

[We] must have all basic needs (groceries, drugs, etc.) easily accessible to the various areas within the City.

Living in the Vine neighborhood, I really appreciate being able to walk to O'Duffy's, Martinis, Crow's Nest, Satellite Records, and other businesses that are right in the neighborhood.

The city needs to be connected with bike and walking trails and offer more public transportation.

Photo credit: Neal Conway



# Great Neighborhoods

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Alignment with Strategic Goals
- 1.2 Unique Neighborhood Input
- 1.3 Revitalization
- 1.4 Raising All Neighborhoods Up

## 2. Neighborhood Plans

- 2.1 Developing the Plan
- 2.2 Neighborhood Plan Process
- 2.3 Implementation

## 3. Complete Neighborhoods

- 3.1 What does it mean to be Complete?
- 3.2 Defining Complete for Kalamazoo
- 3.3 Benefits of Complete Neighborhoods
- 3.4 Compete Neighborhood Strategy

## 4. Housing Strategy

- 4.1 Support of Future Plans

## 5. Zoning as a Strength

- 5.1 Form v. Use

## 5.2 Importance of Context

## 5.3 Removing Barriers

## 5.4 Uses

## 5.5 Parking

## 5.6 Commercial & Neighborhood Nodes

## 5.7 Sustainable Zoning

## 6. Historic Districts

## 6.1 Enhancing Existing Districts

## 6.2 Managing Historic Buildings & Resources

## 6.3 Perceived Conflicts

## 6.4 Conservation Districts

## 7. Parks & Recreation

## 7.1 Park Types

## 7.2 Growing Space

## 8. Neighborhood Network

## 8.1 Neighborhood Links

# 1. Introduction

Kalamazoo has 22 neighborhoods, each with its own history and distinct character. Each neighborhood participated in the IK 2025 process. Specific neighborhood outreach, as well as the compilation of surveys, events, and online input, allowed City staff to focus on neighborhood-scale challenges, goals, and solutions.

## 1.1 Alignment with Strategic Vision

### Goals:

**Common Neighborhood Themes.** As data was analyzed, common themes emerged across all neighborhood feedback, including mobility, ability to meet daily needs, and the desire for active, friendly, and safe neighborhoods. The input became the foundation for the Strategic Vision Goals, which are the foundation for 2025 Master Plan.

*Connected City.* A city that is networked for walking, biking, riding, and driving.

*Inviting Public Places.* Parks, arts, culture, and vibrant streets.

*Safe Community.* A community where it is safe to live, work, bike, drive, walk, and play.

*Complete Neighborhoods.* Residential areas that support the full range of people's daily needs.

*Economic Development.* A supportive infrastructure for growing businesses and stabilizing the local economy to benefit all.

*Environmental Responsibility.* A green and healthy city.

*Shared Prosperity.* Abundant opportunities for all people to prosper.

*Youth Development.* A city with places and supports that help young people thrive.

## 1.2 Unique Neighborhood Input

**Individual Neighborhood Goals.** The neighborhood meetings held across the city during the IK 2025 process gave residents the opportunity to discuss the issues and ideas that were most pressing to their individual neighborhoods. While the topics discussed overlapped transportation, economic development, housing, and parks and recreation, the priorities and related projects differed. Through the individual meetings, City staff felt the Master Plan was too limited and that Neighborhood Plans are the best method to impact changes at the neighborhood level.

All neighborhood-specific information from IK 2025 can be found in this document's appendix. It will be used in the neighborhood planning process.

## 1.3 Revitalization

Many of the goals in the Great Neighborhood section

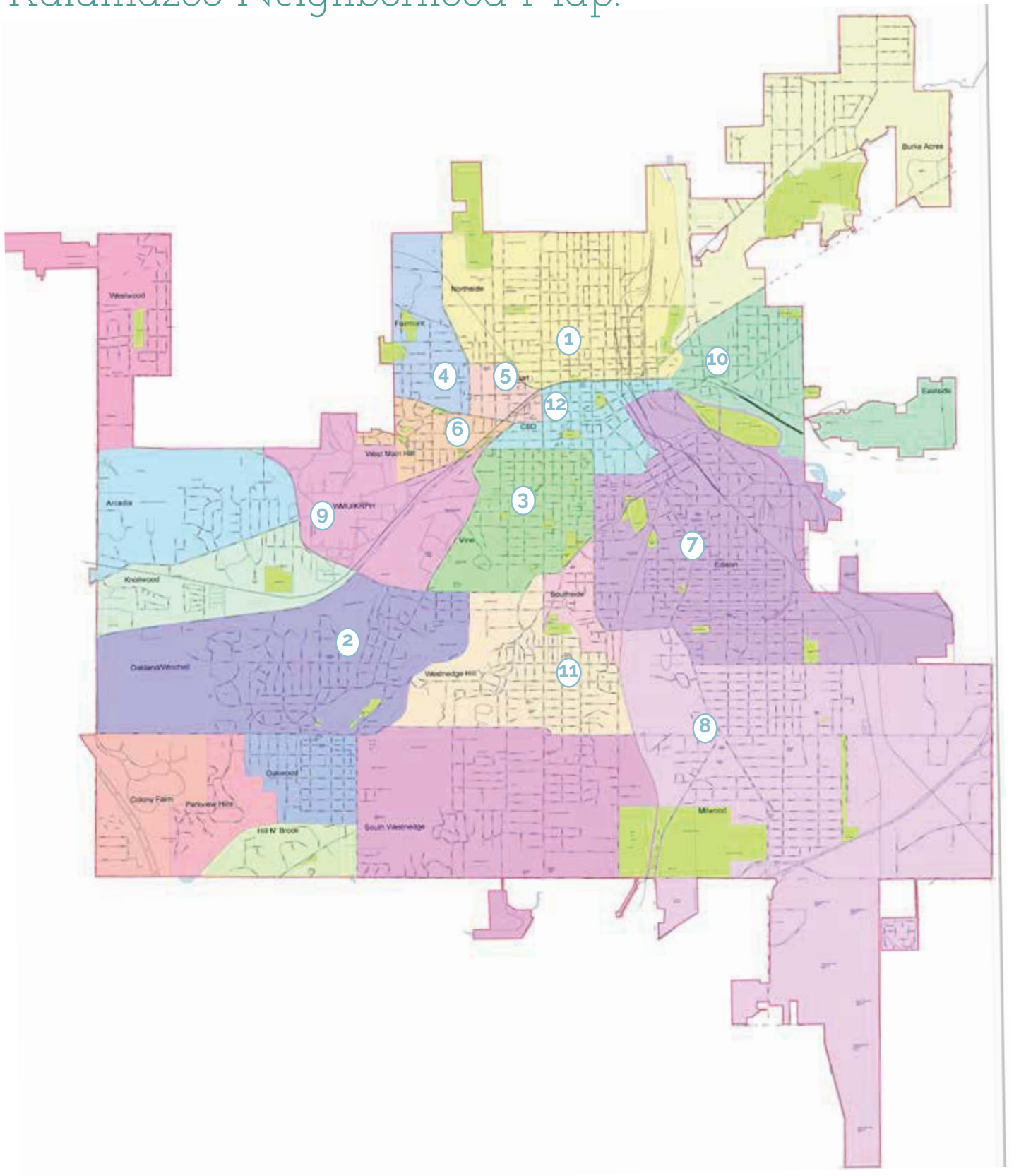
### Neighborhood Map Legend

**Neighborhood Map (right).** IK 2025 hit the road during the Design It Phase of outreach. Twelve meetings were held neighborhoods through the City.

1. Northside
2. Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood, Oakwood, Parkview Hills, & Hill 'n' Brook
3. Vine
4. Douglas
5. Stuart
6. West Main Hill & Kalamazoo College
7. Edison
8. Milwood
9. Westwood, Arcadia, & WMU
10. Eastside & Burke Acres
11. Westnedge Hill, Southside, South Westnedge
12. Downtown



# Kalamazoo Neighborhood Map.



focus on creating complete neighborhoods – places where residents can meet their daily needs, have transportation choices, access to parks, multiple housing options, and more. In some locations, realizing these goals will result in new development or new businesses infilling the neighborhood.

As the City and the neighborhoods begin implementing this Plan, it is critical to continue broad engagement across the community to incorporate community recommendations in shaping our work. Understanding all views throughout this process can help discuss any impacts of neighborhood improvements, often referred to as gentrification.

### 1.4 Lifting All Neighborhoods Up

Gentrification has been defined differently by researchers, academics, and civic leaders across the country. The definition for each neighborhood does not need to be the same. The important discussion for the City to have is that all people need a voice, feel empowered to make decisions, and not feel as if development, projects, or programs are just happening to them. In order to lift up all people in all neighborhoods, the efforts of the City and neighborhoods to increase access to amenities and services must also yield opportunities for residents to access better paying jobs, and avoid involuntary displacement.

**Open Dialogue.** As this plan is implemented, City staff is committed to discussing all policies, projects, and

programs. The goals and actions in this document, will be published on [www.imaginekalamazoo.com](http://www.imaginekalamazoo.com), and City Staff will maintain continuous community engagement. This open dialogue between the City and residents provides opportunity for feedback and shared understanding.

**Neighborhood Plans.** Each neighborhood plan is unique and can focus on the issues and opportunities most important to residents. Through the neighborhood planning processes, residents can translate the Master Plan into details to achieve their neighborhood vision and work toward an implementation strategy that honors their priorities.

**Complete Neighborhoods.** At the heart of Complete Neighborhoods are choices and equal access. A complete neighborhood has safe walkable streets and housing options to meet residents' needs throughout one's life. Additionally, access to parks and recreation, the ability to meet daily needs, and access to fresh food. The unique way that each neighborhood achieves completeness will vary based on resident input. (Figure 1)

**Housing Strategies.** As the City's housing strategy is developed through the Housing Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan and the Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Plan, strategies to prevent displacement will be explored and employed. Using data through multiple partner organizations, the City will begin

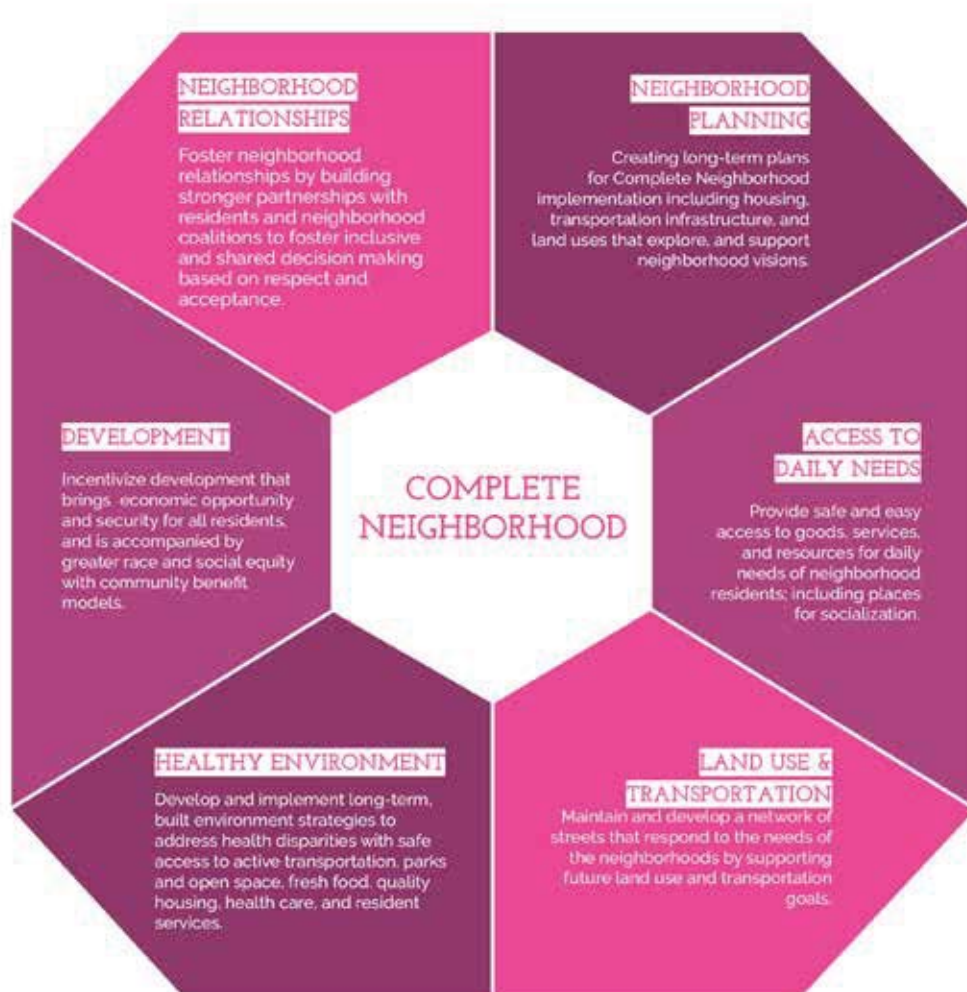
the process of Equity Mapping and monitoring neighborhoods for the effects of gentrification, income inequality, affordable housing, job creation, and development.

Protect and validate Fair Housing & Non-Discrimination Policies to comply with the letter and spirit of the nondiscrimination provisions of civil rights laws; Adherence The Federal Fair Housing Act in

manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing "AFFH" Section 808(e) (5); Americans with Disabilities Act; and Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs – Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule (2012 Equal Access Rule), Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (MI Act 453), Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (MI Act 220); Michigan State Housing Development Authority's Emergency Solutions Grant Fair Housing Policy Statement and City of Kalamazoo's Fair Housing Policy Statement.

### Strategic Goal: Complete Neighborhoods.

Figure 1



Complete Neighborhoods is a Strategic Vision Goal that focuses on raising up all Kalamazoo neighborhoods. It recognizes the critical link between land use and transportation and sets the stage for neighborhood planning efforts

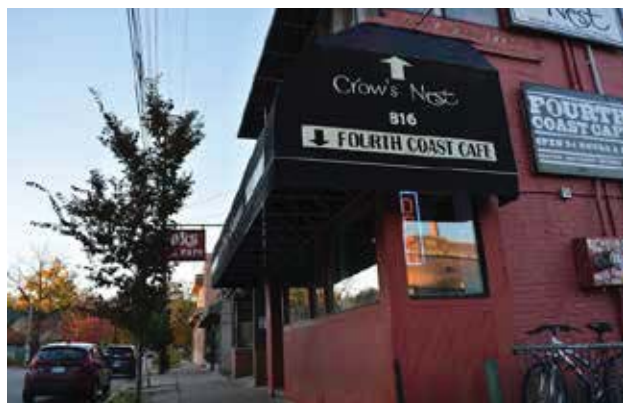


## 2. Neighborhood Plans

Kalamazoo's neighborhoods are a diverse collection of people and history. During IK 2025, it became clear that in addition to common issues such as walkability, access to recreation opportunities, and desire to meet daily needs in each neighborhood was at a different. Each geography was at a different stage of development or had a unique focus. The Stuart neighborhood with its rich history, wanted to enhance its historic character through street design. The Northside neighborhood is focused on resident-

owned businesses and resident jobs, while infilling with single-family homes. The Milwood neighborhood wants to create a stronger identity and sense of community. The Vine Neighborhood was hoping to enliven the park with a skate park. Because of the specific nature of these requests, City staff quickly started to organize a neighborhood plan process.

Neighborhood Plans will allow residents to focus on issues important to their neighborhood, while also creating the



Each Kalamazoo neighborhood has a specific history and character. Neighborhood Plans will address the needs of each neighborhood individually. Photo credit: Neal Conway

opportunity to achieve City-wide Strategic Vision and Master Plan goals. They can focus on as much or as little as the plan would like to cover. All plans will seek to be adopted into the 2025 Master Plan through the Planning Commission.

Neighborhood Plans will:

- Align with the Strategic Vision and Master Plan at the neighborhood scale.
- Develop individual strategies needed to achieve neighborhood completeness.
- Establish a unique neighborhood vision, goals, and actions for implementation.
- Establish relationships within the neighborhood to support implementation.
- Use IK 2025 input from residents as a place to start.



Neighborhood associations play an important role in the development and implementation of Neighborhood Plans.

Photo credit: Neal Conway

## 2.1 Developing the Plan

The development of Neighborhood Plans will be a collaborative effort between the City and each neighborhood. Engagement with residents, business owners, workers, community organizations, institutions, and neighborhood associations are key to the successful development and implementation.

These partners will work with the City to identify neighborhood priorities and set actionable goals.

## 2.2 Planning Process

The Neighborhood Plan process is outlined step by step (Figure 2). It includes information for neighborhoods with and without a current organization, for neighborhoods who are confirming existing plans, and those creating new ones.

**Step 1. Neighborhood Organization.** To begin the planning process, a neighborhood must have an established organization. This can be formal as a 501c(3) organization or informal. The key is that the group represents the neighborhood as whole, has regular meetings, and an established method of communication through physical or online newsletters or flyers, email, and/or social media.

**Step 2. Existing Plan.** This step is an opportunity to review all existing planning documents related to the neighborhood. A good review will determine what is still relevant for the neighborhood, and how it aligns with the Strategic Vision & Master Plan.



# Neighborhood Plan Process

Figure 2

## Step 1. Neighborhood Organization

Yes, we have an organization.  
Confirm & update communication methods



No, we do not have an organization.  
Establish an organization & communication network.  
City can assist with outreach.



## Step 2. Does your neighborhood already have a plan?

Yes. Review the plan? Is all of the plan still relevant?



No.



## Step 3. Contact Planning Division to meet with Neighborhood Activator 269-337-8044

Review relevant past plans against Strategic Vision & IK2025 - What new information needs to be included?  
Confirm/discuss development of neighborhood coalition.  
Confirm/discuss development of unique neighborhood goals.  
Discuss resident engagement strategy.



Discuss development of a neighborhood coalition.  
Review Strategic Vision & IK2025 goals in relationship to the neighborhood.  
Discuss development of unique neighborhood goals.  
Discuss resident engagement strategy.



## Step 4. Neighborhood Coalition

Yes, we have a coalition. Confirm coalition members to ensure all key stakeholders are included.



Establish coalition. City can assist with coalition building to ensure all key stakeholders are included.



## Step 5. Set Neighborhood Goals through Resident Engagement.

Use resident engagement to confirm existing plan and establish new priorities.  
City will assist with meetings, including providing maps or other materials.

Use resident engagement to create neighborhood goals and those from IK2025.  
City will assist with meetings, including providing maps or other materials.

## Step 6. Align Neighborhood Goals & Plan with Strategic Vision

		SP	CC	IPP	ER	SC	YD	CN	SD	EV	GG
	Strategic Vision Goals	Shared Prosperity	Connected City	Inviting Public Places	Environmental Responsibility	Safe Community	Youth Development	Complete Neighborhoods	Strength Through Diversity	Economic Vitality	Good Governance
Neighborhood Plan		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•



## Step 7. Prioritize & create S.M.A.R.T. goals and actions.

Use resident engagement to confirm existing plan and establish new priorities.  
City will assist with document drafting.



## Step 8. Confirm plan, goals, & actions with neighborhood.

Use resident engagement to confirm plan.



## Step 9. Planning Commission to review the plan as Master Plan amendment.

City will assist neighborhood with Planning Commission review.

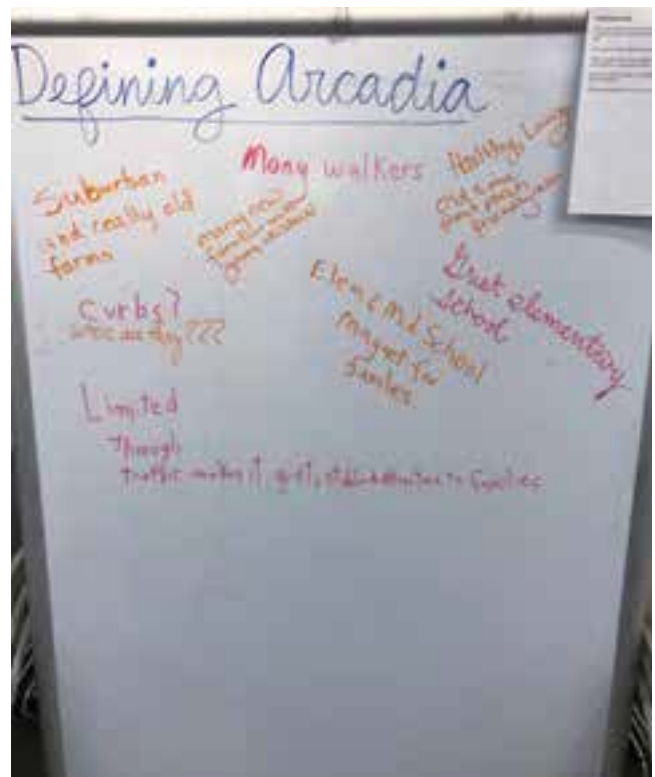
**Step 3. Contact the Planning Division.** The City will support all neighborhoods in their planning efforts. Checking in with Planning Division early in the process will allow the opportunity to start this partnership from the beginning of the process.

**Step 4. Neighborhood Coalition.** Neighborhood Plan development and successful implementation requires a support network. The coalition will be comprised of representatives of the neighborhood organization and City Staff. Community Planning and Development will serve as the lead City representative; other City Departments will be represented depending on the neighborhood's needs. The coalition will also include neighborhood partners representing a variety of interests such as businesses, schools, civic, church, and non-profits who work with and are located within the neighborhood.

**Step 5. Set Neighborhood Goals through Engagement.** The neighborhood outreach will build from IK2025 and include confirmation of this input, explore ideas further, and gather new ideas. The type and extent of engagement will vary by neighborhood and depend on if the neighborhood is working on an existing plan or creating a new one. At a minimum the engagement with neighborhood-wide meetings and regular communication through social media, email, or newsletters/flyers. The City can provide meeting materials and development of engagement activities. The outreach and contact process will be lead by the neighborhood.

### Steps 6-7 Neighborhood Plan Development.

Neighborhood Plans have two key roles. First, they provide a neighborhood approach to implementing the City-wide goals outlined in the Strategic Vision and Master Plan. This includes creating a Connected City and realizing Complete Neighborhoods. Secondly, Neighborhood Plans also aim to achieve the unique vision and goals of the neighborhood. Implementation of the goals and actions will be clearly defined, much like the IK at Work Section of this document. Community Planning and Development (CP&D) staff will typically manage the drafting of the plan document for the neighborhood.



Working to define the Arcadia Neighborhood at a IK2025 meeting.



**Step 8. Confirm Plan with Neighborhood.** When the draft plan is completed, a presentation to the neighborhood should be held so that it can be confirmed by the neighborhood.

**Step 9. Planning Commission Review.**

Neighborhood Plans will be incorporated into the Master Plan through a Planning Commission hearing. The City will assist the neighborhood with this process.

## 2.3 Plan Implementation

Neighborhood Plans are to be action-oriented documents, with clearly implementable goals and actions. Once adopted into the Master Plan, the goals and actions can be realized in a variety of ways.

**Zoning Ordinances.** The Master Plan provides the vision, and the Zoning Ordinance provides the

detailed regulations relating to our built environment. Neighborhood Plans may require zoning updates to realize its vision.

**City Policies & Plans.** The Complete Street Policy and the Non-Motorized Plan will guide transportation projects in the City for all travel modes. Neighborhood Plans actions will be reviewed and implemented using these as guides.

**Funding.** Funding is key to implementing any plan. Priority actions from Neighborhood Plans can be considered for future City budgets and grants. For example, including projects in the City's Transportation Improvement Plan. The incorporation of the Neighborhood Plan into the Master Plan and its alignment with the City's Strategic Vision is seen favorably to many State and Federal grants that can provide additional support.

### 3. Complete Neighborhood

The concept of a Complete Neighborhood is not new. Prior to the dominance of the personal vehicle in the transportation network, cities and neighborhoods were developed to meet the needs of their residents on a small scale - a scale defined by the reasonable distance one could travel on foot. Daily-need goods and services such as school, church, food, apparel, pharmacy, pub, cafe, and barber/salon were developed in close proximity to residences.

The dominance of the personal vehicle allowed for larger scale development, spread out at a distance greater than could reasonably be traveled on-foot. Commercial and residential stopped being integrated into neighborhoods. In some cases, it was completely zoned out of neighborhoods. This new development pattern has had negative impacts across the United States and in Kalamazoo.

- Those who cannot drive due to age or disability and those who cannot afford a personal vehicle are left behind by this system.
- Obesity and diabetes rates have skyrocketed as personal activity levels have decreased.
- Greenhouse gas emissions from personal vehicles impact our climate and air quality.
- Communities are less cohesive, as residents travel farther from their neighborhood for work, shopping, and entertainment in personal vehicles or bus if available.

#### 3.1 What Does it Mean to be Complete?

Cities across the country are defining what a Complete Neighborhood means for them. For example, Detroit's 20-Minute Neighborhoods initiative aims to provide residents with everything they need within a 20-minute walk or bike ride of their residence. Across the country, Portland, Oregon defines completeness as those neighborhoods where people have safe and convenient access to goods and services needed in daily life.

National organizations are also looking at Complete Neighborhoods. The United States Green Building Council (USGBC), which manages the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system, also reviews neighborhood developments (ND). LEED-ND provides a rating based on the mix of commercial uses; form and design of all structures (storefront transparency and entrance location); housing options; access to recreation; and mobility, including transit service provided, existence of sidewalks, and bicycle facilities.

However defined, Complete Neighborhoods focuses on planning at the neighborhood level as a holistic, comprehensive approach. Complete Neighborhoods necessitates that land development and transportation planning merge to create the places envisioned by the community.

## Best Practice: Complete Neighborhoods

### Detroit, Michigan

Detroit has commitment to developing 20-minute neighborhoods. Since then, over \$10 billion has been invested into and more than 16,000 jobs have been created. In 2016, residents were still making 71.6 percent of their transactions outside of the 20-minute neighborhood range; that distance has been decreasing since 2013. The walkable, dense development of the 20-minute neighborhood initiative has drawn new residents—particularly young people—downtown.

Source: JP Morgan Chase Institute. March 2017. "Going the

Distance: Big Data on Resident Access to Everyday Goods."



### Neighborhood Development Rating System.

Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) is a system for neighborhood design that promotes sustainable development practices. It focuses around three key strategies:

- Smart Location and Linkage (where to build - eg. development on grayfield sites)
- Neighborhood Pattern and Design (what to build - eg. green space within 1/4 mile of all residences)
- Green Infrastructure and Buildings (how to manage development - eg. planting and preservation of urban trees)

The LEED-ND rating system informs the framework for Complete Neighborhoods in Kalamazoo.

Source: US Green Building Council

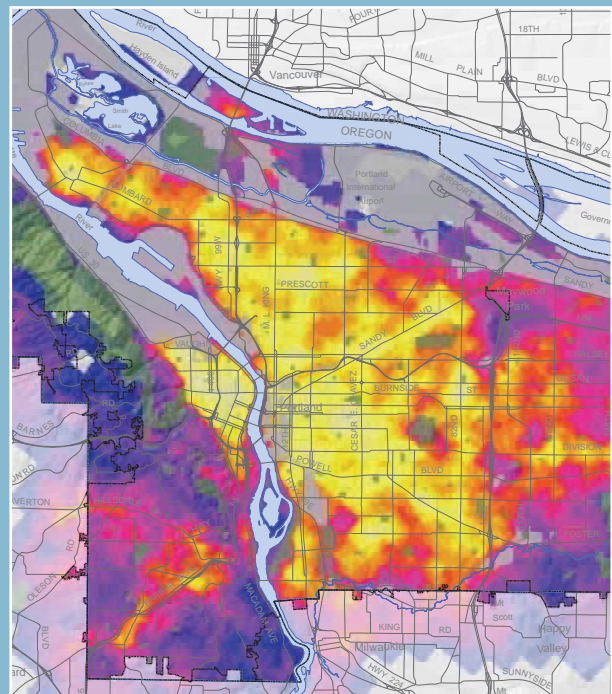
### Portland, Oregon

Assessment of Complete Neighborhoods promotes dense, walkable, convenient, diverse, vibrant, and beautiful cities, where residents can access all daily needs with only a short walk or bicycle ride. Completeness ratings consider both the accessibility of goods and services and the quality of the pedestrian environment.

The Portland Plan measures a neighborhood's completeness based on the percent of the population that live within the following:

- 1/2 mile of grocery store
- 1/2 mile of a park
- 3 miles of a full-service community center
- 1/2 mile of elementary school
- 1/4 mile of frequent transit

Portland aims to have 80% of its neighborhoods meet these criteria by 2030.



Heat map of neighborhood completeness in Portland

Source: The Portland Plan. April 2012. [www.pdxplan.com](http://www.pdxplan.com)



### 3.2 Defining Complete for Kalamazoo

What does a Complete Neighborhood look like in Kalamazoo? Considering IK 2025 feedback, seven criteria stand out as elements of Kalamazoo's definition:

- Ability to meet daily needs
- Access to parks and open space
- Walkability
- Access to transit and bicycle networks.
- Access to food
- Access to multiple housing opportunities
- Neighborhood schools

To measure neighborhood completeness, these seven criteria will be used to study Kalamazoo's neighborhoods. Understanding that Kalamazoo is a built City, with neighborhoods of different sizes and different mix of uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.), the study area will be slightly larger than the neighborhood itself. The study area will be the neighborhood plus an area of a half mile in all directions from the neighborhood's perimeter. A half mile is about a ten minute walk.

**Ability to Meet Daily Needs.** Kalamazoo residents desire the ability to safely meet their daily needs within their neighborhoods. This includes access to shopping, neighborhood gathering space, and basic services. This criteria requires that a neighborhood have access to a minimum number of different stores.

**Access to Parks and Open Space.** Safe and convenient access to parks and recreation amenities was a frequent desire noted during IK 2025. At

neighborhood meetings during the Design It Phase, IK participants considered the quantity, size, design, and placement of parks and open space in their neighborhood. Through this discussion came the metric for access to parks and open space. A resident has access if they live a 1/4 mile or about a 5 minute walk from it. (Figure 3)

### Gaps in Access to Parks & Recreation

Figure 3



A quarter-mile distance around existing parks in the Douglas Neighborhood is noted with a green circle. Areas not served with a park within 1/4 mile or 5 minute walk are noted with the hatch.

A secondary element of this criteria is how are residents are being served. Understanding that the recreation needs for residents differ, this considers how many park facilities (playground, courts, passive green space, trails, etc.) are within the neighborhood.

**Walkable Neighborhoods.** A complete sidewalk network is critical to allowing residents to safely move through the neighborhood on foot. TO be considered complete, a complete sidewalk network must exist on at least one side of every street. Sidewalks must be American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant both in width and at street crossings.

**Access to transit and bicycle networks.** Access to multiple transportation networks increases mobility options for all residents. A Complete Neighborhood will offer transportation options beyond a personal vehicle and will take the first and last miles of a transit journey, which are often done on foot or by bicycle, into consideration. To be considered complete, a neighborhood must have access to at least one transit route, defined by stops located within the neighborhood and one bicycle route (signed and/or with on-street improvements).

A secondary element to this criteria is the frequency of transit stops and the destinations. Like the second criteria for access to parks and recreation, this looks beyond if residents are being served to consider how residents are served.

**Access to food.** Access to food takes meeting daily needs a step further to focus on fresh food sources



Transit and bicycle infrastructure must work together.

Photo credit: Neal Conway



The Kalamazoo Farmers' Market provides fresh food options for residents year round.. Photo credit: Neal Conway

within each neighborhood. To meet this criteria, a neighborhood must have access to affordable food stores with fresh fruits and vegetables, a year-round farmers' markets, or year-round ability to grow food.

**Multiple Housing Opportunities.** Multiple housing types within a neighborhood can facilitate a wider range of size, age, and income households living within a geographic area. This lends itself to the creation of a socially robust community and the ability to “age in place,” or live in a neighborhood through the various stages of one's life. This criteria will require the existence of multiple types of housing, such as small single family homes, single family homes, duplexes (2 attached units), row/town houses (three or more attached units), and buildings with multiple units.

**Neighborhood Schools.** A school can serve as the social center of a neighborhood. The ability of youth to walk or bicycle to school would cut down on both personal household and school district transportation costs, and would positively impact physical health. To meet this criteria, a neighborhood must have a public elementary school with a district boundary that includes the whole neighborhood or have a school building that serves the neighborhood as a meeting or activity center.

### 4.3 Benefits of Complete Neighborhoods

Achieving Complete Neighborhoods in Kalamazoo can impact the quality life of Kalamazoo residents.



Photo credit: Neal Conway



Source: Zuniga Architecture



Source: Google Maps



Source: Google Maps

Examples of single-family, attached, and low-rise apartment housing types that are appropriate in many Kalamazoo neighborhoods.



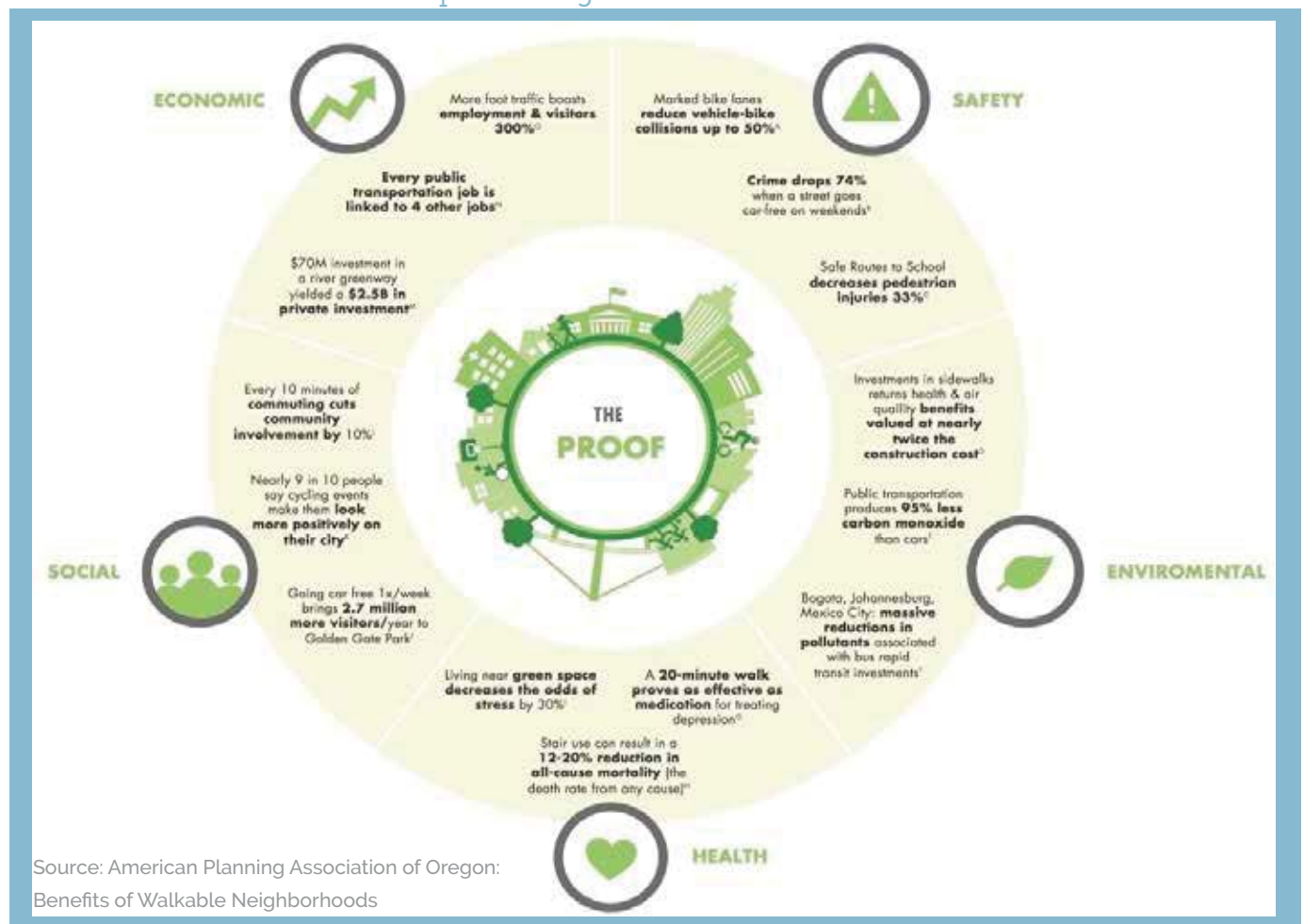
**Mobility.** Complete Neighborhoods have multiple transportation options - walking, bicycling, transit, and personal vehicles. This ensures that no one is left out of mobility access, and can also reduce household expenses for transportation.

**Healthier Lifestyles.** Complete Neighborhoods can lead to more active lifestyles with the location of shopping, school, or work within walking distance of residences. If access to food is incorporated into Kalamazoo's definition, achieving Complete

Neighborhoods can help eliminate food deserts and can increase access to fresh food, including produce.

**Access to Fresh Food.** Increasing local food production through community and personal gardens and farmers' markets has multiple benefits. In addition to increasing access to fresh food, local growing can boost Kalamazoo's economy and support local business. Cooperative efforts such as community gardens can improve the social fabric of neighborhoods.

## Best Practice: Benefits of Complete Neighborhoods



**Increased Daily Convenience.** Reducing travel times to shopping, school, and work and increasing mode of travel choices makes everyday life easier for residents regardless of age, level of mobility, or access to a personal vehicle.

**Reduced Emissions.** According to the Climate Action Plan, transportation makes up nearly a 1/3 of the greenhouse gas emissions in Kalamazoo. A reduction of the vehicle miles traveled by personal automobiles will reduce these emissions. Vehicles miles can be reduced by providing access to daily needs within neighborhoods, improving the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit transportation network, promoting neighborhood schools, and increasing local job opportunities.

**Sense of Community.** Increasing access to gathering places; encouraging a greater variety of household types; improving street design, streetscape, and vacant land planning policies; and increasing walkability in a neighborhood will positively impact the sense of community.

**Improved Economic Vitality.** A focus on neighborhood businesses and employment - including the development of new business incubators and marketing strategies - will boost Kalamazoo's economic vitality and diversity.

**Shared Prosperity.** Complete Neighborhoods offer a greater variety of choices for housing and transportation, opening possibilities to a greater number of Kalamazoo residents and increasing

residents' ability to age in place. Access to jobs and daily needs within neighborhoods reduces the need for long-distance travel.

### 3.4 Complete Neighborhood Strategy

Achieving Complete Neighborhoods is a Strategic Goal for the City. Realizing Complete Neighborhoods will require alignment with other City Plans, consideration of the criteria by City Departments in their daily work, and working with partner organizations, such as Metro Transit.

**Plan Alignment.** Realizing Complete Neighborhoods will require alignment with other City plans, such as the Parks and Recreation Plan and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan. As these plans are updated to incorporate IK 2025 input, they will include policies, goals, and activities that will also support achieving Complete Neighborhoods.

Another planning tool to support Complete Neighborhoods are Neighborhood Plans. These will be instrumental in developing strategies for how individual neighborhoods in the City can meet the criteria. Neighborhood Plans also offer the opportunity for neighborhoods to include additional criteria based on neighborhood needs and goals. Examples of these could include access to health care and access to employment opportunities.

**City Department Work.** Everyday decisions made by City staff can impact realizing Complete Neighborhoods in Kalamazoo.

*Economic Development.* Economic Development staff can assist and guide businesses as they look for a location keeping such criteria as access to daily needs and fresh food in mind.

*Public Services.* In reviewing projects and budgets, Public Service can impact the transportation related criteria of walkability and access to transit and bicycle routes.

*Community Development.* Community Development staff work regularly with organizations that focus on housing development in Kalamazoo. Understanding where a need exists for additional housing types can help shape housing conversations.

*Planning.* The Planning Division's work impacts most of the Complete Neighborhood criteria. Their work to create Neighborhood Plans will shape how each neighborhood is able to meet the Complete Neighborhood criteria.

*Partners.* The City does not work alone. Achieving Complete Neighborhoods in Kalamazoo will be a collaborative effort with area organizations whose work focuses on key components of the criteria such as transit, schools, and housing.

## Best Practice: Livable Communities for Seniors



### Livable Communities for Seniors.

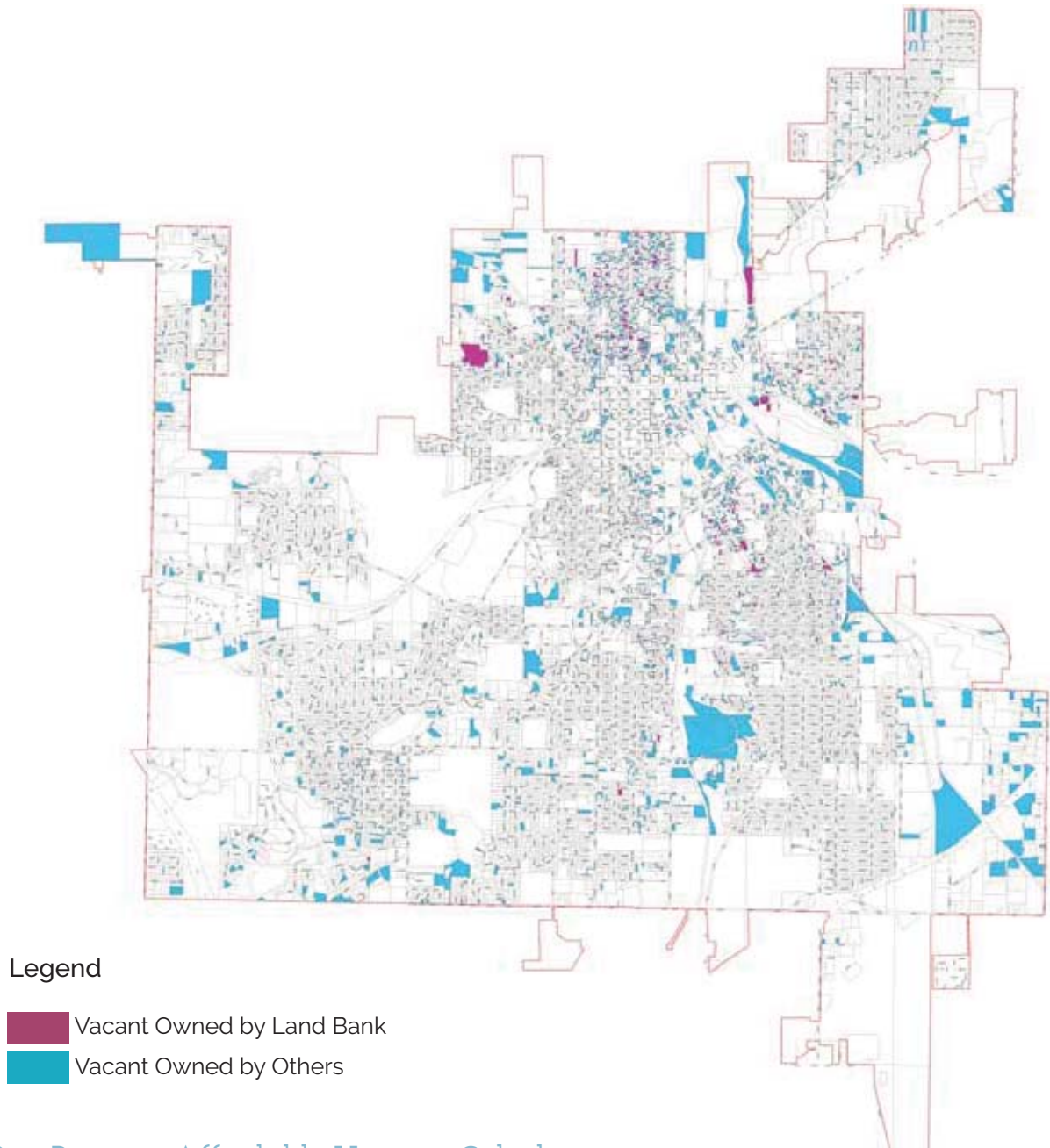
A livable community is one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features, and services and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.

AARP The Journal - <http://journal.aarpinternational.org/explore-by-topic/infographics/the-livable-community>



# Vacant Properties Map

Figure 4



## Best Practice: Affordable Housing Calculations

### Kalamazoo Attainable Housing: By the Numbers:

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as 30% or less of monthly income. In Kalamazoo this means:

A household earning \$10/hr or \$1,733/month needs rent of \$519 or less to be attainable

HUD determined affordable rent in Kalamazoo based on average monthly income (AMI) for a 2 bedroom unit is \$782, which would be 45% of monthly income for this household.

## 4. Housing Strategy

IK2025 heard many comments on housing issues in Kalamazoo. Five common comments given are:

- A desire for an increase in the quantity of attainable housing units throughout our neighborhoods
- A desire for an increase in the quantity of different housing types throughout our neighborhoods
- A desire for resources (skills and funds) to rehabilitate homes, including for weatherization
- Concerns with gentrification and change in property values (both an increase and decrease)
- Create Zoning Districts that allow for more than one housing type.
- Remove restrictions such as minimum lot and unit size.
- Allow the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right.
- Update Zoning Map to locate housing throughout the City using both the existing neighborhood context, access to daily needs, and in areas with multiple transportation options.

Concerns with blight and vacant lots within residential neighborhoods.

### 4.1 Support of Future Plans

To best manage these issues and concerns, a focused housing strategy is required for Kalamazoo. At a minimum, the housing strategy should address these IK2025 comments. Through the update of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan and the new Shared Prosperity in Kalamazoo (SPK) Plan these and many other housing goals and actions will be development to put Kalamazoo on a path to ensure all residents have access to attainable housing. The Master Plan can set these efforts up for success through goals and actions related to the built environment.

**Zoning Ordinance Update.** As detailed in a later section, the Master Plan is recommending many updates to the Kalamazoo Zoning Ordinance. To specifically support efforts to increase the quantity of attainable housing and the quantity of different housing types throughout all neighborhoods, the following changes are recommended:

**Neighborhood Plans & Complete Neighborhood Strategy.** The existence of multiple housing options within a neighborhood is one of the Complete Neighborhood criteria. Neighborhood Plans will be influential in determining the types of housing needed by neighborhood residents and location options within each neighborhood to maximize access to other neighborhood amenities. This is increasingly important for the growing number of seniors within our community, as well as those who wish to remain in their neighborhood, but in a smaller home.

**Vacant Land Strategy.** Many vacant lots exist in Kalamazoo. The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo County Land Bank, responsible for 350 lots, will be working to create a strategy for the reuse focusing on the needs of the neighborhood. All housing types appropriate for the area's context can be considered for affordable housing infill, including duplexes and accessory dwelling units. Simple neighborhood houses can easily blend with the existing single family context of many Kalamazoo neighborhoods. (Figure 4)

## 5. Zoning as a Strength

In the state of Michigan, having a Zoning Ordinance necessitates the creation of a Master Plan. The intent is that the Zoning Ordinance reflects the vision and goals of the Master Plan and includes regulations that achieve them. Accordingly, to achieve the Citywide vision and goals established in this document, the City Zoning Ordinance will need to be updated.

### 5.1 Form v. Use

Traditional zoning focuses on the use of a lot, with a few basic parameters for a structure's setback and height. These strategies were born out of historic concerns for lack of light and air and overall safety and welfare; not as tools to support active, vibrant areas. As personal vehicles began to dominate the transportation network, new development was planned with their ability to allow long-distance travel in mind. The result, seen around the country more broadly, has been not only detrimental to a location's sense of community, the environment, ability to travel

without a car, and our personal health, they are also not aesthetically pleasing or attractive to future development if they fail.

Zoning can facilitate implementation of the goals from IK 2025, including a Connected City, Inviting Public Places, and Complete Neighborhoods, but only if it takes a different approach. Future zoning regulations will focus on the form of buildings and their placement in relation to the street and adjacent buildings first and foremost. Uses are still managed, but are no longer the primary sorting tool. This is known as form-based zoning.

Form-based zoning regulations typically include the following types and regulations.

- **Build to line or zone.** This allows the City to better control building placement. Placing buildings close to the front property line improves access by transit riders, pedestrian, and bicyclists.



Blank facades and oversized parking lots lack aesthetic appeal and sense of place. Source: Google Maps



## Best Practice: Elements of Walkable Urban Areas



Examples of building elements that can be incorporated into a form-based code to support walkable urban areas.



- **Maximum coverage of the lot width at the front property line.** In commercial areas, this standard can prevent gaps between buildings which impacts a shopper's interest in a street or block.
- **Location of entrances on front and corner facing facades.** This ensures easy access for those traveling by transit, on foot, or bicycle.
- **Minimum level of transparency (windows, storefronts) on front and corner facing facades.** Active retail areas require high levels of transparency in buildings to allow potential shoppers to see in.
- **Height,** often in feet and not in total stories and typically has both a minimum and maximum

height. Setting minimum and maximum heights allows the City to determine where mixed-use buildings are appropriate.

## 5.2 Importance of Context

The relationship between buildings and the street is an important element of form-based zoning. Regulations take existing or desired context in mind to facilitate the realization of the area's vision. This prevents, for example, residential development on high speed, high traffic count streets - or in an infill situation, a building that is set back significantly further than those around it. It also helps to create inviting places by viewing streets as an integral part of a place.

### Best Practice: Elements of Walkable Urban Areas



Examples of building elements that can be incorporated into a form-based code to support walkable urban areas.

Zoning maps in form-based codes lay out zoning districts that regulate building form, placement, and use, and also designate street types. This format is being implemented in the Future Land Development Plan. Like zoning districts, the street types have associated standards for such details as vehicular lane widths, pedestrian infrastructure, and streetscape. These guide both public and private street development and improvements.

### 5.3 Removing Barriers

Zoning regulations dictate how land is developed and used. If they are out of step with a City's vision, the regulations can be an obstacle, making use of a lot, rehabilitation of a structure, or new construction difficult to impossible. In many Kalamazoo neighborhoods, zoning is that obstacle - but it does not need to remain one. Future Zoning Ordinance updates will need to reflect both the Citywide vision and correct current barriers within neighborhoods

### 5.4 Uses

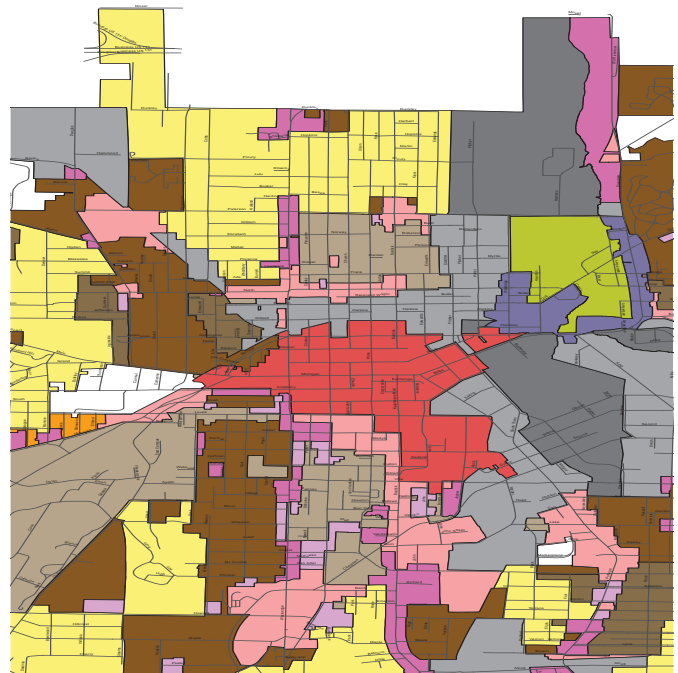
The list of permitted uses will be reviewed and updated to expand options and facilitate starting new businesses.

Some of the changes will include:

- Incubator or shared space opportunities and craftsman or maker-spaces
- Office uses in all commercial districts
- Residential uses in all commercial districts
- Distilleries and brewery uses
- Bed & breakfast and short term lodging
- Home occupations - permitted list, signage.



It is important to consider existing development patterns in neighborhoods. The Edison neighborhood, for example, is primarily zoned RD-5, RD-19, and RM-15 with required minimum lot widths of 40' or 60'. The existing average lot widths, however, range from 20' to 70', with the majority in the 30'-40' range.



The Industrial zoning (gray) to the north and east of Downtown no longer reflects the vision or the existing development in those areas.

## 5.5 Parking

Parking requirements need to match the scale of development, both in quantity required and location.

**Quantity.** Commercial uses in Nodes that focus on the adjacent residences require less parking than those that serve multiple neighborhoods, or the greater City. Residences near transit-served, mixed-use commercial areas need a different requirement than those in other locations. Parking, like many other zoning requirements, is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Context and character, in addition to the traditional considerations of size or quantity of customers, are important. Zoning updates should consider on-street parking and shared spaces in the parking requirements. Overnight on-street parking regulations should be reviewed to determine if the overnight restrictions are necessary.

**Location: On-street.** On-street parking was a frequent discussion at IK 2025 neighborhood meetings. Over-signage, confusing signage, and too many



Screening of a surface parking lot adjacent to the street.  
Photo credit: Christina Anderson

"(We need more) connectivity between neighborhoods and downtown and around downtown without using a car—transit loop, bike share, bike racks, wayfinding, etc."

- Kalamazoo Resident

restrictions were common complaints heard in many neighborhoods. Adjustments to existing on-street parking will vary by neighborhood. When evaluating potential changes, it is important to consider the age of the neighborhood; lot character, including driveway and garage sizes; adjacent land uses; and neighborhood needs. Resident parking permits, streamlined signage, and adjusted time restrictions should be considered on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. This can be addressed in the Neighborhood Plan and through the cooperative efforts of the neighborhood with the City.

**Location: Surface Lots.** Surface lots, especially in commercial and neighborhood Nodes, should be designed and located to minimize appearance and interruption to the character of the area. Lots should not be located on corners and should be screened with fencing and landscaping whenever located adjacent to a street or residential development

## 5.6 Commercial & Neighborhood Nodes.

The Future Land Development Map designates Commercial and Neighborhood Nodes. Nodes are concentrated areas of commercial and mixed use development intended to be walkable urban

environments. Besides the development parameters typically associated with commercial, Nodes have additional development requirements, both for the lot and the adjacent street to achieve inviting, vibrant places that can be accessed by all modes of transportation.

### Best Practice: Transit-Oriented Development

#### Transit-oriented development (TOD).

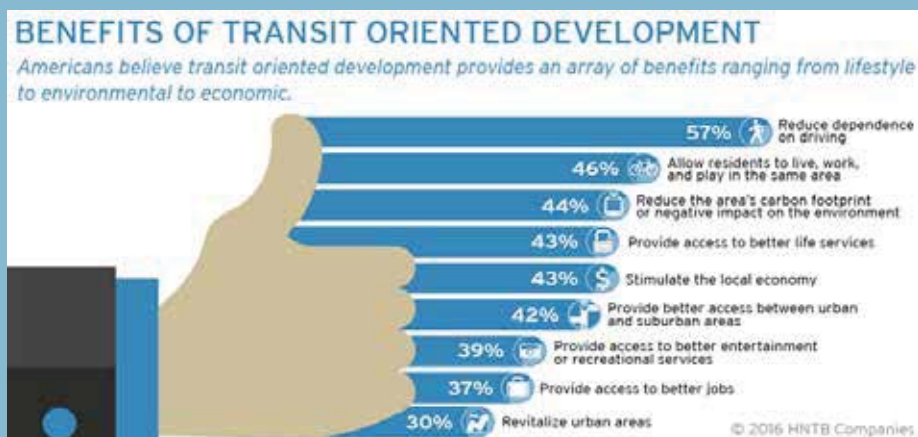
TOD is a land use and development approach that prioritizes transit. The National League of Cities - Sustainable Cities Institute defines the principles of TOD as such:

- Focus on mixed-use development
- Moderate to high density
- Pedestrian orientation/connectivity
- Transportation choices
- Reduced parking
- High-quality design

While the density required to support transit service is dependent on many factors, research suggests that 7 residential units, or 20-30 persons, per acre can provide for a 30-minute bus service.

Transit-oriented development can address environmental concerns, road congestion, increasing demand for urban living, and shrinking household sizes.

Sources: Reconnecting America. "Featured Topic: Transit Supportive Density." National League of Cities - Sustainable Cities Institute. "Transit-Oriented Development."



Source: HNTB Companies

[www.indymidtownmagazine.com](http://www.indymidtownmagazine.com)



**Zoning Districts.** Nodes are inviting, vibrant places with access by all modes of transportation. The Zoning Map will need to be updated with zoning districts that reflect the appropriate scale, uses, and lot layout parameters for these areas.

**Structures.** Development at Nodes should reflect the vision for that area, as developed by neighborhood input. This could be it mirroring the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood or something new. The scale of the Node - whether it is designated neighborhood or commercial in the Future Land Development Plan - should also be taken into consideration.

Required elements critical to the success of a Node as a walkable urban environment include:

- Entrances located on the street-facing facades or sides of buildings
- Transparent windows along the street facing facades
- Construction of buildings at or near the front property line, especially on corner lots
- Signage appropriate to an urban Node, including projecting signs and sandwich board signs.
- Parking located in rear or side of lots
- Consideration of on-street and shared spaces in parking requirements

**Streets.** Nodes occur on a variety of street types. At the Node, regardless of the designated street type,

additional consideration for mobility by all modes must be given. This includes:

- Location of transit stop(s)
- Bicycle parking
- Streetscape, such as trees and way-finding signage and street furniture
- Sidewalk width
- Crosswalk, including special markings or mid-block crossings as necessary
- Management of driveway access to parking or loading areas to minimize conflicts with pedestrians

## 5.7 Sustainable Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance can guide sustainable development practices through out the City. Future Zoning Ordinance updates should include the following.

**Stormwater Management.** need to expand the consideration of stormwater management beyond setting a maximum lot coverage requirement. Roof top gardens, rainwater gardens, pervious and semi-pervious surface materials, graywater systems, and innovative in-street methods should all be studied for implementation.

**Energy.** Use of solar panels and wind turbines are permitted in the current Zoning Ordinance. Updates can expand their use and provide ideal parameters for installation on both previously developed and undeveloped sites, such as building orientation or roof pitch ideal for solar installations.

**Landscape.** Updates to the landscape requirements

should focus on native species and those compatible with native species. Guidance on edible landscapes, particularly usage of fruit trees in public or shared spaces should be detailed.

**Walkable Urban Environments.** Walkable urban environments are inherently sustainable. By making other modes of transportation available and easily accessible, personal vehicle trips can be reduced.



Innovative stormwater management.



Rain garden planning. Photo credit Kalamazoo Nature Center

## 6. Preserving Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo has five Local Historic Districts, which includes over 2000 homes and businesses, and nine individual historic structures. These protected areas have preserved Kalamazoo's character and heritage for current residents and, moving forward, will continue to tell Kalamazoo's story.

Not all residents nor all visitors are aware of Kalamazoo's unique history. They are not aware of the Local Districts' boundaries and locations, the histories behind the designations, or the rules that govern their management. Education and awareness will allow Kalamazoo to capitalize on these unique assets to serve residents - current and future - attract new visitors, and better preserve the city's heritage.

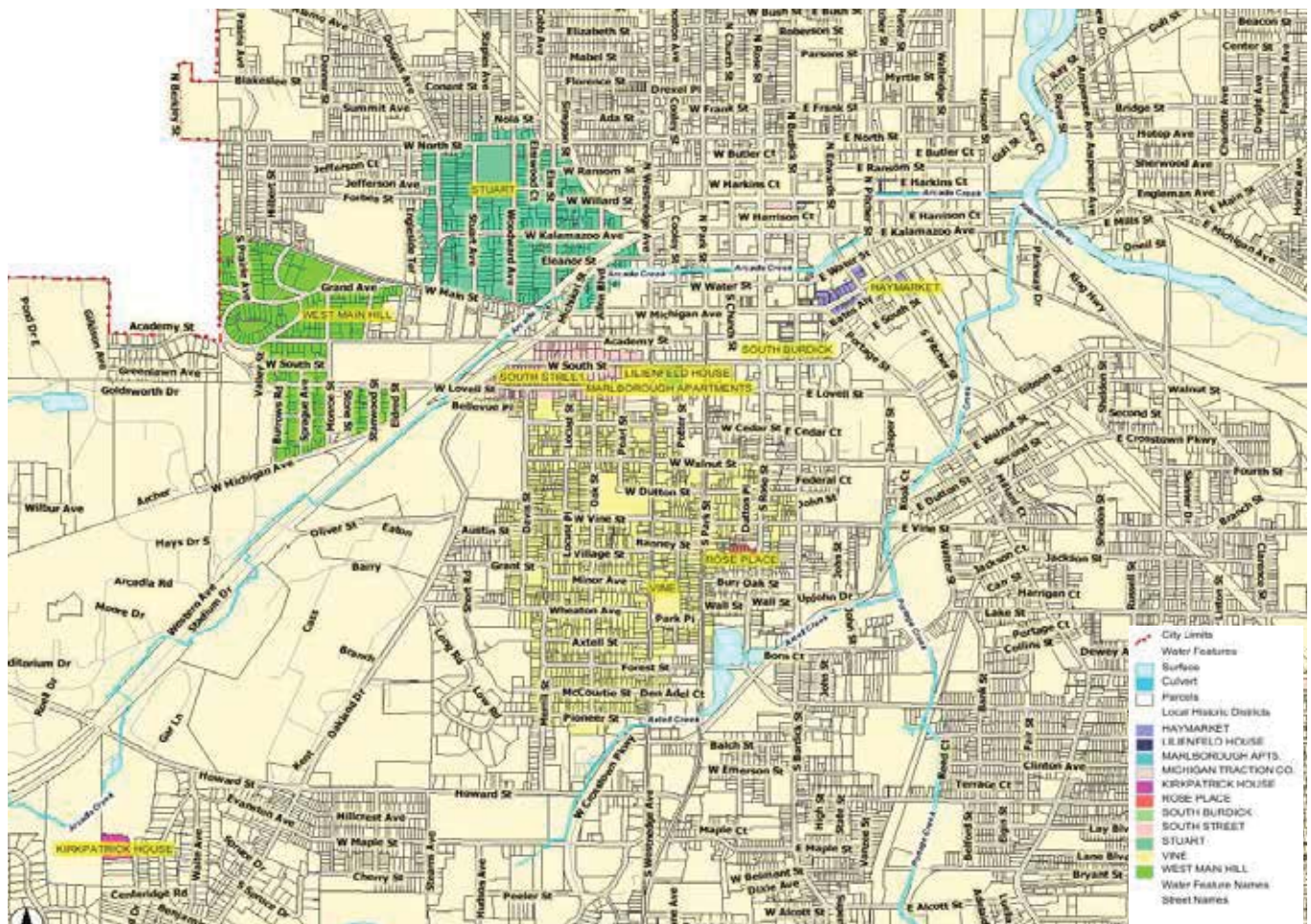
### 6.1 Enhancing Existing Districts.

Physically marking both the Local and National Register Districts and structures locations is critical to enhancing Kalamazoo's historic places. This can be done in many ways, including adding signs at key points of entry, banners on light posts, or simply painted curbs and crosswalks. Each District should be branded in a way that is appropriate for its history. Collaborating with residents and area students to research and design the signage will engage citizens in the history of their City and could reduce infrastructure costs.

Special events such as tours increase the exposure within the City and region and can engage residents of historic districts. Tours can be run by historic experts or the residents of the District, which has the added benefit of increasing local knowledge of the



## Kalamazoo's Historic Crescent



Map of Kalamazoo's Historic Crescent



House in the Stuart Historic District. Photo credit: Sharon Ferraro



Properties in the Vine Historic District. Photo credit: Sharon Ferraro



community. The City of Kalamazoo has seen success with programs like "If This House Could Talk," in which yards signs provide a brief history of a structure or district. The collection of signs creates a self-guided walking tour.

## 6.2 Managing Historic Buildings & Resources.

Historic buildings and resources, particularly those constructed prior to the mi-20th century, can have a different set of "best practices" for maintenance and repair. To facilitate the maintenance of the City's 2000+ historic structures, and to make the choice of owning a historic property easier, resources to assist owners with maintenance and renovations should be made more readily available. Providing assistance allows property owners to make an informed choice, whether they undertake a project themselves or choose to contract out the work. The reality is that many historic home maintenance projects can be done economically by the property owner, but are deferred or ignored due to a perception of expense and difficulty. Together, the City and the many local organizations, including the Old House Network, Community Home Works, and the Kalamazoo Land Bank, can establish regular classes and hands-on workshops to provide residents with the tools that they need to manage their structure.

**Historical Survey.** As Kalamazoo's structures continue to age, additional structures or areas might be eligible and appropriate for local historic designation. Regular study of Kalamazoo structures and neighborhoods



Henderson Castle in the West Main Hill Historic District.  
Photo credit: Sharon Ferraro

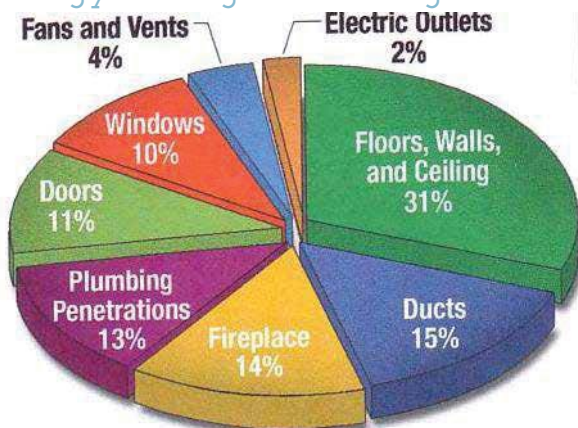


"If This House Could Talk" encouraged residents to explore the history of their own houses. The project was promoted through yard signs like the one above. Photo credit: Sharon Ferraro



"The U.S. Department of Energy states that windows account for only 10% of air infiltration, while floors, walls, and ceilings account for over 30%. Insulation in floors and attics can offset the minimal energy loss in windows. The primary culprit for energy loss in windows is air infiltration around the perimeter of the frame and the movable sash. Weather-stripping, caulking, and the installation of a storm window greatly reduce air infiltration, while replacing the original window and installing a replacement will have a minimal positive effect."

### Energy Leakage in Buildings



Source: <http://www.taseca.com/draft-reduction.html>

will help ensure that areas of significance can be preserved and their history added to the already rich Kalamazoo story. This survey of properties can also yield information useful to reviewing and updating City Ordinances, such as the Zoning Ordinance. Historical surveys should be updated every 10 years.

### 6.3 Perceived Conflicts.

During IK2025, residents frequently noted a concern that Local Historic District regulations were in conflict with achieving energy efficiency and meeting modern needs - particularly in the case of residential dwellings. This is not the case. Energy efficiency can be economically attained in an historic structure without altering the historic character. Providing information and access to options, associated costs, and DIY resources will change this perception and can positively impact heating, cooling, and other energy-saving costs. It is important that this information reach property owners and renters who can undertake simple, inexpensive steps to positively impact their heating and cooling costs.

**Historic Regulations.** A review of the Local Historic District regulations will help to balance the needs of today's property owners and the preservation of Kalamazoo's historic structures. Focusing requirements on the elements that have the greatest impact on the character of a district, such as the facades and yards visible from the street, can provide property owners with flexibility to expand or renovate the interior without altering the exterior character of structure or the view from the street. Other

ordinances, such as the Zoning Ordinance should also be reviewed to ensure they are not inadvertently a barrier to maintaining historic structures. This includes a consideration of setbacks, lots size, and lot coverage requirements.

#### 6.4 Conservation Districts.

Conservation Districts are a “softer” alternative to Local Historic Districts. They seek to maintain and encourage infill that helps redevelopment areas that have lost much historic fabric, but still have enough remaining to establish their character. Conservation District standards would focus on enhancing the established character. This tool could be explored by neighborhoods through their Neighborhood Planning process.

## 7. Parks & Recreation

IK2025 input for parks and recreation centered on two concepts. First, there was a stated desire for all residents to have safe and convenient access to parks and recreation opportunities. Access is defined as living no more than a ¼ mile, or a 5-minute walk, from a park or open space. In addition to access, IK2025 input also included a discussion of how residents are being served by the existing park properties. Understanding that residents use parks differently, IK2025 discussed where different types of park facilities or amenities (playgrounds, courts, greenspace, or growing space) should be located.

### 7.1 Access to Parks

To achieve the access goal for parks and recreation, the first step is to understand what areas are not currently served by open space. Knowing where gaps exist allows for the following actions to be taken to meet access needs.

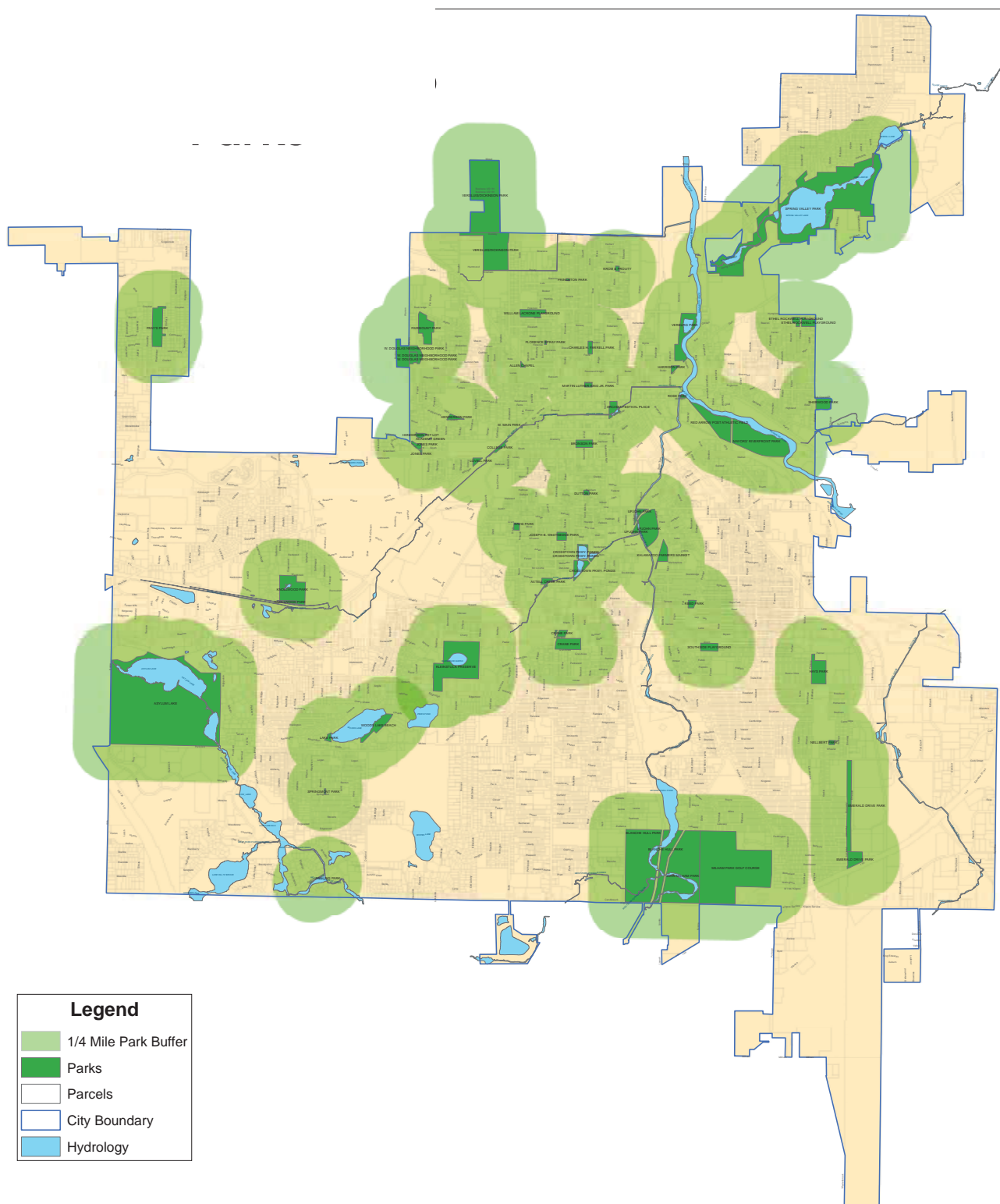
- Prioritize areas with gaps for land acquisition for new park and recreation facilities.



Kalamazoo has a variety of park facilities or types. Photo credit: Neal Conway.

## Access to Park within 1/4 Mile of Residence

Figure 5







Development of a community garden in an existing park in West Main Hill neighborhood. Photo credit: Christina Anderson

- Work with property owners to develop vacant or underutilized lots in areas with gaps to meet resident park and recreation needs.
- Partner with neighborhood organizations to find ways other than physical park facilities to meet recreation needs.

The future updates to the Parks and Recreation Plan will utilize the 1/4 mile access service area to guide its goals and actions. Through Neighborhood Plans, residents can better define the gap areas within their neighborhood and create a vision to meet their park and recreation needs. (Figure 5)

## 7.2 Park Types

Parks can be passive (green and natural spaces) or active (courts, playgrounds, splash pads, pools, etc). Updates to the Parks and Recreation Plan will detail the different park types and amenities appropriate in Kalamazoo; intended service areas for each (neighborhood, multiple neighborhoods, whole city, regional park, etc); and ideal distances residents should be from each facility type.

## 7.3 Growing Space

In addition to passive or physical recreation, parks can also serve as opportunities for community growing spaces. IK2025 input included the desire for growing space, specifically community gardens, food forests (areas planted with edible landscape, specifically fruit and nut trees), and public fruit trees. Many of the City's park spaces are appropriate for these uses. Utilizing park properties could have several benefits, including increasing access to fresh produce; building a sense of community among neighbors and/or gardeners; and reducing emissions from food transportation.



Future updates to the Parks and Recreation Plan, should include which parks could support growing spaces and establish guidelines for their creation. These guidelines should cover leasing of public space, garden planning and review process, growing guidelines, and technical resources. Partnering with organizations, such as the Food Innovation Center at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), Michigan State University (MSU) Extension, and other food or growing related organizations, to promote community gardens giving potential gardeners training and technical resources. Plan updates should also include a list of appropriate fruit or nut trees for park and other public spaces. Strategies for trees should include guides for their maintenance and care through neighborhood or local partnerships.

## 8. Neighborhood Networks

During IK 2025, the transportation networks within and around neighborhoods were frequent discussion topics, particularly around neighborhood schools, parks, and identified Nodes.

### 8.1 Neighborhood Accessibility

Large parks and schools (especially middle schools) are often shared by adjacent neighborhoods. To facilitate connectivity, existing routes for all travel should be reviewed. Where networks are not linked, new connections should be considered. Through IK 2025, priorities for network of connections were around schools, parks, and Nodes.

**Barriers to Connection.** Barriers often exist, including major roadways, missing sidewalks, unfinished bike networks, railroad tracks, or natural features such as waterways that make travel seem more difficult. When connecting parks or commercial spaces, access points must be considered. Where barriers exist, alternative routes must be developed or other accommodations made. This could include the use of medians in a roadway to assist at pedestrian crossings or adjusting trail routes.

**Safe Routes to School.** SRTS is focused on creating a safe walking and bicycling environment for children as they travel to school. The program aims to promote physical activity, decrease air pollution and traffic, and create a sense of shared community. SRTS saves on busing and driving costs, and reduces the rate of

injury. According to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, cities that have invested in SRTS projects see, on average, a 31% increase in walking and bicycling to school over a 5-year period. By prioritizing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, the City of Kalamazoo can support families and create prosperous and active neighborhoods.