

City of DeWitt

MASTER PLAN

May 2023 DRAFT FOR DISTRIBUTION

INSERT RESOLUTION

Acknowledgements

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Photo credit: City of DeWitt

1. Overview

Introduction

The City of DeWitt’s future land use decisions will have a fundamental impact on the character and quality of life in the community. In recent decades, there has been a large increase in the amount of residential growth in the region. Although the Michigan economy has slowed considerably, DeWitt and the surrounding area is expected to continue growing. This growth pressure is expected to continue to impact DeWitt, the DeWitt School District, and other public services during the life of this Master Plan and beyond.

This Master Plan is intended to continue the City’s efforts to protect and preserve qualities on which residents place great value while allowing the City to grow and prosper in a responsible manner.

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a document that pulls together the goals, desires, and vision of the community as they relate to land use. It acts as a “guide” for future land use decisions and provides a framework upon which the zoning ordinance, and any amendments, is based. The City of DeWitt Master Plan identifies and examines a wide range of physical issues including population, housing, public services, natural resources, traffic and circulation, utilities, and land use. The implications of each are analyzed and translated into a series of issues, goals, and recommendations for the City to follow. This effort

culminates in the creation of a Future Land Use Plan, which identifies what the future land uses should be for all areas of the City for the next 5-10 years. The Future Land Use Plan is the result of, and based upon, the entire Master planning effort.

Why Do We Need a Master Plan and What Will it Do?

In short, the Master Plan is a well-thought-out document that is intended to give long-term guidance on the daily land-use decisions. Land uses and individual land use cases change over time. People request variances or question whether the Zoning Ordinance allows them to conduct a particular activity on their land. The Master Plan is a resource that may be referenced as the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals or the City Council look to resolve questions relating to land use.

The Differences Between a Master Plan and a Zoning Ordinance

The Master Plan provides general direction on the future development patterns, policies, and actions for community leaders to consider. While the Master Plan does not change the Zoning Ordinance or zoning of any property, some of the plan recommendations will be implemented through text and map amendments. Some of the other differences between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance are listed in the table titled, “Master Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance.”

Table XX: Master Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance

Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general policies, a guide.	Provides specific regulations, the law.
Describes what should happen in the future – recommended land use for the next 10 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today.	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions.
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.	Deals only with development-related issues under City control.
Flexible to respond to changing conditions.	Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change.

How Will the Master Plan Be Used?

The City Council, the Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals will be the primary users of the Master Plan, using it as a guide in making land use decisions. Applicants seeking approval from any of these bodies will also find the Master Plan to be a valuable tool for understanding the long-term goals of the City. Other citizen committees may also use the Master Plan to assist them in their review of and land-use-related issues.

The Master Plan also acts as the starting point for all Zoning Ordinance updates and amendments. Michigan State law requires that the Zoning Ordinance and zoning amendments be based upon a Master Plan. The Master Plan gives a legal basis for zoning and identifies how the community is protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the population. If either the Zoning Ordinance or a decision of the Planning Commission or City Council is challenged in court, the Master Plan will help provide the planning rationale to support the land use regulation.

The City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the public should continuously reference the Master Plan in order to:

- » Review development proposals – to confirm any given proposal meets all goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
- » Review rezoning requests – to confirm the request is consistent with the City’s criteria to consider rezonings including existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, consistency with the goals and policies of the Master Plan, and potential impacts on the City.
- » Provide a basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and zoning map – to help realize and enforce plan goals.

- » Understand expectations for the future land use pattern and desired land use types in the community to guide new development and redevelopment.
- » Identify and recommend physical improvements to important resources such as roadways, streetscape and entryways, nonmotorized pathways, parks, and public facilities.
- » Provide specific design standards related to buildings, landscaping, and other site improvements for development and redevelopment throughout the community.

When Will the Master Plan Be Updated Again?

According to Michigan Law, Master Plans must be reviewed every five years. Amendments to the Plan may be made at that time or on a regular basis as changing conditions dictate. This Plan was adopted on **MONTH XX, 2023**; therefore, a statutory review of the Plan will be required no later than five years from the date of adoption.

The Future Land Use Plan, which is part of this Master Plan, may need to be updated more regularly as requests are made for changes in zoning designation. The correct way to deal with a request for such a change is to first examine the future land use designation to see if it matches the requested zoning classification. If it does not, then the Planning Commission should first consider whether conditions or circumstances have changed since the Master Plan was updated that dictate an amendment to the Future Land Use Plan. If conditions have not changed, then the request for a Master Plan amendment should be denied. Likewise, the request for a zone change should also be denied. All zoning actions should be based upon the direction of the Master Plan.



Cabin Fever Reliever
Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Downtown Ferris Wheel during the Ox Roast.
Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Santa Run during the Christmas Market.
Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Photo credit: City of DeWitt

2. Existing Conditions

Demographics & Housing

Population

Between 1990 and 2000, Dewitt experienced a large growth spurt, welcoming 738 new residents over the decade. Since 2000, when the last demographic update was completed for the City's Master Plan, the population has remained largely the same. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, the population has experienced a very slight increase over the past twenty years from 4,702 to 4,776 residents. However, between 2010 and 2020, Dewitt Township grew rapidly from 14,321 (2010 Table P1) to approximately 15,073, a gain of 752 residents. In that same period, Clinton County grew by about 3,900 residents (2010 & 2020 Decennial Census Count). Part of these population changes may be attributed to the sustained growth in Lansing, and its immediate adjacency to Dewitt Township.¹

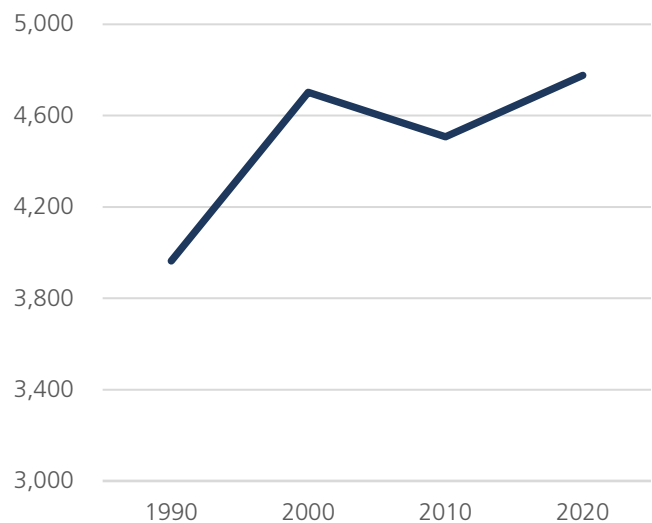
Age

In 2021, the median age in the city was 44.8 years compared to 35.4 years old in 2010 (S0101). The table "Life Stages, 2010-2021" demonstrates more clearly why the median age has risen – the largest percentage jump was among seniors, and the largest declines were among children and young adults. When looking at the projections for 2025, even greater change is seen at each end of the age spectrum: a steadied reduction of children and a quicker rise in seniors. If the projections are correct, then the senior population would more than double in just 15 years. Another consideration for an aging community is that disabled persons are concentrated among the senior age cohort. In DeWitt, 9.1% of the residents have a physical or mental disability, and nearly one-third are among people aged 65 years or older. Aging communities are a common trend in Michigan, and if it is not balanced by other life stages, can have implications for how to plan for housing and services tailored to seniors.

Households

As of 2021, there were 1,855 households, 72.4% of which were considered families. While Dewitt remains a family-kind-of-town, the percentage of family households has shrunk since 2000

Figure XX: Population Change, 1990-2020



Source: 2010 Master Plan, 2020 Census

Table XX: Life Stages, 2010 - 2021

Life Stages	2010	2021	2025
Children (19 and younger)	31.5%	22.1%	22.5%
Young adults (20s)	12.8%	12.0%	10.0%
Family formation (30-44)	19.1%	16.2%	20.8%
Empty nesters (45-64)	27.7%	31.9%	25.4%
Seniors (65+)	8.8%	17.7%	21.2%

ACS 5- Year Estimates S0101, ESRI Report "Age by Sex Profile"

Family Household: A householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Nonfamily Household: A householder living alone, or where the householder shares the home with people to whom he/she is not related.

Table XX: Household Composition, 2021

Type of Household	Dewitt	Clinton County	Michigan	U.S.
Total households	1,855	30,835	3,976,729	124,010,992
Family households with children under the age of 18	28.4%	28.3%	25.4%	27.2%
Family households	72.4%	68.1%	63.4%	65.1%
Married couple families	60.7%	55.1%	46.8%	47.8%
Single parent	11.7%	13.0%	16.6%	17.3%
Nonfamilies	27.6%	31.9%	36.6%	34.9%
Householders living alone	21.5%	24.4%	29.9%	28.1%
Living alone over age 65	8.3%	10.5%	12.3%	11.2%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table XX: Socioeconomic Indicators, 2021

Indicator	Dewitt	Clinton County	Michigan	U.S.
Education				
High school graduate (equivalency)	97.4%	95.3%	91.6%	88.9%
Bachelor's degree	28.1%	20.6%	18.6%	20.6%
Advanced degree	18.3%	12.0%	12.0%	13.1%
Income				
Median household income	\$90,382	\$76,161	\$63,202	\$69,021
Median family income	\$109,438	\$92,900	\$80,365	\$85,028
Poverty				
All people	2.1%	8.5%	13.3%	12.6%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

when families comprised 80.5% of households. This rise of nonfamily households is occurring nationwide. Nonfamily households, defined as unrelated roommates and persons living alone, are growing for several reasons: delayed marriage, longer lifespans, and a need to share housing costs with others. The average household size was 2.7 persons, and the average family size was 3.1 persons, showing practically no change since 2010. The trend was likely already in motion for families; in 1990, an average family size was 3.35 persons, and the change is consistent with an increase in nonfamily households.

Education and Income

Education and income are highly correlated. For the population over the age of 25, 97.4% graduated high school, 46.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 18.3% have an advanced degree (2021 DP02). Compared to 2000, the level of educational attainment has climbed by noticeable margins. Likely as a result, the median household income is \$90,382 and the median family income is \$109,438 (2021 DP03), representing a rise of about \$30,000 and \$27,000, respectively, in 18 years. While these increases represent modest increases on an annual basis, it shows consistent income growth. When compared to Clinton County, Dewitt's median

household and family income is nearly \$14,000 and \$16,000 higher, respectively. Correspondingly, 2.1% of the population live under the poverty rate, a significant drop from 2000 when it was 4.3%.

Housing

According to the City Assessor, there are a total of 1,622 residential units in DeWitt. The percentage of single-family units remains high at 78.6%, indicating that almost all new housing development took this format. In 2020, an “age in place” center was developed that offers independent living for seniors in duplexes and multi-family units with memory care assistance, which would not yet be reflected in census figures. Aside from single-family housing, the remaining units are spread amongst single-attached units, duplexes, triplex and quadplex, and buildings that range from 5 to 19 units.

Housing Supply and Demand

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) released a report in 2019 that analyzed the housing markets by region. Dewitt belongs to the southcentral region with Clinton, Ingham, and Eaton counties. It found that the region is not ready for the growth it is experiencing due to a lack of housing stock. It is expected that between 2020 and 2025, households in the region are expected to grow by 3% (the largest growth expected to come from seniors followed by age group 35-44)² – to match that growth, new housing construction is needed, but in previous years could not keep pace. For example, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of housing units grew by 1,119, a 1% change,³ and the population grew by 9,961 during that time, or 2% (2011 & 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates). On top of that, 1,200 units had been removed from the housing market as they are used for second homes, vacation homes, or housing for migratory workers, and another 6,857 were vacant.⁴ This leaves a major gap in housing supply, and amps up demand for the remaining units.

Using data from the Multiple Listing Service, the MSHDA report found a strong market for single-family homes and condominiums. The demands for these housing types is evidenced by a drop in the median days on the market, despite the median sales price rising between 2012 and 2018.⁵ During this period, the construction of new single-family

Table XX: Single Family and Condominium Demand

Tri County Region	Changes 2012- 2018
Single Family	
Average # annual sales	9,882
Sales price	Increased 50%
Days on market	Decreased by 41%
Average size	2,200 sq ft
Condominiums	
Average # annual sales	962
Sales price	Increased by 25%
Days on market	Decreased by 51%
Average size	1,500 sq ft

Source: MSHDA

homes slowed (-33%) while the construction of new condominiums rose (617%), indicating growing demand for smaller units.⁶ MSHDA's report also found that newer homes sold for 34% more than units built between 1970 and 1990,⁷ showing both the premium on newer homes and the higher cost of new construction.

In DeWitt, during a three-year period (October 2017 – October 2020), 271 homes were sold for an average sales price of \$223,861. Interestingly, the average home sold in that time period was built in 1964. Reflective of this time period, the median floor area is just under 1,600 square feet, and the average floor area is about 1,658 square feet, indicating that about half of the homes purchased are closer to the “starter home” size. In Dewitt, the size of a home and its sales price are highly, positively correlated: the bigger the home, the greater the sales price. This is not always true in urban settings where a condominium downtown could outsell a larger home on the periphery – a recipe for sprawl.

Housing Cost and Cost Burden

The median housing value in DeWitt is \$220,000, over \$20,000 more than Clinton County. Despite higher incomes and higher housing values, there are still 9.6% of homeowners who spend more than 30% of their income on their mortgage. By Housing and Urban Development standards, this would constitute a “cost-burdened” household.

Table XX: Housing Indicators, 2021

Housing	Dewitt	Clinton County	Michigan	U.S.
Cost-burden				
Homeowners	9.6%	15.8%	24.3%	22.0%
Renters	33.4%	42.6%	48.7%	49.4%
Housing Value				
Median housing value	\$220,000	\$197,400	\$172,100	\$244,900
Median gross rent	\$918	\$906	\$946	\$1,163
Tenure				
Owner-occupied	78.2%	81.7%	72.2%	64.6%
Renter-occupied	21.8%	18.3%	27.8%	35.4%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Cost-burden is even higher among the 21% of renters in Dewitt; about 33.4% of renters are “overpaying” for housing, relative to their income.

With shrinking household sizes, an aging population, and considerable cost-burdened housing, homes no longer need to have such a large footprint. In 2018, this was finally reflected in the average size of new construction as a reduction of about 110 square feet (2,689 to 2,576); as the production of smaller units increases, the average home size drops.⁸ With that comes the benefits of a smaller unit that can bring down costs and provide a greater variety of housing types for young professionals, empty nesters, and seniors.

Connection to Demographics

- » An aging population indicates that senior housing is needed, and greater attention should be paid to universal design.
- » New construction housing could induce population growth – a greater variety of housing types and price points are needed, while maintaining single-family homes as the dominate housing type.

Sources

- 1 Lacy, Eric. Lansing State Journal. “Census: Lansing’s Population Grows for Eighth Straight Year, Hits Highest Point Since 2005.” May 23 2019. <https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/news/2019/05/23/us-census-lansing-michigan-population-growing/1206488001/>
- 2 Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. “Companion Report: Key Trends and Measures by Prosperity Region.” March 2019. Page 200
- 3 Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. “Companion Report: Key Trends and Measures by Prosperity Region.” March 2019. Page 206
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- 5 Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. “Companion Report: Key Trends and Measures by Prosperity Region.” March 2019. Page 210
- 6 Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. “Companion Report: Key Trends and Measures by Prosperity Region.” March 2019. Page 218
- 7 Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. “Companion Report: Key Trends and Measures by Prosperity Region.” March 2019. Page 210
- 8 Shanesy, Lauren. “Here’s What Home Buyers Want in 2019.” February 22, 2019 https://www.builderonline.com/design/consumer-trends/heres-what-home-buyers-want-in-2019_o

Natural Features

Introduction

All elements of a city may be classified as the built environment or the natural environment. The quality of their interaction, for example, tree-lined streets, riverfront access, and open space illustrate how the integration of city and nature is necessary for creating desirable places to live. On a more fundamental level, the union of these two elements must be carefully considered to protect residents' health, safety, and welfare, meaning that development permitted in the city limits should also consider natural features protection and preservation.

Water

The City of DeWitt is located within the Looking Glass River Watershed that goes on to cover 309 square miles and eventually drains into Lake Michigan.¹ The Looking Glass River, the 71-mile centerpiece of the watershed that runs through the center of the city, brings with it the rewards and risks of any waterbody: easy access to water and recreation, and greater chances of flooding. Rivers are encased in a floodway, a 1% annual flood hazard, and usually a 0.2% annual flood hazard. There are currently 206 parcels within both the floodway and 1% annual flood hazard as a result of denser parcels concentrated along the river. However, due to their heightened risk of flooding, these parcels are protected by the additional regulations and a permitting process. Moreover, parcels adjacent to the river have a required 25-foot

natural feature setback from the ordinary high-water mark that has adequately buffered structures from damage post-storm.

The extent of the floodway and the 1% annual flood hazard are based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) estimates of the likelihood an area is to flood – 1% refers to an area having a chance of flooding once in 100 years. These estimates are based on historic data and therefore do not include up-to-date climate patterns that call for more frequent and intense storms. Recent research has found that these estimates have greatly undercounted the number of parcels at risk of flood, and that incidents of flooding are projected to get worse by 2050. The updated model examined each county in the nation and found that in Clinton County, the percent change in the number of properties affected by flooding between 2020 and 2050 is expected to see a 49.7% increase.² It is becoming increasingly true that to avoid catastrophic effects of flooding, cities would need to exceed state and federal standards.

There are ways that developed areas can mitigate the impacts of heavy precipitation. Regional cooperation is the first step. The City of DeWitt is a member of the Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management (GLRC), a committee that guides implementation of the stormwater program for participating communities within the Grand River, Red Cedar River, and Looking Glass Watershed.



Riverside Bridge

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Because DeWitt falls into the Looking Glass Watershed, best management practices would dictate that its natural resource goals should align with the 2008 Watershed Management Plan (WMP). Some of the biggest findings from the WMP were translated into goals for the region: reduce the impacts of nonpoint source pollution, protect wetlands, protect groundwater, and improve recreational opportunities in the watershed (while not degrading its integrity).

DeWitt's Zoning Ordinance includes a section on stormwater management with standards reviewed by a qualified engineer prior to development approval. Because the standards require onsite retention, they help to reduce runoff and nonpoint source pollution from entering water bodies. Building practices, such as pervious pavement, bioswales, and rain barrels can significantly reduce runoff, and should be practices required in the Zoning Ordinance where feasible or impactful. Secondly, the subdivision ordinance has a clause that prevents areas prone to flood from being platted as determined by the Planning Commission.³ Additionally, public investment in vegetation along riparian corridors helps to stabilize the shoreline and filter runoff to keep water quality high.

Some areas for improvement for stormwater management were mentioned in the 2008 WMP: 50% of the city has storm drainage; open ditches and natural flow patterns are used in the remainder.

Soils & Topography

Soil type and topography are important factors for determining development potential. Fortunately, in both cases, neither are substantial hinderances to development in DeWitt. The city's soil types are primarily loam and sandy loam and their capacity to drain ranges from somewhat poor to well drained sands. Between the two soils, they account for nearly 94% of the city's soil profile which indicates that soil is not a hugely limiting factor for development. Conversely, development has an impact on soil, most commonly in the form of erosion, or the degradation of topsoil over time from water, wind, and mass movement. The Clinton County Building Department claims that for every acre under construction, over a dump truck of soil finds its way into a county drain if erosion controls are not in effect. For that reason, soil

erosion control measures are embedded in the site plan review process but managed by the County through a permitting process. A permit is required generally with earth change within 500 feet of a lake, stream, or regulated wetland and for parcels larger than an acre.⁴

DeWitt is not marked by steep gradients. According to Clinton County, DeWitt does not see more than 50 feet of grade change throughout the city. It sits at 800 to 850 ft above sea level, and the gentle landscape is amenable to different development types.

Wetlands & Woodlands

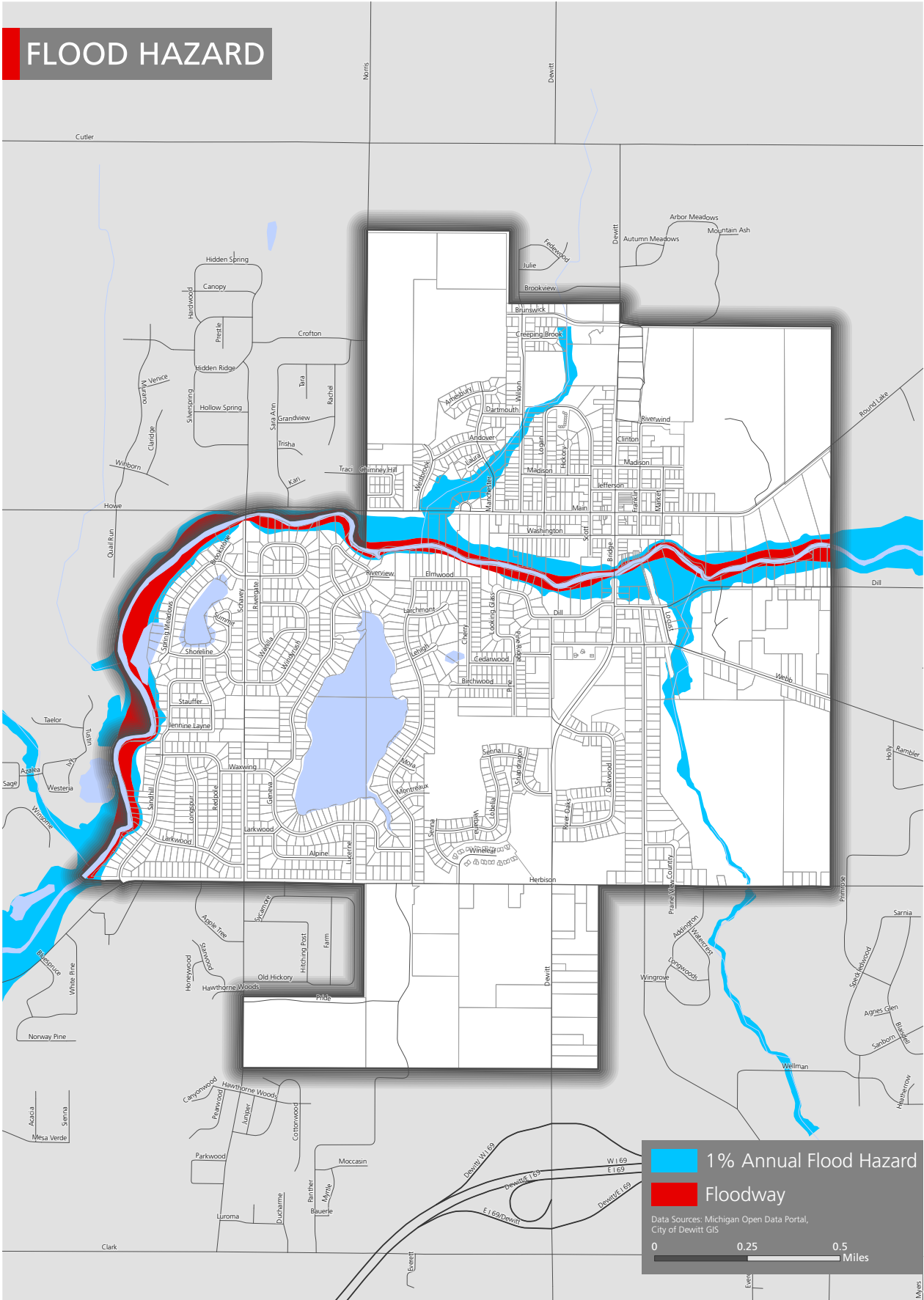
Wetlands are a vital part of stormwater management as they are nature's sponge that absorbs excess stormwater. According to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), DeWitt does not have a wetland ordinance on file with the state agency. Generally, EGLE regulates wetlands that are 5 acres or greater that are located within 500 feet or connected to a lake, pond, stream, or river. While many of DeWitt's wetlands are adjacent to water, there are 25 wetlands that are less than five acres and could use additional protection through a local ordinance.

DeWitt's woodlands are scattered throughout the city mostly as deciduous stands and often near wetlands. The city has been designated a Tree City by the National Arbor Day Foundation for seventeen years. To be awarded this title, a city must meet four standards:

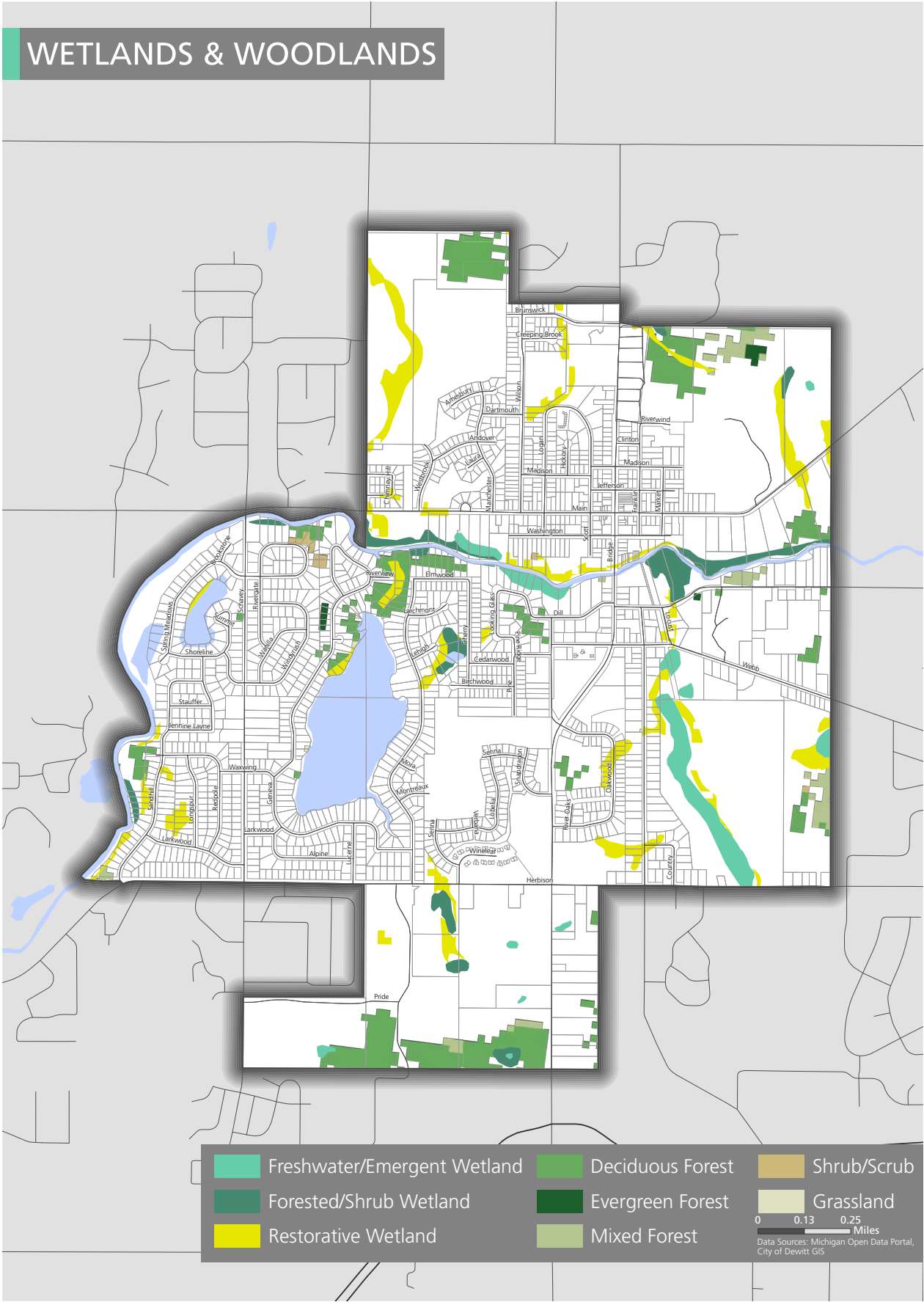
- » Have a tree board or department
- » Have a tree care ordinance
- » A comprehensive community forestry program
- » Observe Arbor Day

Having said that, only about 5% of the land is wooded. The integration of more trees into the landscape is exceedingly beneficial in not only beautification but in terms of habitat restoration and stormwater management. Rain gardens, planter boxes, green roofs, and tree canopy that break up impervious surfaces are ways to create a fertile ground for specie replenishment and reducing instances of flooding in hardscaped areas. When applicable, such standards can be applied and enforced through the Zoning Ordinance.

Map XX: Flood Hazard



Map XX: Wetlands & Woodlands



LEED Neighborhoods

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, known as LEED, is a framework designed to measure the sustainability and performance of a building. More recently LEED has developed a neighborhood development (LEED ND) guide as a more holistic approach to fighting our environmental challenges at a larger scale. Because the world is only expected to become more urbanized, there must be green interventions to ensure that we are protecting the resources we rely on. LEED's guidelines can be used as incentives through the Zoning Ordinance to encourage the major more sustainable development. In the LEED ND rating system, the major prerequisites and credits are categorized as Smart Location and Linkage (SLL), Neighborhood Pattern and Design (NPD), and Green Infrastructure and Buildings (GIB).⁵ These three criteria combined express the power of smart land use and design on mitigating our impact on the environment.

- » SLL (where to build) – The intent is to encourage development within and near existing communities and public transit infrastructure, to encourage improvement

and redevelopment of existing cities while limiting the development footprint in the region, to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle distance traveled, and to reduce the incidence of obesity, heart disease, and hypertension through daily physical activity associated with walking and bicycling.

- » NPD (what to build) – The intent is to make efficient use of land to curb suburban sprawl, which consumes and fragments the rural landscape along with watersheds, wildlife habitat, and prime farmland, to mix land uses, to provide a wide range of housing, and design spaces for a variety of ages and abilities, to build walkable and bikeable streets with reduced surface parking lots to reduce car dependency, and to provide access to green and open space.
- » GIB (how to manage environmental impacts) – The intent is to encourage green buildings that are water-efficient, well landscaped for stormwater management, featured as much reused materials as possible, prevent pollution during construction, mitigate the heat island effect, maximize wind and solar energy through building orientation, and use renewable energy sources.

Sources

- 1 Mywatersheds.org. "Everyone Lives in a Watershed. Find Yours." <https://www.mywatersheds.org/find-my-watershed>
- 2 USA Today. "Millions Think They're Safe from Flood Waters. They Aren't." June 29 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2020/06/29/real-estate-millions-more-homes-risk-flood-might-need-insurance/3217450001/>
- 3 DeWitt. City ordinances. Chapter 38 Land Division. Section 38-175.
- 4 Clinton County Building Department. Clinton County Soil and Erosion Control Ordinance. Accessed August 19 2021. <https://www.clinton-county.org/DocumentCenter/View/95/Soil-Erosion-and-Sedimentation-Ordinance-PDF?bidId=>
- 5 U.S Green Building Council. "A Citizen's Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development: How to Tell if Development is Smart and Green." https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/citizens_guide_LEED-ND.pdf

Community Facilities & Services

Community facilities and services may not be top of mind for residents selecting a place to live, but the physical and social infrastructure of a city keeps DeWitt a fun and functional place to live. It is the balance of high-quality essential services like water and sewer, and the beautiful open spaces to recreate that allow residents to live here comfortably.

Municipal Water

Approximately one-half of the city is provided with municipal water services. The city's municipal water system dates to the early 1970s when the first water mains were first installed. Since then, the system has been expanded through either private development with residential subdivisions or through projects undertaken by the city.

In 2000, the City of DeWitt and DeWitt Charter Township entered into a cooperative agreement with the Lansing Board of Water and Light (BWL) to provide conditioned and fluoridated water to the residents. Although the City of DeWitt owns the municipal water mains and hydrants located in the city, the BWL is responsible for operating and maintaining the municipal water system. The water from the BWL comes from the Saginaw Aquifer, one of the finest natural sources of groundwater ever discovered.¹ However, the aquifer is susceptible to contamination from human activity.

BWL Fast Facts

125 wells ~400 ft deep

2 water conditioning plants

166,000 population served

40,450 wholesale population served

834 miles of water mains

19.2 million gallons per day average use

Sewer

Most of the City is provided with municipal sanitary sewer services. The City's original sanitary sewer system was constructed in the 1960's. Sanitary sewage generated in the City is treated at the Clean Water Plant, which is operated by the Southern Clinton County Municipal Utilities Authority (SCCMUA). SCCMUA was formed by the City of DeWitt, the City of Bath, DeWitt Charter Township, and Watertown Charter Township to address the need for a regional wastewater treatment plant. The Clean Water Plant can treat up to 5,000,000 gallons of sanitary sewage a day, and the city owns approximately 12% of the treatment capacity in the Clean Water Plant.

SCCMUA discharges into the Looking Glass River in Clinton County and maintains a current National Pollutant Discharge Eliminating System permit. The operation of SCCMUA is governed by a ten-member Board of Commissioners comprised of individuals representing the four constituent municipalities with one representative from the city.

Community Services

Public Safety

- » The DeWitt Police Department includes six full-time sworn officers.
- » The DeWitt Area Emergency Services Authority (DAESA) is responsible for delivering fire and emergency medical services to residents of the City of DeWitt, Olive Township, and Riley Township.

Public Services

The Department of Public Services is comprised of five staff and is responsible for a wide range of services including the cemetery, roads, parks grounds and facilities, streets, and yard waste.

Parks and Recreation

DeWitt has five parks with the following amenities:

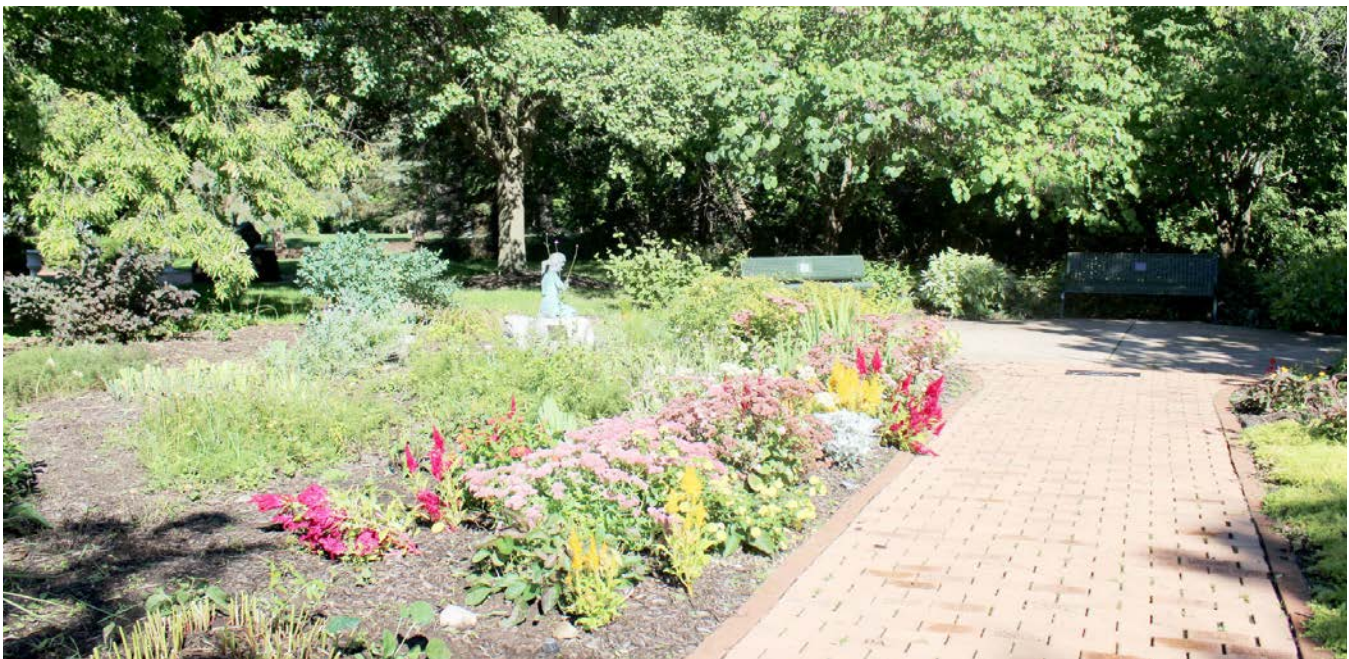
- » Memorial Park – gazebo
- » Riverside Park – pavilion, restrooms, picnic tables, BBQ grills, play structure, universally accessible playground, canoe launch
- » River Trail Park – pavilion, restrooms, picnic tables, BBQ grill, play structure
- » McGuire Park – pavilions, restrooms, picnic tables, BBQ grills, play structures
- » Sports Park – pavilion, restrooms, picnic tables, BBQ grill, play structures, soccer field, softball fields.
- » Community Room – located in City Hall, a versatile recreation room for classes, events, and socializing

In a joint effort with DeWitt Charter Township, the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA) formed in 2003 and is responsible for delivering recreation programs while the City continues to maintain its parks. As a part of this partnership, DARA and the City of DeWitt are coordinating senior services at the new Community Room.



All Kids Playground

Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Path in Cemetery

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Source

- 1 Lansing Board of Water and Light. 2019 Annual Water Quality Report. <https://www.lbwl.com/sites/default/files/documents/2020-05/wqr2020.pdf>

Transportation

Introduction

By car, DeWitt is easily accessible in the region due to its proximity to Lansing and the supporting infrastructure built to connect the capital region. The city is a short trip to I-69 that connects to I-96 and US-127, both which span the entire state, east to west, and north to south, respectively. Within the region, DeWitt residents have the option to avoid the highway system to get to Lansing or the Capital Region International Airport as there are connective thoroughfares that provide direct routes to both locations. In a short amount of time, DeWitt can access an employment-, entertainment-, and retail-rich region.

National Functional Classification and Road Ownership

The National Functional Classification is a system created by the United State Department of Transportation. The road designations determine if a road is eligible for federal funds. In DeWitt, minor arterials and major collectors are eligible for federal funding.

Along arterials and collector roads, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) is recorded by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The most heavily transited road, DeWitt Road, connects

I-69 to the downtown, carrying on average 7,415 vehicles daily. → On top of that, another 3,647 (from west to east) vehicles pass through Main Street daily for an estimated 11,000 vehicles passing through the downtown. This type of exposure to downtown is a boon for businesses, as it represents a far greater vehicle total than the city’s population as potential clientele. Local and private roads often do not keep track of roads counts as they generally only serve the households on those roads.

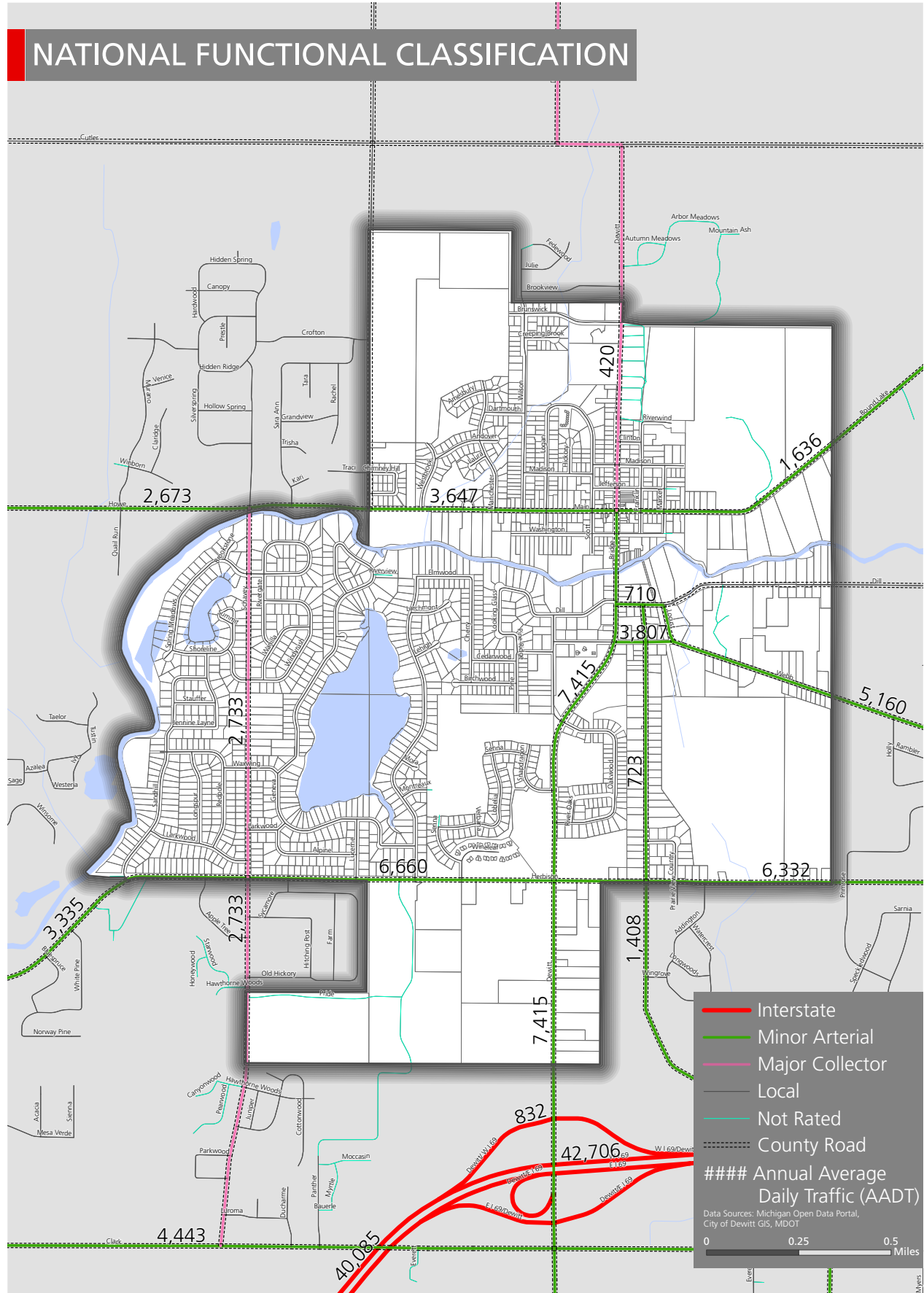
Road Condition

The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System, known as PASER, is a widely used system for visually rating the surface condition of roads on a scale of 1 to 10. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) uses the system to rate both federal-aid eligible and noneligible roads but does not rate local roads or “not a certified public road.” In this case, the unrated roads are likely private subdivision roads that are maintained separately. The majority of roads in DeWitt are in fair or good condition. In several instances, the roads do not belong to the city, but rather are maintained by Clinton County. In those instances, the city is not responsible for their upkeep but can work with the county for the timing and extent of repairs needed. The PASER map is a tool for determining when and where road repairs should occur; generally

Table XX: Road Classifications

Road Classification		Description	Roads in DeWitt
Eligible for federal funds	Minor arterial	Provide important roadway links to major activity areas; primary function is to move traffic between neighborhoods, employment, and shopping	Herbison Rd, DeWitt Dr, Webb Dr, Locust St, Bridge St, Turner Rd, Main St
	Major collector	Serve to gather traffic from local roads (and subdivision streets) and deliver to arterial roads. Collectors provide access to abutting properties.	N. Bridge St, Schavey Rd
Not eligible	Local streets	Primarily provide access to individual properties and access; generally short and connect to collector streets	Franklin St, Market St, Cherry St

Map XX: National Functional Classification



Map XX: PASER

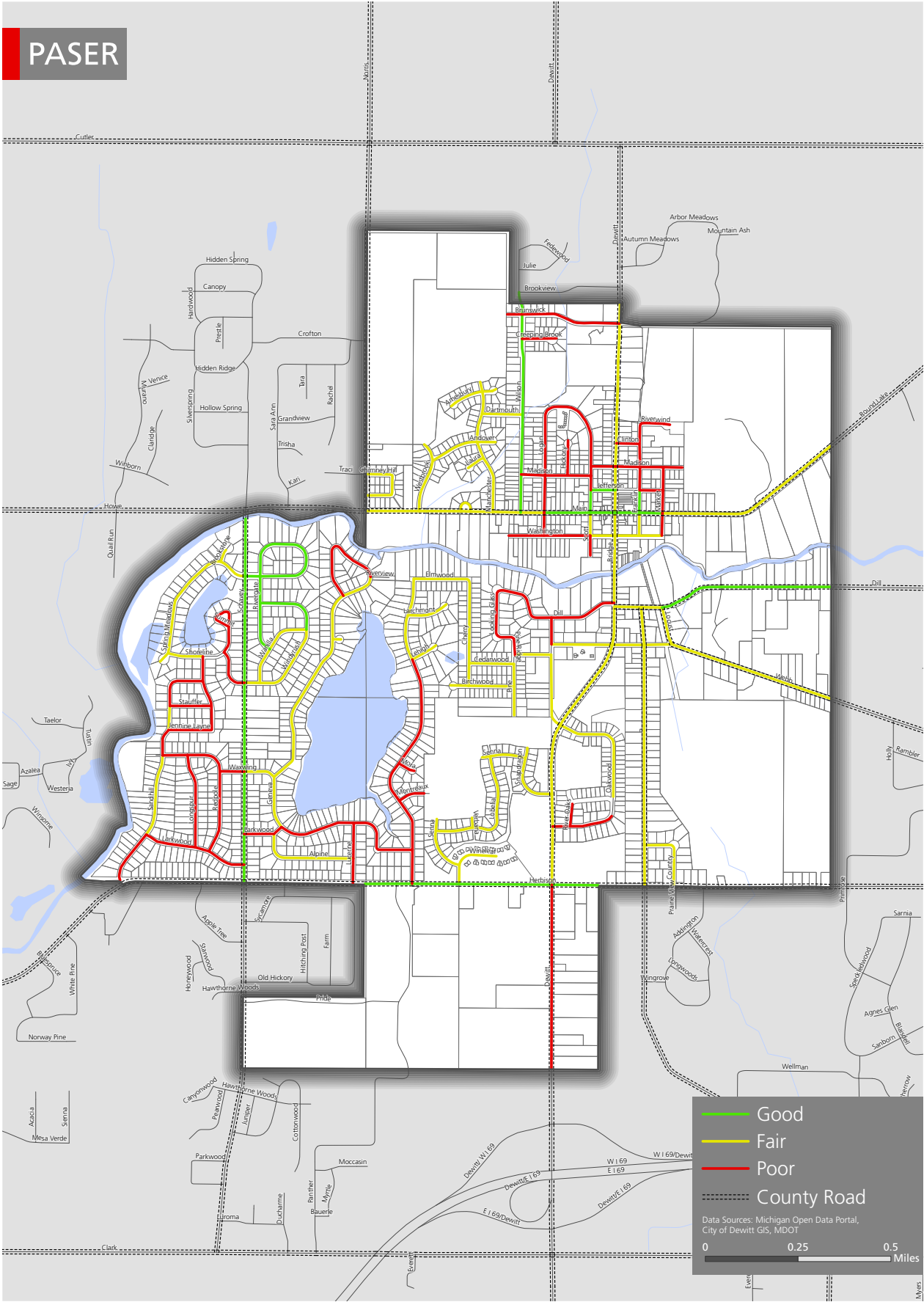


Table XX: Road Conditions

Condition	Length (ft)	% of Road
Good	20,986	14%
Fair	60,645	41%
Poor	40,341	27%
Unrated	26,068	18%

Source: PASER (MDOT)

the worse condition a road is in, then the more expensive it is to repair. Therefore, a goal should be to not allow any roads to fall into poor condition which requires a robust database of road conditions and ample funding.

In a region as developed as the tri-county, transportation planning is best done at a larger scale so that it is coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission has created a Transportation Improvement Program scheduled between 2020 to 2023. During that period, a segment of DeWitt Road and the western portion of Herbison Road are scheduled to be improved.¹

Nonmotorized Network

In 1998, the City of DeWitt Planning Commission adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathway System Plan that it is still uses to implement projects today. The plan assists the city in determining how public funds available for nonmotorized transportation should be used. Based on community engagement and an inventory of conditions, a map was created that shows the locations for primary and secondary priorities for improvement (excluding the downtown). Since then, five miles of bicycle and pedestrian pathways have been installed with a remaining two to go. Between 2010 and 2019, there have been zero reported crashes with a pedestrian or bicyclist.²

Nonmotorized paths are integral to transportation planning. Often, they have been thought of in terms of recreation, and rarely as a means to arrive to a destination, yet nonmotorized travel, when well-planned and well maintained, takes cars off the road, offers greater choice in travel, and serve as a form of exercise. Investment in sidewalks, bicycle paths, and multi-use paths is a win win.

Commuting

There has been little change in modes of commuting since 2010. Then, approximately 90% of the workforce commuted by driving alone, and in 2018, about 91.5% commuted this way. It was reported in 2018 that 1.5% of workers aged 16 years and older worked from home. With the arrival of COVID-19 forcing many to work from home in 2020, and the long-term implications still unknown, it is difficult to say with a degree of certainty how this figure will change. It is likely this number will be significantly higher than previous decades, and that working from homes remains status quo even after the virus is controlled. Some predictions estimate that up to one in six workers will work from home at least two days a week.³ If that were the case, then 10 times more workers will be spending part of the week in DeWitt than just two years ago.

As of 2018, the census application “on the map” estimates that about one-third of workers commute to Lansing and East Lansing. With residents working from home more often, the barrier between business that residents routinely commute to near their place of employment and the business down the street from their house, may be removed. It remains to be seen if residents staying local more often could have a positive impact on downtown businesses as their access to bigger markets is diminished. This change is worth monitoring the impacts on the local economy.

Another possible positive impact is that residents can reduce the amount of their income spent on transportation costs. Despite high median household incomes, residents are spending on average between 22-29% of their income on transportation (car payment, insurance, maintenance, parking), driving on average 23,187 miles annually, when the recommendation is not to exceed 15%.⁴

Public Transit

The County provides the only public transportation provided in DeWitt. Known as the “Blue Bus,” it is a publicly funding, curb to curb, fully accessible, demand response service with no fixed schedule or routes. Their ridership for 2019 reported the following break down for reasons for trip taking, showing the importance of this service for residents without vehicles to perform essential tasks:

- » 30% Shopping/Errands
- » 23% Employment
- » 23% School/Training
- » 13% Medical
- » 11% Recreation⁵

The Future of Mobility

The rise of car sharing, electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicles (AVs) is predicted to change mobility in several ways. First, it is anticipated that car ownership will shift from privately owned to shared mobility – the most extreme predictions anticipate a “car free” generation within the next twenty years. If fewer people own vehicles and have access to on demand pick-ups and drop-offs – do cities need as much dedicated parking? The reduction of space dedicated to parking has been reimagined as lanes of drop off and pick zones, or in instances of larger surface lots, transformed into other development, mobility hubs, or public open space.

Secondly, the infrastructure that accommodates cars will likely change – because AVs are expected to be smaller in size and driven more precisely, travel lanes can be narrowed. As vehicles themselves transition to electric models, a vast network of electric charging stations will be needed to fuel travel. Currently, Michigan offers 480 publicly accessible charge stations that offer 1,400 charging outlets, in addition to 146 private charge stations.⁶ With fewer cars on the road, less

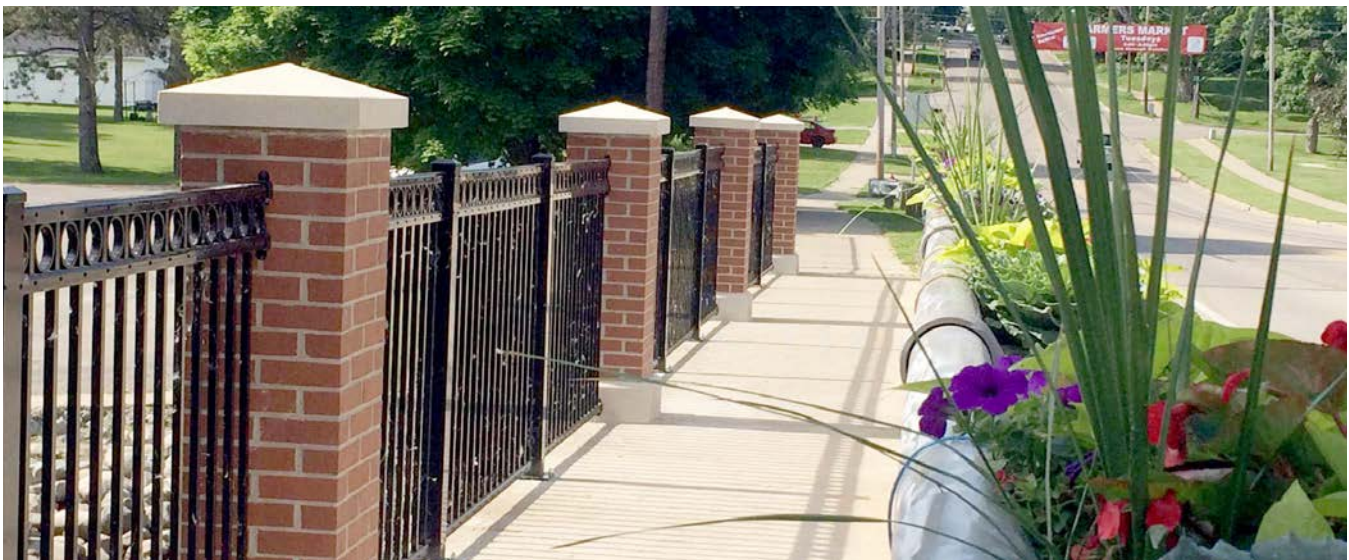
Mobility Hubs

Places of connectivity where different travel options come together: walking, biking, transit, and shared mobility. The hub provides an integrated suite of mobility services, amenities, and supporting technology to connect high-frequency transit to an individual’s origin of destination.

Source: SANDAG

right-of-way can be dedicated to vehicles. This will allow more space to be shared with bicycle and pedestrian networks. AVs will be equipped to communicate with others to improve traffic flow and intersection efficiency. This will allow users to do other things while the AV navigates to destinations, meaning that signage and signalization designed to direct humans may no longer needed to direct AVs.⁷

It is incumbent upon DeWitt, and cities across the country, to monitor how this new technology develops and that it works with the Tri County Regional Planning Commission to coordinate a plan and regional rollout of any infrastructure or ordinance updates to accommodate this new form of mobility. As the city monitors these changes, it will need to consider changes to parking formulas, signage, and provisions for electric charging.



Bridge Walk

Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Source: American Planning Association

Sources

- 1 Tri County Regional Planning Commission. 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program Projects. <https://mitcrpc.app.box.com/s/6k1mwetlwgo48m0o6s1u0682pk68su5j>
- 2 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts. Data Query Tool. <https://www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/querytool#q1;0;01012010-12312019;c1939;0,76:5>
- 3 Thompson, Derek. The Atlantic. "The Workforce is About to Change Dramatically." August 6 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/08/just-small-shift-remote-work-could-change-everything/614980/>
- 4 Center for Neighborhood Technology. Housing and Transportation Index. <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=42.842256&lng=-84.56914870000001&focus=place&gid=11878#fs>
- 5 Clinton Transit. FAQ. <http://clintontransit.com/millage-faq/> Accessed September 2021.
- 6 The Office of Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "Governor Whitmer Announces Grants for 88 Electric Vehicle Charging Site to Expand Statewide Network." May 7 2021. https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90640-558822--,00.html
- 7 American Planning Association. "Here Come the Robot Cars." April 2017. <https://www.planning.org/planning/2017/apr/robotcars/>

Economic Development

Introduction

Economic development can be a challenging part of community planning as local markets depend on regional, state, and national economic policy. Many aspects of economic development are outside of a city's control, for example, employer's wages and benefits, national investment in infrastructure, and educational institutions' training and curricula to name a few. In a Master Plan, economic development focuses on employment composition and residents' spending habits to determine suitable land uses and businesses for DeWitt's market. In the city, downtown is the primary focus area for commercial change and will be the focus for recommendations.

Employment Composition

Over the nine-year period between 2010 to 2019, there have been a few noticeable changes in employment sector growth. To start, DeWitt is well situated for job access, according to the Tri County

Regional Planning Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as the capital region ranks two out of ten Michigan regions for labor force growth and GDP growth. The leading industries in the capital region are:

- » Education
- » Manufacturing
- » Insurance
- » Health care
- » Government¹

The table titled "Employment Sectors for DeWitt Residents, 2010-2019" shows that in 2019, DeWitt's residents worked in "education, health care, and social assistance" and in "professional and management services" at a greater proportion of the population than in 2010. When comparing DeWitt residents to the region, there is some clear overlap in the areas of finance, health care, and scientific services. This is to say that DeWitt is generally moving in the same direction as the

Table XX: Employment Sectors for DeWitt Residents, 2010-2019

Employment Sector	% 2010	% 2019	% Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	0.8	1.3*	62.5
Construction	6.3	3.1*	- 50.0
Manufacturing	10.6	11.5	0.08
Wholesale trade	1.0	3.2*	220.0
Retail trade	12.5	4.5*	- 64.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.3	3.0*	- 0.09
Information	4.1	0.4*	- 90.2
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.3	10.6	68.2
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	4.1	11.2	173.0
Educational services, and health care, and social assistance	22.7	29.1	28.2
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	4.7	7.0	48.9
Other services, except public administration	7.8	4.7*	- 39.7
Public administration	15.9	10.6	-33.3

*high margin of error
Source: ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates

region with a diversified job market that shows promise of growth for the foreseeable future. Some sectors have not fared as well during this time period. Retail has taken a large hit, as has construction. This will have an impact on downtowns that rely heavily on retail and in growing areas in need of new development.

DeWitt has a high labor participation rate; as of 2019, 72% of the population over the age of 16 were working. However, this is subject to change as the population ages, this number is expected to shrink, unless retirees move out of the community and are replaced with workers at the same rate.

Another important finding from the CEDS is that 60% of businesses in the greater Lansing area have between 1-4 employees; small businesses fit into DeWitt's small-town footprint.² As a bedroom community, DeWitt is not positioning itself as a corporate headquarters, but rather as community with a boutique downtown with local businesses.

Retail Spending

DeWitt is not an employment hub, but the jobs residents hold give insight into their discretionary incomes and spending habits. Due to relatively higher median household incomes than the county, state, and nation, DeWitt residents spend higher than the national average in every retail and service category as shown in the table titled "Retail and Service Spending." The column "spending potential index" is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service relative to the national average of 100. For 2026, spending in every category is expected to grow. With that said, most of this money is being spent outside of the city limits. Except for "building materials, garden equipment, and supply stores," all other retail sectors are "leaking," meaning that money is leaving DeWitt to purchase these goods elsewhere.

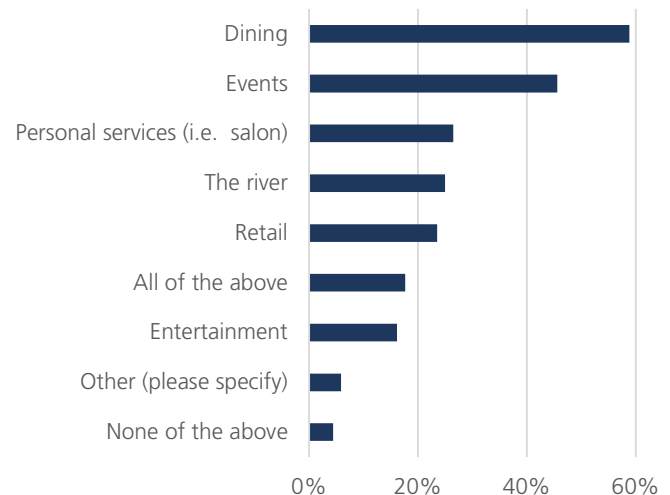
Where there is a retail leakage, there is an opportunity for DeWitt to bring that business to its downtown. While commercial vacancy is low in the downtown, staying abreast of how residents spend is a critical link to business recruitment. With this information in hand, should a business leave a storefront vacant, the city and DDA know what type of retail and services to target to occupy the space that meets its residents needs and preferences.

Table XX: Retail and Service Spending

Retail & Services	Spending Potential Index
Apparel and Services	142
Computer	140
Entertainment & Recreation	145
Food	139
Financial	163
Health	138
Home	162
Household Furnishing & Equipment	142
Household Operations	152
Insurance	154
Transportation	145
Travel	150

Source: Esri "Retail Goods and Services Expenditures"

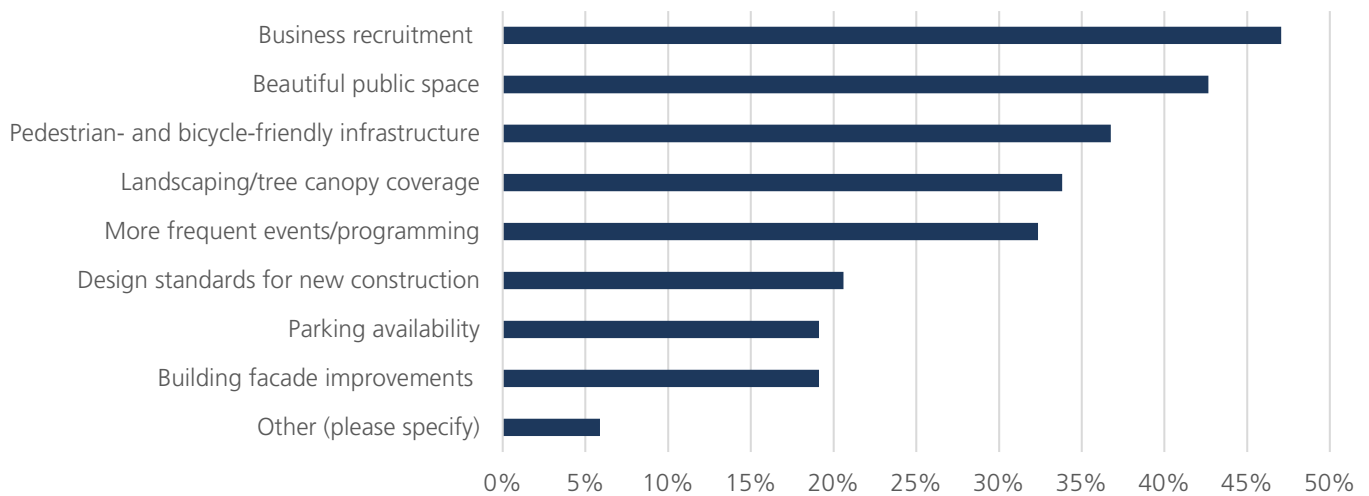
Figure XX: What Draws You to Downtown?



Source: Community Survey Results

According to the community survey, retail is not the largest draw to downtown. More commonly, residents visit the downtown for dining and events. This was seconded in the survey when respondents recorded not going downtown more often because "there's little/nothing there I want to buy." Moreover, survey-takers' top priority for the DDA is to focus on business recruitment. When asked more specifically what they'd like to see come downtown, "restaurants," "food and beverage,"

Figure XX: What are the top three elements that you would like to see the Downtown Development Authority improve?



Source: Community Survey Results

“sporting goods, hobby, books, music,” and “personal services” were the most frequently selected options. These findings suggest that there is room for improvement with the downtown offerings and that a data-driven approach can help to secure businesses that will thrive in DeWitt.

It remains to be seen how downtowns will adjust post COVID-19. While many residents have converted to online shopping to stay safe, others are rediscovering their cities as they work from home. One trend is clear: downtowns are becoming hubs of services rather than retail. Ideally, the downtown would have a balance of both, tightly tailored to its patrons.

Placemaking

The idea of placemaking remains popular because it falls into physical improvements that the city can make, without having to rely on private investment. Ultimately, the downtown enhancements will require public and private investment, but a

common strategy is to lead with in the public realm to signal to businesses that the city is ready for redevelopment. The survey-takers’ responses aligned with placemaking practices: “beautiful public space” and “pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly” were the second and third most selected priorities.

The DDA’s 2006 Development Plan acknowledges this concept and lists projects that would achieve downtown beautification. Examples include façade improvements, uniform lighting, parking lot improvements, trail connections, and streetscaping. Recently, the DDA has made such investments in the downtown by updating the crosswalks and burying the utility lines. The residents noticed. Almost 60% of respondents reported that downtown has improved over the last five years.

To keep that momentum running, it is recommended that this plan be updated to reflect the actions that have been completed and develop a new set of priorities.

Sources

- 1 Tri County Regional Planning Commission. “Connect and Collaborate: An Honest Conversation About #LoveLansing. 2018-2023. Page 42.
- 2 Tri County Regional Planning Commission. “Connect and Collaborate: An Honest Conversation About #LoveLansing. 2018-2023. Page 42.



Outdoor seating at Sweetie-licious in Downtown DeWitt.
Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Photo credit: City of DeWitt

3. Land Use Framework

Introduction

Land use is the central tenant of community planning. Analyzing demographic and land use trends side by side in one document makes the Master Plan a valuable tool. By comparing the two, it can be determined if the two are in sync – is Dewitt building appropriately for its residents and potential newcomers?

Land Use Patterns

The City’s downtown is the urban core; properties are smaller and clustered on a grid system that date back as far as 187 years ago. Within walking distance of the downtown is a concentration of historic homes, built alongside or close to the commercial buildings. As residential development fans out from the core, the lots and structures tend to get larger, the homes are newer, and the roads follow a curvilinear path as opposed to a grid. The majority of development within Dewitt is residential subdivisions, which started in the 1960s and 1970s and continues to be the dominant form of residential growth. The prevalence of housing in comparison to other land uses, and the number of residents commuting out for work makes Dewitt a bedroom community.

Land Distribution & Planning Areas

DeWitt still has room to grow within its boundaries. As shown in the table, “Existing Land Use,” there are 105 acres of vacant residential parcels. By using the assessor’s land codes, the City can keep track of which properties are “improved,” a parcel with a structure on it, and which are “vacant,” a parcel without a structure on it. These codes are not to be confused with zoning classifications or future land use categories; they are codes used to systematically tax land in accordance with state law. For planning and development purposes, the location of these parcels and the land use code demonstrate potential areas for new construction or redevelopment, pending the property owner’s willingness to sell.

Land use categories are divided into five categories and are shown on the Existing Land Use map.

Map XX: Structure Age, 2020

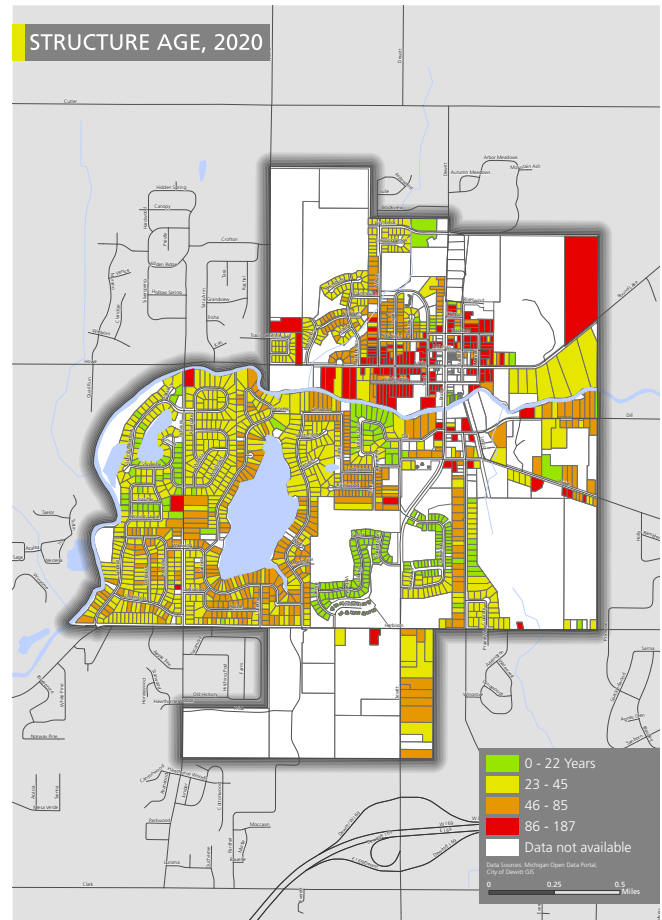


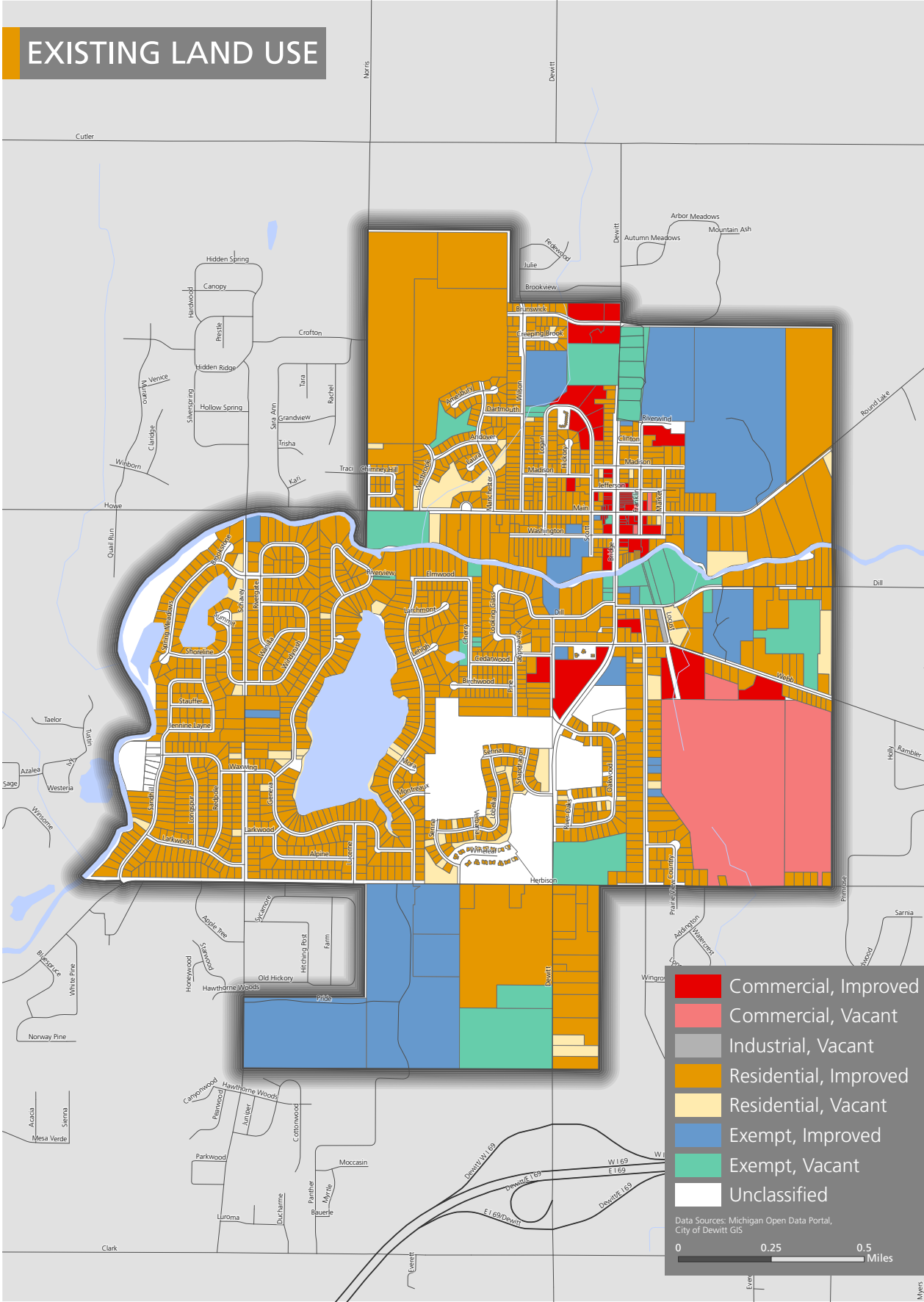
Table XX: Existing Land Use

Land Use	# of Parcels	Total Acres	% of Total Land
Residential	1,641	1,010	60.9%
Improved	1,580	905	54.5%
Vacant	61	105	6.4%
Commercial	63	189	11.3%
Improved	58	54	3.2%
Vacant	5	135	8.1%
Exempt	51	382	23.0%
Improved	23	265	15.9%
Vacant	28	118	7.1%
Industrial	1	0.7	0.0%
Vacant	1	0.7	0.0%
Unclassified	12	78	4.7%
TOTAL	1768	1658	100%*

Source: City assessor, 2020

*total may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding

Map XX: Existing Land Use



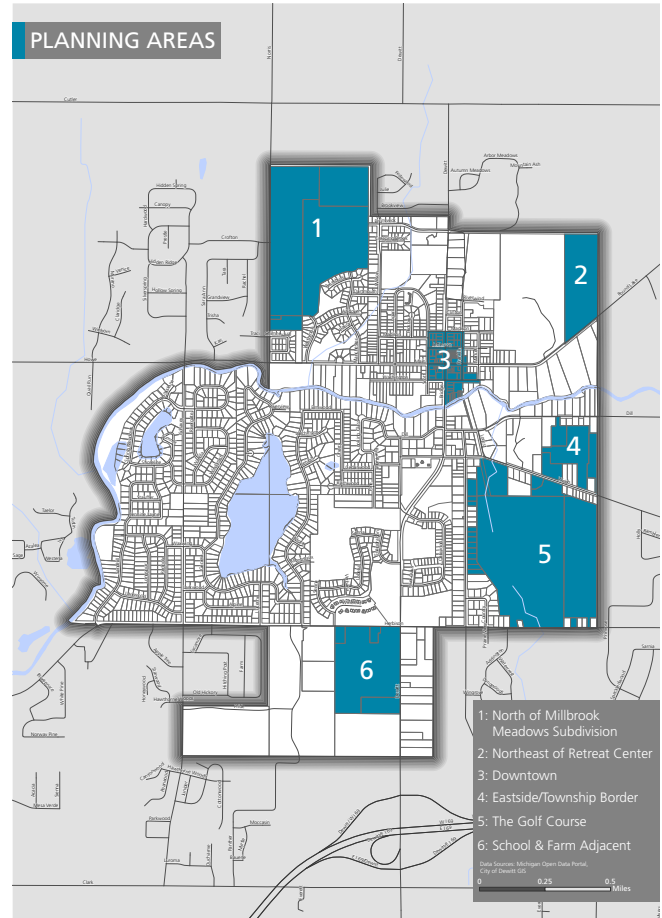
Residential

Residential is DeWitt’s primary land use. Almost 61% of all land is lived upon, the majority of which are improved. The vastness of the “improved” category is misleading as a large parcel may have one structure on it and remain largely empty, and therefore appears vacant. It is some of these improved parcels that have the most potential for development, should they enter the market. The residential parcels classified as vacant are generally clustered together which creates greater opportunity for coordinated development.

Several of the critical planning areas identified in 2010 remain undeveloped, with one exception. The site just south of the post office was developed into a senior community and memory care facility, just as intended. The project was completed in 2020.

Each planning area is mapped and described, its boundaries are outlined on an aerial map, and its opportunities and constraints are summarized in a table.

Map XX: Planning Areas



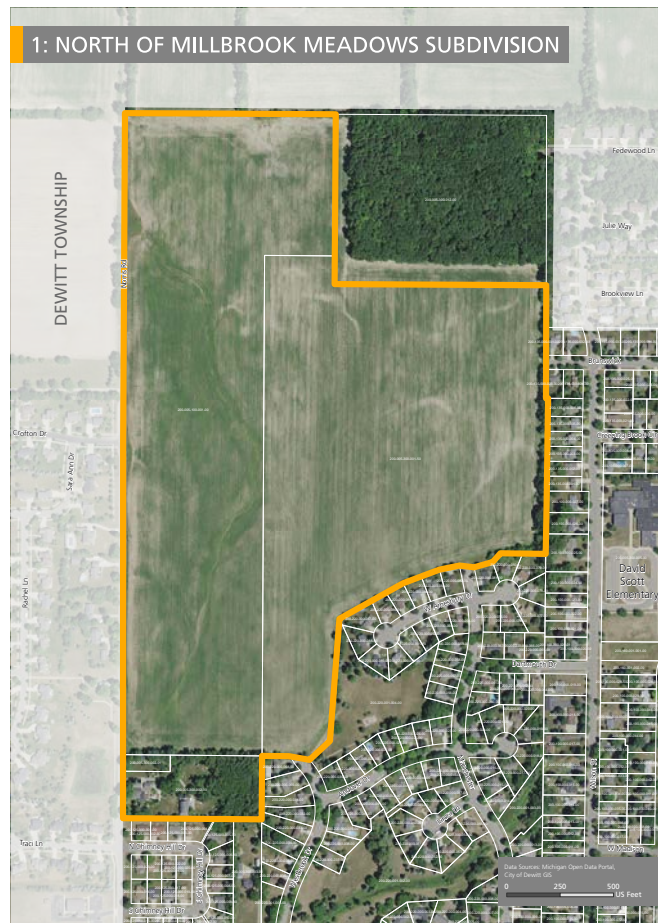
Snow on Riverside Bridge
Photo credit: City of DeWitt

*Planning Area 1:
North of Millbrook Meadows Subdivision*

The 200-acre planning area is zoned R-2 but remains actively farmed. Just before the Great Recession, it was planned to be converted into a subdivision, but this plan collapsed along with the market. As such, a drainage course exists for stormwater management along the west edge of the site. Should this area develop, primary access could be achieved from Norris Road and street extensions from Westbrook Drive, Manchester Drive, and Brunswick Drive. Except for a wooded area near the northeast corner of the site, the property contains little existing vegetation. The 20-acres of woodlands was purchased by DeWitt Township residents to preserve it from residential encroachment. On the southwest corner, a 4-acre parcel area is zoned R-3, the city's densest single-family designation, and is buffered from the planning area with tree canopy.

This planning area is apt for residential development. Due to its proximity to David Scott Elementary School, housing units that cater to families with younger children would be appropriate. The site is large enough to host starter homes and larger single-family units through a Planned Unit Development. It is also possible with the development of a new neighborhood that Millbrook Park will need to be expanded to accommodate more residences.

This property is perpetually up for sale but as of yet no offers have been accepted.



Opportunities	Constraints
Connect to Main Street and to David Scott Elementary School	Needs links to the existing road system (upgrade to Norris Road)
Logical extension of residential uses to the south and east	Some environmental and natural features on site (woodlands and drain)
Existing city park on adjacent lands to the east	Stormwater management

Planning Area 2:
Northeast of Retreat Center

This 20-acre strip of land is located at the far northeast corner of the city. The southern portion touches Main Street, abuts the St. Francis Retreat Center to the west, and crosses the city boundary into DeWitt Township to the north and east. This is part of a larger parcel, the majority of which is located in DeWitt Township.

The property in the city is used for agriculture and contains a home with several farm related buildings. The property is zoned R-1, which requires 20,000 square foot minimum lots. Adjacent land in the Township is currently zoned agricultural; however, the Township’s Future Land Use Map recommends a mixture of low (30,000-40,000 square foot lots) and medium density residential uses (15,000 – 20,000 square foot lots) surrounding the city’s portion of that parcel. Because this parcel crosses two jurisdictions, it is best practice to coordinate development that is favorable to both municipalities prior to implementation. This area should remain residentially zoned to match the Township’s proposed density.

One the site’s major development constraint is a lack of utilities. Municipal water and sewer do not extend to the parcel. While the water main was upsized to accommodate future growth, it requires future extension to service new development. New residences would also likely require other amenities such as a park or walking loop, and a nonmotorized connection to downtown.

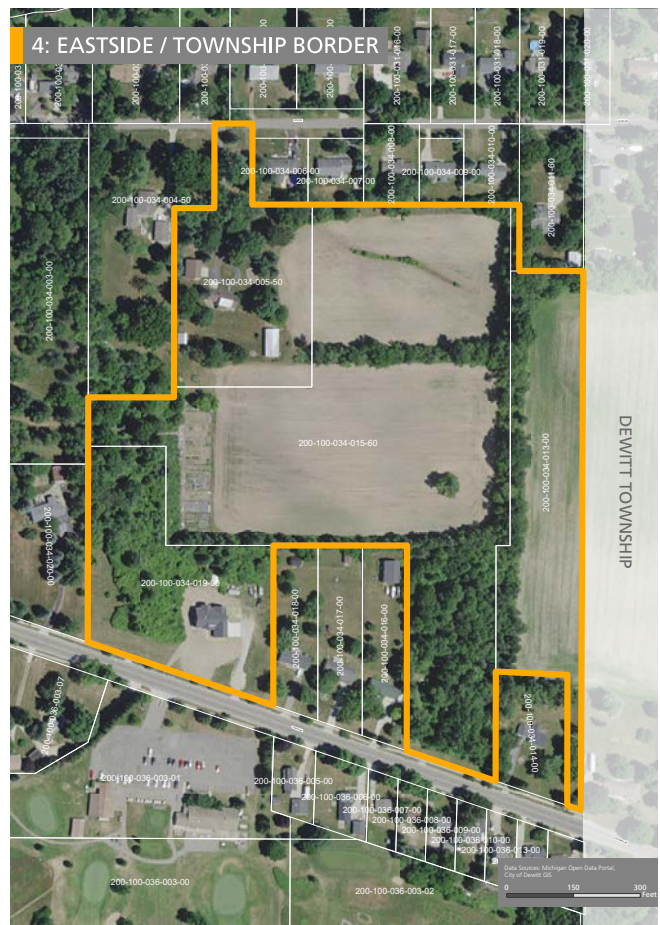


Opportunities	Constraints
Proximity to Main Street and retreat center	Parcel crosses into Township
Appropriate for residential use	Nonmotorized links to rest of the City on Main Street
	Lack of utility connection

*Planning Area 4
Eastside and Township*

This planning area also crosses the City and Township border with an agricultural use in an R-1 zone. The planning area abuts the North Pointe Community Church property on the west. The area consists of several parcels that total approximately 30 acres along the eastern edge of the city, although recently 13 acres were purchased from the church by a resident who wants to preserve agricultural land. On the Township side, east of this parcel, property has been developed into subdivisions. The vacant area along the city’s border (on the Township side) is proposed in the Future Land Use Map to be medium density single-family residential (15,000 – 20,000 square foot lots).

The majority of the planning area is wedged between residential lots which front on East Dill and East Webb Drives. Given the size and location of the parcels, they could be developed individually or combined into a unified development parcel. This property should remain residentially zoned, align with the Township’s proposed densities, and be thoughtfully designed to minimally disrupt existing housing.



Opportunities	Constraints
Aligns with uses proposed on the Township side	Parcel crosses into Township and sits in between established uses
Access on Webb and Dill Roads	Drainage issues and stormwater management
Space to incorporate recreation onsite for residents	Preservation of natural features

*Planning Area 5
The Golf Course*

This planning area consists of the Prairie Creek Golf Course and two vacant parcels which abut the west side of the golf course. The two abutting properties have access onto Turner Street. The golf course property has street frontage onto East Webb Drive and Herbison Roads. Two significant environmental resources are located on the golf course. The County's Prairie Creek Drain traverses the property. Trees and understory vegetation are located along the edges of the creek. Toward the north end, areas of steeper topography abut the creek. Several wetland areas located on the golf course are likely part of a larger wetland system extending east into DeWitt Township.

The majority of the golf course is zoned PQ (Public-Quasi Public), with the exception of the eastern third of the golf course and a small, isolated area near the northwest corner of the site which is zoned R-3. Properties along Turner Street are zoned R-1. This property is likely best suited for denser condominium style housing to preserve as much of the sensitive natural features and the golf course as possible. Should there be a mix of multiplex condominiums and single-family housing, a Planned Unit Development could be a useful land use tool to accomplish a mixed residential development.



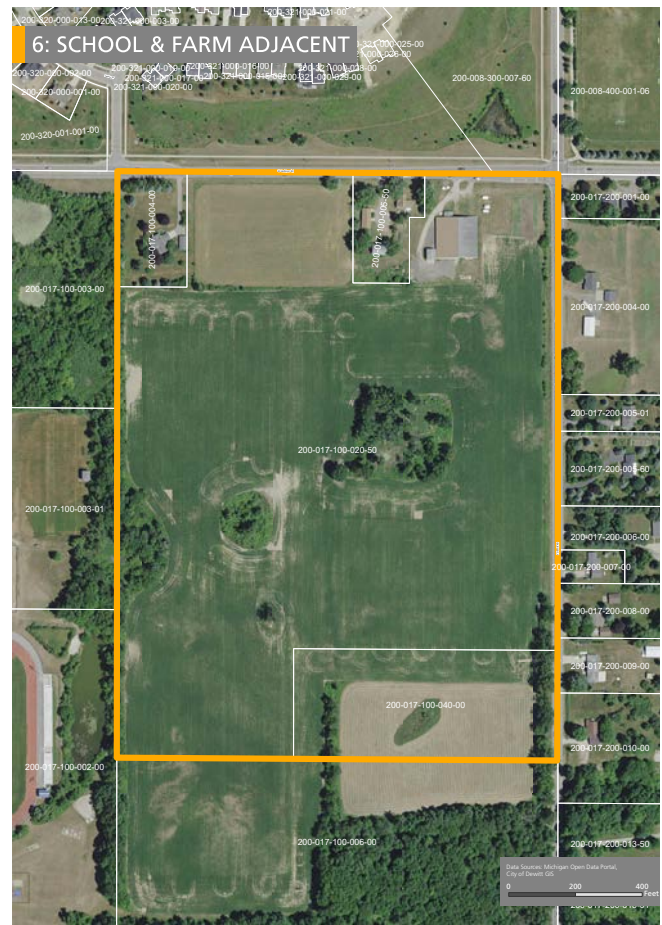
Opportunities	Constraints
Potential for mixed-housing types	Parcel crosses into Township
	Drainage issues and stormwater management
	Preservation of natural features and public access

Planning Area 6
School & Farm Adjacent

The planning area is located southwest of the intersection of DeWitt and Herbison Roads, totally approximately 60 acres (although 5 of the acres in the southeast corner are owned by the library). The intersection is a pivotal location in the city because of its adjacency to the high school and middle school and the Township, its size, and visibility along two major thoroughfares. The southern portion of the planning area, leading from I-69, is the main gateway to the city. The site is already equipped with utilities.

Single-family homes front the east side of DeWitt Road with lots ranging from two to ten acres in size. North of Herbison Road, there is subdivision style housing on smaller lots. South of this parcel is vacant land in DeWitt Township. The 2018 DeWitt Township Comprehensive Development Plan proposes institutional uses described as public or semi-public uses that include administrative offices, existing parks, schools, religious institutions, Capital Region International Airport properties, and the wastewater treatment plant. Given the proximity to school campuses, any development there should be compatible with a learning environment and neighborhood development.

Currently the land is zoned R-1, but its proximity to the school and R-2 zoning to the north means this parcel could also support greater density.



Opportunities	Constraints
Proximity to I-69	Preservation of natural features
Build on a grid to maximize space	Adjacency to thoroughfares may require additional buffering
Proximity to school campus – opportunity to build nonmotorized paths for children to safely walk to school	Enhance crossings on Herbison and DeWitt Roads

Commercial

Aside from the downtown commercial parcels, commercial uses also refer to multi-family units, which explains why this classification is spread throughout the city. The commercial “parcels” and “acres” numbers from the table “Existing Land Use” require further explanation as they may seem misleading. The 135-acre vacant commercial

parcel refers to the golf course. The size of this parcel inflates the overall percentage of total acreage that is commercially vacant when in fact, the vast majority of parcels assessed as commercial are improved and clustered in the downtown. The downtown will remain the concentrated commercial hub to boost its vibrancy and prevent sprawling strip mall style development on its corridors.



Farmer's Market

Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Downtown businesses

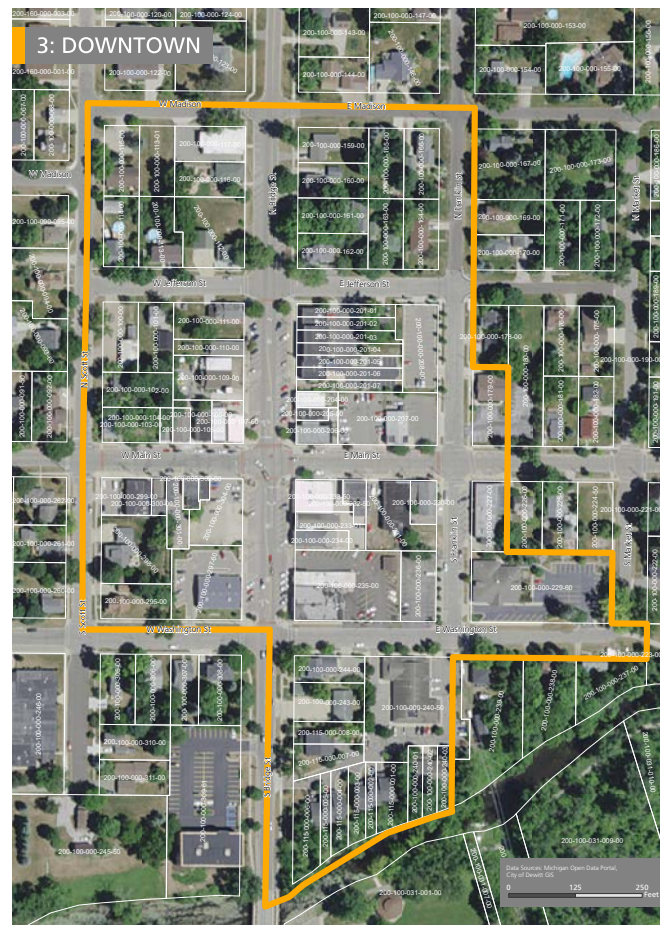
Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Planning Area 3 Downtown

The overall objective is to maintain and emphasize downtown DeWitt as the focus of commerce and services by encouraging retail, niche businesses, office, and residential uses that complement the city's heritage. Specialty retail and restaurants are especially sought after for this area. In addition to having the right mix of businesses, aesthetics is of high importance to make a visit downtown enjoyable. Recent streetscape improvements were made including burying overhead utilities. Public art is an agreed upon way for beautifying downtown. One piece of art hangs downtown but the DDA is exploring ways to promote more local artwork. If done on a larger and consistent scale, public art can become a cultural draw to the downtown.

Another aesthetic improvement is working towards a unified architectural style. While it is not mandated in the Zoning Ordinance, a set of design guidelines exist that reinforce a cohesive look when applied. Because zoning code or guidelines are applied to new development, this tool can be less productive in an already developed downtown. The DDA has uses another tool, a façade grant program, designed to provide a match to building owners' investment in their façade up to \$5,000. Not only can this apply retroactively, but it can align design efforts to a desired outcome. Even as an actively used program, there is room for improvement to yield a larger impact. For instance, the grant program could extend greater sums of funds to fewer building owners to support larger-scale façade improvements. Importantly, the funds should only be issued to investments that are meeting high-quality design standards.

Improved accessibility that makes the downtown friendly to nonmotorized users is also a priority and was included in the updated streetscape design with brick paver crosswalks. The downtown's proximity to Looking Glass River is another example of connecting the city's major assets in a pedestrian-friendly way.



Downtowns are historically places for mixed-uses, typically with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. Currently, residential uses and mixed-uses are permitted as special land uses in the downtown. One reason for the additional procedural layer is that parking in the downtown is already limited, and uses that require spaces, such as residential uses, would require greater review. A movement towards reduced parking standards is taking place in Michigan as younger generations forgo owning vehicles. Another possibility is to permit mixed-uses and residential uses by right with maximum parking requirements that fit into the existing development pattern.

Opportunities	Constraints
Connection to Looking Glass River	Inadequate parking
Historic building patterns with no setbacks and rear parking	Lack of architectural continuity
A dedicated DDA and low commercial vacancy	Offices and non-retail uses are on the first floor
Recent aesthetic and accessibility upgrades	

Exempt

Close to one-quarter of the city's acreage is dedicated to such uses. Exempt land uses refer to uses that do not generate tax revenue for the city. These parcels are owned by governmental entities, religious institutions, and other public, non-profit, or charity groups. The most prominent examples in DeWitt of exempt "improved" are dedicated to DeWitt Public schools, St Francis Retreat Center, and St. Jude's shown on the map in blue. Vacant exempt uses largely represent city parks. While these land uses are not lucrative per se, they are often essential community spaces that serve many civic and recreational functions that enhance residents' quality of life, and help keep property values in DeWitt stable.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is the culmination of the comprehensive planning process. Based upon trends in development, the results of the issues analysis, goals and recommendations set forth in the Plan, and input of the Planning Commission, the City Council, and DeWitt residents, the FLUM is the basis for Zoning Ordinance revisions. It may be considered the ideal direction in which the City should follow in terms of land use policy, not necessarily as a parcel-by-parcel blueprint, but rather a guide to aspire to over the next 10 years.

The Future Land Use Map is intended to guide land use decisions in DeWitt and assist City officials with the development and modification of land use regulations. It can be an invaluable tool when used to evaluate requests for rezonings, vacation of rights-of-way, or for variances from the Zoning Ordinance. Requests that do not follow the intent of a Future Land Use Map should be denied. If City officials wish to amend the Future Land Use Map to reflect changing conditions, then this should be done before a change in zoning is approved and should be based on appropriate research and land use practices.

Future Land Use Categories

In this section, the future land use categories are described and matched to the corresponding zoning district to convey the type and scale of change suggested.



Ox Roast

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Summary of Proposed Land Use Changes

- » Condense moderate density housing zones from two to one.
- » Expand moderate- and high-density housing to new parcels.
- » Remove the "office" and "limited commercial" zones.
- » Add design standards to the central downtown business district.
- » Permit housing as an overlay zone on the golf course.

Map XX: Future Land Use

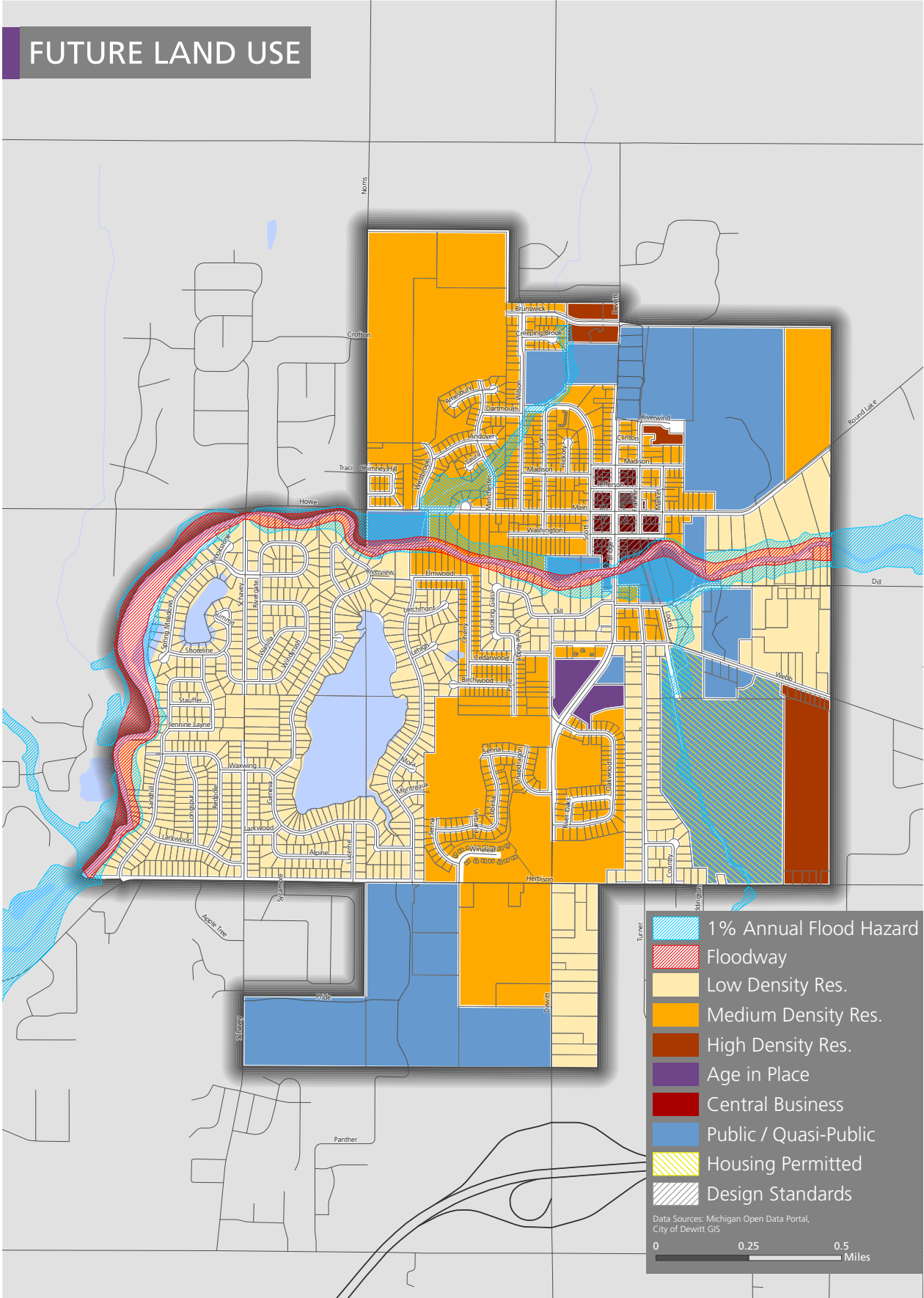


Table XX: Future Land Use Categories

Land Use Category	Intent	Corresponding Zone
Residential		
Low Density Residential Planning Area 4	The intent of this land use category is not expected to change. Low residential density will be preserved. Land uses considered incompatible with residential neighborhoods are not permitted.	R-1
Medium Density Residential Planning Areas: 1, 2, 6,	This land use category combines two “moderate density” residential zones to permit slightly greater density and a mix of missing middle housing types (i.e. townhome, duplex, triplex). It has the largest proposed expansion with the intent to increase the housing supply that can accommodate a variety of household types while still being compatible with the city’s suburban character.	R-2, R-3
High Density Residential Part of Planning Area 5	It is intended to provide for a mixture of housing types. The purpose of this district is to ensure that multiple-family housing is located in areas which afford adequate street capacity, is served by public sanitary sewer, and is in close proximity to commercial services.	M-F
Age in Place	The intent of this land use category is to permit a range of housing and services (communal and medical) geared towards an aging population with various levels of needed support. This category is optimized when located in easy access to other necessary amenities and services for this demographic.	MF-N
Commercial		
Central Business District Planning Area 3	The intent of this land use category is not expected to change. It shall remain the city’s mixed-use hub that provides retail, office, dining, and entertainment on smaller lots to maintain its walkability.	CBD
Public		
Public/Quasi Public Part of Planning Area 5	The intent of this land use category is not expected to change. It provides for open space areas, parks, conservation areas, public schools, religious institutions, governmental facilities, historic places. It is recommended that agricultural uses be removed from this land use category.	PQ

Zoning

Overlays

In addition to the proposed future land use categories, there are two proposed overlay zones that would be adopted as part of the Zoning Ordinance. Overlay zones are an additional set of standards that apply “on top “of the existing base zone. They are supplementary to the requirements in the base zone and are usually used to enhance the zone in a specific way that aligns with a greater vision for the area. The descriptions are below.

Planned Unit Development

This is another common land use tool used to create more flexibility and innovation in the use and variety in design, layout, and type of structure. In DeWitt, it is written for larger more transformative projects that are 40 acres or greater but has a caveat that this tool may be applied to smaller parcels if the project meets eligibility criteria that demonstrate an added benefit to the City. For projects that do not fit perfectly into a zoning district, this tool may be appropriate, especially if the project proposed aligns with the Future Land Use Map.

Table XX: Proposed Overlay Districts

Proposed Overlay District	Intent	Corresponding Zone
Design Standards	This is a set of aesthetic standards that are applied to building facades and orientation, signage, landscaping, and parking placement to give a cohesive “look” and identity to the downtown.	CBD
Housing Permitted	The golf course, outside of its environmental constraints for development, is a good site for multi-family housing. While it is not appropriate to permit housing on every parcel zoned PQ, this site make sense for an overlay to permit condominiums along the periphery of the course (not to interrupt ecosystems), geared towards avid golfers.	PQ



Cruise In

Photo credit: City of DeWitt



Bridge & Main Market
Photo credit: City of DeWitt



4. Vision & Goals

Good planning uses data and preferences to shape a preferred course of action. In this section, findings from the previous sections and the community engagement series are used to build an Action Plan of strategies to advance the City of DeWitt toward its goals over the planning horizon.

Residential

Goal #1	Objectives
Maintain and continue to create predominately medium-density, single-family residential neighborhoods.	Require high-quality materials for housing, landscaping, and infrastructure for existing neighborhoods.
	Utilize development agreements with large scale developments to assure quality development and environmental safeguards.

Goal #2	Objectives
Provide a variety of housing options to support the range of residents' needs through different life stages.	Expand housing options so that young professionals, empty nesters, and retirees can live in DeWitt in a suitable residential unit.
	Buffer single-family residential areas from higher-density multi-family units.
	Delineate areas within the City that are appropriate for housing types alternative to single-family based on available infrastructure and proximity to services and amenities.
Actions	
Check land availability	



Outdoor seating

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Commercial / Downtown

Goal #1 (For Residents)	Objectives
Provide a diverse and balanced mix of goods and services that are tailored to residents' preferences.	Reduce the instances in which Dewitt residents have to leave the City for entertainment, dining, or retail.
	Work with the DDA to develop an ongoing data-driven business recruitment program for downtown.
	Assist in implementing the DDA's Development Plan actions for business retention.
Actions	
Consistently monitor residents' retail and service needs and use that information to proactively recruit businesses to fill that needs.	
Provide market analysis to existing and interested businesses.	
Develop criteria to determine if local incentives are producing desired results regarding retail and services provided.	

Goal #2 (For Visitors)	Objectives
Improve the appearance and functionality of the downtown to draw in visitors.	Tie some of downtown's programming to the Looking Glass River.
	Identify parcels that could be used for mixed-use opportunities.
	Ensure that the ground floor units are reserved for commerce that contributes to the vibrancy of downtown.
	Use placemaking strategies to improve the experience of downtown visitors through design guidelines, landscaping standards, circulation, access management, lighting, and signage.
	Create a parking strategy that serves patrons but does not detract from the downtown's compactness.
	Make downtown the hub for community events.
Actions	
Tools – look into incentives that can used as economic development tools.	

Goal #3	Objectives
Maintain an up-to-date database of commercial development and redevelopment sites.	When necessary, use local, state, and federal incentives to fill and develop vacant buildings and/or sites.
	Work with business owners to gather basic property information for sites that are suitable for new business or business expansion.
	Provide a vision for development for vacant properties and actively promote it.

Community Services & Recreation

Goal #1	Objectives
Acquire, develop, preserve, and maintain parkland and equipment to provide sufficient open space for recreation.	Plan park acquisition based on resident’s level of need, distribution of parkland, and accessibility standards.
	Continue to balance residential development with open space requirements through the ordinance.

Goal #2	Objectives
Develop nonmotorized pathways to expand the existing network for multi-use paths.	Prioritize nonmotorized pathways based on connections to existing parks, neighborhoods, and local destinations.
	Align goals with DARA’s Recreation Plan.
Actions	
Seek opportunities with Dewitt Township and Clinton County to participate in a regional greenway system.	
Apply for grants to assist with funding an expanded nonmotorized network.	
Develop a maintenance plan with a sufficient budget for nonmotorized networks.	

Goal #3	Objectives
Expand recreation and social programming for all age groups.	Utilize the new community space at City Hall to provide entertainment and education programming that is broad and community-based.
	Youth: Continue to play a supportive role in youth programming.
	Adults: Ensure that adult recreational programming is convenient and aligns with residents’ interests.
	Seniors: Provide social and wellness options so that seniors choose to age in place in Dewitt.
Actions	
Coordinate courses and excursions with the age-in-place facility.	
Contribute funding to update the DARA Recreation Plan.	
Proactively recruit and show appreciation for volunteers who lead recreational programming for youth.	

Natural Features

Goal #1	Objectives
Enact standards and policies that maintain or improve DeWitt’s natural features.	Continue to implement current stormwater management regulations.
	Develop strategically to avoid sprawling onto natural features.
	Use the zoning ordinance to strengthen preservation efforts for trees, native vegetation, and wetlands.
	Use landscaping standards to incorporate greenery into developed areas.
Actions	
Require the developer to identify woodlands, watercourse, and other natural features during the site plan process.	

Goal #2	Objectives
Use land use policy to maintain high water quality for the Looking Glass River Watershed.	Maintain the Looking Glass River as a beautiful natural asset and thriving ecosystem.
	Follow Upper Looking Glass River Watershed Management Plan recommendations for improving water quality.
	Reduce runoff and pollutants from impervious surfaces with green stormwater infrastructure.
Actions	
Develop a wellhead-protection program for community water supplies.	
Establish filter strips near fertilized and impervious areas to remove sediment and other pollutants from runoff water.	
Participate in the Natural Rivers Program with other communities in the Watershed through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.	
Implement Upper Looking Glass River Watershed Management Plan recommendations, including: protecting existing wetlands from development, establishing a minimum vegetated buffer on both sides of the river, establishing a minimum building setback from the river, and stabilizing riverbanks.	



Riverside Park

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Multi-Modal Transportation

Goal #1	Objectives
Provide alternatives to the automobile through multi-modal transportation options which connect neighborhoods, schools, the library, businesses and other activity areas.	Participate in efforts to enhance connectivity to Lansing.
	Study the possibility of establishing a continuous pathway along the Looking Glass River.
	Continue to expand delineated bicycle lanes along major roads with clear destinations.
Actions	
Meet with landowners who have land abutting the river to determine the viability the pathway.	

Goal #2	Objectives
Create a safe and coordinated transportation system adequate to support existing and future land uses that balances traffic needs with actions to ensure the City remains an attractive place to live.	Ensure that all future development and residential neighborhoods are linked to the City’s roadway grid and pathway system.
	Build a transportation system in which all users feel comfortable using it.
Actions	
Work with the Clinton County Road Commission and Dewitt Township to expand pedestrian and bicycle trail systems outside of the City.	
Continue to participate in the Capital Area Regional Transportation Study Committee to provide input.	

Goal #3	Objectives
Monitor the progression of autonomous vehicles and ride-sharing trends to determine if any changes to road infrastructure and parking are necessary.	Research trends that will influence parking requirements, loading zones, or street design.
	Stay up-to-date on legislation or other policy related to alternatives to personal vehicle ownership.



Riverside Path

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Intergovernmental Cooperation & Coordination

Goal #1	Objectives
<p>Continue to cooperate and coordinate with adjacent governmental jurisdictions to provide for a more comprehensive approach to land use planning and a more effective and efficient delivery of public services and utilities.</p>	<p>Coordinate the provision of services where efficient and feasible.</p>
	<p>Eliminate the possibility of land use conflicts on municipal boundaries and with other major land holders.</p>
	<p>Create opportunities for joint interaction, collaboration, and communication among City commissions, boards, and prominent organizations in the area.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	
<p>Meet with Dewitt Township and staff periodically to review long range plans and land use issues.</p>	
<p>Continue to actively participate in the Dewitt Area Recreation Authority's planning and development processes.</p>	
<p>Work with the Board of Water and Light and Dewitt Township in the coordination, provision, and implementation of water services.</p>	
<p>Coordinate with the School Board regarding their facility development and construction.</p>	



Farmers Market banner

Photo credit: City of DeWitt

Appendix: Community Survey Results

City of DeWitt Planning Commission

Master Plan Survey Summary

February 25, 2021

A total of 70 responses were collected for the DeWitt Master Plan update between January 12 and February 15, 2021.

Who Were the Survey Takers?

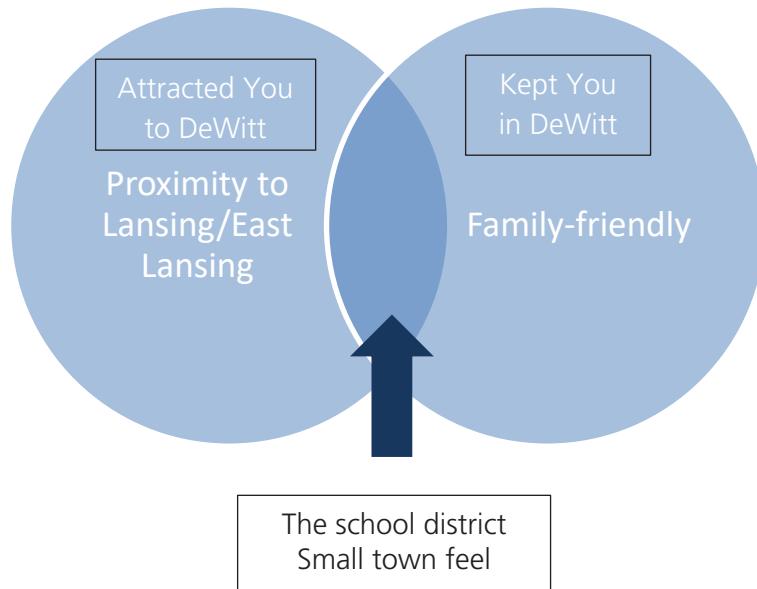
Just short of two-thirds of all survey-takers were residents of the city of DeWitt. The remaining one-third were primarily Dewitt Township residents, and half a dozen were from Watertown Township. Most of the survey participants (67.2%) are well-established residents who have lived in the area for at least 10 years. The table below demonstrates which demographic groups were over- and under-represented in the findings. The proportion of respondents in the age group 35-44 is more than three times larger than the city, whereas 0% of the youth's perspective was captured. Similarly, no residents earning under \$50,000 annually were reflected in the survey results and in the next income bracket (\$50,000-\$74,999), residents were widely underrepresented.

Survey vs. City-wide Survey Demographics

Demographic Characteristic	Survey	City (2018 ACS)
Age		
18-24	0.0%	5.6%
25-34	9.5%	12.3%
35-44	45.2%	13.6%
45-54	16.7%	14.4%
55-64	14.3%	14.3%
65+	14.3%	14.0%
Median Household Income		
Under \$49,999	0.0%	20.3%
\$50,000-\$74,999	7.1%	16.7%
\$75,000-\$99,000	19.0%	13.4%
\$100,000-\$150,000	23.8%	24.3%
Over \$150,000	31.0%	25.3%



Q2 & Q3 What Attracted You to DeWitt and What Has Kept You Here?



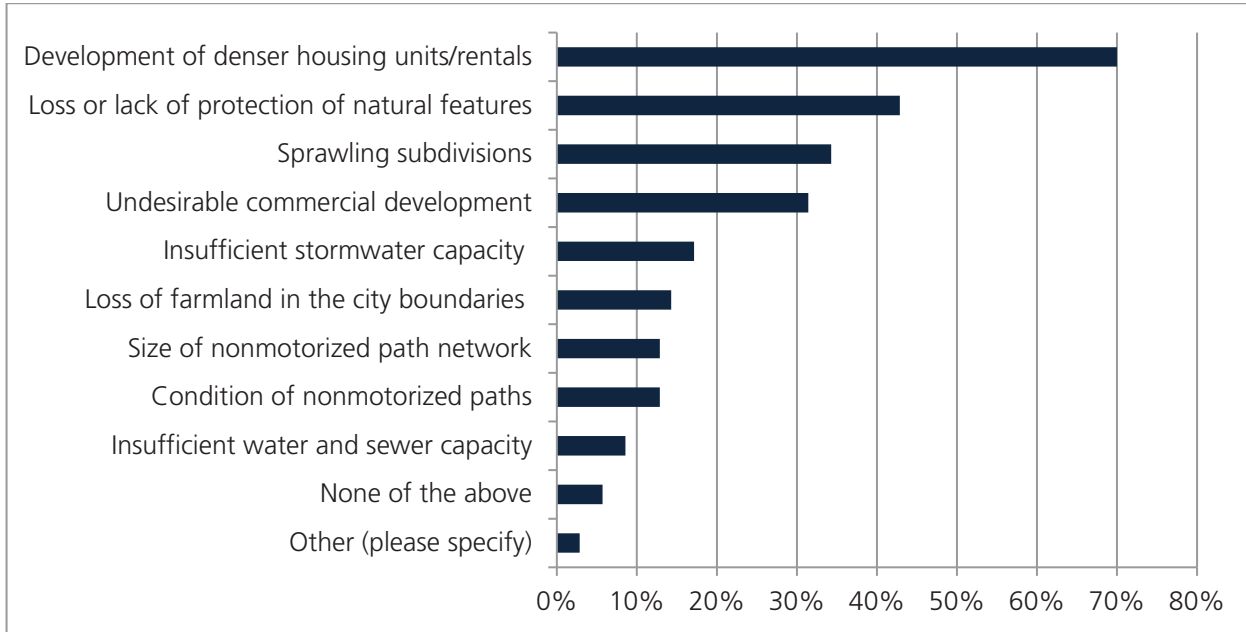
The top three reasons for moving and staying in DeWitt have a large overlap. The top answer for both questions was “the school system.” This statement implies that many who move to DeWitt are planning to have a family. This is further evidenced by survey-takers reporting that they moved to DeWitt for its “proximity to Lansing/East Lansing (likely for access to employment options)” but stayed for its “family-friendly” atmosphere (likely upon starting a family). The other commonality in the top three responses for both questions was a “small town feel.”

Q4 & Q5 Land Uses: Concerns and Priorities

When asked about their top land use concerns, respondents’ top three responses centered on housing and natural features. The concerns regarding nature were unanimously about protecting it from further loss or degradation. However, with housing, the concerns were more varied. The majority of residents (70%) are concerned with the “development of denser housing units/rentals,” yet another one-third are concerned about “sprawling subdivisions (34%).” Survey-takers were then asked in an open response format to write more specifically what should be the city’s top land use priority over the next 10 years. The responses reveal that some would prefer to limit the expansion of multi-family housing units while others want more housing options and to slow the rate of subdivision expansion. Broader comments about slow and controlled development were also expressed. Another major priority was an expansion of parks and recreation facilities.



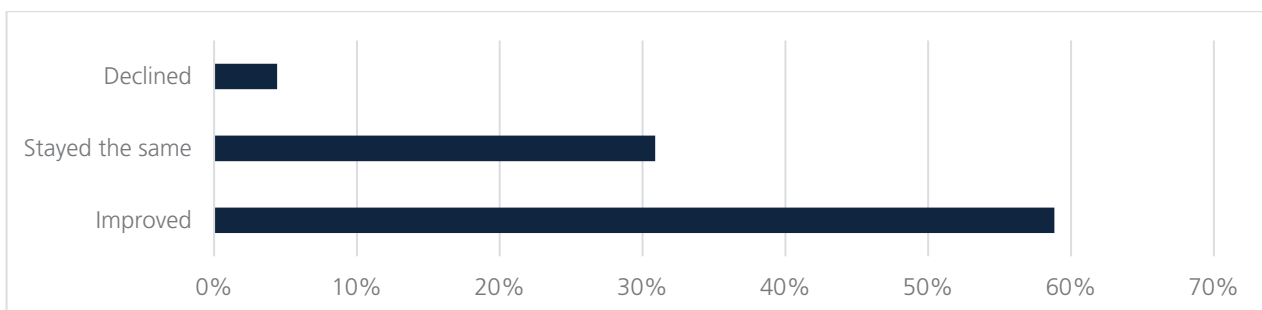
Land Use Concerns



Q6 -10 Downtown

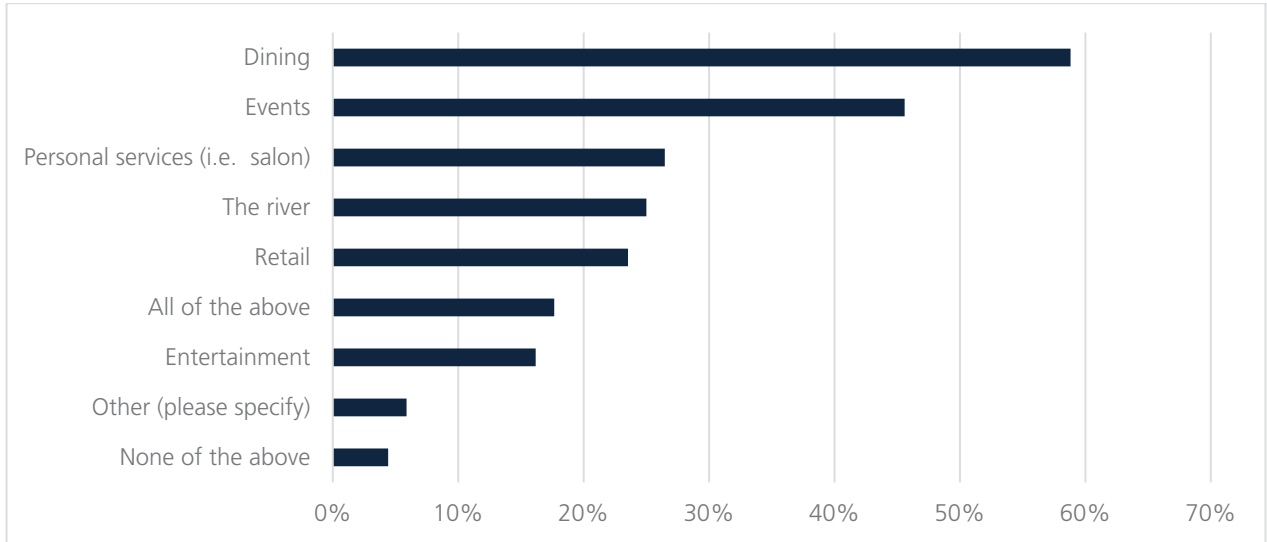
Overall, 58.8% of the survey-takers think that in the last five years the downtown has improved. While this is a positive a result, there are noticeable areas of improvement. When asked what prevents them from going downtown more often, they reported that there is little or nothing there that they want to buy (44.1%) or do (29.4%). What most commonly draws survey participants downtown is dining (58.8%) and events (45.6%), but retail and personal services fall lower on the list of attractions. These findings correspond to a desire for the DDA to focus on business recruitment above all else (47.1%). The other elements noted for DDA’s focus are primarily beautifying the downtown’s public spaces, enhancing landscaping and tree canopy cover, and nonmotorized infrastructure. To a lesser extent, respondents also want to see design standards for new and existing development. Interestingly, the river plays a more influential role in drawing residents downtown (25.0%) than entertainment (16.2%), exposing that a tighter connection could be drawn between the two.

I Think Downtown Has...in the Last Five Years



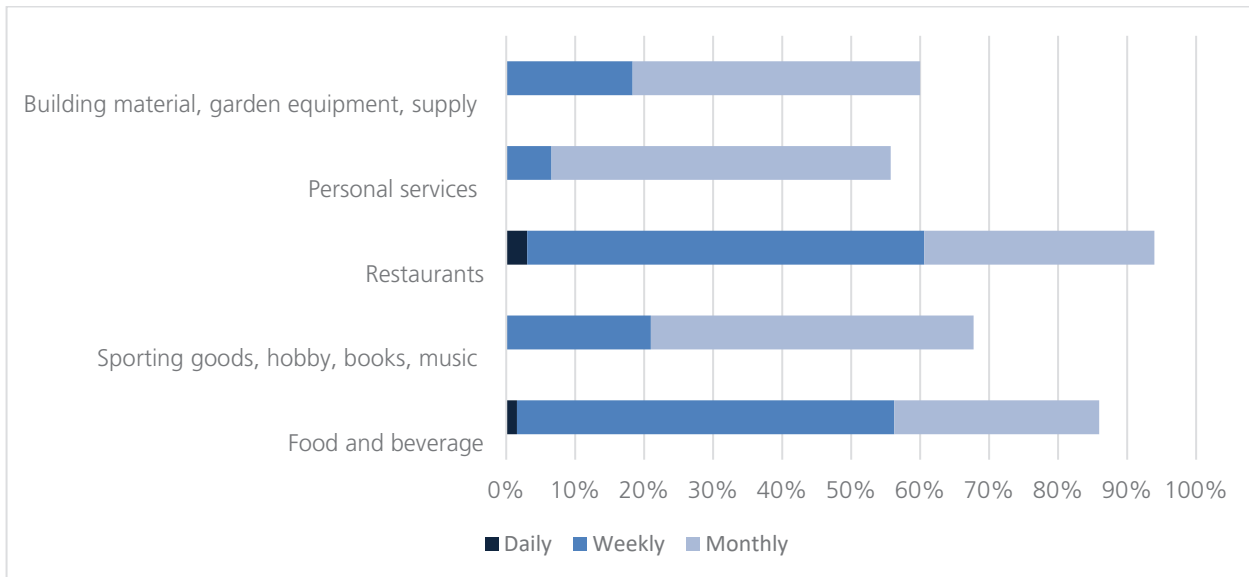


What Draws You Downtown?

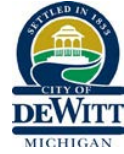


More specifically, survey participants were asked to select the types of retail they want to see downtown and to estimate how often they would frequent them. The table below summarizes the retail types that would be patronized on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis (on average) that accumulated more than 50% of votes.

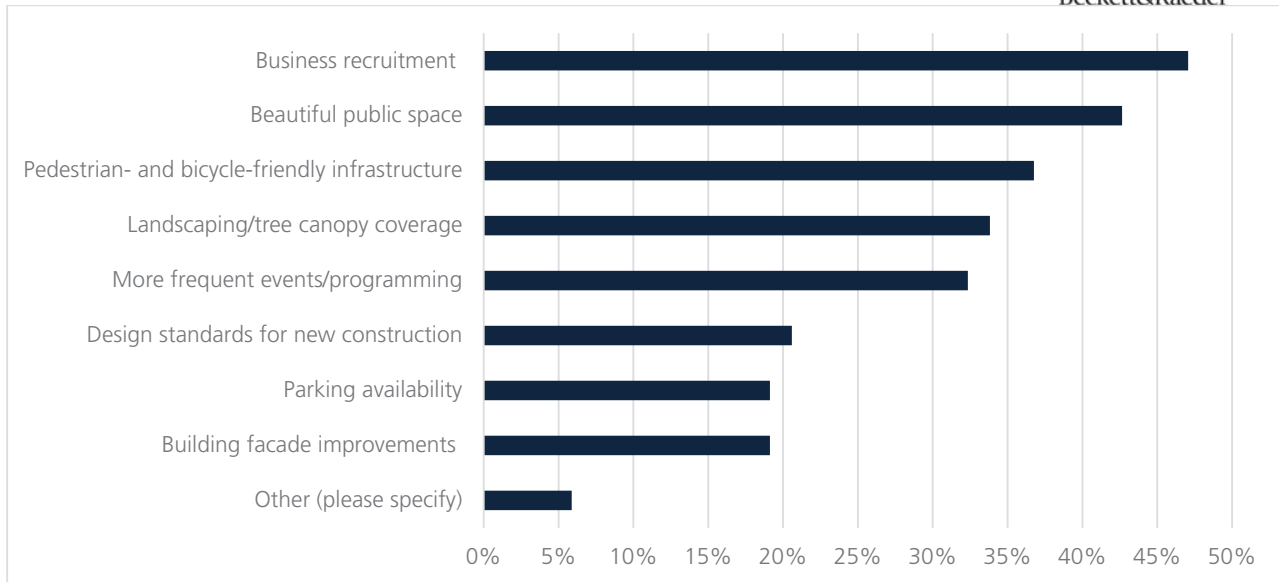
Types of Retail Desired Downtown and Estimated Frequency of Patronage



Top Elements for DDA to Prioritize



B R ⓘ
Beckett&Raeder

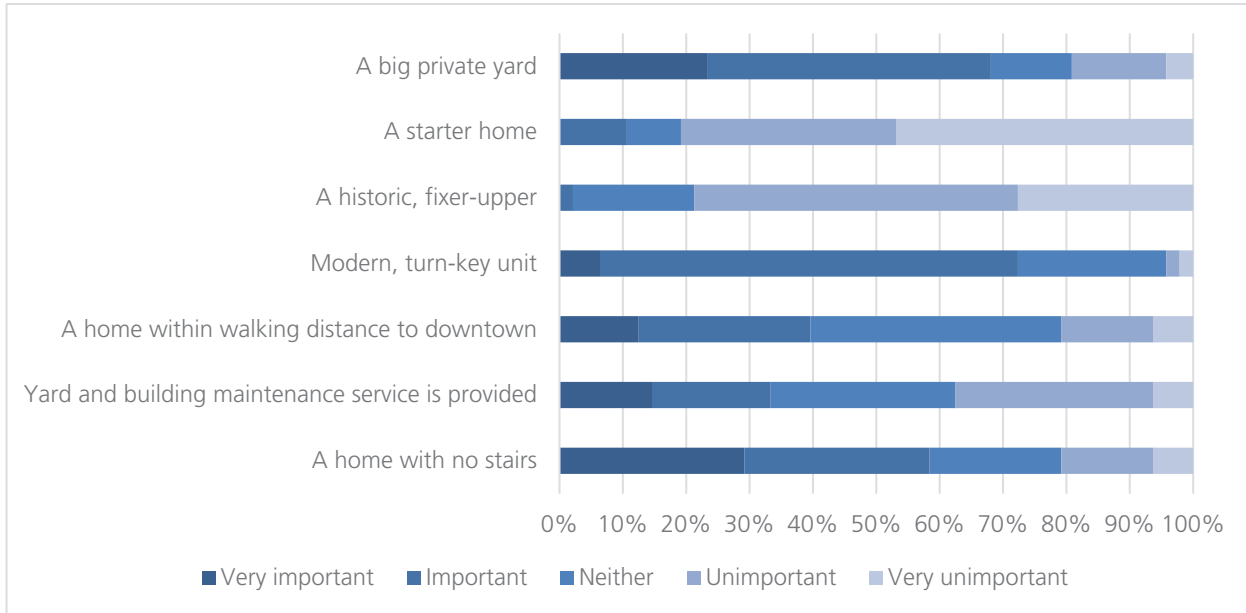


Q11 - Q15 Housing

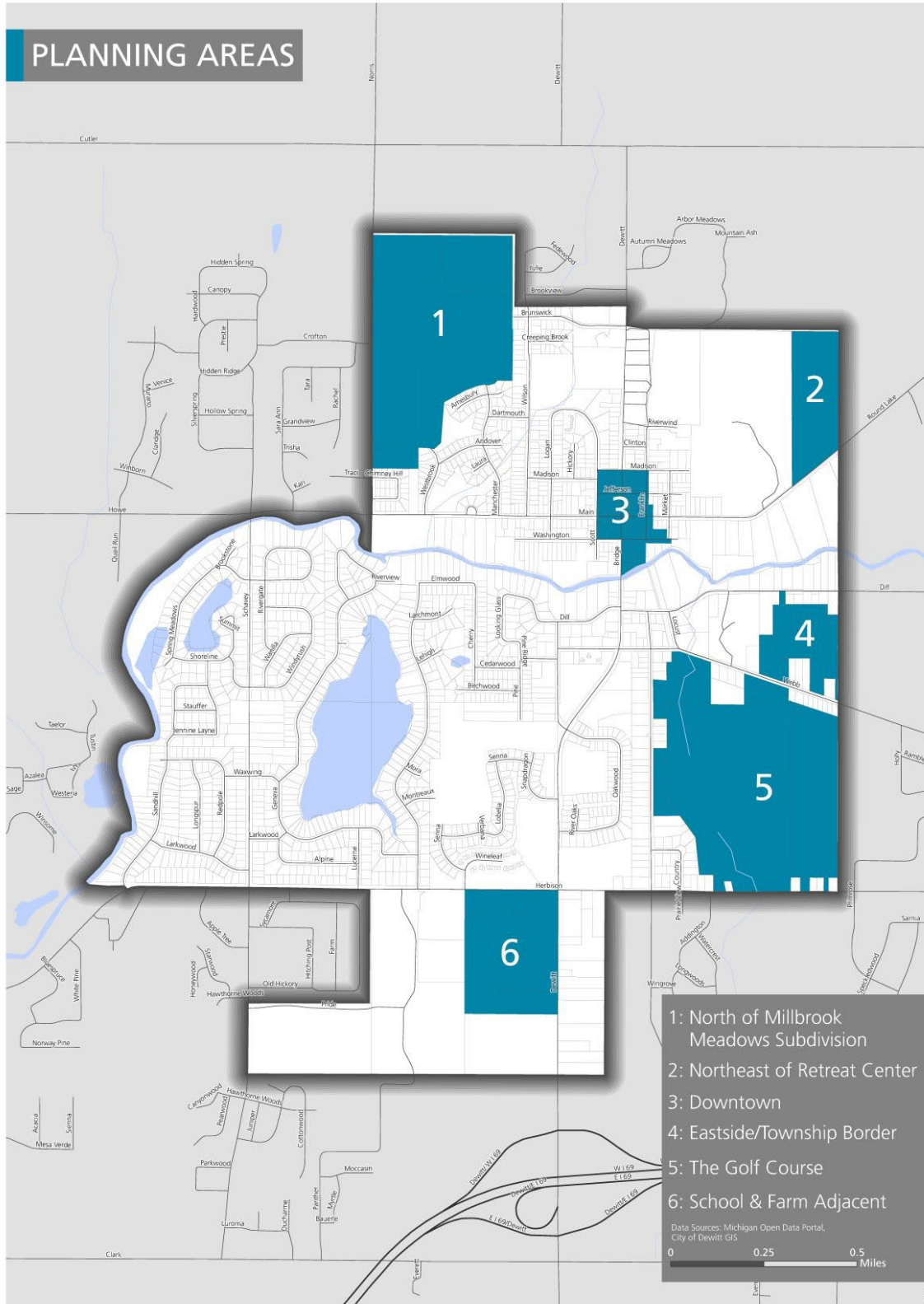
Over 95% of respondents live in single-family detached units. When asked what type of unit they want to live in 10 years, that percentage drops to 87.8%, when township residents' responses are filtered out, it drops to 83%. In a decade from now, 12% of city of DeWitt residents want to live in two-unit condos, 4.8% want to live in each of the following: attached townhomes, multi-unit, and/or mixed-use buildings. Many of those percentages double when the results are filtered for older age groups; ages 45 and older have a greater desire to live in multi-family units in the next 10 years. This is true even when responses are filtered for the highest income earners. Survey respondents were also asked to assume that their level of economic security remains constant, and then to estimate a price range that they are financially comfortable buying a home. Over half of them replied with a cost range that was \$250,000 or higher. Desired features in those homes differ. The most commonly selected answers were for a "big private yard," a "modern, turn-key unit," a "home within walking distance to downtown," and "a home with no stairs." When results are filtered by age group, yards become less important; stairs and the maintenance and modernity of the units rise in value for senior citizens.



Desired Housing Features in the Next 10 Years



Next, the survey asked where the city should consider permitting midrise condominiums (3-5 stories), attached townhomes, or smaller single-family homes. Six options were provided (see map below). Planning area #6, the property near the school on the southern edge of DeWitt, received the greatest share of votes, but not by much. The votes were spread fairly evenly across all planning areas (with the exception of planning area 4), most areas received between 22%-27% of all votes.





Q16 - Q20 Recreation

This survey was launched immediately after the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed; more detailed results for recreational planning can be found there. Survey-takers were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (best) five different aspects of recreation in DeWitt. Park maintenance received the highest score. The other areas all received a score lower than four, with the greatest room for improvement in “variety of recreation options.”

Variety of recreation options 3.2



Recreational programming 3.4



Safety from vehicle as a bicyclist 3.6



River Access 3.9



Park Maintenance 4.1



