4A: Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan to ensure that current and future recreation needs are being met.	Short-term	X		X	X	X	Parks and Recreation Board
	Action 3.4B: Connect Starvaggi Park to the surrounding neighborhoods via pedestrian/bicycle pathways.	Short-term		X				Parks and Recreation Board
	Action 3.4C: Create a greenway along Cove Road.	Long-term		X	X	X		Property owners
	Action 3.4D: Acquire riverfront property to offer public river access.	Long-term		X		X		Property owners
GOAL 4: Improve connectivity.								
HIGH	Objective 4.1: Increase the accessibility of neighborhoods and centers.							
	Action 4.1A: Support WV DOT efforts to redesign the Freedom Way / Birch Drive intersection.	Short-term		X	X			WV DOT, BHJ
	Action 4.1B: Work with the WV DOT to rehabilitate and reopen the Lee Avenue bridge.	Short-term		X	X			WV DOT, BHJ
	Action 4.1C: Work with the BHJ to include additional road improvements into the Long Range Plan and TIP.	Ongoing			X	X		WV DOT, BHJ
Objective 4.2: Enhance the active transportation and multimodal options within the City.								
LOW	Action 4.2A: Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance to ensure that roads accommodate all types of users.	Short-term	X				X	
	Action 4.2B: Extend the Panhandle Trail through the City of Weirton to connect to the Brooke Pioneer Trail	Long-term		X	X	X		Weirton Rail Trail Committee, Parks Board, BHJ

Priority Level		Timeframe for Implementation	Action Required for Implementation				Potential Partners
			Regulatory Action (policy/ordinance)	Capital Project (\$\$ required)	Additional Plans/ Studies Required	Staff Time/Resources	
LOW	Action 4.2C: Prepare a detailed sidewalk assessment and plan to prioritize areas to improve when funds become available.	Short-term = 1-5 years; Long-term = 6-10 years; Ongoing = continuous		X	X	X	
	Action 4.2D: Construct new park-and-ride lots.	Long-term		X	X		BHJ, Transit Authority
	Action 4.2E: Install bike racks on all buses and at public parks and spaces.	Short-term		X			Transit Authority
	Action 4.2F: Expand transit service.	Long-term					Transit Authority
Goal 5: Ensure that public services continue to meet the needs of current and future residents/businesses.							
HIGH	Objective 5.1: Implement sustainable policies and practices.						
	Action 5.1A: Implement sustainable future land use and development policies.	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	
	Action 5.1B: Update the City's Unified Development Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan.	Short-term	X		X	X	
MEDIUM	Action 5.1C: Incorporate environmental responsibility and sustainability into planning and public / private decision-making.	Ongoing	X			X	X
	Objective 5.2: Ensure that City Departments can operate efficiently and effectively.						
	Action 5.2A: Address capacity issues.	Ongoing		X		X	
	Action 5.2B: Upgrade infrastructure.	Ongoing		X	X	X	

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.

¹ www.nmtccoalition.org/progress-report

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.

Potential Funding Opportunities

Arts & Culture

- ArcelorMittal USA Inc. Corporate Giving Program
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- FirstEnergy Foundation
- GE Foundation
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Kroger Co Foundation
- Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- Starvaggi Charities, Inc.
- Schwab Charitable Fund
- Sophia Pipinos Charitable Trust
- Surdna Foundation, Inc.
- The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
- The Grainger Foundation, Inc.
- The Greater Washington Community Foundation
- The Pfizer Foundation, Inc.

Community & Economic Development

- Alcoa Foundation
- AmazonSmile Foundation
- Cisco Systems Foundation
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley, Inc.
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- John C. Williams Charitable Trust
- Kresge Foundation
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Inc.
- The Albert Schenk III & Kathleen H. Schenk Charitable Trust No. 1
- The Allstate Foundation
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- The JPMorgan Chase Foundation
- The Wal-Mart Foundation, Inc.
- Verizon Foundation
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Education

- ArcelorMittal USA Inc. Corporate Giving Program
- EQT Foundation, Inc.
- Starvaggi Charities, Inc.
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- The Wal-Mart Foundation, Inc.

Environment

- ArcelorMittal USA Inc. Corporate Giving Program
- Charles H. Douglas Charitable Trust
- Hugh I. Shott, Jr. Foundation Inc.
- The H. P. and Anne S. Hunnicutt Foundation, Inc.

Health & Human Services

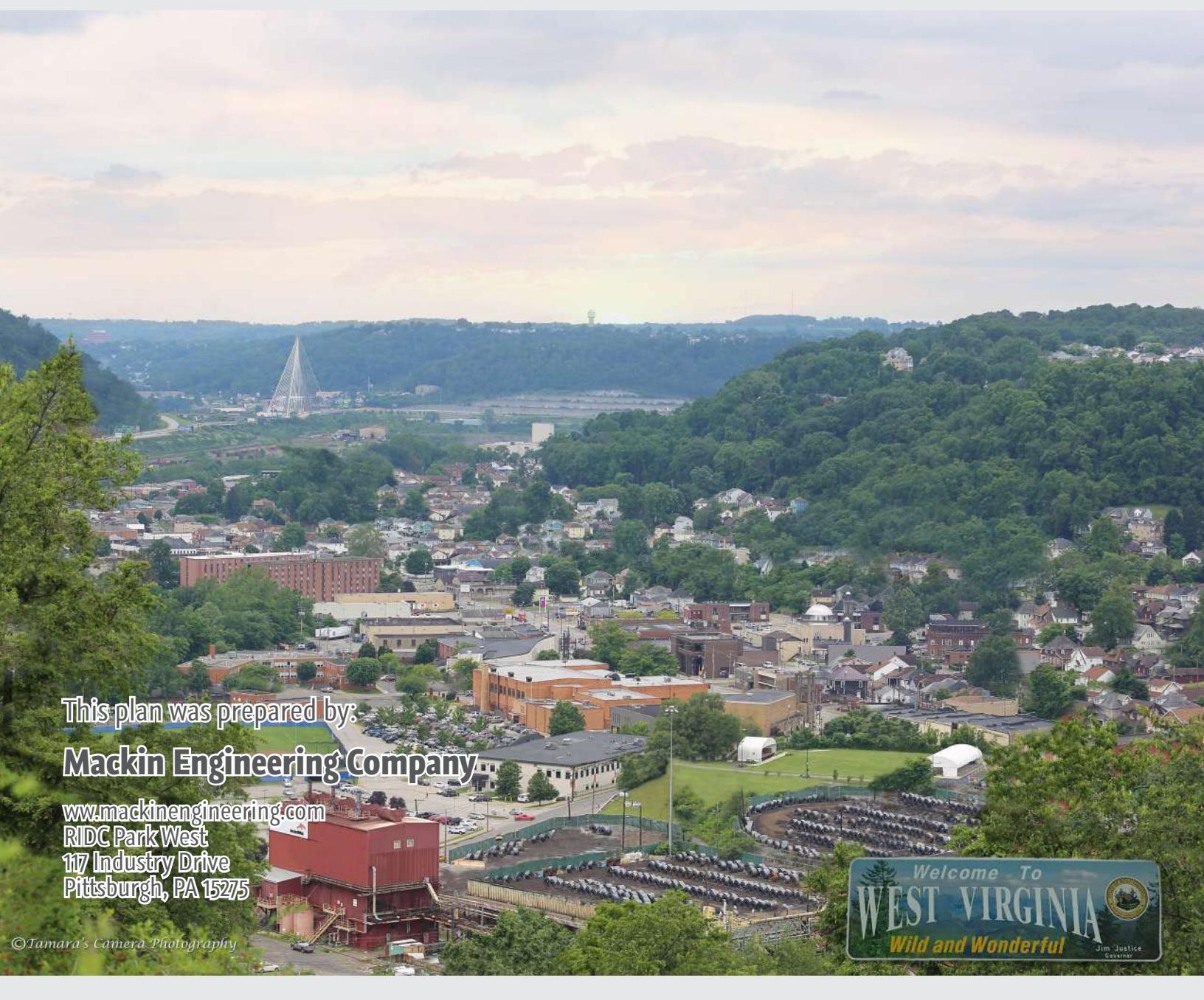
- ArcelorMittal USA Inc. Corporate Giving Program
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- Hugh I. Shott, Jr. Foundation Inc.
- John C. Williams Charitable Trust
- Starvaggi Charities, Inc.

Public Safety

- ArcelorMittal USA Inc. Corporate Giving Program
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- Hugh I. Shott, Jr. Foundation Inc.
- Starvaggi Charities, Inc.

Sports & Recreation

- Brickstreet Foundation, Inc.
- Bernard McDonough Foundation, Inc.
- Colcom Foundation
- George W. Bowers Family Charitable Trust
- Hugh I. Shott, Jr. Foundation Inc.
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- Starvaggi Charities, Inc.
- The Allstate Foundation
- The Grainger Foundation, Inc.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Wal-Mart Foundation, Inc.



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