

City of Stanton 2025 Master Plan

DRAFT JANUARY 2025



Acknowledgments

Thank you! The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the 2024 Stanton Master Plan is greatly appreciated.

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DDA

Rachael Coffey, City Manager
Chelle Zerka
Holly Peterson
Melissa Williams
Mercedes Millard
Kelly Worden
Sue Hendrix

Prepared by:



MCKENNA

235 East Main Street, Suite 105
Northville, MI 48167
mcka.com



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Executive Summary





Welcome

Welcome to the City of Stanton Master Plan. Stanton is unique in many ways, boasting a classic Downtown Core, ample parkland and outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic rural areas, as well as a multitude of successful commercial businesses.

The Stanton Master Plan highlights these assets and envisions future managed growth and development in ways such as expanding the housing stock while preserving neighborhoods, marketing and enhancing commercial options without losing the small-town feel and capitalizing and building on the area's many recreational resources.

The Plan also examines the City's evolving transportation and infrastructure needs, to inform decisions addressing opportunity sites, planning for future roads, trails, and land uses, and much more.

Throughout this Plan, two of the most significant themes are the City of Stanton's love for their historic downtown and the ongoing commitment to maintaining the rural character of this small-town. It is important that the City continues to plan to maintain the small-town character, while offering amenities that enhance the quality of life of the residents. In addition, the Stanton of tomorrow will be a community that is able to properly accommodate people of all ages, backgrounds, physical capabilities, economic status, races, and ethnicities. Each specific goal and objective were intentionally selected for this Plan to support and promote measured growth, community enhancements, and protection of rural character.

All data, conclusions, and implementation measures, and recommendations in this Plan derive from a robust public engagement process, high-level existing conditions analysis, and expansive knowledge of best practices in planning. Each of these elements is critical to effective, implementable city planning. Taken together, they form a strong foundation that will guide and support the City of Stanton into a thriving, vibrant, and sustainable future.

Chapter 7

Planning Context



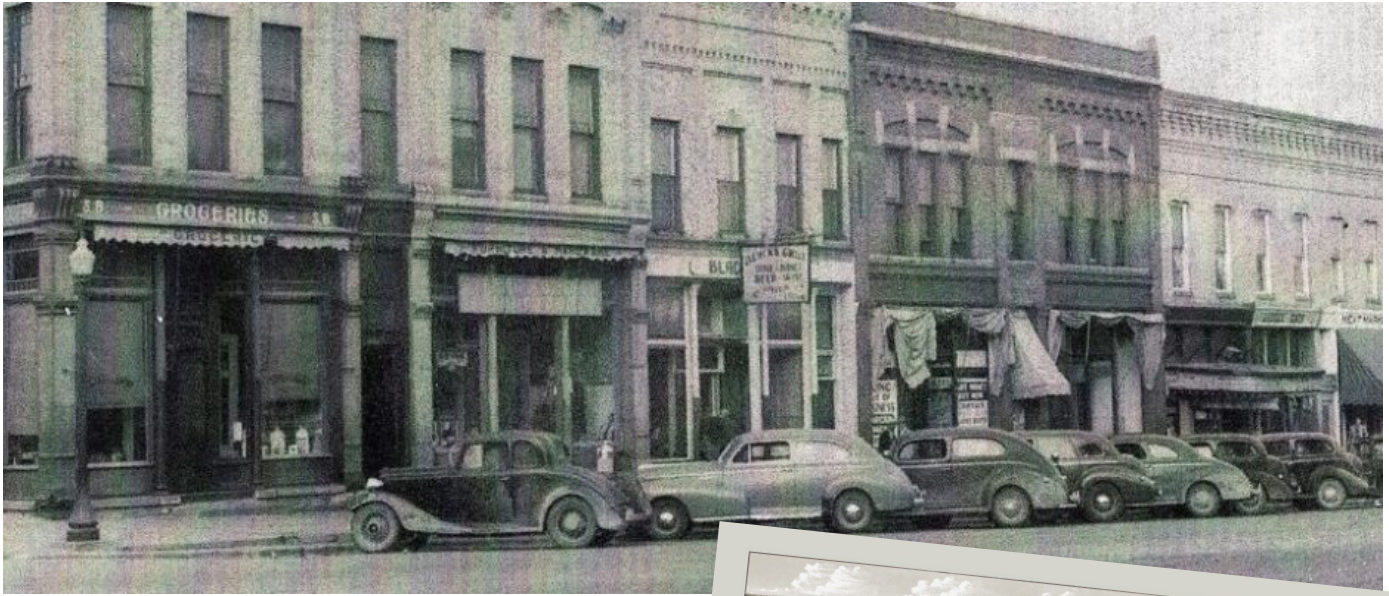


Introduction

Planning for future change and continual development and redevelopment of a community is largely dependent on where the community is located. Understanding the regional location of a community and other existing conditions such as transportation systems, environmental features, demographics, and more helps to drive logical, pragmatic, and action-oriented implementation measures that can be used to steer the community into an economically viable and sustainable future.

Not only is it imperative to understand regional location and existing conditions within a community, other elements such as regional development and planning trends – as well as broad development and planning trends – are significant foundations to the master planning process and subsequent implementation actions taken by a community. By analyzing both regional and broad planning trends, a community can proactively prepare for changing environments and seamlessly adapt to growth and development for years to come.

The 2025 Master Plan process in Stanton started in June of 2024 and took one-year to complete.

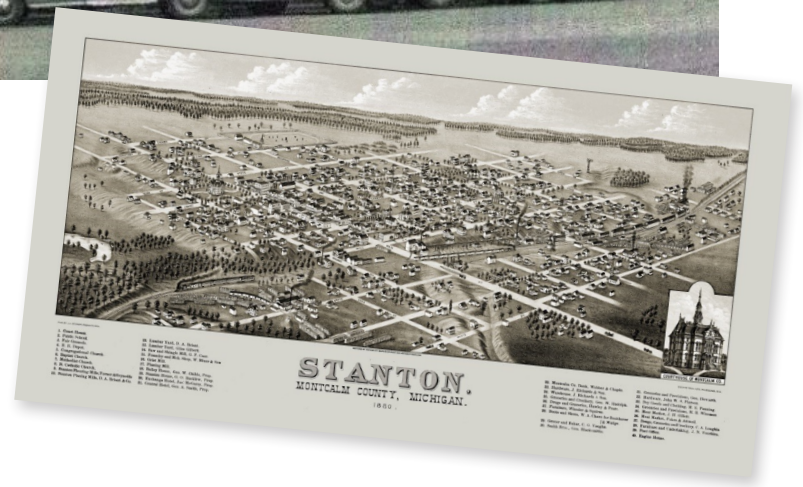


Regional Snapshot and History

The City of Stanton is located in Montcalm County, in the central portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Stanton is positioned on M-66 between Alma and Greenville. It is within an hour drive of major centers like Grand Rapids, Lansing, Mt. Pleasant, and Big Rapids. Stanton is also surrounded by other small towns such as Sheridan, Crystal, McBride, Sidney, to name a few. Stanton is also located about 20 miles away from the City of Greenville, an economic center for the area. The City's location on M-66 is a large part of its identity.

Stanton was established in 1860 when the people of Montcalm County voted to move the county seat from the City of Greenville. The County Board purchased 40 acres from Fred Hall of Ionia and named the location "Fred" in his honor. The City was renamed for U.S. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in 1863. The Village of Stanton and county seat of Montcalm was founded in 1863. The original plat and survey of Stanton was done in 1864. The Town was incorporated in October of 1867 and reincorporated in 1869 under a special act of the State of Michigan Legislature. The City of Stanton officially became a city in 1881.

The family of Levi Camburn was the first to settle in Stanton, and he became its first postmaster on March 10, 1862. The Hotel Montcalm was established in



1863. It began as a 1.5 story log cabin and eventually was built upon to become three stories. The hotel was sold to P.H McGarry in 1883 who renovated it to have a dining room, lighting, and windmill. It burned down shortly after renovations but was rebuilt quickly.

Many people sought to move to the area to farm, due to its fertile soils. Stanton also became a popular hunting destination, with its thick forests and diverse game. It was because of these forests, mostly the abundant pine groves, that Stanton grew into a lumbering hub for the region. Lumbering became Stanton's main industry. The rail line (now the Fredrick Meijer Heartland Trail) was completed in 1873, connecting Stanton with Grand Rapids and other larger areas of commerce such as Lansing, Detroit, and Chicago.

The arrival of automobiles had many effects on the City, including changes in population as well as bringing new development. The car brought new changes to the City with the M-66 trunkline. Stanton became a



stopping point for travelers between Charlevoix and Indiana for many years. However, with the construction and upgrading of north-south routes of U.S. highway 131 and 127 travelers no longer use M-66 as a main way to travel north. This has had an impact on Stanton as fewer travelers pass through the City on their way north. Stanton has remained resilient in keeping its small-town, rural character.

As the lumber industry began to slow in Stanton, the rail line also became of less importance to the City and the surrounding area. By 1933, the Stanton Junction was removed and by 1962 the Stanton Depot was demolished. The City no longer had the need for a rail depot as freight and passenger rail travel stopped. In the 1990's, the Pere Marquette rail line was removed. In the 2000's, the rail line was converted into a walking and biking trail-the Frederick Meijer Heartland Trail. The trail is widely used by residents of Stanton and the region.

Stanton has a strong history of Master Planning. The previous Master Plan was implemented in 2016. The Stanton Master Plan is a policy guide, based on identified goals, of appropriate and desired future development. The plan was prepared after completion of comprehensive assessments of land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, economic growth potential, existing land use and zoning of adjacent communities, and other pertinent

variables. The information gained was analyzed against the natural capability of the land to sustain certain types of development; the future need for residential, commercial, industrial, and public land; the existing land use distribution; and input from citizens, business leaders, city staff, and public officials.

The Master Plan was prepared by the Stanton Planning Commission with the assistance of the Stanton City Council and city staff. Ongoing public meetings were held, affording citizens the opportunity to fully participate in the planning process.

This plan is an update of the City's last Master Plan prepared in 2016. The Plan is flexible and may, after careful analysis, be amended from time to time based on changing conditions and needs.

As a guide to the City's growth, development, and redevelopment, the Master Plan becomes the primary rationale for land use regulations, the most prominent of which is the zoning ordinance. The Stanton Master Plan supports the Stanton Zoning Ordinance through the delineation of appropriate and desired land use (district) locations and through the various land development standards recommended by the plan. The above tools are consistent with the statutory requirements of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act [Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended] and Michigan Planning Enabling Act [Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended].

Chapter 2 **Stanton Today**





Introduction

The City of Stanton Master Plan provides a roadmap for the future development of the City. The changes in the City's demographics, acknowledgment of advances in technology, community-building, and other important sectors, and comments received during public input have led to a revised vision for future changes within Stanton.

Demographic analysis, or the study of the characteristics of the population, is a fundamental element of master planning. Future growth and development require consideration of how many people will need City services, how much housing is affordable, how many new houses will be built, and other vital signs. By understanding these existing conditions and past trends, the City can then appropriately anticipate and plan for the future needs of the community.

The comprehensive data source for the City of Stanton is the U.S. Censuses in 2000, 2010, and 2020, with American Community Survey data used where necessary. This analysis compares the City of Stanton to several surrounding communities and Montcalm County where appropriate.

Differences in demographics may indicate issues or areas in which land use planning and public policies are warranted; may identify strengths or assets that can be further developed; or may identify weaknesses or issues that need to be addressed.



Community Profile

POPULATION TRENDS

Stanton's years-round population has fluctuated since 1970. Stanton saw a peak population of about 1,500 residents from 1990 to 2000. Since 2010 the population of Stanton has increased slowly until 2020, when it has decreased slightly from 1,417 residents to 1,348 residents in the 2020 Census. Overall, Stanton's 2020 population has 259 residents more than it did in 1970. The population has experienced small dips and spikes but has remained consistent at around 1,300 residents. The table below shows the relative stability of Stanton's population from 1970-2020.

Table 1: Population Change, 1970-2020

Unit	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1970 - 2020	
							# Change	% Change
City of Stanton	1,089	1,315	1,504	1,504	1,417	1,348	+259	+23.78%
City of Greenville	7,493	8,019	8,101	7,935	8,481	8,816	+1,323	+17.66%
Village of McBride	272	252	236	232	205	189	-83	-30.51%
Douglas Township	1,118	1,787	1,944	2,377	2,180	2,239	+1,121	+100.27%
Sidney Township	1,504	2,053	2,375	2,563	2,574	2,538	+1,034	+68.75%
Evergreen Township	1,842	2,183	2,531	2,922	2,858	2,941	+1,099	+59.66%
Day Township	1,180	1,234	1,196	1,282	1,172	1,141	-39	-3.31%
Montcalm County	39,660	47,555	53,059	61,226	63,342	66,614	+26,954	+67.96%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

RACE, GENDER, AGE, AND DISABILITY STATUS

Based on 2020 Census data, 96.4% of City residents are White alone. In addition to White alone, there were 0.8% American Indian/Alaska Native residents and Black/African American residents made 2.8% of the population.

The City has more male than female residents. Females comprise 44 percent (599) of the population, while males comprise 56 percent (557).

Stanton has a lower percentage of senior citizens (15%) than the state (17.2%) and a higher percentage of individuals under 18 years of age (20.2%) than the state (22%). When planning for public programs the differing interests and needs of age ranges should be considered. For example, recreation programming for the school-aged population would take a different form than programs for older adults. The following is a more specific breakdown of the City's population by age range.

The City's median age was 41.5 years which is higher than the Michigan median age of 39.8 years. As the table below points out, this is a higher median age than most of the cities, neighboring townships, and Montcalm County. Stanton is a city with a strong older adult population. About 25% of Stanton's population is aged 55 and older. The City should plan with this population in mind. Housing affordability, a strong and convenient school system, natural amenities and easy access to business and services, are attractive to families and seniors alike.



Table 2: Population by Age Range, City of Stanton, 2020

Age Range (Years)	Number	Percent of the Population in Each Age Group	
		2020	2010
Under 5	81	6.0%	6.2%
5 to 9	57	4.2%	10.5%
10 to 14	92	6.8%	11.7%
15 to 19	31	2.3%	8.2%
20 to 24	68	5.0%	4.5%
25 to 34	177	13.1%	14.1%
35 to 44	166	12.3%	11.0%
45 to 54	199	14.7%	10.1%
55 to 64	234	17.3%	8.9%
65 and Over	188	13.9%	15%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 3: Median Age by Municipality, 1980-2020

Governmental Unit	2010	2020
City of Stanton	30.9	41.5
City of Green-ville	32.4	36.4
Village of McBride	36.9	38.2
Douglass Township	42.2	47.2
Sidney Town-ship	43.2	56.9
Evergreen Township	44.1	39.2
Day Township	48.2	47.6
Montcalm County	38.6	40.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLDS

As of the 2020 Census, Stanton had 543 households and 553 total housing units. This includes 288 family households (53%) and 255 non-family households (47%).

Based on the U.S. Census for 2020:

- The average household size is 2.24 persons.
- The average family size is 2.93 persons.
- Just over one fourth of all households had children under the age of 18.
- About 46% of all households had at least one or more people over 60 years old and about 16% of all households were single seniors living alone. There are 24 grandparent led households in Stanton where a grandparent is responsible for their grandchildren.
- There are 84 female headed households in which there are children present under the age of 18.
- According to the 2020 American Community Survey, 30.2% of Stanton residents (365 persons) are currently living below the poverty line. This is a high percentage of residents who are below the poverty line when compared to Montcalm County (14.8%) and the state of Michigan (12.6%).
- Of the City's 553 occupied housing units, 62.4 percent are owner-occupied, and 37.6 percent are renter occupied.

Table 4: Housing Unit Age

Total Housing Units	Estimate	Percentage of Total Housing Units
Built 2020 or later	0	0.0
Built 2010 to 2019	11	1.5
Built 2000 to 2009	100	10.9
Built 1980 to 1999	242	26.4
Built 1960 to 1979	220	24
Built 1940 to 1959	172	18.8
Built 1939 or earlier	170	18.6

Source: U.S. Census: S2504: 2022 Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Units

Stanton's housing stock is fairly typical of walkable small-town communities. According to the 2020 Census, Stanton had 511 occupied housing units and 42 vacant units. The majority of housing units in Stanton are 2-3-bedroom homes (57%). In addition, 33% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1940 (180 units). Many of these are the fabulous historic homes which are found throughout the City.

The quality, affordability, and availability of a community's housing stock has a significant impact on the vitality and quality of the community as a whole. The following analysis of trends relating to the number of housing units, the amount of owner-occupied, rental, and vacant units, and households by type helps evaluate the health of City of Stanton's housing stock.

ECONOMIC PROFILE

Stanton residents are primarily employed in the retail trade and manufacturing sectors. Most of the manufacturing jobs are located outside the City. The area's retail businesses provide a significant number of employment opportunities. Similar to manufacturing, they are not only found in Stanton but also in the Greenville and Belding areas.

Along with retail trade and manufacturing, the education and health services sector provide many jobs in the community. There are a number of educational and health centers located within the City boundary. As well as Montcalm Community College, located just 5 miles down the road.



The fact that residents work locally or close by is supported by “journey to work data” found in the Census. 39% of the population travels less than 10 minutes to work.

The following table identifies employment sectors by the percentage of those 16 years of age and older in the work force.

Stanton had a total of 454 people 16 and older in the workforce in 2020, and 327 full-time, year-round people 16 and older in the workforce. The main employment sectors for full-time workers were retail trade (107), manufacturing (79), and educational services and healthcare (73). The median household income in Stanton during the 2020 Census was approximately \$38,920, which is lower than both the State at \$63,202 and the County at \$52,390.



Table 5: Employment by Industry

Industry	City of Stanton
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	454
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	3
Construction	25
Manufacturing	79
Wholesale trade	8
Retail trade	107
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	19
Information	3
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	12
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	13
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	73
Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services:	30
Other services, except public administration	48
Public administration	34

Source: DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2020

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY PROFILE



Stanton's population has remained stable over time at about 1,500 residents.



The City has both a strong family presence and a senior citizen presence.



Stanton's residents work in a number of employment fields adding diversity to the local economy.



Stanton's population overall has lower income levels but more affordable housing than the state average, and when compared to Montcalm County.



Top employment sectors continue to be retail trade, manufacturing, and education and health services.



Most Stanton residents work within a 10-minute drive.



The housing stock is diverse in age, type, and style. Much of the current housing stock was built prior to 1940.



The City has a high level of home ownership.



Existing Land Uses and Character

OVERVIEW

Knowledge of current land uses allows Stanton to consider the compatibility of new land uses and is a valuable tool when considering the day-to-day problems associated with land management and the delivery of key public services. The existing land use survey provides an inventory of land use within the community and is a key source of background information used in developing the Master Plan.

A major component of a community Master Plan is to identify existing land use patterns. To make informed decisions regarding the future of land uses in the City of Stanton, it is critical to have a clear understanding of existing land uses and the relationships between those land uses. Documenting the existing land use framework not only identifies the locations of particular

land use activities, but also highlights the areas with future growth potential and areas where land use conflicts may exist.

A key element to consider when determining the future fabric of a community is the identification of where current activities (such as residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational) take place. This existing conditions and land use analysis will help to determine what areas and corridors should be preserved, redeveloped, or intensified.

This master planning process has also identified other existing conditions that help determine not only the Future Land Use Plan, but also the overarching goals, objectives, and recommendations, as described in the next section – specifically nodes and corridors.



RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY, MULTI-FAMILY DENSITY, COMMERCIAL)

The City of Stanton has several residential land uses associated with varied densities. Single-family neighborhoods make up the majority of the City's current housing stock and residential land uses, however several apartment-style buildings are spread throughout Stanton. These multi-family and two-family housing units are located near the western edge of the City limit, near the center downtown core, and on the eastern portion.

Also along the downtown core is the commercial-residential district allowing for mixed use in the center of the City.



COMMERCIAL

Commercial sites are those that are intended for use by for-profit businesses, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and malls. Commercial uses in the City of Stanton are largely located along M-66, East and West Main Street. Both corridors are prominent circulation routes for downtown traffic and also function as ways to gain access to surrounding communities.

These streets make up Downtown Stanton's main thoroughfare, Downtown Stanton hosts businesses like the Montcalm County Government Offices, the US Post Office, religious establishments, a funeral home, and a mixture of food and commercial establishments. The City of Stanton has several commercial land use types that vary in intensity. The local commercial uses are located in and around the downtown area and near residential neighborhoods, while higher intensity commercial is located in the downtown fringes, within close proximity to M-66.



PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC

The City has three public parks located throughout the City. These parks are D. Hale Brake Park, Maddie's Park, and Veterans Memorial Park. Other recreation amenities include disc golf, multiple baseball fields, and tennis courts.

The City of Stanton includes numerous public institutions – City Hall, the Sheriff's Office, the Montcalm County Road Commission, US Postal Service, facilities of the Montcalm County Administrative Office and The County Seat, the White Pine District Library, and a number of churches and other religious institutions along major corridors and within neighborhoods. Fire and EMS services in Stanton area provided by the Stanton Community Fire Department located in the City.

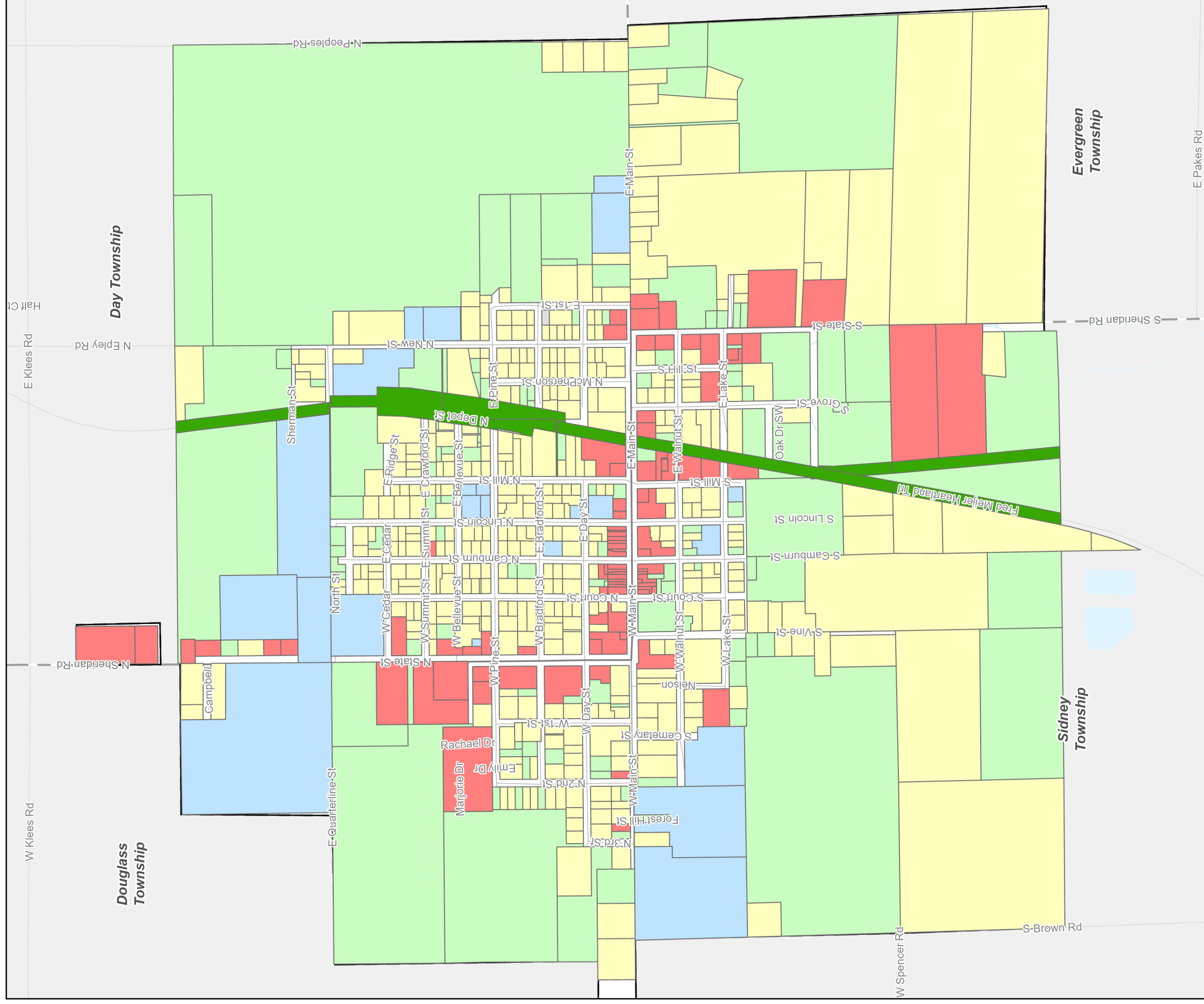


VACANT

The Existing Land Use Map identifies parcels that are undeveloped but are not set aside for parks and preservation. These parcels are a key focus of the Future Land Use Map, with some targeted for residential growth, some targeted for business growth, and some set aside for preservation.

Several large, privately-owned areas of vacant land exist in Stanton, with the largest area making up most of the southern portion of the City boundary.

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Existing Land Use

City of Stanton,
Montcalm County, Michigan

October 28, 2024

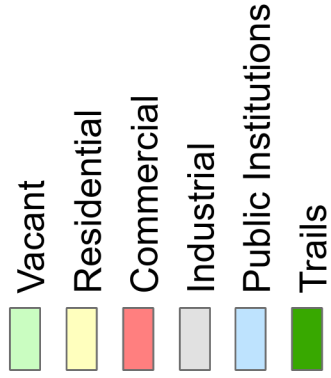
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a.
Data Source: Montcalm County 2024.
McKenna 2024.



MCKENNA



LEGEND



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Natural Features

OVERVIEW

Stanton is blessed with an abundance of natural features including open fields, forest, and agriculture within or near its boundaries. The City is also surrounded by agricultural lands and open fields. These aspects keep Stanton natural and allow the residents to be in close proximity to natural areas.

WATERSHED, WETLANDS, AND FLOODPLAINS

Stanton has a small number of wetlands, creeks, and drains in the southernmost part of the City. Stanton also has an abundance of open spaces and natural areas.

These areas remain open and undeveloped and could benefit the natural resources for the area. This area also holds the potential to add new residential units and park and trail infrastructure.

TOPOGRAPHY

Stanton is blessed with topographical features that make it a unique small-town and agricultural community. The area is relatively flat with some small elevation changes, mostly in the northeast corner of the City. Stanton is at an elevation of 902 feet above sea level. The elevation changes only slightly in the area with a minimum of 869 feet above sea level. The relatively flat elevation of Stanton makes it ideal for agriculture and neighborhood planning.





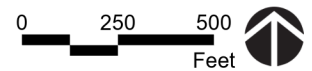
Wetland Features

City of Stanton,
Montcalm County, Michigan

June 5, 2024

LEGEND

- Marine
- Estuary
- Marsh, Swamp, Bog, Prairie
- River
- Lake, Reservoir



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for
Geographic Information, v. 17a.
McKenna 2024.



Existing Transportation Network

ROAD SYSTEMS

A large component of the City's land mass is comprised of its transportation network. The street system of the City of Stanton is comprised of 11.21 miles of roads comprising 8.48 miles of local streets and 2.73 miles of major streets, as classified by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Stanton's one major road (M- 66) controlled by MDOT jurisdiction.

Much of the street system is designed in grid fashion, common to mature small-town communities. This fact also makes the City very easy to traverse on foot, as the grid connects most neighborhoods to one another and to the downtown. In general, continuing the existing grid system in the greater community should be encouraged. The City of Stanton is bisected by Fred Meijer Heartland Trail that cut north and south through the City.

ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

Stanton has four (4) roadway classifications which function in a hierarchical fashion. These include non-certified, minor arterials, major collectors, and local streets. The function of each roadway type is briefly described below. Note: depending on location, some systems may function in more than one capacity:

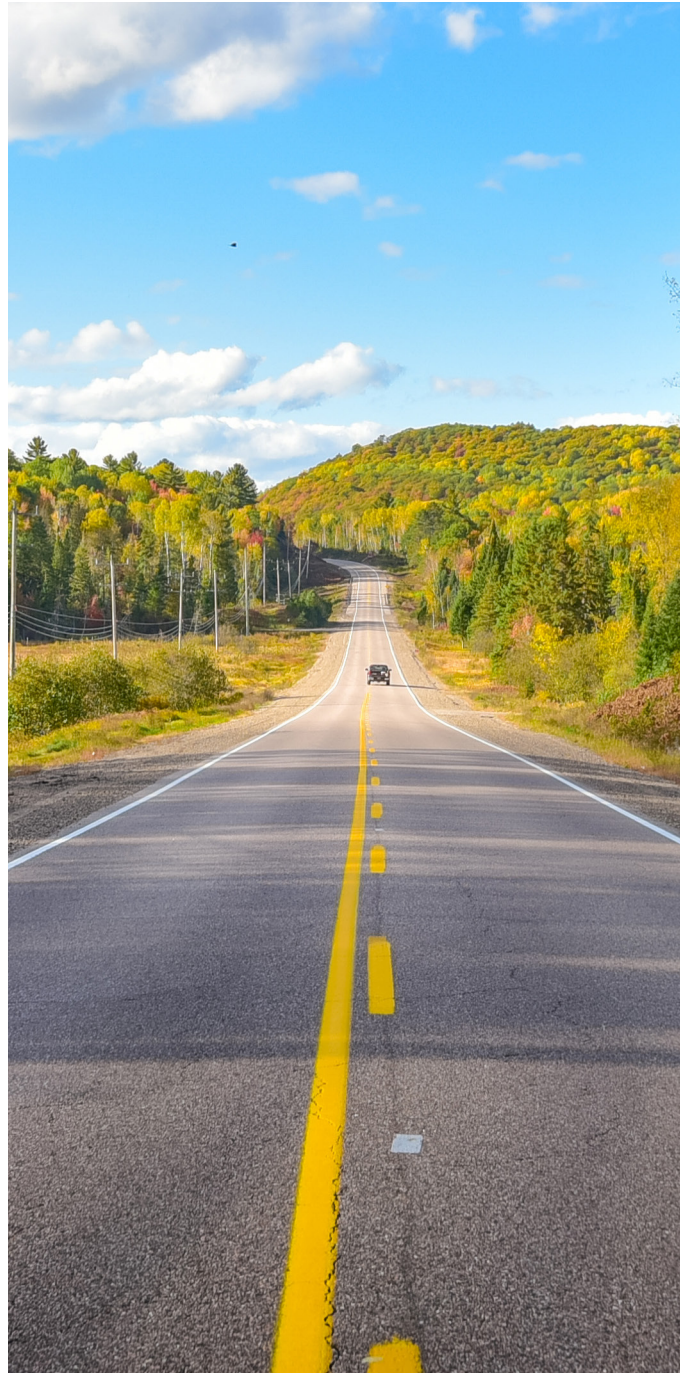
Non-Certified - A Road/highway that is not under the jurisdiction of any public road agency.

Minor Arterial - A Road/highway whose principal function is the movement of traffic received from the City's system of collector streets. Minor arterials often funnel traffic to major arterials. Minor arterials include portions of North and South State Street and West and East Main Street (M-66).

Major Collector - Major collectors provide access to minor or major arterials by traffic originating from local streets. Collectors include portions of West Main Street.

Local Streets - Local streets are the neighborhood (residential) streets on which homes are located.

The 2016 Master Plan emphasized the importance of pedestrian circulation in the City. Stanton is served by M-66, the only state truckline within the City. As detailed earlier, the remainder of the City's road network is comprised of major collectors and local streets, all of which experience fairly minimal through-traffic. Stanton's location in the middle of several population centers (e.g., Grand Rapids, Lansing, Mt. Pleasant) encourages some through-traffic. Such traffic is especially noticeable on Main St. (M-66). While downtown Stanton traffic can occasionally be snarled, the roadways are adequate for the amount of vehicle traffic in Stanton.





AIRPORT

The nearest regional airport nearby to Stanton is Grand Rapids' Gerald R. Ford International Airport, located approximately 54 miles to the west. Gerald R. Ford International Airport is currently served by Allegiant, American, Delta Air, Frontier Airlines, Southwest, United, and offers charter service. The airport offers non-stop service to 19 locations in the U.S. year-round.



MASS TRANSIT

The Montcalm County Commission on Aging offers curb-to-curb and dial-a-ride service to all of Montcalm County. The service is available to residents 60 years and older and free for all eligible users. People can volunteer their time and money to provide rides for those in need. Volunteer drivers donate their time to provide rides for adults for 60 years and over to medical appointments, dental appointments, grocery shopping, errands, and Senior Centers for activities and meals. At least three days' notice is requested to allow time for scheduling. The Montcalm County Transportation Service has wheelchair transportation available.



Downtown Stanton Features Wide Sidewalks for Pedestrian Comfort

SIDEWALKS AND BIKE PATHS

Sidewalks and bike paths are important elements to the character of a community and to the safety of its residents. Sidewalks link homes and neighborhoods and allow children and adults to move freely and safely about. Sidewalks also link residential areas with the City's downtown, parks, schools, and other facilities.

While much of the City contains sidewalks, a large share does not. Generally, existing sidewalks are concentrated near the core of downtown and some of the surrounding neighborhoods. Much of M-66 includes sidewalks as it comes through downtown. The more mature neighborhoods in the City either do not have sidewalks, or the existing sidewalks are not well maintained. Neighborhoods on the edges of town and homes in outlying areas possessing large lots or acreage parcels are mostly void of sidewalks.

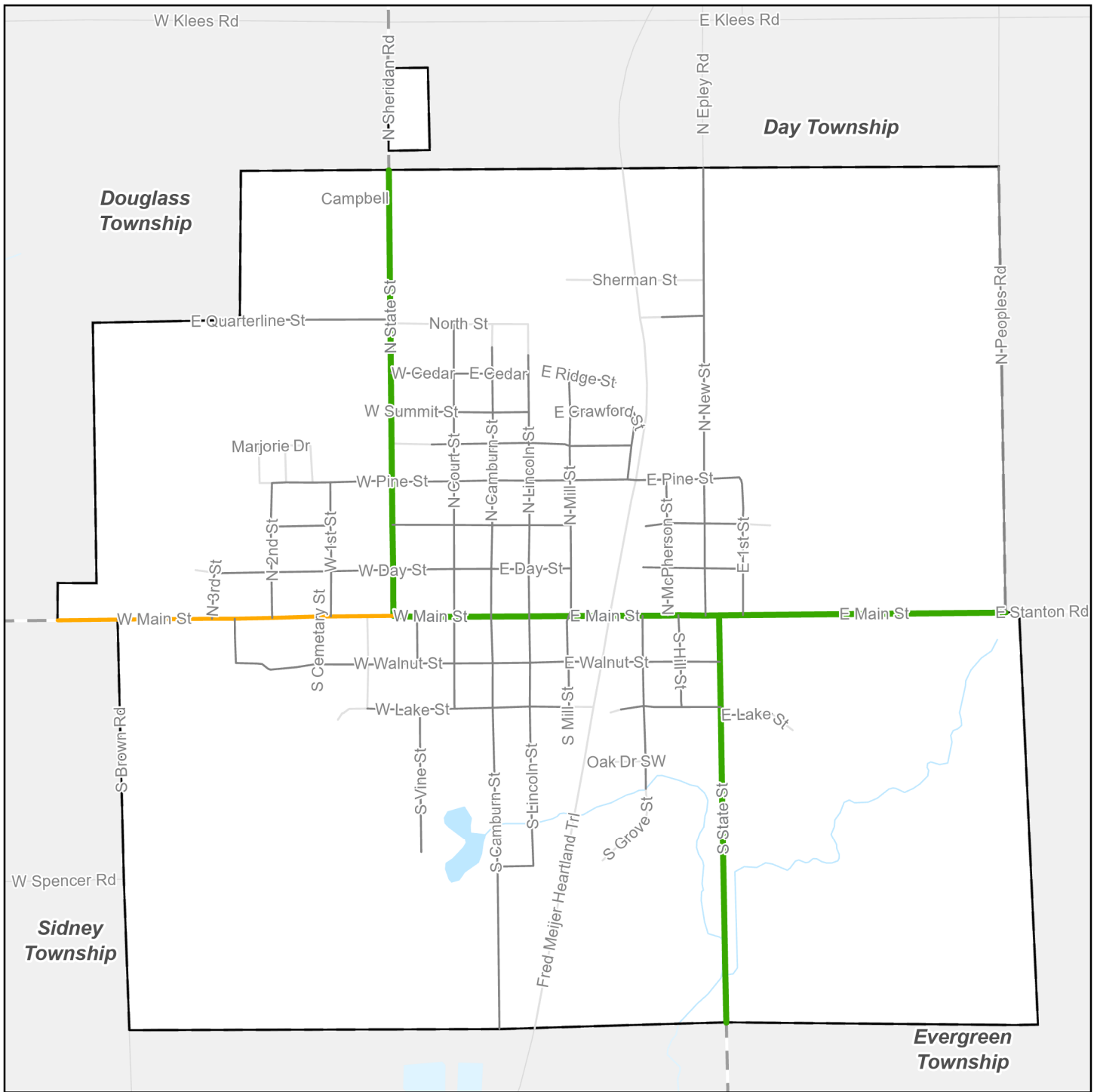
A few of the 2016 Stanton Master Plan goals were to:

- Identify and address missing sections of the sidewalk system in the City
 - Enhance the community's non-motorized system
 - Connect proposed and existing recreational areas to Fred Meijer Heartland Trail
 - Establish trail markings and wayfinding techniques to get users of the trail system into downtown
- Extend sidewalks to connect the downtown and city parks including Veteran's Memorial Park

Respondents of the community survey and public engagement open houses also mentioned the importance of having quality sidewalks in a walkable town. Sidewalks should be located on both sides of a street where housing or retail density are found. Lower density locations that connect key community assets and locations should be encouraged to implement sidewalks and, if safety warrants, required to do so.

The City could institute a voluntary sidewalk replacement program that property owners can use to replace the sidewalk adjacent to their property. Some programs use a 50-50 cost sharing program where the City and the property owner each pay 50% of the cost to remove and replace the sidewalk. The City should examine possible grant funding opportunities to assist in the build out of sidewalk infrastructure, as these types of projects are often cost prohibitive for a small municipality to fund on their own.

Where right-of-way permits, bike paths should be incorporated along each of the City's major and minor arterials and collector streets.



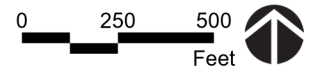
Transportation System

City of Stanton,
Montcalm, Michigan

June 5, 2024

LEGEND

- Non-Certified
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for
Geographic Information, v. 17a.
McKenna 2024.



Community Facilities

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Stanton was officially incorporated as a village in 1869 and became a city in 1881. The City of Stanton is a Home Rule City and has a mayor and 6-member Commission form of government. The Council and the mayor are elected by the citizens. The Planning Commission is appointed by the mayor with approval from the City Commission with liaisons from the commission on each body.

General management and day-to-day operations rest with the Stanton City Manager. The City Manager is appointed by the Stanton City Commission and is the chief administrative officer for the City. The City's full-time public works employees perform maintenance for public infrastructure including streets, stormwater sewer drains, wastewater treatment, water and sewer mains, public facilities, cemeteries, sidewalks, roadside landscaping maintenance, and the parks system. Other City staff members are involved in various aspects of the City programming on an assigned or as-needed basis.

FUNDING

The City of Stanton utilizes several sources of revenue: general fund revenues, fees for service, grants, and various financing tools. Programs rely on general funds like taxes, licenses and permits, and equipment rental fees.





UTILITIES

The City of Stanton is served by a municipal water system that is owned and operated by the Stanton Department of Public Works.

The City is responsible for maintaining 60,720 feet of water main, 220 main line valves, over 1,000 service line related valves, 97 hydrants, 471 water meters, the water wells, and a water tower. The City is also responsible to maintain 55,000 feet of sewer main, 145 man holes, 8 sewer pumps, four lagoons, 2 infiltration beds that cover 1.8 acres each, lift stations, and a wastewater treatment plant.

City policy requires connection to the system if water main access is available. Most homes have access to sewer and water, some have either sewer or water. However, some have none.

The public water supply comes from two municipal ground wells, each over 201 ft. deep. The two wells are located in a well field 601 N New St. Due to the reliance on groundwater the City of Stanton the City performs annual water quality reports. The City has enough water and sewer capacity to meet their current needs. The map below shows the water and sanitary sewer service area in Stanton.





PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection is provided by the City of Stanton, staffed by full-time and reserve police officers and a police chief. The Police Department is centrally located in the City Hall building. Fire services are provided by the Stanton Community Fire Department who also serve the townships of Douglass, Evergreen, Sidney, in addition to the City of Stanton. Service is provided by a full contingent of paid emergency services workers. EMS services are provided by Montcalm County Emergency Services.

Stanton Family Care Center is a doctor's office located on North State Road. Stanton Primary Care University of Michigan Sparrow Medical located on State St. provides regular hour physician appointments and lab services from 7am to 5:15pm on weekdays. Montcalm Care Network is open for health services from 8am-8pm Tuesday through Thursday and 8am to 5pm on Fridays.

There are no hospitals located in the City. However, Sheridan Community Hospital is located in the Village of Sheridan, just south of Stanton and Corewell Health Greenville Hospital is located further southwest of Stanton.

CULTURAL AND CIVIC FACILITIES

Stanton City Hall is located downtown on the corner of S Camburn and E Lake Streets. City Hall, the Fire Department, the library, and post office facilities are located and generate activity in the downtown. The White Pine District Library offers full library services, programming, Wi-Fi, access to computers, and also houses a varied collection of books, CDs, magazines, audiobooks, and DVDs. While public and civic facilities contribute to downtown health, they should remain secondary land uses in the downtown area. Healthy downtowns need the bulk of their use to be retail and service (like eateries) with governmental and office uses as a backdrop for retail activity. The Stanton Old Fashion Days - operated by volunteers - is another community asset that generates activity and commercial exchange. The festival takes place the second weekend in August each summer. It includes a variety of vendors, entertainment events, and activities including a farmers' market, a pageant, variety show, line dancing, tournaments, and a parade.



SCHOOLS

The Central Montcalm School District covers the City of Stanton and surrounding areas outside of the City. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Stanton had a total district enrollment of 1,374 students for the 2023-2024 school year. The school system provides education services to Stanton residents as well as others from the areas around the City limits. The system has a high school, middle school, upper and lower elementary schools and an adult education center.

Montcalm Area ISD is located in the City. The organization supports the seven school districts in the County by offering CTE Programs, Early College, Early Childhood Services, Early On Services, Instructional Services, Local Center Programs, and Special Education Services.

The Stanton Elementary School is currently being used to provide similar services such as adult education and special education services.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are several unique recreational facilities in the City which are important to the character of the community. Stanton has three park areas within the City with a variety of recreational activities available in each. D. Hale Brake Park includes a pavilion picnic area, playground, as well as tennis courts. The Stanton Baseball Fields are located just south of this park as well. Veteran's Memorial Park includes a playground, disc golf, and baseball diamonds. Maddie's Park includes a carious playgrounds for children of different ages, a swingset, a gazebo with picnic amenities, and a walking path.

Chapter 3

Stanton Tomorrow





Introduction

This Section describes the planned future conditions of the City of Stanton, through the duration of this Master Plan. The goals, objectives, and recommendations listed in this Plan derive from the high-level existing conditions analysis, feedback from City staff and officials, stakeholder and public input, analysis of current planning trends, and more.

The primary purpose of this section is to determine the goals and objectives of this Plan and itemize and prioritize the implementation steps for achieving them. The Future Land Use Plan is also a significant component of this Section, which describes the future planned land use of each parcel of land within the City.

Planning Process and Public Input

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

For the purpose of gathering public comments for the Master Plan update, the City of Stanton conducted a community wide survey in the summer and fall of 2024. The survey was promoted on the City of Stanton's Facebook page and residents were informed with a flyer promoting the survey in their summer tax bills. There were a total of 169 responses to the survey before it was closed on October 28, 2023. Most of the survey respondents (56%) own a home in Stanton, but only 36% live there full-time. Survey respondents tended to be middle-aged adults, with those aged 25-44 representing 37% of respondents and those aged 45-64 years representing 33% of respondents.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey began by asking people to indicate their age range and the largest group (37%) was the 25-44 year olds, followed by 45-64-years old (33%), 65-84 years old (20%), 18-24 year olds (6%), and 85+ years old (4%). Respondents were then asked how many people were in their household. The largest response (39%) said they were two-person households, followed by four-person households (19%), five or more person households (17%), three-person households (13%), and one-person households (12%). Participants were then asked about their affiliation with City of Stanton, including their residency mentioned above. 21% attend an institution in City of Stanton like a church or school, 15% work in City of Stanton, 15% work in City of Stanton but live somewhere else, and a small number of other responses. Participants were then asked how long they have lived in City of Stanton, the most common answer was 20+ years (36%), followed by 0-5 years (19%) 6-10 years (15%), 11-20 years (8%) and 22% of respondents said they don't live or own property in Stanton. This indicates that the City of Stanton has long-term residents and newcomers at the same time.



OVERVIEW

Respondents were then asked how long their commute to work is and the answers ranged from, under 10 minutes (39%), 10-15 minutes (17%), over 30 minutes (17%), 20-25 minutes (12%), 15-20 minutes (9%), 25-30 minutes (7%).

The survey then asked respondents to rate their level of priority for economic growth efforts and gave participants the options to develop more housing, develop more retail space, develop more office space, manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, expansion of the downtown, and development of more mixed-use, walkable areas. Answers to these questions are shown on the right. Overall, Stanton Master Plan survey respondents want to see an expansion of the downtown (53%), more mixed-use/walkable areas (38%), More retail space (37%), and more housing (33%).

The survey then asked respondents to rate the level of priority for transportation developments in City of Stanton. Participants were given the option to rate the following items: improved pedestrian safety, improved bicycle infrastructure like bike parking, reduced automobile congestion, connecting to public transit, improved local public transit, beautified roadways, and public art installations. Answers to those questions are shown below on the left.

Respondents were then asked to rate whether or not the current housing options in the City of Stanton meet their needs. Respondents to this question typically fell into two groups. The largest answer choice was, "unsure/no opinion" (45%) "yes" (30%), followed by other answers that received a few responses.

The survey then asked participants to compare different housing styles and rate their appropriateness near them, in City of Stanton but not near them, on a major road near them, on a major road somewhere else in the township, or in downtown Stanton. When asked what housing type would be appropriate near them, the most popular housing style was the traditional single-family home (54%), followed by Cottage Court homes (47%), duplexes (37%), suburban style single-family homes (17%), and other responses received a few votes.

The survey then asked participants to rate their level of agreement to potential beautification efforts in City of Stanton. Respondents were asked to rate the following choices: bury powerlines (31%), improved stormwater drainage (35%), preserve natural space (52%), create more parks (19%), and add more amenities to existing parks (50%).

Figure 1. Rate your level of priority for economic growth efforts.

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NOT A PRIORITY
Development of more housing	33.93% 38	29.46% 33	20.54% 23	16.07% 18
Development of more retail space	36.94% 41	40.54% 45	18.02% 20	4.50% 5
Development of more office space	4.50% 5	35.14% 39	45.05% 50	15.32% 17
Development of more manufacturing/warehousing/logistics space	28.32% 32	30.09% 34	26.55% 30	15.04% 17
Expansion and improvement of the downtown area	53.04% 61	39.13% 45	6.96% 8	0.87% 1
Development of more mixed use/walkable areas (other than the downtown)	38.39% 43	36.61% 41	17.86% 20	7.14% 8

Figure 2. Rate your level of priority for transportation developments efforts.

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NOT A PRIORITY
Improved pedestrian safety	28.32% 32	42.48% 48	23.89% 27	5.31% 6
Improved bicycle infrastructure	22.12% 25	43.36% 49	23.01% 26	11.50% 13
Reduced automobile congestion	16.22% 18	27.93% 31	38.74% 43	17.12% 19
Connectivity to public transit city-wide	22.61% 26	26.96% 31	25.22% 29	25.22% 29
Improved local public transit	27.19% 31	26.32% 30	23.68% 27	22.81% 26
Beautified roadways	20.87% 24	44.35% 51	26.09% 30	8.70% 10
Public art installations	17.54% 20	32.46% 37	28.95% 33	21.05% 24

The survey then asked respondents about the type of new commercial businesses they would like to see in the area, if new businesses are to come. The largest response was lodging and entertainment (24%), followed by small-scale retail businesses (21%), national retail chains (14%), industrial businesses (10%), professional offices (6%), and other responses received a few votes.

Respondents were then asked what recreation amenities they wished they had more of in Stanton. The largest response was restaurants (70%), followed by community event space (43%), shops (33%), bike facilities (30%), and a small number of other responses. The next question asked participants to select park and recreation improvements that they feel would benefit City of Stanton. The largest response was better bathroom facilities (59%), followed by benches and seating (52%), picnic pavilion (52%), better garbage and recycling receptacles (29%), ADA walking path (21%), better parking areas (21%), and better signage (14%). Other options received a small number of responses.

PARKS

The survey then asked participants about potential park and recreation amenities they would like to see more of in City of Stanton. The largest answer was youth and senior recreation programs (46%), followed by passive recreation/conservation areas (33%), neighborhood pocket parks and playgrounds (32%), golf courses (20%), campgrounds (20%), and several other amenities received a few votes.

Participants were then asked how often they used the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail. Answers are below.

Figure 3. How often do you use the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail?		
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Frequently - Several times per month	22.61%	26
Frequently - Once per month	12.17%	14
Occasionally - A few times a year	30.43%	35
Rarely	21.74%	25
Never	13.04%	15
TOTAL		115

Next, respondents were asked about the types of opportunities they think would benefit teens to get them engaged socially and recreationally. The largest response was frequent teen events (31%), followed by teen-inclusive spaces (29%), other outdoor activities not mentioned (16%), community centers (13%), and coffee shops (8%). Answers are shown below.

Figure 4. What types of opportunities do you think would benefit teens to get them engaged socially and recreationally?					
	A GREAT DEAL	A LOT	A MODERATE AMOUNT	NONE AT ALL	TOTAL
Park Activities	26.92% 28	24.04% 25	36.54% 38	12.50% 13	104
Skate Parks	22.12% 23	21.15% 22	38.46% 40	18.27% 19	104
Athletic Courts like Basketball and Pickleball	30.28% 33	30.28% 33	30.28% 33	9.17% 10	109
Trails and/or walking paths	19.23% 20	24.04% 25	43.27% 45	13.46% 14	104
Public Beaches or pools	41.12% 44	24.30% 26	21.50% 23	13.08% 14	107
Biking Activities	11.88% 12	31.68% 32	44.55% 45	11.88% 12	101
Frisbee Golf Courses	19.42% 20	23.30% 24	33.01% 34	24.27% 25	103
Hammock Poles	10.00% 10	18.00% 18	29.00% 29	43.00% 43	100
Horseshoes	5.00% 5	14.00% 14	48.00% 48	33.00% 33	100
GaGa Ball Area	6.12% 6	13.27% 13	36.73% 36	43.88% 43	98
Private Recreation Amenities like canoe and kayak rentals, or bike rentals etc.	16.83% 17	25.74% 26	24.75% 25	32.67% 33	101
Opportunities for social engagement with other residents	27.52% 30	31.19% 34	30.28% 33	11.01% 12	109



Participants were then asked to rate the types of activities that would get teens and young adults more involved socially. The most popular answer was to create teen inclusive spaces (31%), followed by frequent youth events (21%), community centers (18%), coffee shops (12%), and other activities received a few votes.

Shifting away from parks and recreation, participants were asked about what they would like to see in the open space area in the northeastern corner of the city. The largest answer was, add more housing in this area (20%), add more mixed-use options in this area (16%), create new neighborhoods in this area (16%), leave this area alone and don't develop it (11%), use this land for parks and recreation (11%), use this area for industrial production (11%).

Similarly, participants were asked what their ideas were for the vacant area in the southeast portion of the city. The largest response was to add more housing in this area (22%), create new neighborhoods in this area

(19%), add more commercial options in this area (19%), add more mixed-use options in this area (11%), use this area for industrial production (10%), use this land for parks and recreation (8%), leave this area alone and don't develop it (7%).

Lastly, participants were asked what their ideas were for the vacant area in the southwest portion of the city. The largest response was to create new neighborhoods in this area (24%), followed by add more housing in this area (19%), use this land for parks and recreation (18%), leave this area alone and don't develop it (17%), add more mixed-use options in this area (8%), use this area for industrial production (7%).

Participants were then asked an open-ended question about what they love about City of Stanton. There were numerous responses to this question, but the majority of answers focused on the small-town, rural character and charm of the Township being the most important aspect.

Respondents were then asked if they were to be given \$1,000 to spend in Stanton, what would they spend the money on. The largest responses were downtown improvements (27%) and more activities for youth and young adults (27%), better parks and recreation amenities (13%), better schools (13%), better police, fire, EMS (8%). An open-ended question regarding what they would change about City of Stanton. Most responses to these questions tended to fall within a few categories. Respondents mentioned wanting to have more commercial options, a better downtown, more parks and recreation amenities, and community events for youth and adults, among other things.



Participants were then asked what they loved about City of Stanton. Responses were varied and are listed below.

Figure 5. What do you love about the City of Stanton?

#	RESPONSES
1	Close knit community.
2	Laid back and NOT busy.
3	Small town.
4	Small town atmosphere with mostly friendly people.
5	Always lived here.
6	The small town! I don't want to lose our small town feel/ number of people.
7	The small hometown feel.
8	Small town, friendly (usually), relaxed, laid back, physically attractive and pretty much quiet.
9	Most things in town are within walking distance.
10	Friendly people.
11	The small town environment. Typically a safe place. Current events make citizens feel not so safe, but, hopefully resolved soon. The consistency of a small town.
12	Small town freindly for the most part.
13	Small town feel.
14	The older homes, the beautiful yards, nature all around the Heartland Trail The sidewalk gardens.
15	It's home.
16	Small town feel.
17	The peace.
18	The small town feeling of being neighborly. We don't need to implement "big city" improvements.
19	I love the painted walls and the flowers. It looks colorful!
20	It's small.
21	People are generally kind and friendly.
22	Quiet and low crime rate.
23	The heartland trail.
24	Smaller city but has much to offer. Walking distance to many attractions.
25	Fred meijer heartland trail. 2 grocery store choices.
26	Small town atmosphere and community.
27	The Heartland trail.
28	Small town.
29	Small town.
30	We're a small city but we have a big sense of community.
31	The frendliness and welcoming attitudes.
32	Small town feel; basic amenities available.
33	It is very walkable.
34	I love the sense of community.
35	Businesses, court complexes, jail.
36	How quiet it is.
37	I love having a McDonald's, somewhere that is a chain and open consistently. The small business are nice, however unreliable to grab groceries from or a bite to eat.
38	Everyone is so very friendly. It is so quiet and peaceful for the most part. It is quaint, cute and just needs a downtown boost.
39	Small businesses.
40	Tight knit community.
41	It's a beautiful small town. Very friendly people, nice neighborhoods , as a senior I can enjoy my life style here.
42	Quiet.
43	Small town, peaceful, slow pace people are wonderful.
44	Small, Relatively safe place to raise children. Away from the hustle and bustle of other cities.
45	Landscaping and downtown hub has a lot of potential.

46	Quaint and safe.
47	Small town charm.
48	Small friendly community.
49	Its quiet.
50	The small knit community.
51	I feel safe.
52	It's small town family feeling .
53	Quiet small town.
54	IT'S A SMALL TOWN.
55	It's small, has that community feel, safe except for the trail, quiet.
56	The hometown feeling.
57	Small town.
58	The peacefulness and the forestry areas surrounding Stanton.
59	Small.
60	It's home!
61	I use to love my neighbors but they are all gone and most of them live like pigs.
62	It's a very calm neighborhood.
63	Quite and friendly for the most part.
64	Familiarity and history.
65	Old fashioned.
66	Small town feel.
67	Small town and provides potential for a sense of community.

68	Downtown small community.
69	Small town, just need businesses in our stores.
70	The old charm.
71	Our groomer and clifford lake the town like most in this area is unfortunately lacking.
72	It's mostly quiet, friendly, and charming.
73	The residents.
74	The old downtown buildings and flower beds!
75	It seems to want to get better.
76	Convenient location to what is needed. Not super busy. Well maintained.
77	The quiet evening.
78	Small community.
79	Small but busy.
80	The well-kept downtown flower/landscape areas.

Participants were then given the chance to share what they would change about Stanton, if they could. Responses are below.

Figure 6. What would you change about Stanton, if you could?

#	RESPONSES
1	I would bring the city to the present age with public transportation. This is not a luxury but a necessity in today's world. Take your vehicle away or inability to drive and where would be? What could you access?
2	Clean up and beautify the city.
3	Water Bill Charges.
4	Adding a fence around the retention pond in front of the cemetery. That's an accident waiting to happen with the kids now fishing there. One slip and then the city would be sued.
5	Unsure, I love it now.
6	It needs more smaller housing/single story housing for seniors so it opens up housing for families. There's no housing available in Stanton for any size families.
7	More housing alternatives, further development of Veteran's Park and further improvements in the downtown area.
8	That stupid swamp by the cemetery would have to go
9	More youth places for gathering and activities.
10	I am happy with the City of Stanton except for the current recycle facilities. It is cleaner and neater but the inlet for materials is too small and you have to take everything out of your bin piece-by-piece to put in the compactor. It is not efficient.
11	The police are not nice or friendly. They pull people over for no reason more often making up reasons.
12	More things to do and more art/music/theater types of events and activities. We need a community center.
13	I would hope to find businesses that could come in and fill the empty buildings. I would ask the people that own those buildings to fix them up so that someone would want to use them.
14	Needs more housing/apartments.
15	Work to fill EXISTING retail spaces downtown.
16	The water, the high property tax.
17	Bring small industry here to support more middle class families.
18	The Police Chief.
19	More community investment.
20	Retain businesses; Redesign/repurpose current empty business space.
21	Get rid of the pot shops, or at least only have 1.
22	Shopping availability. Maybe an GLIKS. Also more manufacturing.
23	Continue improving city parks. Basketball court at old Stanton elementary needs to be redone. Housing for lower income people. Maddie's park groundskeeping improvements.(weeds are taking over)
24	Residents or city need to take care of sidewalks. I am an avid walker and many of our side walks are popping up or even missing areas. I also feel residents need to be reminded that their landscaping should not go over the sidewalk especially the house at court and cedar the kids use that sidewalk to get to their bus stop and are stuck walking in street due to tall bushes that are not kept well.
25	Bring more small business opportunities to downtown. Possibly apply for grants to help update the storefronts.
26	Bring more restaurants, and manufacturer's for closer job opportunities.
27	Would love to see more funding for social programs, resources, activities and services for the young and old.
28	More housing options available for low income residents-single parent families and sr. citizens.
29	More restaraunts and places of entertainment (movie theatre, golf course, etc.)
30	I would improve the retail space and create more affordable housing options.
31	More low cost apartments or houses.
32	More delivery services.
33	Add more chain businesses, fast food or stores.
34	I would love to see the downtown built up and more businesses attracted to downtown. I would love to see events downtown so people can gather more often. I would also love to see the loose dog situation taken care of as I am afraid to walk in my neighborhood which is sad. I should be able to walk down the street and say hi to the people in my neighborhood but I never know when one of those big dogs will come after me. I really hate that. I moved here so I could do that but I cannot.
35	More restaurants and activities for youth.
36	Need more options for younger people. Stanton feels like it is set up to accommodate one age group (40+). Accommodate and make the town more inviting to younger population.
37	I would like to see more housing available, because we need growth, but not to the extent that we lose our small town feeling.
38	Too many older people we need more younger people.

39	Needs to tap into the resources that have near by, promote being outdoors, hiking, camping, bike riding, etc. Promote being a place to stop during long hauls from traveling up north. stop to dine, explore area shop, coffee and bakery shop, novelty shop promote fresh produce home made items etc. Anderson has a perfect set up need to tap into their resources that you have. Upgrade the parks do movie night at the park, local talent for talent shows in the park, music, comedy shows, magic shows etc. for the everyone to enjoy	60	Water park for kids. More personable police force.
40	Upkeep of homes, sidewalks, more people willing to volunteer, serve, who will actually follow through to help spread the load.	61	Curb/street appeal within the neighborhood. Many properties not having curbs, their lawns are growing out over the pavement of the street, looks sloppy. And the number of people that don't utilize a driveway, parking on the edge of the road in front of their house.... Got cars lined along the street for 3 blocks on Mill Street. Looks awful. Streets damaged from hydrant. flushing keep getting patched instead of working on prevention ideas.
41	More restaurants and meeting spaces, less marijuana shops and more shops for people off all ages to enjoy.	62	Restaurants.
42	Nothing.	63	Get rid of the weeds in the downtown sidewalks and the pathetic flower gardens on main street. A few look great but the rest are awful.
43	More kid friendly areas.	64	More businesses, curb appeal, add a community center and farmers market. Improved green scape areas.
44	Having more options of dining and retail shopping.	65	Make it look nicer.
45	The blight and garbage surrounding so many houses.	66	Nothing.
46	Clean the town up. Yards mowed blight cleaned up. Subdivisions for middle class working families.	67	More senior housing.
47	More activity centers for children.	68	Bringing it back to life, a revitalized old fashioned days, more community events that bring people to the community.
48	Clean up the junk and unlicensed cars. Trash sitting around.	69	Businesses, bakery, coffee/sandwich shop.
49	It doesn't seem like a place for business to thrive. People don't visit.	70	Contract with republic waste services so they can't constantly change your bill.
50	I would get rid of some of the of the people trying to run our town. The water bills should be lowered down in price.	71	Bringing an industrial park will create more jobs in the area and increase the demand for more housing, bringing more residents to Stanton.
51	Increase police force & enforce city ordinances.	72	No more weed stores!! Only one maybe!! Less racing through downtown and loud music from cars!! More small restaurants! More shops! Farmers market on weekends!
52	Open a bakery.	73	Make more long-lasting full-time jobs.
53	Not much.	74	Not enough businesses, breweries, restaurants. Should have more employment options.
54	I would make Stanton look more updated. Improve the fencing, the homes within the downtown area, improve the sidewalks throughout the town and make public transportation for those without it available and easily accessible.	75	Updated store fronts.
55	Nothing.	76	More options for kids activities, pool recreation, etc. Something close by
56	Socialization opportunity.	77	More delivery/food options.
57	Hold residents accountable and make them clean up their yards/homes!	78	I would like to see the store fronts and the old buildings have a little more personality and for the city design to appear more cohesive (without taking away design rights for business owners). In other words, I wish people driving through town would see "a cute little downtown area."
58	We need more draw to our town, be it it social or work. We need places for people to come to and jobs to work at.	79	More restaurants.
59	Stanton needs more young adults.		

Participants were asked to share any additional information about the Stanton Master Plan. Those responses are below.

Figure 7. What do you love about the City of Stanton?

#	RESPONSES
1	I wouldn't want the town to become some warehouse industrial space
2	I think this city would really benefit from more youth centered areas. As I've seen from facebook posts people of this town love to complain about youth walking around town. And it seriously bugs me how much people complain when they dont even know the youth. If the youth of this town had a an updated basketball courts, skate park, splash pad, ect they would have productive things to do. Also more youth centered activities. Gus macker, sports tournaments, basketball with police and fire. Police/ fire vs youth baseball. More youth centered. Community leagues. Community cookouts with police and fire.
3	Parents of children would appreciate not having to drive an hour to Grand Rapids or somewhere else to have access to indoor entertainment.
4	A coffee shop would be an amazing addition. Also an ice skating area where there is already an overflow on the west side of town. Incorporate a sliding hill at the cemetery.
5	Needs some sort of transportation for people that don't have transportation.
6	thanks for asking
7	Get rid of all the recreational marijuana places! They are a waste of space in the city. Let different t small businesses come in. Do we really need 3 in the small area of downtown??!
8	Keep in mind the amount of business/shops that continuously come in and out. In my opinion it would be smart to focus on ways to get you get generation back outside into nature with their peers. It would be great to have a space where that offered natural trails, picnic areas, and water.
9	Housing is a big issue in Montcalm County some new apartments for rent. Need for transportation Transit busing would be wonderful also big need. local transportation for MCC, doctor appointments mental health issue dentist appointment it is all here local just need to upgrade for the resource Stanton has
10	I think we should focus on housing the most in this round of the Master plan. I believe the last one was pretty focused on the park, and while I think we should keep working toward improvements to the parks on an ongoing basis, I think we should shift toward living conditions, including facilitating existing housing to be something we can be proud that people see when they drive through Stanton, and also providing new housing options that are affordable but still nice. There is undeveloped space North of the existing apartments on W Main Street off of 3rd Street that would make a great space for condos or a housing development designed appropriately for Stanton (not overly expensive homes popping up in places like Greenville/Rockford). Maybe even a tiny home community would be a unique draw for those wanting to downsize and live more minimally while enjoying a quiet neighborhood.
11	Do not be greedy! Make changes that would benefit all
12	Need more shops!! More restaurants! Need a coffee shop!!
13	I hope we have a water park for kids in this future plan as well. Especially in veterans park or nearby.
14	Thank you to all of the people who have invested time into downtown development in the past, and to those planning now.

CITY OF STANTON OVERALL

The survey shows a community that takes an enormous amount of pride in their historic downtown. Many survey respondents shared this as the most important aspect of Stanton and the area they would most like to see improved. The survey respondents shared a desire to have more activities for youth and older adults, and more housing and commercial options for residents. Respondents are interested in having more park and recreation options and in upgrading the existing parks and recreation amenities. People tend to want to remain a small-town atmosphere but also want to bring in more activities and amenities.





Future Land Use

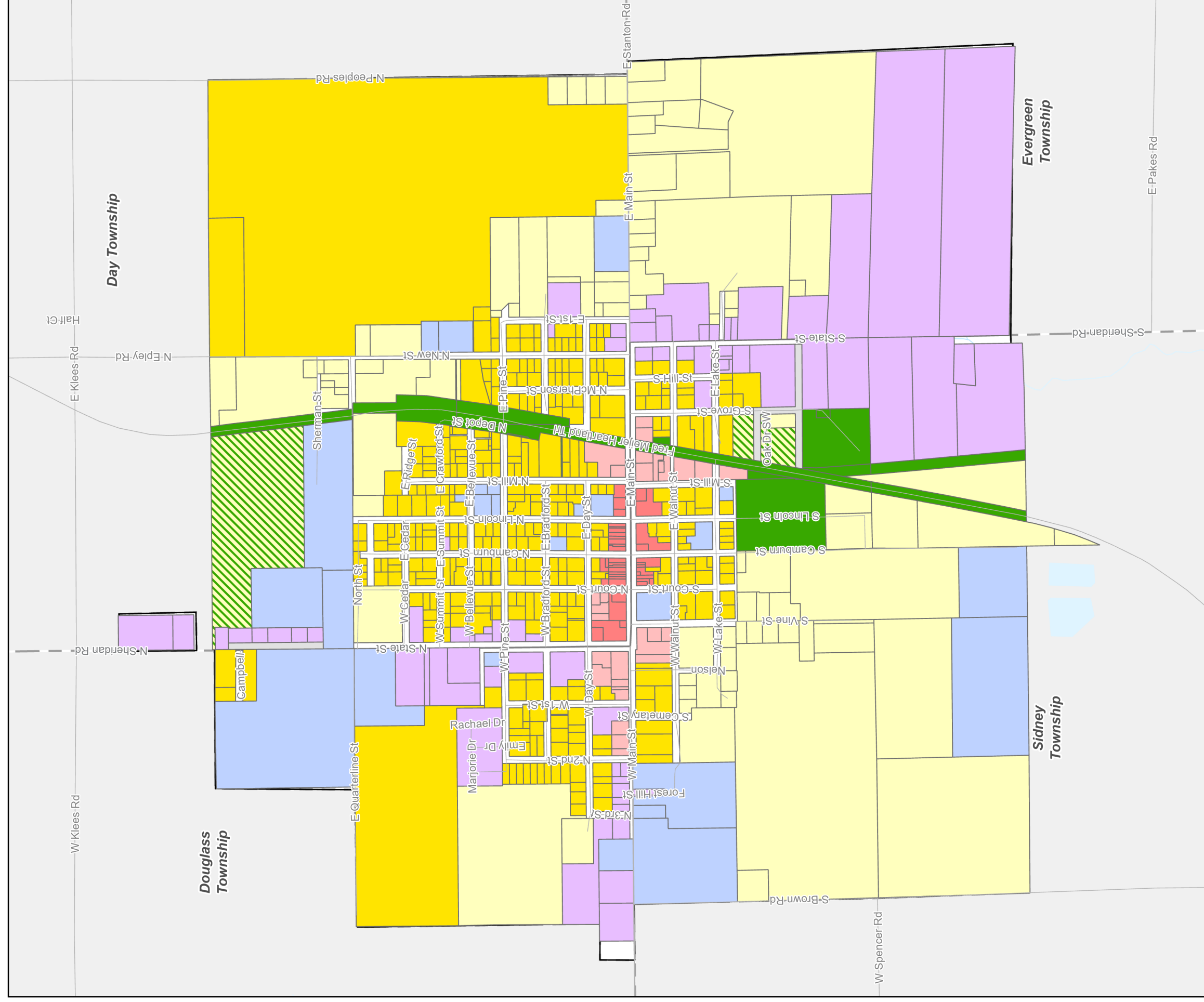
The Future Land Use plan serves to synthesize the comments and opinions of the community and to provide a vision for the community for the next 10 to 15 years. It is based on an analysis of land use issues facing Stanton, existing uses and conditions, demographic and housing data, physical constraints and resources, community infrastructure, circulation patterns, community engagement, and the goals and objectives of this plan.

The Future Land Use map accompanies the Future Land Use plan and attempts to visually represent the types of land uses that Stanton will permit in the future, and where they will be permitted. The future land use map is visionary and does not imply the City of Stanton will build or develop land but will instead allow various land uses to take place. The future land use map is unlike the zoning map, which legally regulates land uses by zone or district. The Future Land Use map, shown on the next page, outlines visions for future land use areas in Stanton.

During the public engagement process, some themes were more prominent than others. It's clear that city residents would like to see Stanton remain a small, charming community with history and character. The sentiment gathered from the community survey and public engagement open houses was that residents wanted to retain the current character of Stanton, while planning for measured growth in the future. Through land use planning and zoning controls, the City intends to ensure that the character of neighborhoods are preserved, that economic development is encouraged, and that the designated mixed use areas become more vibrant and exciting places to be.

The City of Stanton can support future land uses by creating robust zoning requirements that ensure the type of development meets the standards of Stanton.

This Future Land Use plan constitutes the development policy of Stanton, and as the City moves into the future, the plan should be regularly updated to address how development and physical change has impacted the infrastructure and existing conditions.



Future Land Use

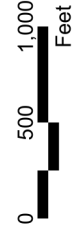
City of Stanton,
Montcalm County, Michigan

November 11, 2024











Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a.
Data Source: Montcalm County 2024, McKenna 2024.



MCKENNA



LEGEND

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Neighborhood Preserve/Expansion |
|  | Low Impact Residential |
|  | Gateway |
|  | Downtown Edge |
|  | Core Downtown |
|  | Public/Institution |
|  | Recreation |
|  | ROW - Undeveloped |
|  | ROW |
|  | New Park Target Areas Overlay |

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Future Land Use Categories

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVE/EXPANSION

General Characteristics

This future land use category is comprised of existing residential areas as well as vacant and clear areas surrounding. These areas typically feature historic single-family houses on residential streets. Buildings in these areas were typically constructed in the mid-to-late twentieth century and many follow a “traditional single-family style” housing typology. Examples of housing type in this area are shown on the right. The key recommendation of this district is to protect and preserve the existing neighborhood character while still allowing for expansion where reasonable.

While significant changes are not proposed, these areas can still be upgraded with sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, landscaping, and other improvements.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Typical uses include single-family homes with neighborhood parks and/or open space with convenient access to schools, places of worship, and government facilities.

Streets and Transportation

- Streets in these areas are typically low-speed and low-volume. These street patterns should include high connectivity with accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street and bicycle infrastructure where appropriate.

Building and Site Design:

- Consistent with existing lot and site layout. Neither additional lot splits, nor combinations of lots are envisioned. Any new construction or major renovations should be consistent with the existing character in terms of setback, height, architecture, and function.
- Appropriate Zoning Districts (Rezoning Discouraged Except to Match Existing Development)



LOW-IMPACT RESIDENTIAL

General Characteristics

This district is found in areas of the City where important natural features render traditional subdivision developments undesirable. In these locations, attached housing types and multi-family buildings should be considered to allow woodlands, wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, and natural viewsheds to be preserved.

Neighborhoods should be designed with connected street patterns but need not be designed with grids. Roads should follow natural contours and allow for contiguous natural space. Walking and biking paths should be constructed to allow for mobility and recreation through the natural space, and should connect to surrounding neighborhoods, amenities, retail, parks, and institutions.

This future land use category is comprised of existing low-density residential areas. The goal of low-impact residential is to maximize the amount of natural area that is preserved during construction. As can be seen in the images to the right, low-impact residential designs keep the most green and natural space possible, while minimizing the size of home sites. These areas commonly feature small single-family homes or duplexes. The key recommendation of this district is to provide housing units while protecting and preserving the existing natural areas.

Although significant changes are not proposed for these areas, these areas can still be upgraded with sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, landscaping, and other improvements.

Appropriate Land Uses

Typical uses include residential dwelling homes and units, parks, open spaces, and other compatible municipal or civic uses. These areas may also be utilized for future senior housing opportunities to accommodate the City's aging population. Schools, shopping centers, and transit facilities are generally located nearby, though not within the same development.

Streets and Transportation

Streets should follow a connected pattern that respects topography and natural features. In some situations, a street for automobile traffic may be unnecessary or undesirable to traverse a preserved natural area and connect to a nearby destination. In these cases, walking or biking paths should be substituted to preserve non-motorized connectivity.

Building and Site Design:

Consistent with existing lot and site layout. Neither additional lot splits, nor combinations of lots are envisioned. Any new construction or major renovations should be consistent with the existing character in terms of setback, height, architecture, and function.

Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-1 Low Density Residential District



Planned Character - Sample Photo

GATEWAY

General Characteristics

This future land use category is comprised of legacy uses and new uses that may be candidates for redevelopment in the future. This category envisions that those uses remain in place until a proposal by the property owner to redevelop them, in which case the vision of this section should guide the redevelopment. In the City of Stanton, these sites are most commonly located on the main corridors leading into the City's downtown.

Appropriate Land Uses

Commercial, residential, office, and industrial uses related to the needs of the citizens of Stanton.

Streets and Transportation

These areas are typically located along high-volume arterial roadways. These areas often exist near residential and commercial areas and must account for high levels of daily traffic variation, due to the mixture of land uses within the area. Where appropriate, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle upgrades should occur to support the development. Sidewalks should be constructed where they do not already exist.

Building and Site Design

Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site. Commercial and industrial buildings should be supported by sufficient but not overly excessive parking areas.

Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-M Multi-Family Residential District
- MHP Mobile Home Park District
- C-1 Central Business District
- C-2 General Commercial District
- C-3 Act 425 Parcels
- C-R Commercial Residential
- I-1 Industrial District



DOWNTOWN EDGE

General Characteristics

This future land use category is designed to create an activity center in the City. This area promotes enhanced live/work/play elements along major corridors. This category is oriented towards granting greater flexibility in land uses while increasing building quality and livability in these areas. These areas seek to enhance walkability by incorporating residential, commercial, and office uses in close proximity.

This category is designed to be flexible and to adapt to the needs of a wide variety of uses of the City. The unifying philosophy is to promote vibrancy through an appropriate mix of commercial, institutional, and residential uses, with site design that reflects the circulation needs dictated by the nearby corridor design.

Appropriate Land Uses

Typical land use in these areas are retail stores, personal services, offices, medical clinics, and restaurants. Residential uses may be incorporated into mixed use developments, especially near the downtown. Schools, civic buildings, parks, and churches should also be encouraged. The intensity of development, and the degree to which it is automobile or pedestrian focused, should flex based on the proximity to major corridors, residential areas, and the City's downtown.

Streets and Transportation

These areas are typically located along high-volume arterial roadways. These areas often exist near residential and commercial areas and must account for high levels of daily traffic variation, due to the mixture of land uses within the area. Where appropriate, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle upgrades should occur to support the development. Sidewalks should be constructed where they do not already exist.

Building and Site Design

Buildings should be built with durable materials and should be architecturally compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings with a connection to the street, including designs with attractive front facades, decorative awnings above entrances, and patios or outdoor seating areas are all highly encouraged.

Site design, in terms of parking and building orientation, should depend on the context. In areas closer to the downtown and along more walkable corridors, parking should be in the rear and pedestrian access should be prioritized. In areas with higher speed traffic, larger parking lots may be acceptable, though pedestrian safety should still be considered. Building height is also variable depending on the specific location.

Appropriate Zoning Districts

- C-1 Central Business District
- C-2 General Commercial District
- C-3 Act 425 Parcels
- C-R Commercial Residential



CORE DOWNTOWN

General Characteristics

This future land use category is designed to promote high-quality urban design and enhanced live/work/play elements within downtown Stanton. This category is oriented towards granting greater flexibility towards specific uses while increasing building quality and livability in these areas. Due to its location and potential as a placemaking opportunity, this area represents the most intense mixed use future land use category.

Appropriate Land Uses

Typical land use in this area resembles traditional, walkable “main street” developments such as small retail businesses, restaurants, offices, and incorporated residential uses. Buildings must conform to a high standard of design and must fit the architectural style of the area. They must also be constructed close to the sidewalk to enhance walkability and the area’s sense of place. Businesses such as small retail stores, personal services, small offices (including medical) should populate ground floors of buildings. Residential uses or office uses should be on upper floors.

Streets and Transportation

This area is centered around Main Street. The area features a small-town street grid network surrounding it. Streets should be low-speed and low-volume with ample sidewalk and pedestrian facilities.

Building and Site Design

Buildings should be built with high-quality materials and should be architecturally compatible with the surrounding architecture of other downtown buildings. Buildings must have a welcoming connection to the sidewalk, including designs with attractive front facades and easily accessible entrances. Architectural variation is highly encouraged to create a character on long and connected facades.

Parking areas may be located in the rear yards of buildings, but buildings should front the street and provide parking to the rear. Parking areas should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees, where applicable.

Appropriate Zoning District

- C-1 Central Business District
- C-R Commercial Residential



PUBLIC INSTITUTION

General Characteristics

Existing public, educational, institutional, and municipal uses are called out on the Future Land Use map. It is the intent of this plan that these uses remain in place.

Appropriate Land Uses

Public spaces, government offices, and religious institutions are appropriate here.

Streets and Transportation

Streets should be private and very low volume and used only to access the uses in questions.

Building and Site Design

Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site. Public buildings should be supported by sufficient but not overly excessive parking areas.

Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-1 Low Density Residential District
- C-R Commercial Residential District



Planned Character - Sample Photo

RECREATION

General Characteristics

This designation identifies park land and open space. Areas within this designation can be used for both passive and active recreation. Natural features and developed parklands should be compatible with the surrounding landscape and neighborhood.

Appropriate Land Uses

All areas should maintain uses which promote the inclusion of the public and provide recreational and gathering opportunities.

Streets and Transportation

Existing pedestrian and cyclist trails should be maintained. Additional pathways and associated amenities (e.g., bicycle racks, water fountains, way finding signage, lighting) should be constructed as needed. The connection of such pathways to connect the parks is strongly encouraged where feasible.

Building and Site Design

There are no specific Building and Site Design recommendations in this Plan for the Parks/Open Space designation, although high quality architecture is encouraged. Buildings should be well lit and highly visible, but of scale and appearance that is consistent with their surroundings and should provide public amenities. Parks should be maintained and upgraded as needed.



NEW PARK TARGET AREA

General Characteristics

This overlay identifies areas that have potential for new parks and open spaces. Areas within this designation can be used for both passive and active recreation. Natural features and new parklands should be compatible with the surrounding landscape and neighborhood.

Appropriate Land Uses

All areas should maintain uses which promote the inclusion of the public and provide recreational and gathering opportunities.



Streets and Transportation

Existing pedestrian and cyclist trails should be maintained. Additional pathways and associated amenities (e.g., bicycle racks, water fountains, way finding signage, lighting) should be constructed as needed. The connection of such pathways to connect the parks is strongly encouraged where feasible.

Building and Site Design

There are no specific Building and Site Design recommendations in this Plan for the New Park Target Areas overlay, although high quality architecture is encouraged. Buildings should be well lit and highly visible, but of scale and appearance that is consistent with their surroundings and should provide public amenities. Parks should be maintained and upgraded as needed.



Downtown Future Visions

RESIDENTIAL IN THE DOWNTOWN

Downtown Stanton has a number of historic 2-story buildings that could offer residential spaces. The buildings have commercial businesses on the first floor but could also add apartments or living spaces above.

This vision provides the potential for 24-hour activity in the downtown and could generate more foot traffic.

The buildings should have storefronts facing Main Street, with residential, office, medical, or short-term rental uses on upper floors. Parking should be in the rear of buildings whenever possible to avoid taking spaces away from retail businesses for long periods of time.

ACTIVATED ALLEYS

Activated alleyways are another placemaking tool that Stanton could use to create spaces for events and activities to take place. Many communities “activate” their alleys as a low-cost way to beautify and activate areas of the City that would normally be viewed as wasted space.

Stanton currently has one activated alleyway and four other potential alleys/building facades that could be activated. The alley spaces could also provide additional gathering spaces or activity centers for citywide events. The City or businesses could invest in low-cost movable recreation equipment like bean bag toss, a swing set, game stations for large Jenga, large checkers, or large connect four games. Seating and tables can be made of wooden electrical spools and other low-cost, movable items. Stanton could decide if they would maintain this event space for certain seasons like summer, or just reserve it for special events. Images of potential alley activation sites are shown to the right. They could be imagined having

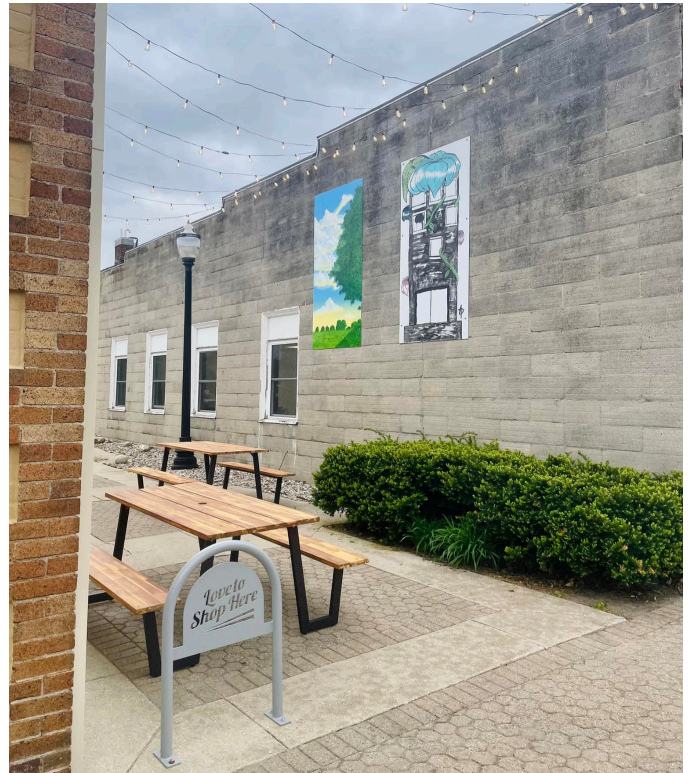
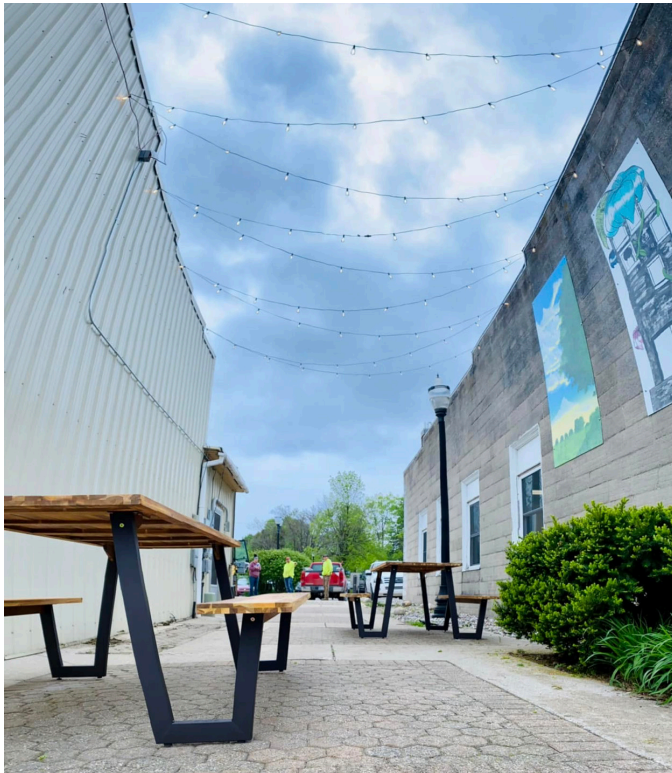
strings of white lights going across the top, or even stringing colored umbrellas together to create color. Small seating could be added along the right side of the image where there are currently stones. Murals could decorate the walls and tell the history of Stanton or describe the people who live there now.

The alleyways running along the sides of downtown businesses present a unique opportunity for the City of Stanton to create a destination pedestrian space.

The alleys could include outdoor dining, an outdoor game and activity center, as well as streetscape improvements and placemaking elements like flower boxes. Stanton could also add a stage area so that concerts or other events can take place in the activated alley. Activated alleys could also be places to allow food trucks to operate, especially for special events.

By creating a dumpster corral for downtown businesses, and adding landscaping, artwork, vibrant colors and lighting, the alley could become an activity space, and regional destination for entertainment and dining.

Local restaurants or a micro-brewery in the vicinity could become vendors for the alley, especially at special events. Vendors could be leveraged to provide activity and street life. Popular festivals could also take advantage of the new public space. The alley should be given a catchy name to help with marketing and activation.





PUBLIC ART

Another placemaking tool that Stanton could use is encouraging installations of sculpture art at key locations around the City. Many communities will hold sculpture art contest events and award the winner with a prize for allowing the City to keep the sculpture for public enjoyment. This can be a relatively low-cost way to create a buzz in the City, gain a placemaking amenity, and beautify the City. There are many potential locations for art installations throughout the City, however they would be best in highly visible areas. Murals are another relatively low-cost way to improve the look and feel of downtown. Murals can be painted on the side of brick buildings to brighten the look. The image shown right is in Williamston, Michigan and shows an example of how this feature can make the area look better. Others choose to make murals celebrating the history or diversity of the town. These could all be low-cost placemaking options for Stanton to consider.



Architecture and Historic Preservation

It is inevitable that changes to structures in the downtown area will occur over time. However, it is imperative that these changes do not damage the historic building fabric or compromise the character of the downtown. Restoration or preservation of storefronts will improve the overall character of the downtown area, strengthen its position as a regional destination, and strengthen its value to the community.

The historic buildings in the downtown area were constructed according to a common architectural tradition. While the style of each building may be somewhat different, there are commonalities that all of the historic downtown buildings share.

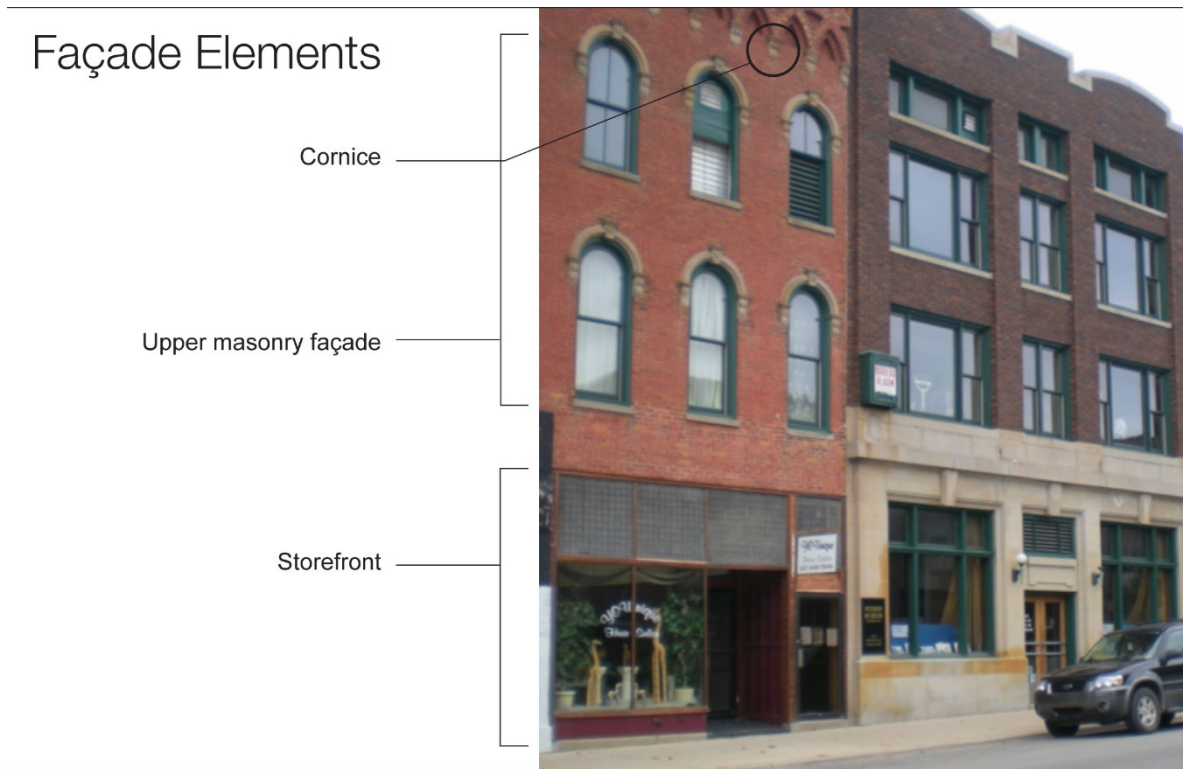
These common design elements are rooted in a centuries-old tradition of village/town building. Such centuries-old traditions develop over time in response to the needs of human activity.

Any building renovation or alteration, no matter the planned use, must retain the overall design integrity of the historic building by protecting or restoring the original features, design elements, and materials. This section provides recommendations for basic design standards that will help maintain the historic quality of Stanton's downtown, no matter what the particular architectural style of the building.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following general standards are to be applied to rehabilitation projects, considering economic and technical feasibility:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, they will not detract from the historic value and integrity of the property.



MAINTAIN THE DOWNTOWN BUILDING DESIGN TRADITION

There are two primary elements to downtown building design - 1) the layout, location, and proportion of major building elements, and 2) architectural detailing. In the centuries-old "main street" building design tradition, major building elements follow a very rigid set of rules while architectural detailing distinguishes any particular building's unique character and flair.

So long as all buildings comply with a simple set of building element design standards, downtown Stanton's walkable and historic character will be preserved.

The specific architectural details may vary drastically, which is acceptable. When a building has a strong architectural character, this character should be preserved. It is not the intent of these design guidelines to dictate architectural style - only to ensure that the vernacular traditions of main street design involving major building elements are followed.

The basic main street building façade consists of three major elements:

- A decorative cornice that caps the building,
- An opaque upper masonry façade with regularly spaced window openings, and
- A storefront along the ground floor with an entrance at the front of the building and large window displays.

These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles but the result is essentially the same. Stanton's oldest and largest buildings share all three traits (while others share only the storefront element).



DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION DESIGN STANDARDS

Downtown building construction and renovation should be consistent with the following standards:

Transparent Storefront Area

- The traditional storefront is composed almost entirely of windows. The large glass area serves to display the goods the business has to sell, as well as allowing natural light deep into the store to minimize the need for artificial light sources.
- If the interior uses of a particular building must remain concealed, then interior window treatments should be employed.
- Do not cover or enclose storefronts with opaque materials such as metal, wood, or brick.

Building Entrances

- Entrances should be maintained or restored in their original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed considering traditional design themes and its relationship to the overall building façade and symmetry.
- Recessed entrances are encouraged because they prevent doors from swinging open onto the sidewalk and increase display areas.

Awnings and Canopies

- Awnings and canopies should correspond to the width of storefront openings and should not obscure or damage important architectural details.
- Awnings may be canvas or metal and may be sloped or level.
- Awnings and canopies should not be internally lit.

Windows on Upper Stories

- Upper story windows should retain their original openings and should be taller than they are wide.
- If upper story windows have been bricked over or otherwise altered from their original status, they should be restored to their original design.

Building Materials

- Original materials should serve as the primary guide for what is acceptable to use in renovations or restorations.
- Original materials or features must not be concealed, and if they have been concealed by past renovations they should be restored.
- Generally, brick and masonry were the primary materials used in downtown Stanton and should be so in the future.
- Supplemental materials should, to the greatest extent possible, be natural materials such as wood, stone, or cast concrete.
- Avoid the use of materials that are not visually compatible with the original façade such as shiny metals, plastic panels, vinyl windows, or vinyl doors.
- All glass should be non-reflective and clear or minimally tinted.

Do This:

- Good maintenance of original building features
- Upper story windows with vertical aspect and historically accurate maintenance
- Sign band
- Transom windows
- Recessed entry with historically consistent doors
- Transparent storefront with lots of glass



Don't Do This:

- Poor maintenance of original building features
- Inaccurately proportioned building entrance and door with improper materials
- Non-transparent glass block windows
- Brick addition hides original storefront



Sustainability and Resiliency

In recent years, there has been a renewed emphasis on the concept of sustainability – i.e., the ability of communities to maintain themselves economically, environmentally, and socially in the years to come. The following pages include ways in which the City of Stanton and its citizens intend to work to protect the environmental and historical resources of the community.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Green building techniques can ensure that new and renovated buildings in Stanton are environmentally sustainable. Examples include the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, the International WELL Building Institute, Green Globes, the Building Research Establishment Assessment Method, and others. Each program certifies new construction and renovations as environmentally sustainable. The organization uses checklists of building techniques to grade construction projects and assign "Silver," "Gold," or "Platinum" designations to them.

The City of Stanton is well-positioned to attract developments looking to attain LEED status, by promoting sustainable design elements such as bike racks, sidewalks, reduced parking, and more.

The table to the right lists a variety of construction materials, designs, and techniques that can reduce a community's environmental impact and improve its sustainability for the future. Some are expensive and technical, while others are simple, easy, and cost little-to-nothing. Picking just a few of the most feasible for a project can go a long way in reducing the project's environmental impact. Further, some techniques can be implemented inexpensively by homeowners if they are given the tools to execute them.

Site Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize Disturbed Area • Maximize Permeable Surface • Stormwater Management • Density of Development
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Trees • Maximize Permeable Surface • Green Roof
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainwater Harvesting • Stormwater Management • "Graywater" Re-Use • High-Efficiency Fixtures
Energy/HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy-Efficient Appliances • Efficient Hot Water Distribution • Pipe Insulation • Combustion Venting • Moisture Control • Room-by-Room Controls • Enhanced Insulation • South-Facing Windows • Solar Panels • Geothermal Energy
Building Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycled Materials • Efficient Construction Management (reduce over-ordering) • Environmentally-safe Materials • On-Site Waste Reduction



ENERGY CONSUMPTION

With energy costs rising, one of the most important contributors to community sustainability is conservation. There are many ways to do so, ranging from expensive and complex technology to simple, everyday solutions.

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION

The simplest and easiest way to save energy at home is simply to use the heat and air conditioning less. This is easier said than done for many families, especially in Michigan winters. However, simple home remedies such as putting fans in the windows on hot days and dressing in layers on cold days can help reduce energy bills. Many families already practice these techniques as part of their everyday life.

Construction techniques can also help. Quality materials, such as insulation and windows, are obviously important, but design elements can also be important, such as large windows, especially facing south, to allow sunlight to heat (and light) the home. Finished basements are also a useful feature, because they tend to stay cool on hot summer days.

There are also more technical and complex solutions. These are not feasible for many families, but they should not be discouraged, and indeed can be encouraged through zoning and other measures.

Green roofs not only manage storm water, they also serve to cool the home in the summer. Solar panels can dramatically reduce a family's electricity bill and can even, in some cases, be a source of income.

Geothermal heating and cooling systems can be especially effective in small towns and rural communities, because large lots mean piping can be laid horizontally through the ground, reducing the cost as compared to the vertical systems necessary in more dense areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Most people use a large amount of energy in getting from place to place, and with fuel prices rising, this is increasingly becoming a budgetary strain on families, especially in communities where residents drive a long way to reach jobs, shopping, or school. For that reason, it is important for communities to be walkable and bikeable. The creation of additional non-motorized transportation options, as described elsewhere in this Plan, will allow residents of Stanton to save on gas.

Another way that transportation resources can be saved is through improved communications technology. With better internet and wireless services, City residents can use technology to commute, shop, and communicate, and will not have to drive as often.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The patterns of growth and development in a community are also a key element of sustainability. Stanton is perfectly situated as part of the Lansing region, but is also a historic, walkable community in its own right. Future development should reflect a partnership with neighboring communities to encourage sustainable growth patterns.

EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Many ways to improve community sustainability are simple, but not widely implemented because people are unaware or do not understand their benefits. Thus, education about sustainability is important. A marketing campaign explaining the impact of various practices, not only on the environment, but also on the family budget, could be effective. Setting up a community garden, with or without composting, often results in other people starting their own backyard garden.

Federal tax incentives are available for energy efficiency upgrades by homeowners and landlords. Other communities have found success with these programs. Many homeowners would like to improve the efficiency of their properties but are unable to afford the upfront costs. This is especially true of seasonal residents, who worry about the cost of heating a home that they do not live in the winter. Grant programs can offset those costs.

Other, more complex, sustainability initiatives such as solar or wind power installations built by the City are possible, but not economically practical in the short term. However, the City can make a big difference with simple transportation improvements such as sidewalks, street lighting, and bike lanes.



Chapter 4

Implementing Viable Change

A photograph of a forest path with trees and green foliage. The path is made of dirt and fallen leaves, leading into a dense forest with many green trees and bushes.

Introduction

A Master Plan is at its strongest and most actionable when specific implementation tasks and strategies are included, described in detail, programmed into a time frame, and clearly marked by which organization will be responsible for leading or supporting each item. Thus, below is an Action Plan that should be implemented by the City. Further, the next section of this chapter includes potential resources for the City and its partners to utilize in implementing the Action Plan.

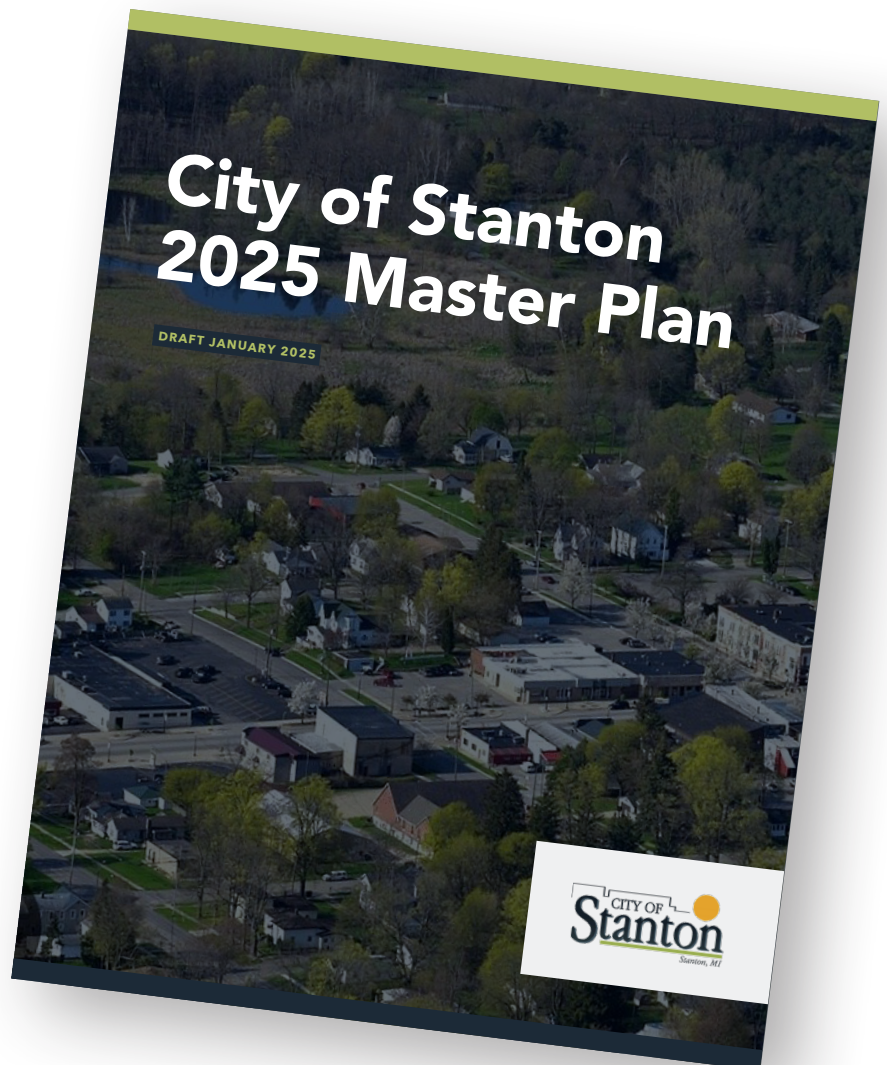


Becoming Redevelopment Ready

The City of Stanton strives to achieve Redevelopment Ready Certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Certification would unlock resources for the implementation of this plan.

In order to achieve certification, the City must update its planning and zoning documents and processes. This Master Plan update is one of the key steps. A subsequent update to the Zoning Ordinance is also important, and the City will need to evaluate its entitlement processes and public engagement policies, as described below.

The following section evaluates the City's current documents (including this plan) against the Redevelopment Ready Certification Best Practices.



BEST PRACTICE 1.1: MASTER PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The master plan reflects the community's desired direction for the future.	Complete	This plan represents the most up-to-date vision of the City, based on public engagement and the efforts of the Planning Commission and City Staff.
The master plan identifies strategies for priority redevelopment areas.	Complete	Pages 52, 58-67, 87
The master plan addresses land use and infrastructure, including complete streets.	Complete	Pages 17-35, 58-67
The master plan includes a zoning plan.	Complete	Pages 94-98
The master plan establishes goals, implementation actions, timelines and responsible parties.	Complete	Pages 86-93, 99-103
The master plan is accessible online.	Upcoming	Once this plan is adopted, it will be hosted in an easy-to-find place on the City's website.
Progress on master plan implementation is assessed annually.	Upcoming	Once this plan is adopted, the Planning Commission should include Master Plan implementation progress in its annual report to City Council.

BEST PRACTICE 1.2: DOWNTOWN PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The downtown or corridor plan identifies development area boundaries.	Complete	Found in the Downtown Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan.
The downtown or corridor plan clearly identifies priority projects.	Complete	Found in the Downtown Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan.
The downtown or corridor plan includes mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development elements.	Complete	Pages 58-67
The plan is available online.	Complete	The Master Plan, including the downtown plan, is available on the City of Stanton website.

BEST PRACTICE 1.3: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The capital improvements plan details a minimum of six years (beginning with the current year) of public structures and improvements and is updated annually.	Complete	The City of Stanton has recently updated its Capital Improvement Plan for the next 6 years.
The capital improvements plan coordinates projects to minimize construction costs.	Complete	The City of Stanton has recently updated its Capital Improvement Plan for the next 6 years.
The capital improvements plan coordinates with adopted community plans and the budget.	Complete	The City of Stanton has recently updated its Capital Improvement Plan for the next 6 years.
The plan is available online.	Complete	The City of Stanton has recently updated its Capital Improvement Plan for the next 6 years.

BEST PRACTICE 1.4: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The plan identifies key stakeholders, including those not normally at the visioning table.	Complete	Pages 77-81 of this Plan specifies a goal to improve public awareness and involvement in the governmental process.
The plan describes public participation methods and the appropriate venue to use each method.	Complete	Page 87 of this Plan specifies a goal to improve public awareness and involvement in the governmental process.
The plan includes the use of both traditional and proactive engagement methods	Complete	The City plans to include these aspects in their Marketing Plan.
The plan identifies how the community will report out results of engagement efforts.	Complete	The City plans to include these aspects in their Marketing Plan.
The community reviews and updates the plan on a regular basis.	Complete	The City plans to include these aspects in their Marketing Plan.
The community provides an update on engagement activity to the governing body at least annually.	Complete	The City plans to include these aspects in their Marketing Plan.

BEST PRACTICE 2.1: ZONING ALIGNMENT WITH MASTER PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community has evaluated the master plan's recommendations to determine if changes to the zoning map or ordinance are needed.	Complete	Pages 94-98
The community has made updates to the zoning ordinance to align with the goals and zoning recommendations from the master plan.	Upcoming	The City will undertake Zoning text updates after the completion of the Master Plan.

BEST PRACTICE 2.2: ZONING ACCESSIBILITY AND USER-FRIENDLINESS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The ordinance and zoning map are accessible online.	Complete	The Ordinance and Map are available at https://stantononline.com/government/ordinances/zoning/
The ordinance portrays clear definitions and requirements.	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The Ordinance is sufficient in this regard, but will be improved during the Zoning Update.
The ordinance includes graphics, tables or charts.	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The Ordinance is sufficient in this regard, but will be improved during the Zoning Update.

BEST PRACTICE 2.3: ZONING FOR CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENT

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The ordinance allows mixed-use buildings by-right in designated areas of concentrated development.	Complete	Upper Story Residential dwellings are currently allowed in the C-1 District.
The ordinance requires TWO or more of the following elements in areas of concentrated development:		
Build-to lines	Complete	The C-1 District has a minimum front setback of 0 and a maximum of 20 feet from the right-of-way line.
Open store fronts	Upcoming	Pages 61-64 of the Master Plan. The Zoning Ordinance does not require this.
Outdoor dining	Complete	The Zoning Ordinance allows outdoor dining in Section 8.02.
Minimum ground floor transparency	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a minimum ground floor transparency requirement.
Front-facing doorways	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a requirement for front-facing doorways.
Parking located in the rear of the building	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance should advise rear parking, especially in the downtown.
Walk-up windows	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a requirement for walk-up windows.
Public art program	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a suggestion for public art.
Temporary or permanent parklets	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a requirement for temporary parks or parklets.

BEST PRACTICE 2.4: ZONING FOR HOUSING DIVERSITY

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The ordinance requires THREE or more of the following housing types by right:		
Accessory Dwelling Units	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance has no provisions for Accessory Dwelling Units.
Townhouses/Rowhouses	Complete	Currently permitted in the R-M District.
Triplexes	Complete	Currently permitted in R-M and C-R districts.
Quadplexes	Complete	Currently permitted in R-M and C-R districts.
6-Plexes	Complete	Currently permitted as a special land use in the R-M and C-R districts.
Commercial	Complete	Currently permitted in the C-R district.
Stacked Flats	Upcoming	Currently not permitted in ZO. The City will consider permitting them in R-M and other districts.
First Floor Residential with Commercial	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.
Residential Above Commercial	Complete	Currently permitted in the C-R district.
Micro Units	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.
Cottage Housing/Bungalow Courts	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.
Tiny Houses	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.

BEST PRACTICE 2.5: ZONING FOR PARKING FLEXIBILITY

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The ordinance includes regulations for THREE or more of the following tools approved either administratively or by the planning commission:		
Reduction or elimination of required parking when on-street or public parking is available	Complete	The Zoning provisions allow street parking to fulfil parking requirements in the C-R and C-1 Districts.
Connections between parking lots	Upcoming	The City will consider allowing connected parking lots.
Shared parking agreements	Complete	The Zoning provisions on shared parking will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Parking Maximums	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.
Elimination of Parking Minimums	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate for any areas.
Parking Waivers	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the development of other parking reforms.
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	Upcoming	The City will develop simple regulations for these.
Bicycle Parking	TBD	The City will determine what areas are appropriate for required bicycle parking.
Payment in Lieu of Parking	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the development of other parking reforms.
Reduction of Required Parking for Complementary Mixed Uses	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The Zoning provisions on shared parking will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Banked/Deferred Parking	TBD	The City will determine what areas are appropriate for deferred parking.

BEST PRACTICE 2.6: ZONING FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The ordinance includes regulations for THREE or more of the following:		
Low impact development techniques (rain gardens, bioswales, etc.)	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the evaluation of landscaping requirements.
Rain water collection (blue roofs, cisterns, water harvesting, stormwater vaults, etc.)	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the evaluation of landscaping requirements.
Green roofs	TBD	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the evaluation of landscaping requirements.
Permeable pavement	Complete	The City allows for alternate parking lot surfaces for stormwater drainage to be approved by the Planning Commission.
Steep-slope Protections	TBD	The City will evaluate the need for this best practice. Given the relatively flat topography of Stanton, this is not likely a concern.
Street-Tree Planting Standards	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The Zoning provisions on street trees will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Tree Preservation or Replacement Standards	Upcoming	The City will establish a tree replacement program for the areas designated as Low Impact Residential on the Future Land Use Map.
Parking Lot Internal Landscaping Standards	Complete	The Zoning provisions on parking lot landscaping will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Open space preservation development (i.e., cluster housing)	Complete	The Zoning provisions on cluster housing will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Required Native or Low-Maintenance Plantings	Upcoming	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the evaluation of landscaping and parking requirements.
Renewable Energy	TBD	The ZO has basic provisions for wind and solar. The City will continue to develop regulations for wind and solar energy for consistency with best practices.
Buffering standards around water bodies or other natural resources	Upcoming	The City will determine whether this is appropriate or necessary during the evaluation of landscaping and parking requirements.
Off-site stormwater regulations allowing site developers to participate in district-scale stormwater management plans	Complete	The Zoning provisions on stormwater management will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.

BEST PRACTICE 3.1: DEFINED PROCESSES

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
Processes for site plan review, special land use, re-zoning, variances, and text amendments are clearly laid out in the zoning ordinance.	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The processes in the Zoning Ordinance will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.
Development review standards are clearly defined.	Complete Improvements Envisioned	The review standards in the Zoning Ordinance will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.

BEST PRACTICE 3.2: POINT OF CONTACT

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community has an identified development review point of contact, which is clearly indicated on the website.	Complete	The processes in the Zoning Ordinance will be evaluated for consistency with best practices.

BEST PRACTICE 3.3: CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community advertises online that conceptual site plan review meetings are available.	Upcoming	The City does not currently advertise free conceptual site plan meetings.
The community has clearly defined expectations posted online and a checklist to be reviewed at conceptual meetings.	Upcoming	The Site Plan requirements are in the zoning ordinance. The City will post these requirements on the City webpage.

BEST PRACTICE 3.4: INTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The internal review process addresses key steps of the application from submittal to permit, timelines, reviewers, and approval standards.	Complete	The processes in the Zoning Ordinance is clear and detailed.
The community has established a joint review team.	Upcoming	The Zoning Ordinance establishes the Planning Commission as the review team.

BEST PRACTICE 3.5: APPROVAL PROCESS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
Site plans for permitted uses are approved administratively or by the planning commission.	Complete	The Ordinance gives final approval over Site Plans to the Planning Commission.
Permitted uses do not require a formal public hearing (but allow for public comment and other engagement as deemed necessary).	Complete	The City does not require a formal public hearing for permitted uses.

BEST PRACTICE 3.6: FEE SCHEDULE

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The fee schedule is available online in an easy-to-find location.	Complete	The fee schedule is clearly defined on the zoning department webpage.
The fee schedule is reviewed annually and updated as needed.	Complete	The City will review the fee schedule annually.

BEST PRACTICE 3.7: PAYMENT METHODS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community clearly indicates on its website accepted method(s) of payment for development fees.	Complete	The City includes payment information on the city webpage.
The community accepts credit card payment for development fees.	Complete	The City includes an online payment option on the city webpage.

BEST PRACTICE 3.7: PAYMENT METHODS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community clearly indicates on its website accepted method(s) of payment for development fees.	Complete	The City includes payment information on the city webpage.
The community accepts credit card payment for de-velopment fees.	Complete	The City includes an online payment option on the city webpage.
Relevant Contact Information	Upcoming	The City will create a Development Guide meeting RRC Criteria.
Relevant meeting schedules; flowcharts of development review processes		
Conceptual meeting procedures		
Applications for all major development review processes (at least site plans, special land-uses, variances, and rezoning)		
Fee schedule		
Special meeting procedures		
Financial assistance tools		
Design standards and other local guidelines		
Information on building processes and contacts		
The Guide to Development is Available Online	Complete	The City includes their Guide to Development on the city webpage.

BEST PRACTICE 3.8: PROJECT TRACKING

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community uses a tracking mechanism for projects during the development process, from application to permits.	Upcoming	The City will develop a process for tracking projects from application to permits.

BEST PRACTICE 4.1: BOARD AND COMMISSION RECRUITMENT PROCESS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
Board and commission applications are available online.	Upcoming	Board and Commission applications will be made available online.
The community has clearly documented the process for board and commission appointments online.	Complete	The Board and Commission application process will be documented on the City's webpage.

BEST PRACTICE 4.2: EXPECTATIONS AND INTERESTS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community outlines expectations for board and commission positions.	Complete	The City has established its board and commission expectations.
The community identifies associated interests and background for board and commission positions.	Complete	The City evaluates the backgrounds of individuals interested in serving on boards and commissions.

BEST PRACTICE 4.3: ORIENTATION

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The orientation materials include all relevant planning, zoning and development information.	Upcoming	The City will organize these materials for new zoning administrators.

BEST PRACTICE 4.4: BYLAWS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community has adopted bylaws for appointed development-related boards and commissions.	Upcoming	The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals will create By-Laws
The bylaws are available online.	Upcoming	The City will put the Board and Commission bylaws online.

BEST PRACTICE 4.5: PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The Planning Commission prepares an annual report for the governing body.	Complete	The Planning Commission prepares an annual report for the City Council.

BEST PRACTICE 4.6: TRAINING PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The Training Plan identifies training goals and expectations.	Upcoming	The City will complete a Training Plan.
The Training Plan identifies funding sources.	Upcoming	The City will complete a Training Plan.
The Training Plan identifies how training participants share outcomes with other officials and staff.	Upcoming	The City will complete a Training Plan.
The Training Plan identifies how the community consistently encourages training.	Upcoming	The City will complete a Training Plan.
The Training Plan is updated annually.	Upcoming	The City will complete a Training Plan.

BEST PRACTICE 4.7: JOINT MEETINGS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community holds collaborative work sessions, meetings, trainings or other joint events at least annually.	Upcoming	Pages 87-91 and 93 of this document calls for greater joint collaboration between local, state, and regional partners.

BEST PRACTICE 5.1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The economic development strategy identifies the economic opportunities and challenges of the community.	Upcoming	Pages 58-67 of this Master Plan identifies economic development strategies, such as the “Activated Alley” that could be included and expanded in an economic development plan.
The strategy addresses activities related to key economic development initiatives including business and talent attraction/retention, education and infrastructure.	Upcoming	Pages 58-67 of this Master Plan offers specific economic development elements, such as a Façade Improvement Program, that are a part of MEDC’s economic development toolbox.
The economic development strategy defines specific goals, actions, timelines and responsible parties for implementation.	Upcoming	Pages 99-103 of this Master Plan suggests specific goals, time-lines, and partners, which could be expanded on for an economic development strategy.
The economic development strategy coordinates with a regional economic development strategy.	Upcoming	The City will coordinate its strategy with the Montcalm Economic Alliance (MEA).
The economic development strategy is accessible online.	Upcoming	The City will post their economic strategy online once its fully developed.
Progress on the economic development strategy is reported annually to the governing body	Upcoming	The City will include this as part of their annual report to City Council.

BEST PRACTICE 5.2: INCENTIVE TOOLS

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The community’s identified local economic development tools are outlined online.	Upcoming	The Community will develop local economic development tools and post them online.
The process for accessing the local economic development tools, and application materials (if applicable) are available online.	Upcoming	The Community will develop local economic development tools and post them online.

MEDC LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL EXAMPLES

FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL EXAMPLES	
FINANCIAL	NON-FINANCIAL
Facade improvement programs	Density bonuses
Housing incentive programs	Design assistance (financial or non)
Infrastructure improvements	Expedited review process
Industrial facilities tax exemption	Height bonuses
Land disposition policies which allow for a reduced sale price	Infrastructure advantages
Local or county brownfield TIF	Off-street parking reductions (project specific)
Local small business support loans	Pre-approved building plans
Nieghborhood enterprise zones	Reduced setbacks
PILOTs (payment in lieu of taxes)	Resource connections
Revolving loan fund	Workforce training
Site Prep	
Tax Abatements (Industrial, OPRA, Commercial rehab, etc.)	
Waived local fees (development review, utility connections, etc.)	

BEST PRACTICE 5.3: MARKETING PLAN

EXPECTATION	STATUS	NOTES
The marketing plan conducts an inventory of existing assets, including visual, online, and physical resources.	Upcoming	Pages 89 and 100 of this Plan calls for the development of a Marketing Plan.
The marketing plan defines specific goals, strategies and tactics to attract businesses and investment including audiences, messaging, and primary delivery methods.	Upcoming	The City will develop a marketing plan with specific strate-gies to attract businesses and investment.
The marketing plan identifies approaches to market priority development sites.	Upcoming	The City will include priority sites and strategies to market these sites in their plan.
The marketing plan aligns marketing efforts with local, regional and state partners.	Upcoming	The City will develop a marketing plan aligns with local, state, and regional partners.
The marketing plan identifies core branding elements that provide a consistent community image including: tagline; simple logo(s); primary color palette; primary typefaces; and a collection of community photos..	Upcoming	Pages 89 and 100 of this Master Plan specifies that the City will develop a marketing plan utilizing print and social media and unified branding.





Goals and Objectives

The City of Stanton is undergoing a Master Plan update with the main goal being to ensure a high quality of life for the City residents. The Master Plan will assist Stanton in continuing a commitment to the community to preserve and enhance the unique character of the City. The Master Plan process will assist Stanton in identifying policies, services, and programs, that result in a Stanton of tomorrow that is a vibrant small-town with an active downtown, offering a variety of recreational opportunities, containing preserved historical buildings and spaces, all while attracting new residents, businesses, and institutions in the community.

The following chapter represents the goals, objectives, and policies which should be used to guide local decision makers in reviewing future land use proposals. Goals represent the ultimate purpose or intent of the Plan, objectives are the means of obtaining those goals, and policies are specific statements used to guide the actions of the City.

GOALS

The City of Stanton recognizes its character as a small rural town with charming neighborhoods and quality parks. To prepare the City of Stanton for the future, the City has created the following Master Plan goals to guide future land use decisions.

- Preserve the current small town, residential character of the City.
- Protect the natural resources in the City as a way to preserve a high quality of life.
- Encourage businesses to serve both residents and visitors to open in the City.
- Preserve the rights of property owners while maintaining the character of the City.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

With the primary goals in mind, the following specific objectives and policies have been formulated to guide action, programs, and land use in the City.



Community Character

GOAL:

Maintain a high-quality character and image for the City.

Objectives:

1. Create and maintain a sense of identity in the community through streetscape elements, public art, signage, or other design features at parks and other public spaces.
2. Consider the impacts of new development, including industry, on the character of the community.
3. Create and increase City-wide efforts that provide opportunities to enhance and revitalize vacant, underutilized, or aging housing stock where needed.
4. Explore options for applying for Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) grants to enhance Stanton's commercial offerings.



City Center

GOAL:

Continue to support and encourage the growth and development of Downtown Stanton.

Objectives:

1. Promote development in the City that enhances the character of Downtown, improves commercial corridors, redevelops priority sites, and provides opportunities for economic and civic advancement.
2. Use the Zoning Ordinance to regulate, encourage, and ensure regular upkeep of façades and storefronts in the downtown.
3. Continue to support relationships with City entities and business owners to support business attraction and retention activities in the Downtown.
4. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures, in-fill, and redevelopment of the downtown.
5. Identify undeveloped commercial parcels and/or evaluate their future land use designations.



Residential Development

GOAL:

Expand the City's housing stock to accommodate and attract residents during all stages of life.

Objectives:

1. Promote a mix of different housing types while preserving the City's stable neighborhoods and residential character.
2. Encourage 'missing middle' housing types such as duplexes or townhomes as part of new neighborhood construction, infill development, and by right zoning.
3. Carefully monitor areas where residential uses are located adjacent to industrial or commercial uses, so that buffering requirements are met to preserve the character of residential areas.
4. Encourage walkable or bikeable residential neighborhoods, developments, and streets.
5. Rehabilitate or remove blighted residential structures and enforce nuisance ordinances regulating excessive weeds, debris, and junk.
6. Explore options for applying for Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) grants to enhance Stanton's housing offerings.

GOAL:

Collaborate with surrounding townships to expand housing opportunities in the City and Township limits, by organizing and implementing joint planning areas.

Objectives:

1. Seek collaborative partnerships with surrounding townships to implement future planning areas, annexations, 425 agreements, and other joint initiatives.
2. Encourage and promote the development of open space or cluster developments that are adjacent to existing open and agricultural areas.



Administration & Governance

GOAL:

Improve public involvement and awareness in government decision-making.

Objectives:

1. Develop a City marketing plan that utilizes print and social media to present a unified brand and message for Stanton. Regularly update the City website and social media with latest information about available resources and upcoming events, meetings, and relevant deadlines.
2. When the City is considering major policy or ordinance changes, provide short and unbiased explanations of proposed changes, in order to further public education and improve transparency.
3. Share public announcements with local organizations to include in their regular newsletters or email lists. Continue publishing a monthly or quarterly newsletter produced by the City to update the public about recent decisions and upcoming events – share this newsletter with an email list.

GOAL:

Seek out opportunities to work jointly with nearby communities to offer more efficient and cost-effective public services whenever achievable.

Objectives:

1. Work with neighboring municipalities to promote each other's parks and recreation facilities, popular businesses, and events, to invite visitors to the broader region.
2. Partner with communities to begin discussion of a regional bike trail connecting area towns.
3. Explore intergovernmental agreements for water and sewer service capacity, police contracts, and 425 agreements.

GOAL:

Provide high quality public services.

Objectives:

4. Maintain a regular Capital Improvement Program to create regular scheduling and prioritization for updates and repairs to roads, publicly owned properties, equipment, and utility infrastructure.
5. Fully develop, enhance and maintain the city's sidewalk system.
6. Ensure that quality services and infrastructure are available to neighborhood areas such as police, fire, road repair and refuse pick-up.
7. Explore and coordinate enhanced opportunities for shared services with the surrounding Townships, Montcalm County, and the Central Montcalm Public Schools.
8. Maintain existing public parking lots and provide clear signage to promote their use.



Commercial Areas & Industrial Development

GOAL:

Maintain and Improve the City's Commercial Offerings

Objectives:

1. Ensure that all commercial nodes in the City are accessible to patrons of all ages, backgrounds, incomes, and physical abilities—for both motorized and non-motorized travelers.
2. Support a wide variety of shopping and retail diversity in the City.
3. Continue to develop positive relationships with local commercial business owners, and industrial business owners, when established, to maintain their presence in the City.
4. Continue to enhance the downtown with visually pleasing and welcoming beautification elements such as public art, gateways, landscaping, sidewalks, decorative streetlamps, street trees, and more.
5. Identify sites to be included in the Montcalm County Brownfield program.
6. Consider developing a corridor plan for each of the major gateway roads into the City to coordinate land use and traffic. The plans should be coordinated with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and/or the Montcalm County Road Commission, in accordance with guidelines for traffic management, land use, landscaping, etc.

Transportation

GOAL:

Ensure City streets are safe and available for pedestrians and non-motorized users.

Objectives:

1. Assess the road corridors within the City that would be appropriate for bike infrastructure. This can include bike lanes, bike paths, expanded paved road shoulders, or other similar infrastructure.
2. Maintain crosswalks and other traffic calming measures at intersections that are frequently used by pedestrians, especially near the school campus and within the downtown area.
3. Install new sidewalks where there are gaps in the existing sidewalk network, especially on collector streets that don't currently have sidewalks.
4. Install traffic calming measures like traffic circles, bump outs, road diets, and others to enhance the safety of non-motorized travel.
5. Provide bicycle parking downtown to encourage biking activity.
6. Renovate city streets to the most appropriate standards for the land uses they serve, including provisions for curb, gutter, and street tree plantings.
7. Explore options for applying for Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) grants to enhance Stanton's transportation offerings.



GOAL:

Ensure City streets are safe and available for motorized users.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the current transportation system in the City to ensure all roadways are safe, accessible, and high-quality.
2. Continue to strengthen relationships with local road agencies to maintain and enhance State and County roadways, where applicable.
3. Explore opportunities for future enhancements to the public transportation options in the City—especially connections to popular employment centers like Lansing or Grand Rapids.



Natural Resources

GOAL:

Protect and ensure the vitality of Stanton's natural resources.

Objectives:

1. Protect groundwater aquifers and natural recharge areas, including wetlands, wherever possible. Do not promote development on lots without sufficient non-wetland landcover.
2. Require new land development projects to review the impact of development on natural features such as soils, topographic changes, hydrology, and forested area.
3. Encourage low-impact development techniques to minimize the impact of the development process on the environment. Consider creating non-financial incentives (such as reduced parking minimums, modified density limits, expedited review process, etc.) for developments that utilize these techniques.

GOAL:

Utilize forward-thinking stormwater management and erosion control techniques to protect natural resources, neighboring properties, and public infrastructure.

Objectives:

1. Require new developments to utilize stormwater management systems which remove sediments and other pollutants from runoff.
2. Encourage the use of permeable pavements and landscape islands where feasible to reduce impervious surface cover in the City.
3. Promote the use of rain barrels and rain gardens.
4. Consider implementing best practices for stormwater management on City properties wherever possible, to set an example and demonstrate the viability of green infrastructure.

Parks & Recreation

GOAL:

Promote multi-generational recreation activities for citizens of all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

1. Increase accessibility to the City's parks and ensure that new facilities are ADA compliant.
2. Create local environmental education programs and recreation activities.
3. Work with area agencies to develop and promote age-appropriate recreational activities for people of various age groups and abilities.
4. Apply for state and federal parks and recreation grants to fund new park infrastructure, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and maintenance or rehabilitation of existing parks and recreation facilities.
5. Make all city-owned parks and recreation facilities ADA accessible.
6. Work with surrounding communities and take a regional approach to connecting bike paths/lanes and non-motorized paths and lanes to other communities in the region.
7. Explore options for applying for Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grants to enhance Stanton's park and recreation offerings.

GOAL:

Encourage healthy living through outdoor recreation.

Objectives:

1. Explore the possibility of providing a permanent structure for the Stanton Farmers Market to better provide fresh, locally-grown food and other products.

Utilities & Infrastructure

GOAL:

Maintain existing public utilities to ensure quality, health, and longevity.

Objectives:

1. Continue to upgrade and maintain sanitary sewer and water system to meet community needs.
2. Ensure that existing utility service lines are, at a minimum, kept in good repair and are given regular maintenance and checks as recommended at installation.

GOAL:

Explore expansion of utility systems within the City and with surrounding townships to create new development opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Explore and develop intergovernmental and coordination agreements with surrounding townships. This can include but is not limited to 425 Agreements.
2. Create revenue and budget stability by exploring the sale of sewer system capacity to surrounding townships through 425 Agreements or other mechanisms.
3. Explore the possibility of creating a shared industrial park with surrounding townships. Develop intergovernmental coordination like 425 Agreements or TIF districts.



Zoning Plan

Following the adoption of this plan, the City of Stanton is committed to enhancing and updating the City's Zoning Ordinance. One of the key purposes of the Zoning Ordinance updates and reviews are to ensure that the City's regulations and requirements align with best practices in planning, ensure the Zoning Ordinance is compliant with State laws, and to enhance the overall quality of life for residents and business owners.

The following Table shows the relationship between the City of Stanton Zoning Districts and Future Land Use categories as described in this Plan. Rezoning requests should be reviewed against this Table to determine whether the requested district is supported by this Plan.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are only encouraged within the Future Land Use categories where they are specifically listed, and they should only be approved if they meet the goals of the Future Land Use category. In Future Land Use categories where PUDs are not listed, they should not be approved.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS
Neighborhood Preserve/Expansion	R-1 Low Density Residential District
Low-Impact Residential	R-1 Low Density Residential District PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category)
Gateway Mixed Use	R-M Multi-Family Residential District MHP Mobile Home Park District C-1 Central Business District C-2 General Commercial District C-3 Act 425 Parcels C-R Commercial Residential I-1 Industrial District PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category)
Downtown Edge	C-1 Central Business District C-2 General Commercial District C-3 Act 425 Parcels C-R Commercial Residential PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category) C-1 Central Business District C-R Commercial Residential PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category)
Core Downtown	C-1 Central Business District C-R Commercial Residential PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category)
Public/Institution	R-1 Low Density Residential District C-R Commercial Residential District
Recreation/Preservation	RM Multi-Family Residential RO Residential-Office Parkway C-2 General Commercial HC Highway Commercial PUD Planned Unit Development (If Consistent with the Vision for this Category)
New Park Target Areas Overlay	R-1 Low Density Residential
Recreation/Preservation	R-1 Low Density Residential

RECOMMENDED ZONING AMENDMENTS

The following key amendments should be part of the anticipated Zoning Ordinance update following the adoption of this plan:

Housing and Neighborhoods

1. **Align the R-1 District with the vision for the Neighborhood Preserve and Expansion as well as Low Impact Residential Growth.**
2. **Establish regulations for street networks in newly built neighborhoods.**
3. **Determine at least three of the following housing types to establish as uses by right in the R-1, R-M, MHP, and C-R Districts.**
 - Accessory Dwelling Units (if this option is chosen, establish simple and clear regulations for them)
 - Townhouses/Rowhouses
 - Triplexes
 - Quadplexes
 - 6-plexes
 - Commercial
 - Stacked Flats
 - First Floor Residential in Commercial Areas
 - Residential Above Commercial
 - Micro Units
 - Cottage Housing/Bungalow Courts
 - Tiny House

Downtown and Mixed Use

1. **Develop the Commercial-Residential Zoning District to implement the Downtown Edge Future Land Use vision.**
2. **Ensure that at least two of the following are required in districts intended to regulate the build-out of the downtown area:**
 - Build-to lines
 - Open store fronts
 - Outdoor dining
 - Minimum ground floor transparency
 - Front-facing doorways
 - Parking located in the rear of the building
 - Walk-up windows
 - Public art program
 - Temporary or permanent parklets

Landscaping

1. Review landscaping standards to ensure they enhance aesthetics, reduce heat island effect, and improve stormwater management without causing burdensome site design difficulties.
2. Consider adopting impervious surface maximums (outside the downtown), with increases in the impervious surface limit for permeable pavement, green roofs, and other low impact design – or even other “green” upgrades, like rooftop solar.
3. Ensure that the updated landscaping requirements include at least three of the following:
 - Green roofs
 - Permeable pavement
 - Steep-slope Protections
 - Street-Tree Planting Standards
 - Tree preservation or replacement standards
 - Parking lot internal landscaping standards
 - Open space preservation development (i.e., cluster housing)
 - Required native or low-maintenance plantings
 - Renewable Energy
 - Buffering standards around water bodies or other natural resources
 - Off-site stormwater regulations allowing site developers to participate in district-scale stormwater management plans
 - Low impact development techniques (rain gardens, bioswales, etc.)
 - Rain water collection (blue roofs, cisterns, water harvesting, stormwater vaults, etc.)



Planned Character - Sample Photo

Parking

1. When possible, require all parking within areas intended to have an urban character to be located behind the building.
2. Reduction or elimination of required parking when on-street or public parking is available
3. Consider exempting industrial uses from minimum parking requirements, to allow industrial businesses to determine for themselves how much parking they need.
4. Clarify shared parking regulations. Consider requiring adjacent parking lots to be connected to each other.
5. Consider requiring bicycle parking downtown and where necessary.

General

1. Develop simple and clear regulations for electric vehicle charging stations. Consider exempting them from all regulations except parking lot dimensional requirements.
2. Evaluate and implement best practices for wetlands and open space protections.
3. Establish regulations for wind and solar energy, specifically encouraging on-site/ rooftop installations.
4. Evaluate processes and criteria for consistency with best practices.
5. Determine appropriate bonuses and incentives for economic development, based on MEDC guidance.
6. Ensure that the sign ordinance complies with the US Supreme Court decision in Reed v. Gilbert.

Action Plan

The Stanton Master Plan and its goals, objectives, and strategies recommend a future vision for the community. This vision is to build upon the City's existing assets and make the most of opportunities that can attract new development and residents to the community while protecting the City's natural beauty and resources. To put it simply, the plan for Stanton is to create an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable community where people want to live, work, visit and play.

The goals and objectives of this plan should be reviewed often and be considered in decision making by the City. Successful implementation of this plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, City staff, the Planning Commission, public agencies, and private citizens and organizations.

The tables on the following pages present a detailed summary of all of the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for completing the activity, and available funding resources for each activity.

RESPONSIBILITY (ABBREVIATION)

MC	Montcalm County
BO	Business Owners
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
SM	State of Michigan
PS	Central Montcalm Public Schools
HO	Homeowners
CM	Community Members
PC	Planning Commission
CC	City Council
MEA	Montcalm Economic Alliance
CS	City Staff

KEY

Priority

A	Most Important
B	Very Important
C	Important

Timeframe

1	W/in 3 years
2	5 years
3	10+ years

Responsibility

	Project Lead
	Key Participant
	Contributor

FUNDING

Public	Includes public funds from the City operating budget, County, and State funding. May also include local government bonds and grants.
Private	Includes funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or property owners

PLANNING AND ZONING

PROJECT	Priority	Timeframe	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING	
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private
Update the Zoning Ordinance as described in the Zoning Plan.	A	1	CC PC CS			X	
Create a Development Plan featuring key development sites for parks, commercial uses, and a farmers' market.	A	1	CC CS	MEA		X	
Implement Redevelopment Ready Strategies.	A	1	CC CS	MEA		X	
Coordinate with MDOT to develop a Corridor Plan.	B	2	CC CS	MDOT		X	
Create a Marketing Plan to present a unified brand for the City of Stanton.	C	3	CC			X	

COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT	Priority	Timeframe	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING	
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private
Explore opportunities for MEDC Grants to enhance commercial businesses.	A	1	CC PC CS	BO		X	
Bring City entitlement processes into compliance with MEDC Redevelopment Ready Best Practices.	A	1	CC PC CS			X	
Promote the business community.	A	1	CC PC CS BO	BO	X	X	X
Develop more retail space.	A	1	CC PC CS	MEA BO	X	X	X
Continue to develop the downtown area.	A	1	CC PC CS	MEA BO	X	X	X
Encourage commercial diversity of the downtown area by increasing local restaurant and retail opportunities	A	1	CC PC CS BO	MEA BO	X	X	X
Seek developers to build a variety of housing types in vacant and underutilized areas to meet the needs of residents in different life stages and revitalize the City.	B	1	CC CS			X	
Explore opportunities for MSHDA grants to meet the needs of residents in the community.	B	1	CC CS			X	
Update the City website, consistent with MEDC Redevelopment Ready Best Practices.	B	2	CC PC CS			X	
Investigate the feasibility of adding aesthetic upgrades to achieve the "Activated Alley" vision.	B	2	CC PC CS			X	
Create plans to implement open store fronts, minimum ground floor transparency, front-facing doorways, parking located in the rear of the building, walk-up windows, public art program, and/or temporary or permanent parklets to create a more mixed use/walkable downtown.	B	2	CC PC CS	MEA		X	
Develop public-private partnerships such as local businesses, developers, utility companies, and non-profits.	B	2	CC PC CS MEA BO	MEA BO CM	X	X	X

NATURAL FEATURES AND PARKS

PROJECT	Priority	Timeframe	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING	
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private
Implement tree preservation and replacement standards to preserve natural spaces.	A	1	CC PC CS			X	X
Work to preserve natural features through low impact development techniques (rain gardens, bioswales, rainwater collection).	A	1	CC PC CS			X	X
Add amenities to existing parks.	A	1	CC PC CS			X	X
Look for sites to develop passive conservation trails.	A	2	CC PC CS			X	
Begin conversations with neighboring municipalities to connect the regional trail to downtown areas.	A	2	CC PC CS			X	X
Create a plan to develop more youth and senior programming.	B	2	CC PC CS	MC		X	X
Investigate the locations of potential parking lots to install permeable pavement to improve stormwater drainage.	B	2	CC PC CS	CM		X	
Investigate locations for potential native plantings.	C	1	CC PC CS			X	X
Look for vacant sites to develop pocket parks and playgrounds.	C	2	CC PC CS			X	X
Investigate the feasibility of installing green roofs.	C	3	CC PC CS	BO		X	X

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT	Priority	Timeframe	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING	
			City	Other Govt	Private	Public	Private
Conduct a citywide walk audit of the sidewalk infrastructure.	A	1	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Determine the feasibility and cost of constructing city-wide sidewalk infrastructure.	A	2	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Take a city-wide approach to installing sidewalks in all neighborhoods.	A	3	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Explore opportunities for shared public services with surrounding municipalities.	B	1	CC PC CS	MC PS		X	
Install Bicycle Parking Downtown.	B	1	CC PC CS			X	
Improve stormwater drainage.	B	2	CC PC CS			X	
Investigate the feasibility of installing tornado sirens at the northern and southern ends of the City.	B	2	CC PC CS			X	
Investigate the feasibility of burying power lines.	B	3	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Continue to maintain quality public services such as police, fire, road repair, utilities and refuse pick-up.	C	1	CC PC CS			X	
Conduct a traffic study to determine the need to install a light at West Main Street and North State Street as well as to widen Walnut Street.	C	2	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Investigate the need and feasibility for bicycle infrastructure and explore grant opportunities.	C	2	CC PC CS	MDOT		X	
Evaluate the need for a Rideshare Partnership, On-Demand Service, or Boutique Fixed Route.	C	3	CC PC CS			X	
Improvements to parking such as connections between parking lots or the elimination of parking minimums.	C	3	CC PC CS	BO		X	
Investigate the need for new signs in public parking lots.	C	3	CC PC CS			X	

Chapter 5 Appendix





Citywide Survey Responses

Staff Acknowledgments



124 E. Fulton Street · Suite 6B
Grand Rapids, MI 48167
(248) 596-0920
www.mcka.com

John Jackson, AICP President
Christopher Khorey, AICP Project Manager
Jeff Keesler Project Planner
Paige Brodeur Project Planner
Callie Garrett Document Design

