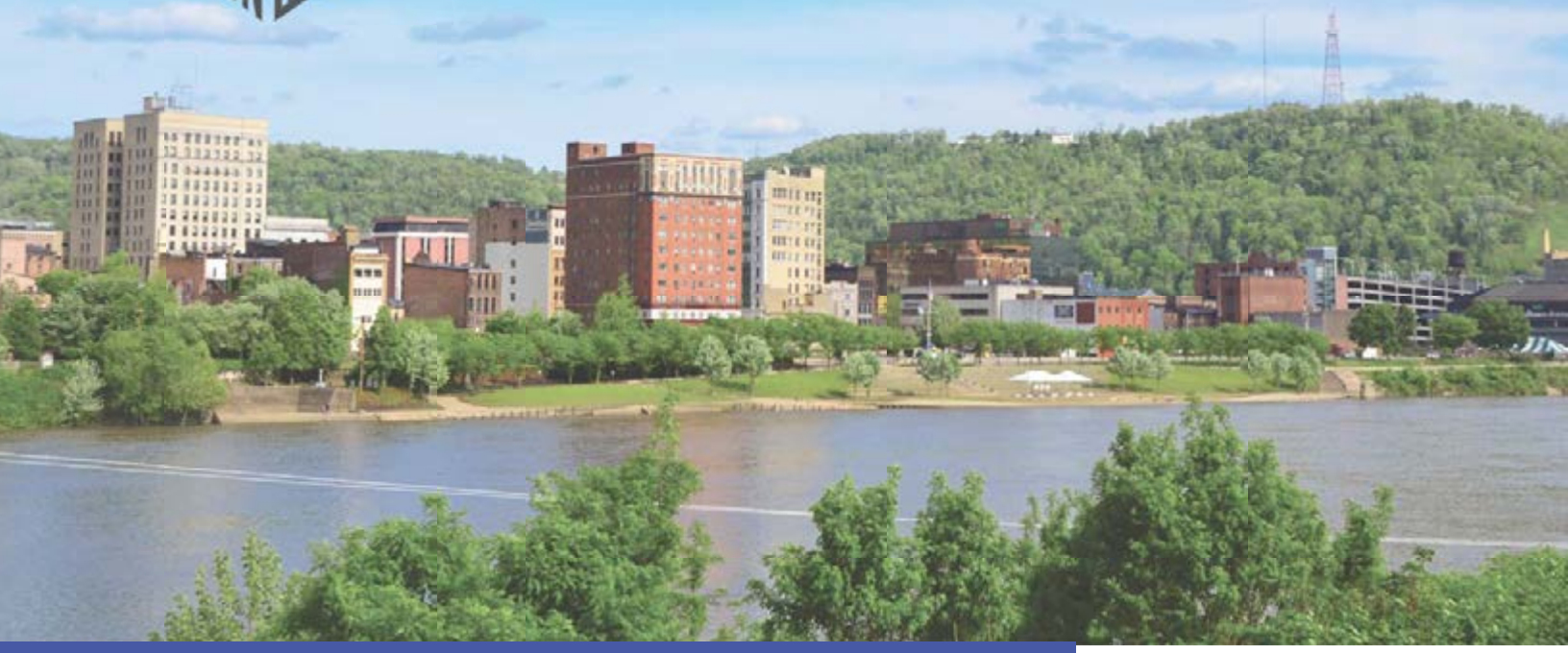
Envision Wheeling

2014 Comprehensive Plan



September 18, 2014 - Public Hearing **DRAFT**

Wheeling
WEST VIRGINIA

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Introduction

Envision Wheeling is the City of Wheeling's comprehensive planning effort that began in late 2013 and was established to develop a vision for the city's future. The purpose of the plan is to serve as a long-term planning tool that identifies the city's policies and strategies related to the physical, economic, and social development of Wheeling. The plan attempts to balance quality of life, livability, economic health, prosperity, private property needs, and public fiscal responsibility through a consensus building process that allowed the public to assist in directing how Wheeling will grow over the next 10 to 20 years. The development of this plan is guided by the following overarching vision statement that was defined after discussions with the public, various stakeholders, and the steering committee.

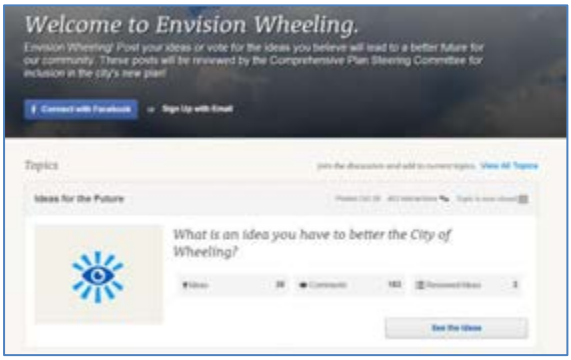
Wheeling will be a forward-thinking, modern, and sustainable community with a diverse economy, support for local entrepreneurs, strong community partnerships, robust neighborhood and infrastructure investments, and an emphasis on embracing the area's unique heritage, culture, and recreational opportunities.

The intent of this document is to provide guidance on future decisions such as capital improvements, investment and reinvestment opportunities, zoning changes, and the general operations of the city. It is designed to provide a vision for the future that will transcend any changes in leadership while remaining flexible enough to allow the city to address any unforeseen major events that could result in significant changes in the city's budget, staffing resources, or demographics of the community.

The Planning Process

This comprehensive plan is an update to the 1997 comprehensive plan that was itself an update to the 1964 city plan. Since the 1997 plan, the State of West Virginia has adopted legislation that mandates each community create and update a comprehensive plan in order to utilize certain development tools such as zoning. With the passing of that law in 2004, the city of Wheeling was given ten years to consider its vision of the future and chart a path that would help them achieve that vision. This plan, and the planning process used to develop the document, is intended to establish a vision of future growth and development within Wheeling as it relates to land use, economic development, housing, transportation, infrastructure, parks, recreation, and other community elements described in the section on compliance with state law.

Before updating the city's vision and comprehensive plan, it was very important to engage residents, business owners, and community stakeholders in the process through different methods that allowed them to have a say in the future of Wheeling. The process began with a series of public meetings in October 2013 where participants were asked to identify major issues and opportunities for the city and prioritize those issues. A summary of the exercise is included in Appendix B of this document but the major issues revolved around access to affordable housing, economic development (jobs), and retaining the younger population. In addition to those meetings, city staff and members of the consulting team interviewed numerous stakeholder groups that had a particular interest in the city (e.g., business groups, the health care industry, educational institutions, parks and recreational groups, neighborhoods, etc.). These interviews provided an opportunity for targeted discussions about individual issues with those who had a unique perspective on the issues. Appendix B also includes a list of the stakeholder groups that participated in this process. In December 2013, the city hosted another series of meetings that were intended to help define the main goals of the plan and areas of potential development and redevelopment within the community based on an interactive mapping exercise. All of these meetings and interviews helped in the development of this document.



In addition to the more traditional public meetings and interviews, this update included an online public engagement opportunity through the MindMixer application that allowed citizens to present their own ideas and/or support other people's ideas about what they wanted to see in Wheeling, where they thought there were opportunities, and where they thought the city should invest their resources. The site was called EnvisionWheeling and gave everyone an opportunity to participate even if they were unable to attend the public meetings. The site allowed the city to engage more than140 active participants in online dialogue, surveys, and questions.

The final element of the plan review was the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee that has been a part of this process from its inception. The committee selected a consultant to assist the city in updating the plan, provided direct feedback on the draft sections of the plan, and was integral in drafting the vision statement identified in the introduction.

Compliance with the West Virginia Code

Chapter 8A, Article 3 of the West Virginia Code defines the basic requirements of a comprehensive plan that a city must meet in order to utilize certain tools such as subdivision review and zoning. This plan goes above and beyond the requirements of Chapter 8A in order to assist Wheeling in its long term planning and development efforts. Appendix A of this document provides a more complete description of how this plan complies with state requirements.

Overview of the Plan

This plan is divided into the following four chapters followed by appendices with supplemental information.

- The **Introduction** chapter sets up the background for the plan and the process, including the general purpose of comprehensive plans.
- The **Community Profile** chapter provides background data and trends analysis that served as a foundation of knowledge for the development of this plan.
- The **Community Vision & Assessment** chapter establishes the vision statement, plan initiatives, and major goals for the plan and for the future of the community. This chapter can be used to guide future decisions that arise out of this plan and those that the city may face in the future that were not anticipated in this plan. The chapter also outlines the major issues facing the community in working toward the established vision.
- The **Community Plan** chapter defines the strategies to implement the vision.

Acknowledgements

The City of Wheeling wishes to acknowledge all of the residents and stakeholders who participated in this planning process. It was their contributions that helped guide the direction of this plan. The city would also like to thank the members of the steering committee who dedicated numerous hours and evenings to the effort.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Planning Commissioners

Councilman Don Atkinson

Barry Crow

James J. Mauck, Jr.

Howard Monroe (Chairman)

Citizens

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MindMixer
Online Public Engagement

Special thanks to Melissa Marshall from The Marshall Creative for designing the Envision Wheeling logo.

Cover photo provided by Arnett Muldrow
Note: All other photographs in this document were provided by Compass Point Planning unless otherwise noted.

Community Profile

Wheeling's population, housing, economy, and public facilities have evolved over time and the impact those trends have on the future depends on the actions of the community. The analyses within this chapter help answer questions such as the following, which in turn provide the basis for making decisions during the development of the comprehensive plan.

- How have the city and region changed in the past?
- What are some of the current trends in the city, county, region, and across the nation, that might affect Wheeling's future?
- How might things change in the future if these trends continue unaltered?

The purpose of this section is to provide a foundation of knowledge that helped assist the city in finalizing the recommendations and strategies identified in this comprehensive plan. These analyses also allow the city to tailor planning tools that will guide any investment toward the community's vision. Additional information about the city and region is provided in Appendix C of this plan to provide an overall snapshot of the community.

Unless otherwise noted, any regional data provided in this section is for the Wheeling Metropolitan Statistical Area (Wheeling MSA). The Wheeling MSA is a region designated by the U.S. Census that includes Ohio and Marshall Counties in West Virginia, as well as Belmont County in Ohio.

Neighborhoods

Wheeling has a number of well-established neighborhoods that residents identify with when talking about where they live and the pride they have in the community. These neighborhoods have been a mainstay in the community over the years and have remained largely unchanged since the last comprehensive plan update. Map 1 illustrates the general boundaries of the existing neighborhoods.

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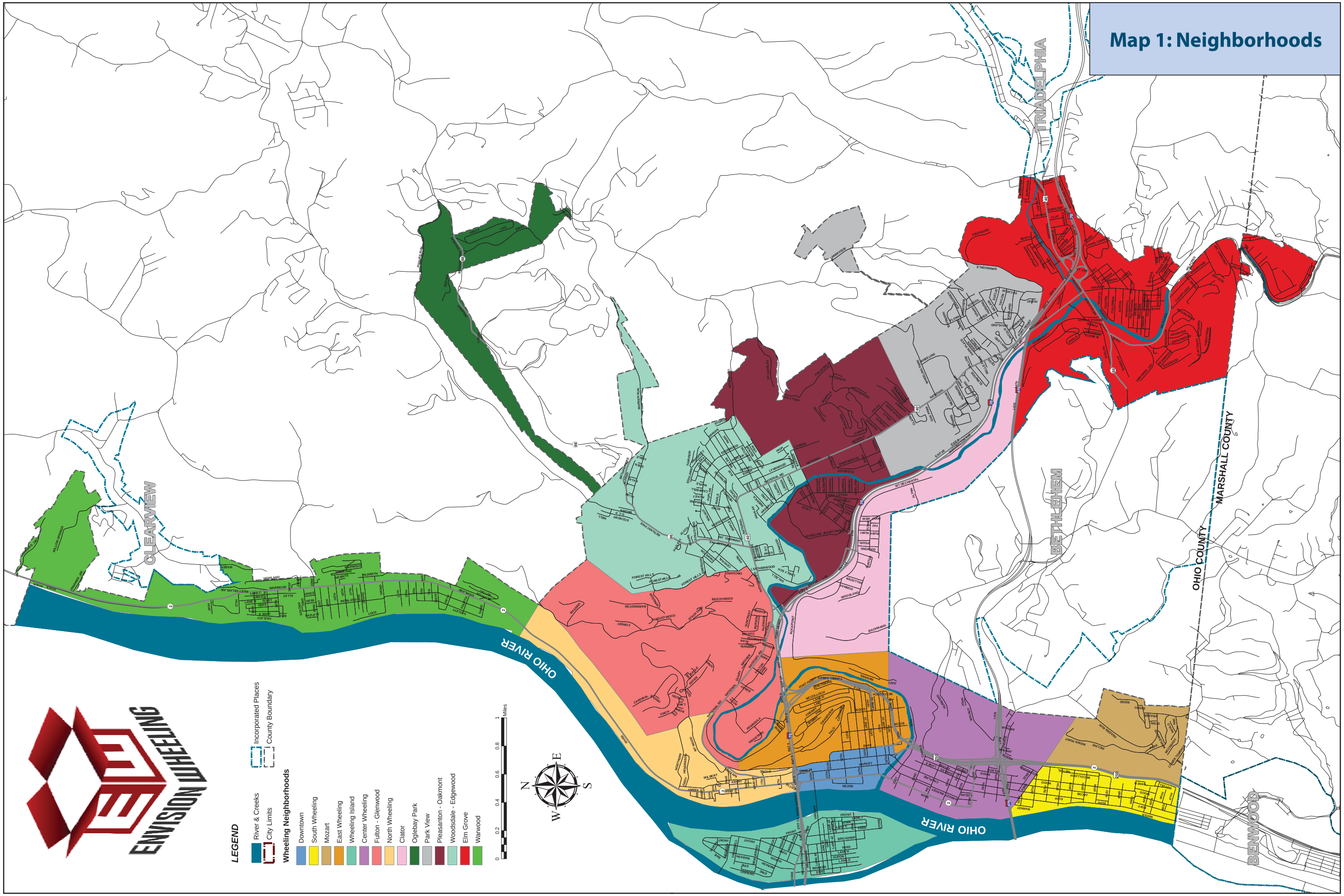
Map 1: Neighborhoods



Existing Land Use

Map 2 illustrates how land in Wheeling is currently used based on the general land use categories identified in the map in Figure A. The information was gathered through data available from the Ohio County Assessor office, in-person field checks, and a review of the map by staff. The following is a brief description of each use.

- **Single Family Residential** is the most common residential land use in Wheeling where individual dwelling units are on located on separate lots.
- **Multi-Family Residential** uses are lots where there are apartment buildings, duplex units, or other forms of multiple dwelling units located on a single lot.
- **Commercial, Office, and Mixed Uses** are the retail and service use areas of the city that contain stores, restaurants, medical office space (not including hospitals), professional offices space, and buildings with a mixture of these uses.
- **Industrial** uses are properties used for warehousing, manufacturing, and similar industrial land uses.
- **Public or Institutional** uses includes all city, county, and state buildings, as well as any properties used for institutional purposes including schools, colleges, churches, etc.
- **Recreational** uses comprise all public and private park and recreational areas within the city.
- **Vacant Land** uses are individual lots that are vacant of any substantial land use or structure. This classification was made regardless of ownership and may include vacant lots that have the same owner as an adjacent developed lot (e.g., side lots).

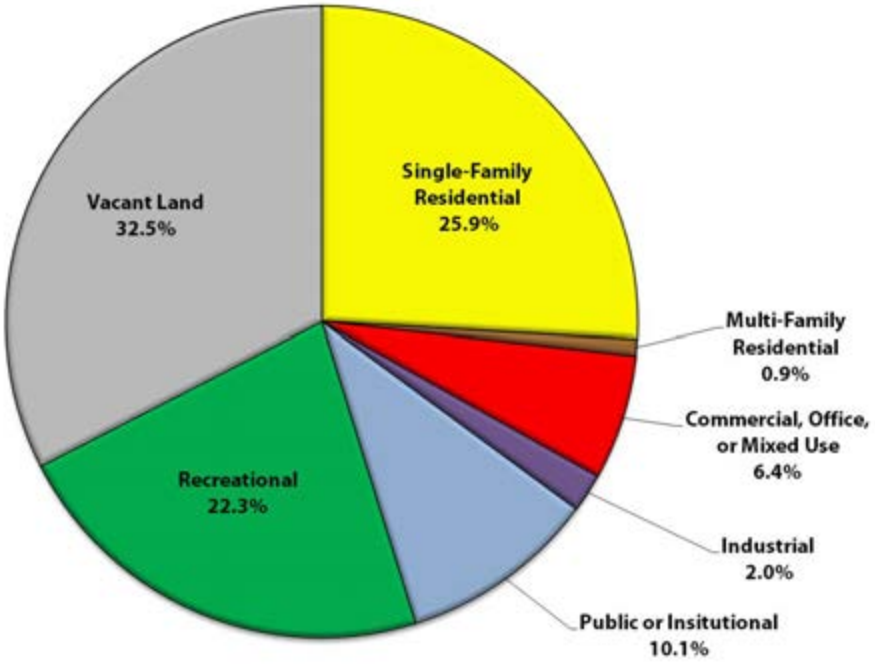


Figure A: Existing Land Use Ratios

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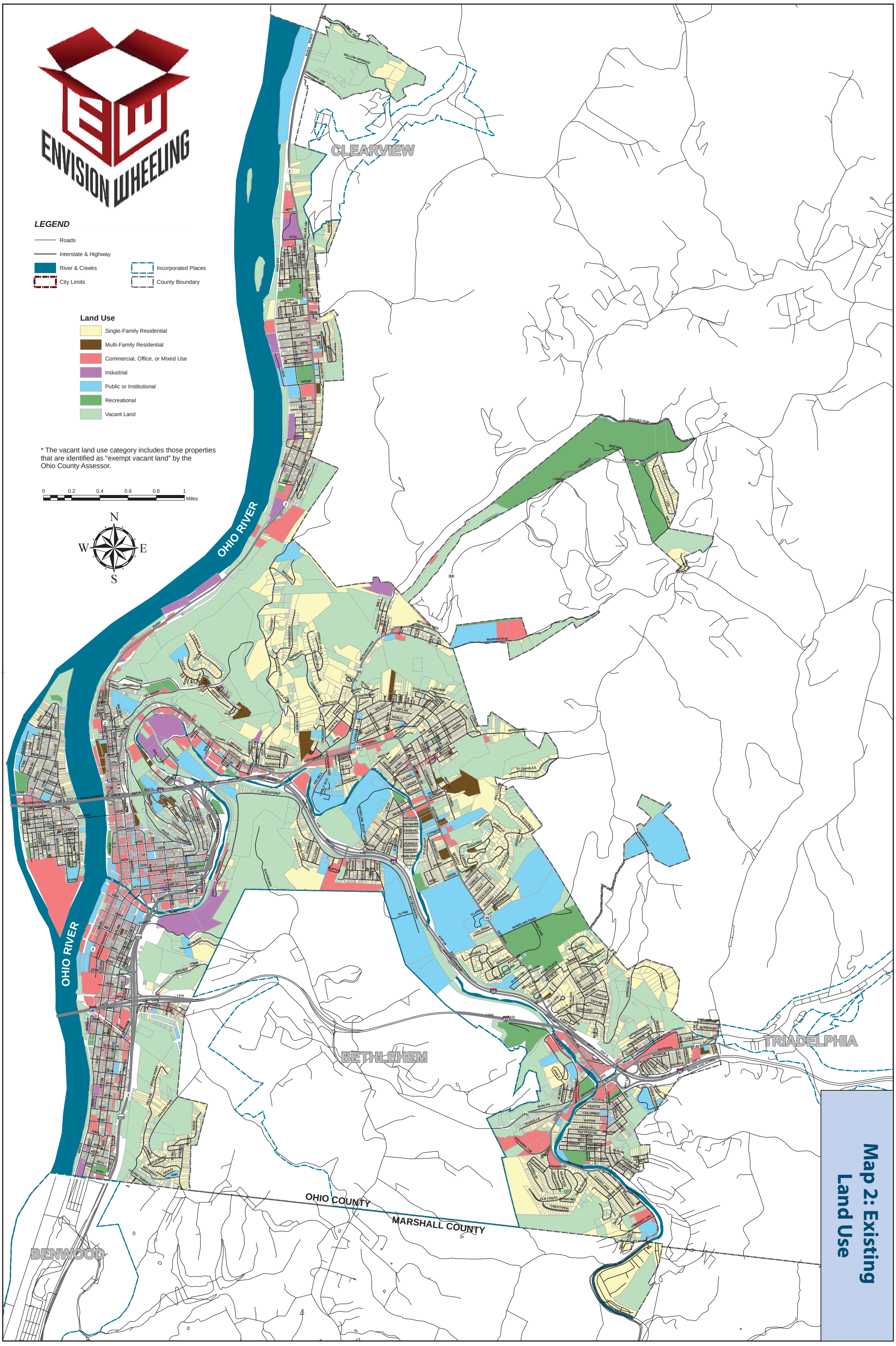
ENVISION WHEELING
LEGEND
Roads
Interstate & Highway
River & Creeks
City Limits
Incorporated Places
County Boundary
Land Use
Single-Family Residential
Multi-Family Residential
Commercial, Office, or Mixed Use
Industrial
Public or Institutional
Recreational
Vacant Land
* The vacant land use category includes those properties that are identified as "exempt vacant land" by the Ohio County Assessor.
0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 Miles
N
W
E
S
OHIO RIVER
CLEARVIEW
BETHLEHEM
TRIADELPHIA
BENWOOD
OHIO COUNTY
MARSHALL COUNTY
Map 2: Existing Land Use

Natural Resources

Natural resources are an integral part of what defines Wheeling as a place. The Ohio River, Wheeling Creek, mountains, and woodlands create a natural environment that surrounds the urban, developed city. Map 3 provides an illustration of the prevalence of floodplains and steep slopes, the most common natural resources within Wheeling. The map shows that roughly a quarter of the city's lots are affected by the 100-year floodplain, which is the area around creeks and rivers that have a 1% annual chance of flooding. The map also shows the prevalence of steep slopes in the area with the white areas of the map illustrating the steepest of slopes (greater than 30%). A 30% slope is an area where there is a 30 foot increase in vertical elevation over a 100 foot horizontal distance. The slopes categories on Map 3 include:

- **0 to 15% slopes** – For development in West Virginia, any area with a slope of 0 to 15% is considered developable with minimal limitations.
- **15 to 30% slopes** – Land within this category can be developed but will require special engineering and precautions to address potential slippage, erosion, and soil instability.
- **30% or greater slopes** – For the purposes of this plan, any land with this steep of a slope is considered to have significant constraints to development. While development is possible with special engineering, it is very costly and the land can be difficult to access. Development on these slopes is usually limited unless there is significant cutting and filling of the property.

Vacant Land

One of the land use categories identified in the existing land use map is vacant land. Simply looking at the existing land use map might make it appear that there are a large number of vacant properties within the city limits with an extensive amount of opportunity for development. However, many of these properties have limited development potential due to the existence of natural constraints such as the floodplains and slopes described earlier. Map 4 illustrates the properties that were identified as vacant in the existing land use survey.

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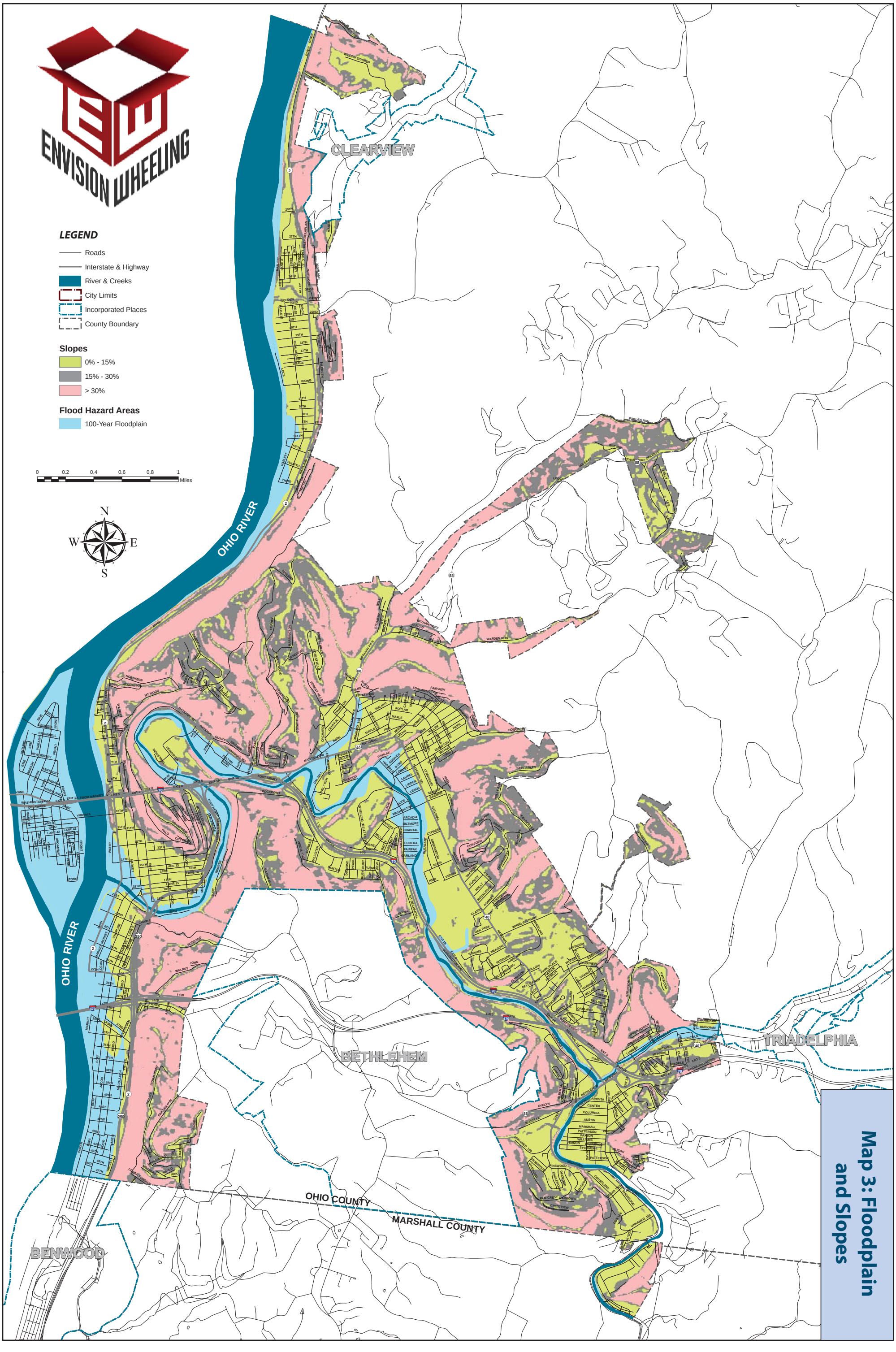
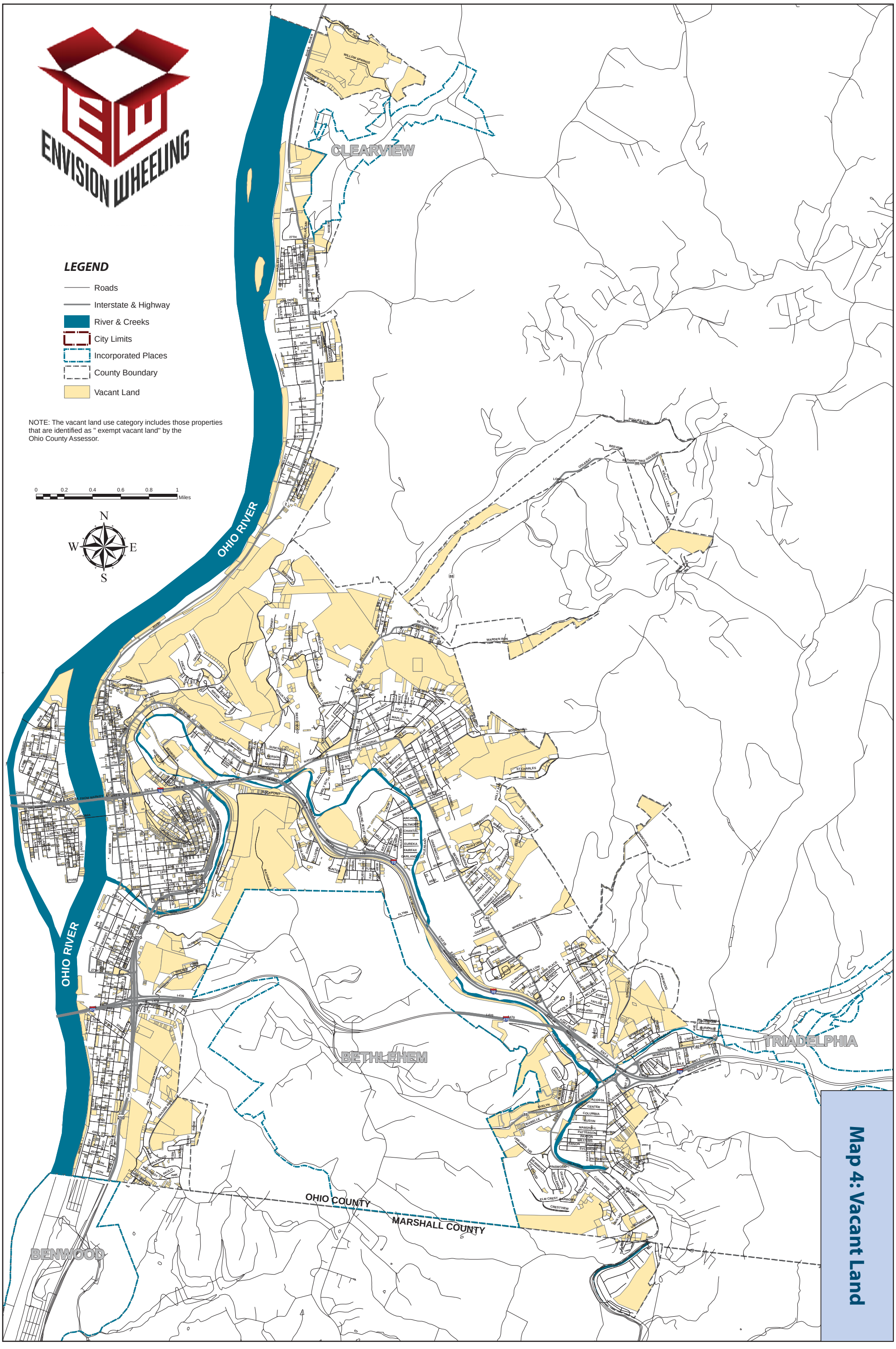


Map 3: Floodplain and Slopes


ENVISION WHEELING
LEGEND
Roads
Interstate & Highway
River & Creeks
City Limits
Incorporated Places
County Boundary
Vacant Land
NOTE: The vacant land use category includes those properties that are identified as " exempt vacant land" by the Ohio County Assessor.
0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 Miles
N
W
E
S
OHIO RIVER
OHIO RIVER
CLEARVIEW
BETHLEHEM
TRIADELPHIA
BENWOOD
OHIO COUNTY
MARSHALL COUNTY
Map 4: Vacant Land

Historic Resources

Wheeling is a historic gem. The city currently has 11 distinct historic districts that are outlined in Map 5. Each district has its own unique history and character that many residents value due to the district's contribution to the community's heritage. Each district, in turn, contains individual buildings that have historical importance. In addition to the historic district, there are a number of historic buildings located outside of the designated districts, some of which are identified in Map 6. These resources are of such great importance to the community that the city was designated a National Heritage Area, which is an area within the United States that has unique natural, cultural, historic, or scenic resources that makes it stand apart from other areas. The Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation (WNHAC) is one of only 49 such areas and one of only two in West Virginia (the other being the National Coal Heritage Area near Beckley).

Population and Household

Table 1 illustrates the historical population numbers for the city, region, and West Virginia, along with the average annual rate of change in those populations. The populations these areas have been in decline for several decades with both Wheeling and the MSA region experiencing a peak in population in the 1930s. Table1 shows that the rate of population decline has slowed considerably over the last decade. Additionally, information from sources such as the 2014 Wheeling Metropolitan Statistical Area Outlook from West Virginia University[1] and the U.S. Census (See Table 1) show that the population has generally stabilized with some minor ups and downs in population projected for the future.

Table 1: Total Population

	City of Wheeling	Ohio County, WV	Wheeling MSA	West Virginia
1970	**48,188**	**64,197**	**182,712**	**1,744,237**
1980	**43,070**	**61,389**	**185,566**	**1,949,644**
Annual Change	-1.1%	-0.4%	0.2%	1.1%
1990	**34,882**	**50,871**	**159,301**	**1,793,477**
Annual Change	-2.1%	-1.9%	-1.5%	-0.8%
2000	**31,419**	**47,427**	**153,172**	**1,808,344**
Annual Change	-1.0%	-0.7%	-0.4%	0.1%
2010	**28,486**	**44,443**	**147,950**	**1,852,994**
Annual Change	-1.0%	-0.6%	-0.3%	0.2%
2012 Est.	**28,213**	**44,075**	**146,420**	**1,854,304**
Annual Change	-0.5%	-0.4%	-0.5%	0.0%

Annual Change = Compounded average annual growth rate
Data Source: U.S. Census

[1] Sartarelli, Ph.D., Deskins, Ph.D, Lego. *Wheeling Metropolitan Statistical Area Outlook 2014*. West Virginia University College of Business and Economics.

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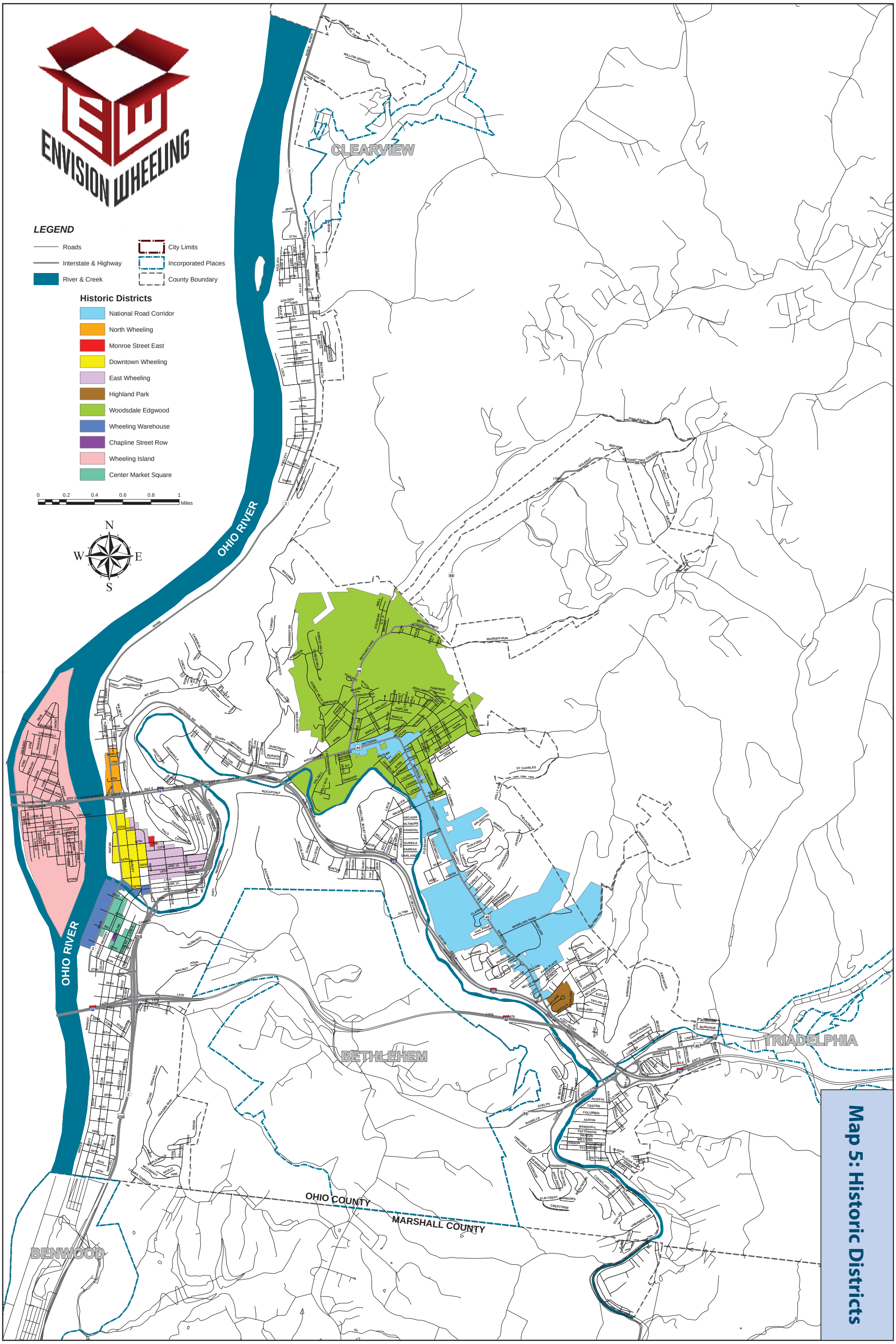


Map 5: Historic Districts

Image Source: City of Wheeling

The population loss in Wheeling is the result of multiple factors including smaller household sizes (fewer births), deaths of older residents (population not replaced), as well as some residents, especially younger residents, moving from the area. The decreasing household size is a trend affecting most communities across the United States and is a trend that was a significant cause for the region's population losses. In 1970, the average household size in Ohio County was 2.86 persons per household (3.11 in the United States) but that number has decreased to 2.21 persons per household in 2010 (2.58 in the United States). The smaller household size is the result of an aging population and a general trend toward smaller families and households. Table 2 identifies the changing number of households and household sizes in the applicable jurisdictions to show the changes across the board.

Table 2: Total Households

	Ohio County, WV	Marshall County, WV	Wheeling MSA	West Virginia
1970	**21,188**	**11,784**	**59,442**	**547,214**
1980	**22,938**	**14,344**	**67,532**	**686,311**
Annual Change	0.8%	2.0%	1.3%	2.3%
1990	**20,646**	**14,051**	**62,858**	**688,557**
Annual Change	-1.0%	-0.2%	-0.7%	-5.5%
2000	**19,733**	**14,207**	**62,249**	**736,481**
Annual Change	-0.5%	0.1%	-0.1%	6.6%
2010	**18,914**	**13,869**	**61,462**	**763,831**
Annual Change	-0.4%	-0.2%	-0.1%	0.4%

Annual Change = Compounded average annual growth rate
Data Source: U.S. Census
Historical household data was not available for the City of Wheeling.

It is significant to note that there were instances in recent history when the number of households in Ohio County and the surrounding region grew even though the population declined. This again is attributable to the smaller household sizes, quite typical of older communities.

Age of Population

The percentage of the population within individual age brackets has changed over the course of 20 years. Figure B illustrates some of the following key points related to the age of the population in Wheeling.

- There was a decrease in the percentage of population between the ages of 5 and 14, which is in line with the trend toward smaller family and household sizes.
- One of the biggest increases was in the percentage of the population who are aged 55 to 64 years old. Over the course of the ten years between 2000 and 2010, that percentage increased from 9.8% to 14.8%.
- The data does confirm that the community is losing population in the 25 to 44 age bracket, which is the age group that the city would like to retain to balance out the population and ensure a more diverse population.

In addition to the information illustrated in Figure B, as of 2010, the median age in Wheeling is 45.2 as compared to 37.2 years old in the United States. The median age is increasing across the nation, but the city and local region's median age is much higher than the overall nation.

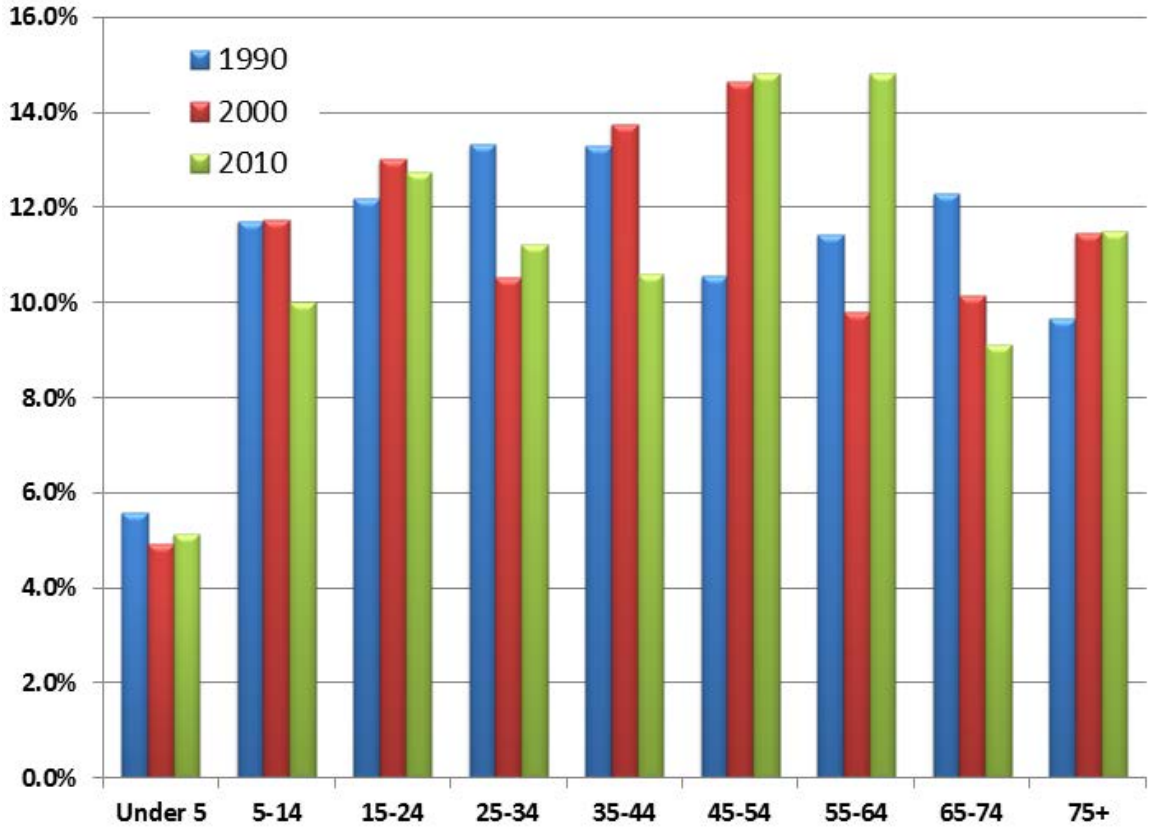


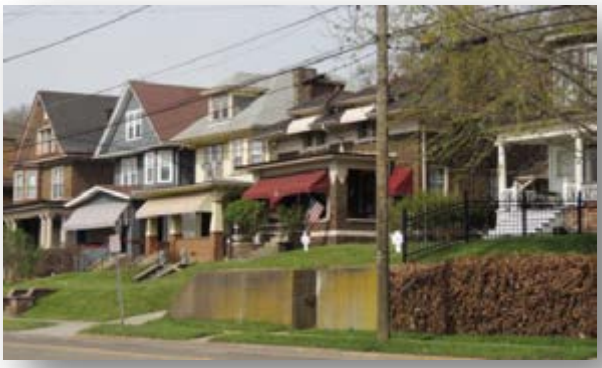
Figure B: Change in Population Age Groups since 1990. Source: U.S. Census

Population Projections

The intent of this plan is to encourage growth in both population and housing in Wheeling as stated by the stakeholders and residents.

There have been changes in the region over the last decade that have started to reshape the community. As important as it is to understand where the city and region have been from a population standpoint, it is also important to identify how certain trends may affect the city in the future. In Wheeling, it is difficult to project where the population numbers may be in 10 to 15 years because of the unpredictable impacts of the oil and gas industry on the permanent population numbers. There has been a tendency of many to believe that the population will continue to fall at a rate similar to what was experienced in the past. The reality is that while it may be difficult to project an accurate 2030 population number, most statistics and analyses show the population stabilizing around the 28,000 mark with an understanding that there could still be some annual up and downs in the population.

Housing



Housing was one of the top issues consistently raised by stakeholders and residents during the comprehensive planning process. Many participants noted that it was difficult to find affordable housing in the area due to the pinch on housing caused by the oil and gas workers. There is also a lot of desire to preserve the older, historical homes and neighborhoods while allowing for and encouraging new housing in a broader range of options including more options for both seniors and a younger population (e.g., patio homes, urban apartments in mixed use settings, smaller homes, etc.). A more detailed description of the housing issues are defined in the Community Assessment chapter of this plan but the following is a brief summary of some current and historical trends related to housing.

Total Housing Units

Like the overall population numbers, the total number of housing units within Wheeling has decreased over the years, although the rate has been fairly steady and not quite as fast as the population decreases. As of the 2010 Census, there were 14,661 housing units in the City of Wheeling, down from 17,840 units in 1970. That averages out to about one-half of a percent loss per year over the last 40 years. However, the biggest loss in house occurred the last ten years due to the city's more aggressive efforts to clear some of the housing stock that was in the poorest of conditions. The opposite has occurred in the larger region where there has been a steady increase in the number of housing units with an increase from 62,460 units in 1970 to 69,542 in 2010. This demonstrates that much of the newer housing expansion has been in the suburban areas.

Occupancy of Housing Units

There is a perception that Wheeling struggles with vacant housing far more than the average community because of its age and the fact that there has been such a population decline. As described earlier, the significant decline in population has been the result of far more factors than people leaving the area and in fact, the decline in the number of housing units has not followed a similar pace as the population. Table 3 provides a summary of the occupancy status of housing units across the city, region, and state. Information for Charleston was also provided for a point of comparison.

Table 3: Summary of Occupancy Status

	City of Wheeling	Wheeling MSA	City of Charleston	West Virginia
Total Housing Units	**14,661**	**69,542**	**26,205**	**881,917**
Total Units that are Occupied	**12,816** (87.4%)	**61,462** (88.4%)	**23,453** (89.5%)	**763,831** (86.6%)
% Owner Occupied	60.7%	72.1%	57.4%	73.4%
% Renter Occupied	39.3%	27.9%	42.6%	26.6%
Total Units that are Vacant	**1,845** (12.6%)	**8,080** (11.6%)	**2,752** (10.5%)	**118,086** (13.4%)
% of Vacant Units - For Sale or Rent	59.3%	41.2%	47.9%	30.4%
% Vacant Units - Seasonal	4.1%	16.5%	7.2%	32.4%
% Vacant Units - Other	36.6%	42.3%	44.9%	37.2%

Data Source: 2010 U.S. Census

While Wheeling does have a slightly higher percentage of vacant housing units, the percentage of the vacant housing stock that is actively for sale or rent is significantly higher than the other areas in the table. This could be because of speculation related to the oil and gas industry (worker housing), but does demonstrate that the amount of vacant housing does not automatically correlate with a deteriorated housing stock. In fact, the last row of the table illustrates that a significant portion of the vacant housing stock is not on the market due to any number of conditions. For Wheeling, that is the lowest number of any of the communities or regions and could be an indicator that the city's vacant property registration notice is providing some positive results at keeping housing from falling into disrepair and disuse.

Housing Values

As mentioned previously, one of the biggest issues raised by residents is the cost of housing in Wheeling, both rental and for purchase. With rental housing, many people feel that they are competing for rental units with the oil and gas workers who will only be in the community temporarily but who are willing and able to pay more money for rent, thus increasing the cost of rental housing. For people looking to buy, the problem is finding a house that is affordable and in move-in condition. There are a number of older housing units that are available and affordable but the caveat is that they will need to invest additional money to renovate the house or spend a significant amount of their time doing the work themselves. Table 4 identifies some of the median housing values and costs as identified by the Census in the 2008-2012 American Community Survey. The data shows that both Wheeling and the MSA are in line with the median costs across the state but are far lower than Charleston.

Table 4: Housing Costs/Value

	City of Wheeling	Wheeling MSA	City of Charleston	West Virginia
Median Value (Owner Occupied Units)	$92,800	$88,800	$141,900	$97,300
Median Monthly Costs (Homes with Mortgages)	$914	$921	$1,159	$953
Median Gross Rent (Renter Occupied Units)	$537	$518	$625	$594

Data Source: U.S. Census – 2012 American Community Survey

The data on housing availability and values identified in Tables 3 and 4 appears to conflict with reality, to some degree. For example, the data in Table 3 shows that over half of the vacant units (600+) are for sale or lease but a quick search of the local classifieds, Craigslist, and other sites shows only a handful of properties that are advertised as for lease. The advertised rent prices also seem to demonstrate that the gross rent values would exceed the medians specified in Table 4 as even apartments with one bedroom and one bathroom are showing rent costs of between $600 and $800 with homes renting for $2,000 and more, all depending on the condition and neighborhood. This is an issue the city will have to continue to monitor and address as part of the housing goals of this plan.

The above is an advertisement on Trulia.com as of June 2014 that shows a "new" one bed room/one bathroom apartment in Center Wheeling going for $1,000 a month without utilities.

Age of Housing

Residents who participated in the planning process noted that there was a significant amount of older housing stock available for purchase or lease in the city but much of that housing requires additional investments for upgrades and renovations. Figure C illustrates that a significant amount of Wheeling's housing stock (47%) was constructed in 1939 or earlier. This is a far higher percentage than in the larger MSA region (33.9%) or even in West Virginia (17%). This is partly attributable to Wheeling's history as one of the oldest cities in the state. Part of this is also attributable to the fact that very few housing units were built in the last decade.

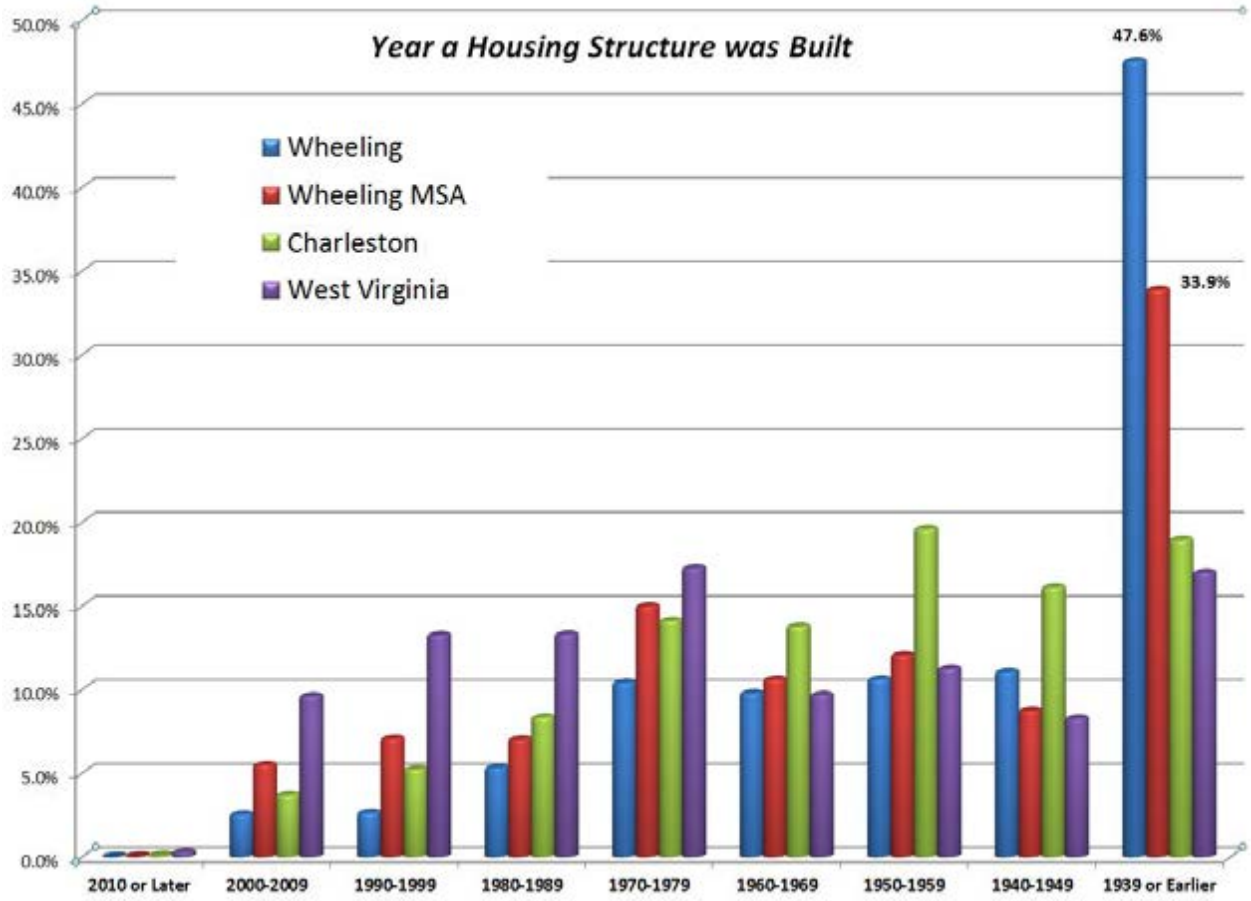


Figure C: Year that Housing Units were Built. Source: 2012 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census

Types of Housing

Another housing issue mentioned during the planning process was the lack of choice in housing types. Both younger and older residents voiced a desire for new housing units that were either smaller single-family homes in an urban neighborhood or up-scale apartments. In both cases, the residents stressed that new housing should be in close proximity to restaurants and shopping. Figure D illustrates the percentage breakdown of housing units based on how many units are in the structure. The high percentage one unit structures is reflective of a significant amount of single-family housing while housing units located in the 20+ unit structure category are reflect the number of high-rise apartment buildings located throughout Wheeling.

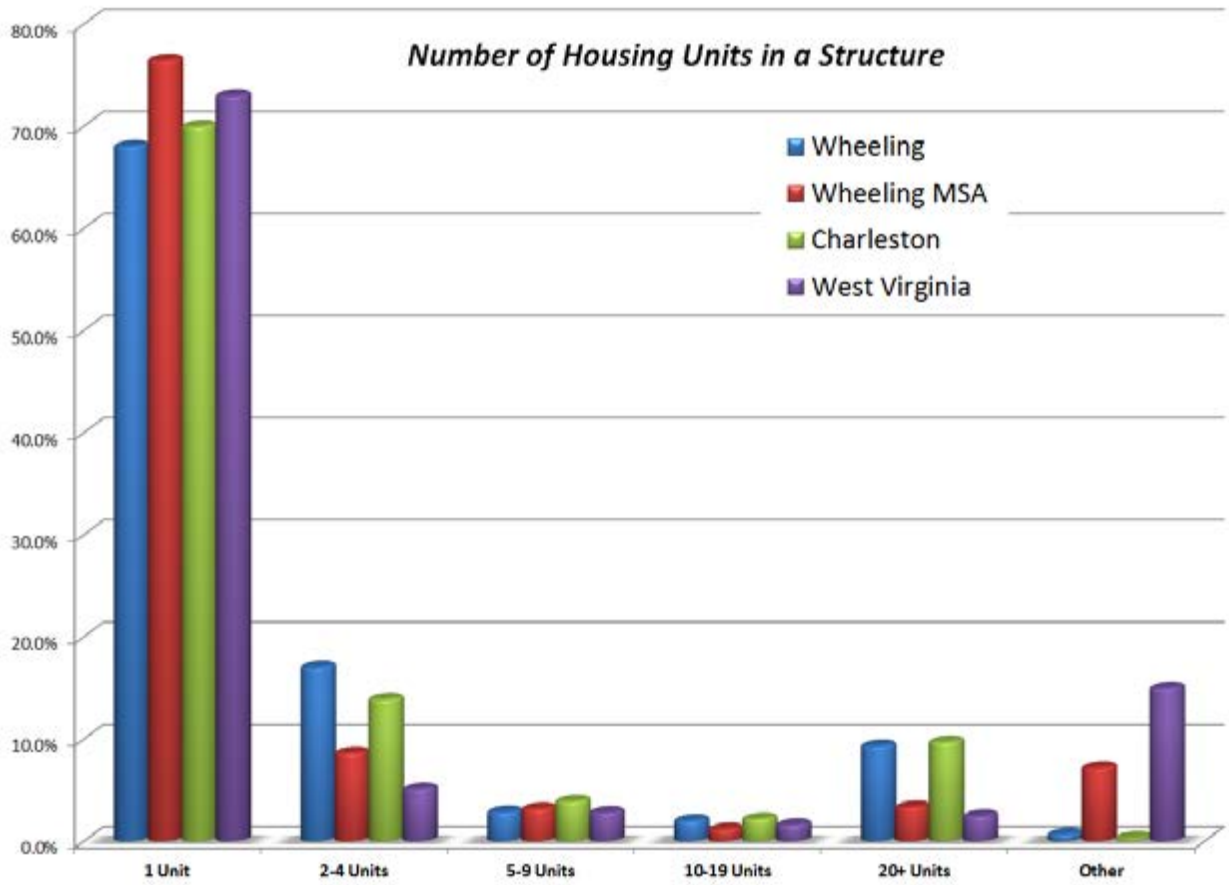


Figure D: Number of Housing Units within a Structure. The "other" category includes mobile home, boats, and recreational vehicles used for housing. Source: 2012 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census

While there is a desire for denser housing options, most participants noted that they do not want to see additional high rise housing buildings. Instead, residents identified a preference for lower-scale residential and mixed use buildings that are closer in scale to the historic development in North Wheeling or around Centre Market. These types of buildings are not typically more than three to four stories tall.

Housing Unit Projections

As with the population projections, it is difficult to predict how much housing is needed for the future given that the population has been in decline with some recent stabilization. However, there is an interest by residents for new housing options that may drive demand for housing even without population growth. This plan demonstrates that there is a sufficient amount of opportunities for development and redevelopment within the current municipal boundaries to accommodate any demand for new housing over the next ten years.

Economy

There is a significant amount of data and analysis of trends about the local economy that is readily available. The previously mentioned Wheeling Metropolitan Statistical Area Outlook report by West Virginia University is an annual economic outlook for the Wheeling MSA that includes information about changes from the previous year as well as from previous Census (10 year) data that provides an outlook on the future of the area's economy. The last report was issued in the beginning of 2014 and presents a fairly positive outlook for the regional economy as it comes back from the economic downturn in the late 2000s. The report does note that any future growth will likely be slow and steady with a lot of the growth focused around the oil and gas industry. Some of the key points made in the report include:

- "Employment in the MSA has grown over the past two years. However, the rate of job growth has been tepid, with the MSA having replaced only one-third of the jobs lost during the recent recession."
- "The economic recovery has been relatively narrow in scope as the natural resources and mining sector accounts for the large majority of net job growth in the MSA over the past two years."
- "Other areas of job growth are in construction, professional and business services, and trade, transportation and utilities. The construction sector has benefited from the growth in oil and gas drilling in the area."
- "Much of the recent job growth in the Wheeling MSA has been in high wage sectors such as natural resources and mining and construction."
- "The labor force in the Wheeling MSA is expected to grow at a modest pace in coming years."
- "While we do not fore see population gains in the region, our forecast calls for an improvement in the rate of population decline in coming years."

Some of the key data identified in that report and available from the U.S. Census Bureau is further defined on the following pages. Additional data and analysis is available in the final economic outlook document.

Industries Where Residents are Employed

Figure E breaks down the industries where the Wheeling labor force is employed as of the 2010 Census. The large percentage of residents employed in the arts, entertainment, education, health care and related industries is no surprise given the increasing presence of the medical and educational industries in the areas as well as the growing arts and tourist business. While the percentage of residents working for the educational and health care industries has remained steady for the last decade, there has been significant increases in other industries such as retail, arts and entertainment, and other trades but these gains occurred at the same time when there was significant losses in residents employed in the manufacturing, wholesale, and information industries, all of which have suffered losses since 2000.

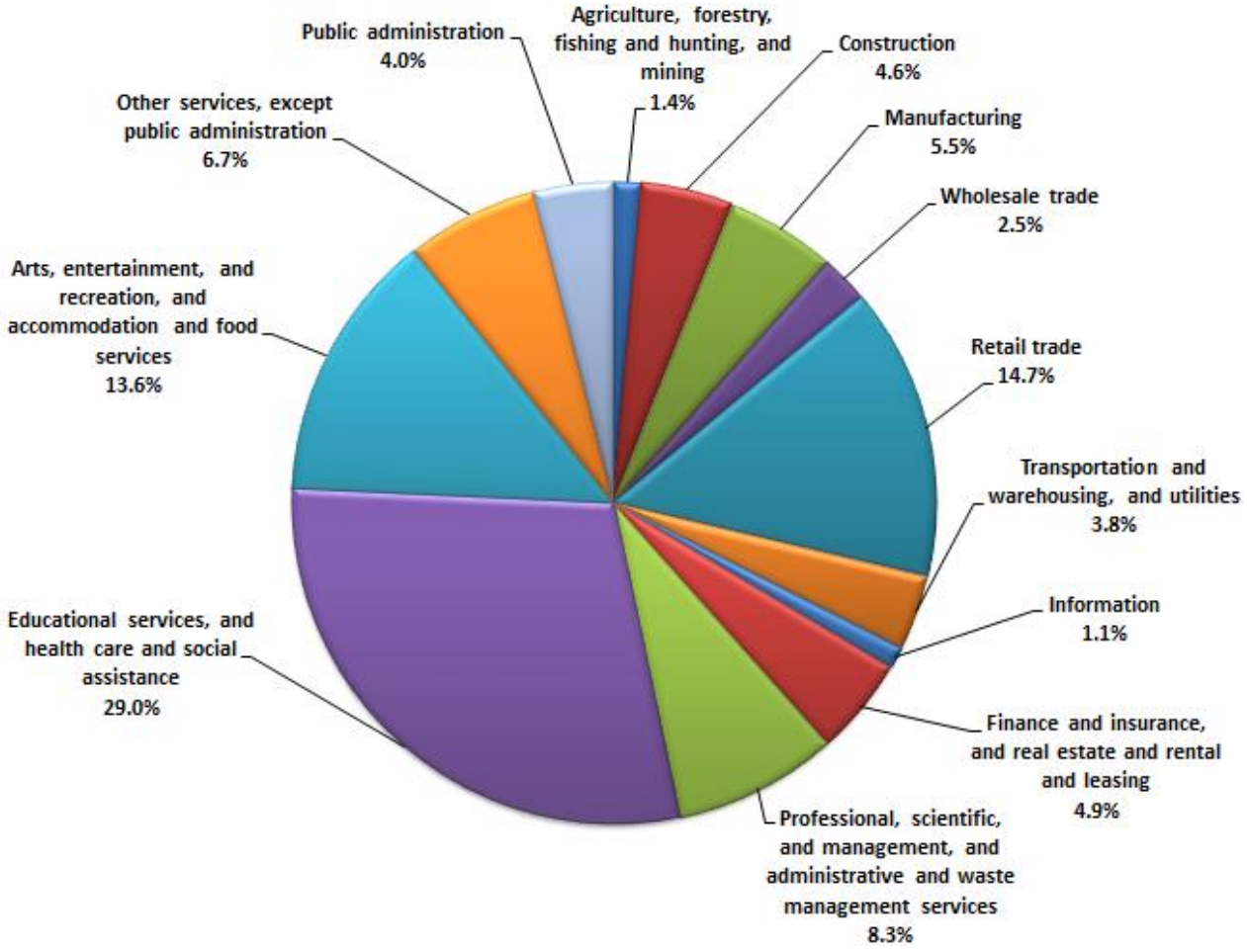


Figure E: Chart of Industries where Residents Work. Source: 2010 U.S. Census

The graphic on the previous page is further substantiated when considering the largest employers in Ohio County as identified by Workforce West Virginia in 2013. The top three employers fall under the medical and educational industries.

1. Wheeling Hospital (11th Largest Private Employer in the State)
2. Ohio County Board of Education
3. Ohio Valley Medical Center
4. Cabela's Wholesale
5. Wheeling Park Commission
6. Wesbanco Bank
7. City of Wheeling
8. Wheeling Island Gaming
9. West Liberty University
10. Wheeling Jesuit University

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in the Wheeling region reached almost 10 percent in 2010 but has declined in recent years. As of May 2014, the rate has dropped to 6.9 percent. This is only slightly higher than the 6.3 percent unemployment rate across the U.S. and 6.1 percent across West Virginia.

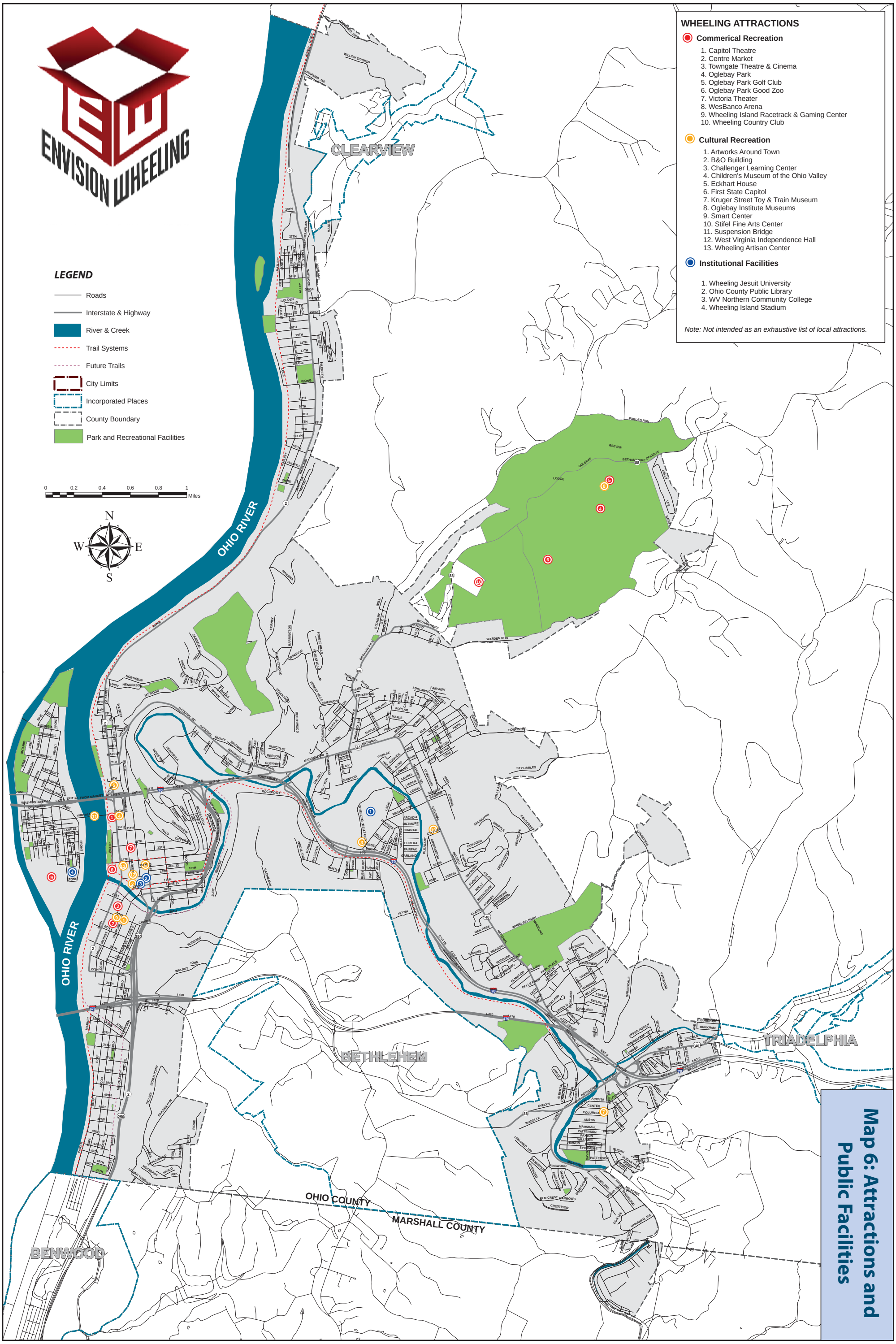
Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Public Facilities

Wheeling is the home of numerous public facilities including governmental services (e.g., city hall, fire stations, police stations, etc.), as well as a host of educational, institutional, cultural, and recreational facilities that serve as local and regional destinations. These facilities serve as the basis of the community's quality of life that must be maintained and expanded to serve the changing population and to enhance the attractiveness of Wheeling. Map 6 identifies the location of the majority of these facilities to highlight those services and facilities that are currently available in Wheeling.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

A majority of the city's main infrastructure systems is old, with some water and sewer lines dating back more than 100 years. Much of the system was designed for a population that far exceeds the current population, so there are some areas of Wheeling where there is existing infrastructure but no demand for the service. The aging infrastructure means that the city is largely responsible for monitoring and maintaining systems that are more prone to breakages and failures with repairs coming at a great cost. There needs to be a stronger reinvestment in modernizing the city's infrastructure.

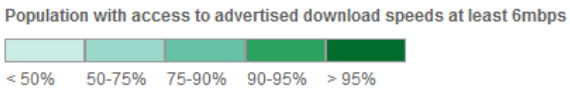


Map 6: Attractions and Public Facilities

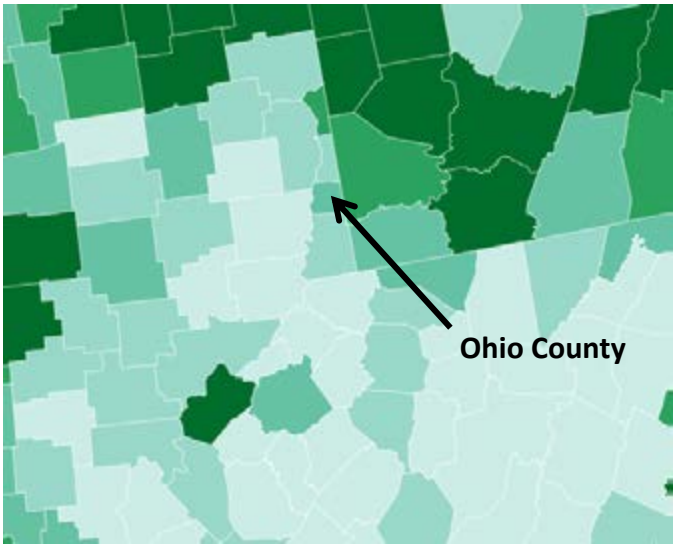
It is evident that almost the entire city has ready access to water and sanitary sewer. The main problem the city continues to face is the presence of a combined sewer system where the sanitary sewer and storm sewers are combined into one line. This is an issue when there is a major storm event that overwhelms the lines and requires the mixed sewage to flow past treatment and directly into the local waterways. The city continues to work on eliminating these combined sewer issues to minimize the potential for the sewage overflow as they work to upgrade the system.

High Tech Infrastructure/Internet Accessibility

West Virginia has worked to attract high-tech jobs to the state over the last few years, but the state still generally lags behind other states when it comes to access to broadband, wireless internet, and fiber optic infrastructure. The image below was generated from 2011 data that shows how areas just outside the Wheeling region have much better broadband access than the region and most of the state. In order for Wheeling to compete with nearby, modern cities such as Pittsburgh and Columbus, the city will have to take a proactive approach of expanding access to technology, especially in areas where the city wants to encourage economic development and reinvestment (e.g., the installment of high-tech infrastructure such as a fiber optic system).



This county map show the percentage of population with access to broadband according to 2011 data as illustrated in Governing Magazine and as based on data from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.



Transportation

The earlier maps in this chapter show the extensive street and highway network located in Wheeling and the surrounding region. On top of the basic roadway system, there is also an extensive network of bike/hike trails throughout the city that the community continues to work on expanding to eventually connect into a larger regional system. Map 7 illustrates the current roadway network, bus routes, and trails that make up the transportation system. The map also identifies both the existing hike/bike trail system and the location of the city's proposed trails expansions.

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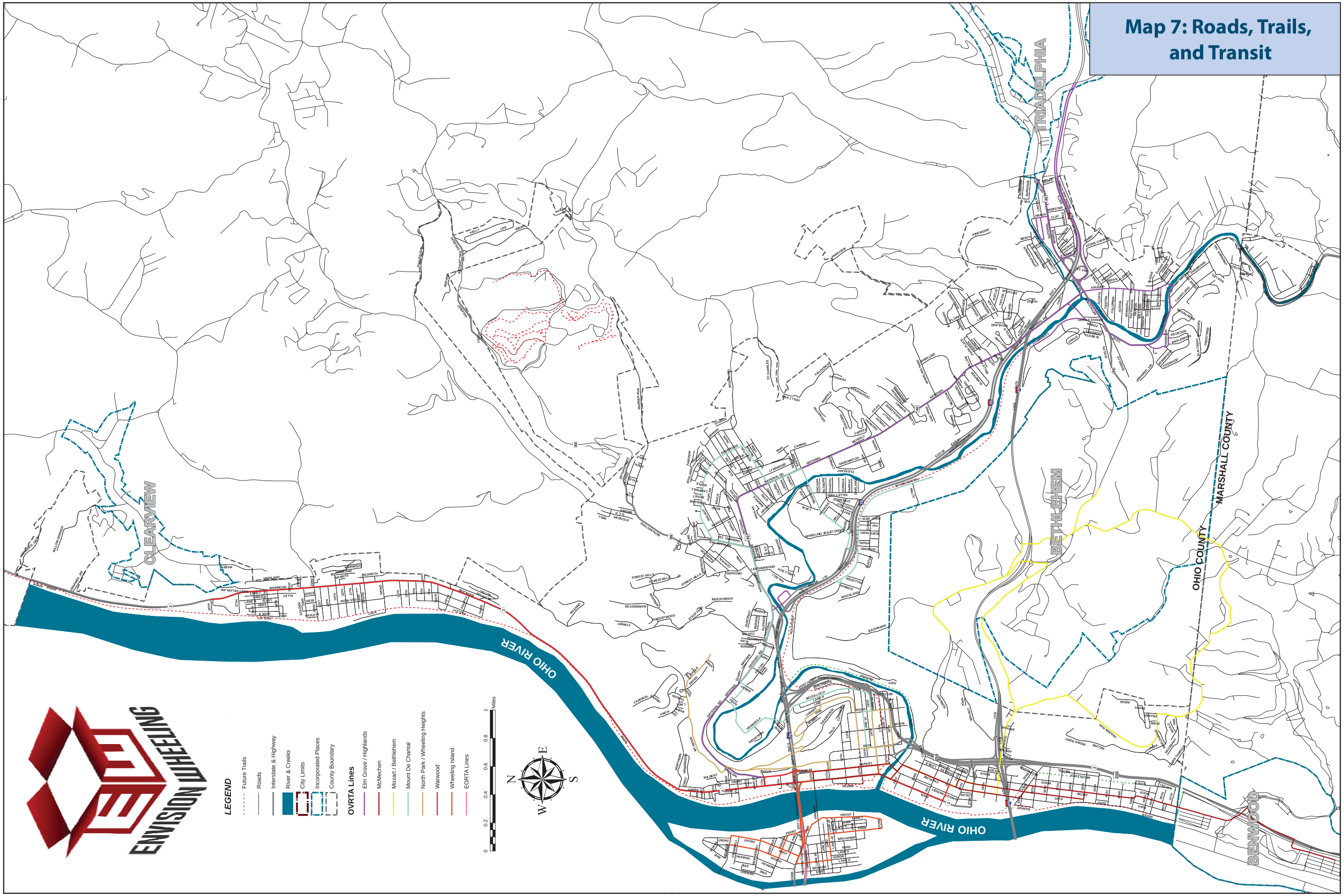
Map 7: Roads, Trails, and Transit



Community Vision & Assessment

Community Vision

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to help guide the future development of the community over the next 10-20 years. Central to that guidance is the overall community vision, which forms the foundation of the goals and initiatives in this plan. The following is the vision statement developed from the contributions of the many people involved in this planning process that succinctly summarizes the direction Wheeling wants to go over the lifespan of this plan.

Wheeling will be a forward-thinking, modern, and sustainable community with a diverse economy, support for local entrepreneurs, strong community partnerships, robust neighborhood and infrastructure investments, and an emphasis on embracing the area's unique heritage, culture, and recreational opportunities.

Community Initiatives and Goals

The vision statement sets the tone for this plan. In order to refine the meaning of the vision, the statement was divided into six major plan initiatives and a series of related goals that creates the foundation of the plan and the series of actionable strategies outlined in the Community Plan chapter.

Initiative #1 – Wheeling will be **Modern and Sustainable** by…

- Targeting reinvestment and revitalization efforts in downtown and in the older, urban neighborhoods to support the establishment and growth of walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Expanding opportunities for sustainable practices including, but not limited to, urban agriculture, use of renewable resources, use of green infrastructure, emphasis on non-vehicular transportation, etc.

Initiative #2 – Wheeling will have a **Diverse Economy** by…

- Promoting an economy built on its own assets including the expansion of the educational and medical industries, strong businesses that have chosen to locate in Wheeling, and a growing entrepreneurial base.
- Targeting business attraction efforts that will bring in jobs with livable wages.
- Developing additional opportunities to assist local entrepreneurs and small business that are looking to start-up a business and/or grow in Wheeling.
- Collaborating with local banks and financial institutions on efforts to streamline investment in the community and finance development projects.

Initiative #3 – Wheeling will have strong **Community Partnerships** by…

- Collaborating with other institutions, public service agencies, stakeholders, neighborhood organizations, and regional partners to identify the needs of the citizens and provide appropriate support to address such needs.
- Engaging all of its citizens in this plan's implementation, regardless of their age, wealth, educational level, or length of residency.
- Incorporating new ideas and new people in the city's planning efforts and in the decision-making processes.

Initiative #4 – Wheeling will invest in its **Neighborhoods** by…

- Ensuring that there are adequate housing options for all age groups including a wider array of housing types, affordable housing options, and an increase in choices between new and older housing stock.
- Providing access to recreational facilities, local and regional institutions, shopping, and public services within close proximity to all neighborhoods.
- Establishing and enforcing policies and ordinances that will provide for the long-term protection of neighborhoods without creating excessive burdens on homeowners and business owners.
- Protecting and ensuring the long term preservation and use of historic districts and buildings.

Initiative #5 – Wheeling will invest in its **Infrastructure** by…

- Supporting all modes of transportation but focusing efforts on expansion of non-vehicular (e.g., sidewalks and trails) and mass transit options.
- Upgrading the local infrastructure systems, especially high-tech infrastructure, to support its residential population and promote economic development.
- Updating the city's Capital Improvement Plan on a regular basis to establish a priority of infrastructure improvements based on community needs.

Initiative #6 – Wheeling will embrace its **Quality of Life** by…

- Providing excellent park and recreational facilities, quality educational facilities, access to arts and culture, and diverse entertainment opportunities.
- Partnering with local preservation organizations and agencies on efforts that will protect and promote the city's heritage as a way of creating a sense of place and an economic development activity.
- Fostering an artistic environment that allows for local visual and performance artists to demonstrate the cultural assets of the city.
- Providing quality public safety and educational services and opportunities to all of its citizens.

Community Assessment

This chapter briefly outlines some of the major issues and needs of Wheeling for each of the six plan initiatives. It is not intended to be a laundry list of issues but an outline of the big picture issues that face Wheeling as they proceed with the plan. The Community Plan chapter identifies the actual strategies the city and stakeholders need to undertake to address the identified issues and work towards the overall vision.

Initiative #1 – Wheeling will be **Modern and Sustainable**.

- **Change Perceptions:** Perceptions can be a powerful thing; discouraging people from moving to the area and misleading people from the facts that might otherwise lead them to invest in the city. Some locals perceive that Wheeling is stuck in its past and continues to do things because "that is the way it has always been done." These perceptions can be overcome if the city and its regional partners work together to promote the assets of the area and the fact that the city is continuing to evolve into a modern and sustainable community.

- **Focus on Downtown:** The city has struggled with encouraging redevelopment in downtown. It is also an issue because the area traditionally defined as downtown is no longer clear cut. Where it once was comprised of the traditional central business district that ends at Wheeling Creek, the downtown activity core now extends past Wheeling Creek into the Centre Market area, albeit at a smaller scale than the central business district. This is not a negative issue because many residents spoke up in support of the investment they are seeing around Centre Market and the area just north of Wheeling Creek where WVNCC has invested in its campus area. The issue is more about where to prioritize the city's investments in the area to garner the biggest impact and to keep the private investment momentum moving. What is very evident is that there is great support for:
    - Capitalization of development along the waterfront area including along the Ohio River and Wheeling Creek;
    - Development of mixed use buildings with apartments above small-scale restaurants and shopping;
    - Urban living options that include the apartments as well as small homes on the periphery; and
    - Preservation of the historic character of the area.

- **Recognize Natural Development Constraints:** As illustrated in Map 3, there is a significant amount of floodplain and steep slopes affecting development in the city. These natural areas limit development potential for parts of Wheeling as well as potentially increase the cost of development and reinvestment. For example, the federal government recently passed legislation that will significantly increase flood insurance premiums for any properties within a floodplain. At the time this plan was adopted, there was some reprieve in the implementation of the law but there is likely to be increasing costs for building or redeveloping within the floodplain over the next 10 years and this may slow reinvestment

  Second, a large portion of the city's historic buildings and districts lie within the floodplain. This is an issue because there are many communities that choose to lessen the flood risks by demolishing buildings and prohibiting reconstruction. However, to do so in Wheeling would be to further halt progress in historic preservation and severely limit the amount of land available for redevelopment. This is where the balance must be found to allow for investment without risking any person's health or safety.

- **Address Vacant Properties:** Like other communities that have suffered through the economic crisis that hit in the early 2000s, Wheeling has had to deal with its own set of foreclosed homes and abandoned properties. The city has been fairly aggressive at addressing the issue including buying properties and demolishing structures as well as establishing the vacant property registration program described in the sidebar. These vacant structures, if not secured and maintained, can turn into a public nuisance and site for illegal activities. Even when they are maintained, a large number of vacant structures can reflect poorly on a neighborhood and stifle reinvestment. Vacant lots can also pose a similar issue to surrounding neighbors if the lot is not maintained and grass and weeds are allowed to run rampant. Some of the key strategies related to this issue will address the more far-reaching ideas for minimizing these vacancy issues as well as methods for redevelopment and renovation of vacant lots and structures.

Initiative #2 – Wheeling will have a **Diverse Economy**.

- **Capitalize on Land Availability:** The Vacant Land Map (Map 4) illustrates the large number of vacant lots located throughout the city. Additionally, there are several brownfields and built areas in the community that are ripe for redevelopment including those areas that are highlighted in the plan section as Priority Reinvestment Areas (Map 9). Recent renovations in downtown and Center Wheeling along with investment by WVNCC and private property owners (e.g., Stone and Thomas Building and the old Wheeling Stamping Building) clearly demonstrate that economic development is not reliant on the existence of large, cleared sites but it will take some work on upgrading infrastructure and marketing the sites to attract additional investment.

- **Build upon Major Industries:** Steel and coal used to be the primary industries in the region and as many have personally witnessed, the loss of those industries led to some of the decline in the area. Wheeling has since evolved into a major medical and educational hub. These industries are fairly stable because there is always a demand for the services. This plan identifies strategies that relate to expanding on the success of these industries to benefit the institutions and the community as a whole.

  In addition to the educational and medical industries, oil and gas has sprung up recently as a third major industry for the area due to its location in the Marcellus Shale region. This industry has brought in an influx of revenue and business growth although no one really knows how long the growth will last since it is a finite resource that will eventually be depleted. This is a significant unknown and to counteract it, the overall policy of this plan is to capitalize on the oil and gas industry while it is here. The focus needs to be on broadening the tax base to move away from reliance on any single industry.

Initiative #3 – Wheeling will have strong **Community Partnerships.**

- **Combine Resources:** The City of Wheeling has a defined budget and a set amount of staff resources to go towards the implementation of this plan. In order to move forward with this plan's vision, it is absolutely vital that the city partner with other groups and agencies on the plan strategies. In some cases, the city will have to take the lead for things such as infrastructure improvements or changes to local ordinances, but in other instances, the city can support local partners as they embark on efforts that fall within these six initiatives. This type of partnership can have multiple benefits including the ability to engage more of the local citizens in planning and implementation activities as well as combining resources to accomplish more of the strategies laid out in the Community Plan chapter.
- **Improve Communication and Coordination:** One of the concerns that arose out of the comprehensive planning process was the overall lack of communication and coordination between various groups involved in the city's future.
  - This comprehensive planning effort was the first time that many of the stakeholder groups from like interests and backgrounds came together for any level of discussions unless they were jointly participating in a specific project. For example, there are a number of private and public recreational agencies in the area who have never sat down in the same room with one another to discuss the future needs of parks and recreation in Wheeling and the region.
  - There is a lack of coordination between the city and West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOH), as well as other service providers, when there should be some obvious ties between the agencies. The WVDOH is planning several major projects in the area that could shut down the interstate and/or the Suspension Bridge and will impact major pavement improvements in downtown. While the city is aware of the projects, there is minimal coordination of activities between the agencies to allow for better planning of local infrastructure improvements or traffic access should the interstate be shut down.

Initiative #4 – Wheeling will invest in its **Neighborhoods.**

- **Increase Housing Options:** Almost every stakeholder group who participated in this planning process raised an issue related to housing that included a lack of both affordable housing as well as higher-end homes ($250,000+), a need for senior housing options, a desire for urban housing, and finally a desire for new housing as compared to older homes that require money and time for renovations.

  Regarding the issues about housing affordability, the discussion revolved around the need for housing that the average person can afford more so than low-income housing. Some communities call this workforce housing where, for example, teachers, police officers, and the average worker can afford to live. The two major constraints to affordable housing in Wheeling are:

  - The influx of gas and oil workers, which has driven up rent prices because of the demand on housing; and
  - The age and condition of housing where many of the affordable homes are older and require substantial time and monetary resources to rehabilitate.

  The desire to see senior housing and urban housing choices came from the discussions with older and younger residents who are both looking to live closer to activities such as restaurants, shopping, and entertainment. In these cases, many of the participants pointed out a need for patio homes, often seen as a senior living option, as well as urban housing that was described as both mixed use with residential uses over commercial uses as well as smaller homes on small lots close to downtown. These discussions led to the overall policies to focus redevelopment efforts in and around the downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods where higher densities can be accommodated because of access to roads, transit, and activities.

- **Consider Transitions between Different Uses:** The Future Land Use Plan (Map 8) highlights areas where there should be additional nonresidential or mixed use development in and around existing residential neighborhoods. Past history has shown that many of the properties along National Road and other major roads are shallow, and any development is seen as an encroachment into primarily residential areas. This will be a growing issue as the city encourages, to some degree, more of a mixture of uses and more flow between residential and business areas. This plan recognizes that Wheeling is very much an urban community where nonresidential uses are typically in close proximity to residential areas but that such adjacency can be softened with appropriate buffers and a transition of land use types and intensities.

- **Encourage Property Maintenance:** With an older housing stock and a growing percentage of rental housing units, property maintenance is continuing to be an issue for many neighborhoods. In certain cases, the neighborhood groups have noted that even a few deteriorating buildings can create a domino effect of maintenance issues that need to be resolved. Some of the plan participants believe that the maintenance issues can be resolved by stronger code enforcement but there are other tools available to Wheeling to address building and property conditions as a form of neighborhood stabilization.

Initiative #5 – Wheeling will invest in its **Infrastructure**.

The following are the major issues and needs related to the city's infrastructure system including the transportation system, water and sewer system, and communication lines:

- **Improve and Update the Infrastructure:** As discussed earlier, much of the city's infrastructure system is significantly older than many modern cities. This will require additional costs for repair and upgrade far into the future and should be addressed through coordination of infrastructure activities to upgrade infrastructure where it will address ongoing service problems.
- **Prepare for Major Improvements:** WVDOH is currently planning to replace or completely rehabilitate all of the bridges along I-70 that are located within the City of Wheeling, excluding the bridges that span the river. These improvements will require scheduled closures of certain lanes and rerouting of traffic at certain points along the highway (without complete closure) for a much longer period of time.
- **Improve Mass Transit:** Wheeling is fortunate to have a bus system that ties the city into a larger, regional transit network, which provides residents with a way to move around the city, get to work, or access necessary services without the need of a car. Unfortunately, the bus routes in place today are largely the same as they were decades ago with the exception of new routes added to larger regional destinations such as the Ohio Valley Mall area and to the Highlands. The older intercity routes remain essentially the same, not adjusting to serve the current population centers. Given that the population in Wheeling is aging, and that one of the priorities of this plan is to attract a younger population, there is an increased need to provide affordable mass transit options for the citizens of the area to locations that serve a higher percentage of the population.

Transit and Walkable Neighborhoods

A recent survey of the Millennial (currently in their 20s and 30s) and Baby Boomer generations by the American Planning Association found that:

- 76% of those surveyed said that affordable and convenient transportation options other than cars are at least somewhat important when decided where to live and work.
- Regardless of the community type, 49% of the respondents wanted to someday live in a walkable community where only 7% wants to live where they had to drive most places.

- **Coordinate Regional Activities and Improvements:** Much of the infrastructure in the city is managed by the City of Wheeling but the major highways are controlled by the West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOH) with Belomar overseeing some of the larger regional improvements. This multi-agency responsibility has led to issues with coordination that could be costly to any of the agencies. As the city moves forward with plans for reinvestment, it will be important to continue to coordinate infrastructure improvements and upgrades to be more efficient and beneficial to the city, region, and state.

- **Discourage Truck Traffic on Local Roads:** In many neighborhoods, major state roads pass through older neighborhoods that are built right up next to the road. In places throughout North Wheeling, Center Wheeling, South Wheeling, etc., semi-trucks and trailers are hauling goods on what many would consider a local street but which is in fact a state highway (e.g. S.R. 2). This increased truck traffic takes a toll on the streets itself, requiring increased maintenance efforts, but it is also taking a toll on the neighborhoods as the trucks pass homes in very close proximity to the roads. While some solutions, such as relocating the state highway, may not be a reality, other options such as the reduction of the speed limit in these neighborhoods and increased traffic enforcement could go a long way toward minimizing the impacts of truck traffic on residents and their homes.

Initiative #6 – Wheeling will embrace its **Quality of Life.**

Wheeling has been fairly successful at creating a high quality of life in the community but there are still issues related to parks, recreation, cultural activities, and the community's heritage that need to be addressed including:

- **Promote Historic Preservation:** Wheeling clearly takes pride in its history and part of that history is the many historic buildings and districts located throughout the city. The preservation of the community's heritage is an important component of the city's vision.
    - There is a growing concern about the potential for future demolition of the city's historic legacy. While many historic buildings and districts are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this does not preclude demolition. Preservation groups continue to look for ways to preserve historic buildings with uncertain futures including, as an example, the Fort Henry Club.
    - Many of the historic buildings and districts lie within the floodplain and the cost of owning a building in the floodplain could increase substantially with new flood insurance legislation. These changes could potentially make purchasing and restoring historic buildings even more costly, especially on Wheeling Island where the largest areas of homes are impacted by potential flooding.
    - Wheeling has experienced an increasing number of local property owners who are investing in older buildings, many of which are historic, that has led to some of the visible investments in downtown and Center Wheeling. These investors have identified issues with the enforcement of the building code on older buildings constructed long before the current health and safety codes. Even though the existing building code provides some flexibility for historic buildings, there are still code requirements that are making code compliance almost cost-prohibitive. These owners are looking for ways to invest in their properties and ensure that the buildings are safe for occupancy but require more flexibility in the building code to make rehabilitation cost effective.

- **Acknowledge an Aging Population:** It is clear from the data outlined in the Community Profile chapter that the population in Wheeling is aging with a median age that is older than the median age of the U.S. This trend was a driving force behind the crafting of this plan and has led to a number of strategies related to the city's demographics. There are a number of issues and opportunities related to population's age that include:
    - An aging population places different demands on the community with a need for additional public services (e.g., transit and medical care) and alternative housing options such as patio homes, nursing homes, and assisted living options that are simply not available in large numbers.
    - Part of the reason the community is aging is there is a large number of people in the 15-34 age brackets who are in fact leaving the area for work and educational opportunities elsewhere and are not necessarily returning to the area to help the region grow.
    - The younger population tends to fall into a category of workers called the creative class that communities are actively seeking because they bring a high level of education as well as new ideas and business to an area that in turn, creates an excitement about the community and helps encourage new growth.
    - Given that Wheeling is growing into an education and medical hub, it is quite possible to capitalize on this trend of capturing the creative class by focusing on retaining the younger residents who attend college in the city or even attracting new residents with a good quality of life, multiple housing choices, and flourishing arts and cultural activities.
    - In order to attract a younger population, the city is going to have to address a number of big picture issues including the provision of affordable housing in urban walkable neighborhoods and the expansion of transit options including bus access and reliable taxi service. At the same time, the city needs to actively protect its recreational and cultural activities to provide the high quality of life the younger population seeks. Interestingly enough, improving access to housing, expanding transit, and improving the quality of life are also things the older population are seeking out in the area so in the end, these types of improvements will help the entire population.

The Creative Class

The "Creative Class" is a term for a group of workers that have jobs in knowledge-based fields such as engineering, research, education, and medicine. They tend to be from the younger generation and are seen as the great thinkers of these generations. They are the ones creating new ideas and technologies for our future.

To attract younger people, Wheeling needs affordable housing in urban, walkable neighborhoods with an upgraded transit system

- **Develop a Parks and Recreation Plan or Strategy:** Wheeling is very lucky to have the extensive network of parks and recreational assets that it does, especially with facilities such as Oglebay Park, Wheeling Park, the Heritage Trail, and numerous playgrounds, pools, and neighborhood parks. There are also numerous stakeholders with ties to parks and recreation including the Wheeling Recreation Department, the Wheeling Park Commission, private sports clubs, school sports clubs, neighborhood organizations, and others who utilize the parks and facilities for their activities.

  While the community has much to offer by way of parks and recreational activities, the city lacks a detailed strategy for parks and recreation that evaluates the condition and use of the existing facilities and determines the needs for the future based on the city's vision and goals. Most communities with a system the size of Wheeling's develop a separate parks and recreation master plan that evaluates current problems with the system and helps define the best locations for future services and uses.

- **Identify Sources of Funding:** Wheeling has a strong support system for parks, recreation, arts, culture, and preservation of the community heritage but much of the difficulty in enhancing the existing systems is a lack of available funding. There are a host of grants available for planning and the development of strategies but the funding sources for actual capital investments can be somewhat limited and very competitive when money is available. The city will have to constantly work with its resource of stakeholder groups to identify available grant opportunities, local foundation monies, and other revenue sources to help supplement the city's resources to truly serve as a guardian of the overall quality of life.

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Community Plan

This chapter identifies the individual strategies that were initially identified as key to the implementation of the community vision. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of strategies, but rather a working list that should set the initial priorities for Wheeling. Each strategy includes a summary of the plan initiatives it supports, the responsible agency for implementation, potential partners and funding sources, an initial timeframe for completion, and any working groups that may be organized to develop the strategy further.

Implementation Committee and Working Groups

While the city may be the formal agency responsible for initiating and/or funding many of the strategies, the city will need assistance by interested stakeholders to help complete some of the strategies and ensure implementation of the vision. For this reason, this plan sets out the need for an Implementation Committee that can oversee and monitor the implementation of this plan. The plan also identifies a preliminary list of working groups who can support and assist in the implementation of certain strategies. These working groups will be comprised of interested stakeholders.

Implementation Committee

The Implementation Committee will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the plan. The committee should consist of members of the public as well as representatives of the Planning Commission and City Council, similar to the steering committee that assisted in the development of the plan. The committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Meet to discuss what has been accomplished or where additional work needs be undertaken on any tasks that have been set forth for that year. This may follow or be part of a work session with City Council as they identify priorities for the year.
- Keep in contact with the various stakeholder groups who were part of the development of this plan and who will likely be involved in the implementation of certain strategies. The implementation committee may direct staff to reach out to these groups to make presentations to the committee about their work and how it helps implement the plan. These interactions may help in the identification of new tools and strategies.

- Work with the City Manager and City Council to ensure that agreed upon responsibilities of the city and its departments are being diligently pursued in a timely manner.
- Update the list of strategies in this plan, as may be appropriate, to remove strategies that were completed and add additional strategies and actions when necessary.

Working Groups

The working groups are envisioned to be small committees of interested stakeholders who can help lead the efforts on certain strategies that will require further refinement and possibly the development of additional actions. This plan initially identifies the need for seven working groups but additional groups may be established as the planning efforts progress. The initial working groups, along with some ideas for potential participants include:

- **Downtown Working Group** – Downtown business owners and residents, local artists, and representatives from WNHAC, Reinvent Wheeling, OV Connect, local universities, downtown religious organizations, etc.
- **Sustainability Work Group** – Representatives from local groups, residents, and businesses that support sustainable activities including, but not limited, those involved in urban agriculture, recycling, non-vehicular transit, etc.
- **Neighborhoods Working Group** – Representatives from neighborhood organizations, landlord associations, preservationist groups, realtors, etc.
- **Population Retention Working Group** – Representatives from the local universities, the student populations, senior organizations, and groups such as OV Connect or the Ohio Valley Young Preservationists, etc.
- **Economic Development Working Group** – Representatives from RED, the Chamber of Commerce, OV Connect, local banks, and local businesses, etc.
- **Infrastructure Working Group** – Residents interested in local infrastructure issues such as traffic, transit, trails and sidewalks as well as representatives from the local service providers, Belomar, and WVDOH, etc.
- **Culture and Arts Working Group** – Representatives from the Wheeling Arts Commission, the Wheeling Symphony, Artworks, local artists involved in all art forms, and similar representatives from other tourism and art/cultural organizations, etc.

Plan Strategies

The following strategies are organized and color coded based on the three different priority levels (high, medium, and low). This is not intended to imply that the strategies be completed in the order listed but that there should be a more immediate focus on those strategies of the highest priority. As the city monitors the plan implementation, priorities may be adjusted as more resources become available or as priorities change. Each strategy includes a summary of applicable plan initiatives and timeframes that are all summarized in Table 5 following the strategy descriptions.

High Priority
Medium Priority
Low Priority

1	Plan Initiatives:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy, Neighborhoods, & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Encourage a Sustainable Mix of Future Land Uses**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	All agencies and stakeholders
	Potential Funding Source:	None required
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

The future land use plan establishes the desired future land use types for properties. In some areas, the city envisions the continuation of existing uses while in others, this plan establishes the ground work for allowing alternative development that fits within the community vision and will be more sustainable in the long run. The future land use plan will help guide the decisions of the Wheeling City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, city departments, regional agencies, and other groups regarding a variety of issues such as zone changes, capital improvements, development of public facilities, and similar decisions.

Potential Growth Areas

While the city does not aggressively seek annexations, there is some potential for expansion of the existing city boundaries. Through an analysis of the slopes and potential for development, the future land use plan identifies potential growth areas and the related future land uses. These areas generally open up potential for new residential growth due to the difficult terrain and access issues (streets and infrastructure) and the city should be open to this growth if the opportunity arises.

Using the Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan (Map 8) is intended to serve as a guide for continued development and redevelopment within Wheeling, as well as the potential growth areas surrounding the city. The map is not a zoning map nor does the adoption of this plan legally regulate how land is used. This plan is not intended to be site specific with a single future land use attached to every individual property. The user should first take into consideration the recommendations and policies of this section, the character of the surrounding area as well as individual conditions of the site including, but not limited to the existing use of the site, natural topography, presence of flood hazard areas, traffic, surrounding uses, and similar conditions. In many cases, this plan includes the possibility of a variety of uses within a specific land use category depending on the conditions of the actual site. The Planning Commission, through a more thorough site plan review process, will work to ensure new developments are of the highest functionality and aesthetic quality to the community and conform to the surrounding neighborhood.

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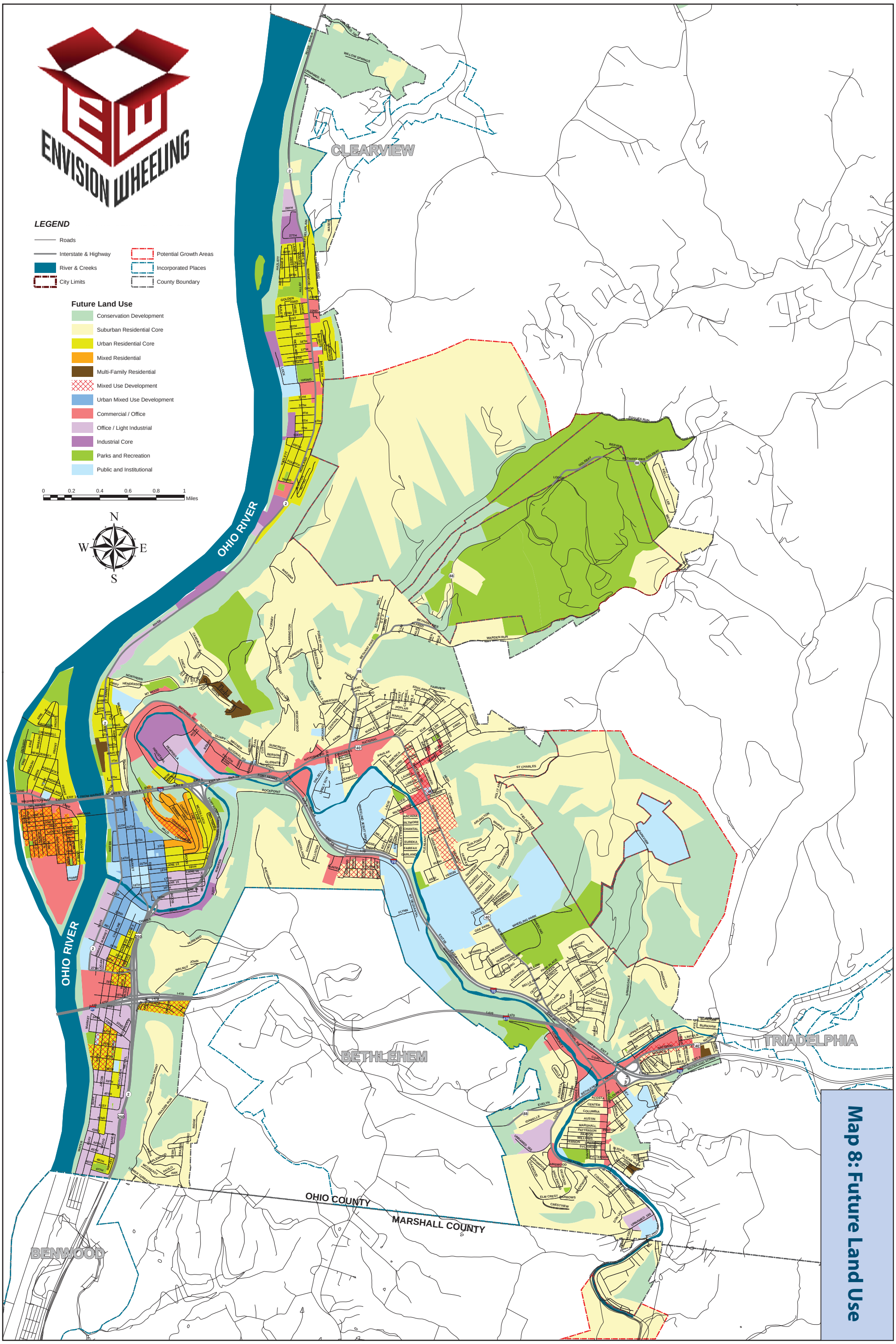

Map 8: Future Land Use

Special Area Plans

There are a number of areas in the city that have the potential to incorporate large development or redevelopment projects (5+ acres) that vary somewhat from the future land use plan. These areas include large tracts of land or other areas where a series of lots could be consolidated into a large parcel that significantly changes the potential for development of the site. The purpose of this plan is not to completely exclude any new development proposal for these large areas but to provide a protocol for amending the future land use plan, and possibly some of the development strategies. This approach would result in the creation of a special area plan that can supplement the recommendations of this comprehensive plan. These special areas plans need to include the following, at a minimum:

- Opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the special area plan;
- Analysis of both the benefits and impacts of the proposed alternative;
- Identification of how the alternative better reflects the community vision established in this plan than the original recommendations;
- Establishment of a revised future land use plan for the designated area; and
- Review and adoption of the special area plan by the city.

Future Land Uses

The following is a description of the future land use categories identified in the future land use plan.

Conservation Development

Development in these areas of the city is typically constrained by floodplains and steep slopes. While it is a goal of this plan to protect these resources, modern development techniques and special engineering can sometimes open up these area to development where they once were deemed completely undevelopable. This plan seeks to balance the interest of private owners to develop their property with the need to mitigate the impacts of development in floodplains and on steep slopes. Land designated for conservation development on the future land use map should be maintained in its natural state to the maximum extent possible.

Should the conditions of certain properties change in the future, the city may consider reevaluating the future land use designations at a later time.

Suburban Residential Core

Wheeling has a number of well-established neighborhoods that were built over the course of the city's history. Some, like Center Wheeling and North Wheeling, are examples of the oldest neighborhoods that grew outwards from downtown. Others, like Woodsdale, Park View, and Elm Grove developed later in Wheeling's history and are examples of more suburban development styles albeit, with some historic context.

The areas that are designated as suburban residential core in the future land use plan should continue "as is" with the primary use being single-family residential uses at low to moderate densities reflecting the existing neighborhoods. While single-family uses will continue to be the predominant land use, there are areas where multi-family residential uses and commercial or offices uses may be appropriate.

Multi-Family Uses in the Suburban Residential Core Areas

The city should allow for the continuation of existing multi-family residential uses. Additionally, new multi-family residential uses may be appropriate with the following considerations:

The above is a multi-family structure that resembles a large, single-family home.

- The new multi-family uses should be confined to a maximum of six to eight dwelling units per structure with a maximum density of eight units per acre.
- The density and design of the proposed residential use should blend in with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. This may include multi-family residential uses located in a structure that resembles large single-family detached homes or multi-family dwellings that maintain a similar height and scale of surrounding residential uses.
- Multi-family homes that provide affordable or accessible housing options are strongly encouraged (e.g., patio homes or cottage housing).
- Multi-family attached dwellings with more than two units should be located on collector or arterial streets unless they serve as a transition discussed below or are part of a master planned development.
- Multi-family residential uses may be allowed in areas adjacent to nonresidential uses to serve as a land use transition or buffer between the more intense nonresidential use and nearby single-family neighborhoods.

Commercial and Offices Uses in the Suburban Residential Core Areas

The city should allow for the continuation of existing commercial and office uses, particularly where they provide a needed service to the neighborhood such as a grocery store or medical office. New commercial and offices uses within the residential areas should be discouraged to protect the residential nature of these neighborhoods.

Urban Residential Core

Wheeling is a National Heritage Area, in large part due to its vast historical resources that are focused in the city's older neighborhoods such as North Wheeling, East Wheeling, Center Wheeling, and others that generally run parallel to the Ohio River. These neighborhoods have a broader mix of residential and nonresidential uses, as well as higher densities than the newer neighborhoods found in the suburban residential core areas. It is a major goal of this plan to encourage the preservation of the city's historic heritage as well as protect these neighborhoods that provide a mix of housing options, neighborhood commercial and office uses, and public services in highly walkable neighborhoods. In areas that are designated as urban residential core, the predominant land use should continue to be residential, which could include single-family homes, two-family homes, and low to moderate density multi-family dwellings in the form of small apartment buildings (6-8 units), townhomes, or rowhouses. All residential uses should be in keeping with the historic characteristics of these areas including smaller lots and shallower setbacks from the streets. Any infill development should be sensitive to the scale and massing of adjacent structures.

Commercial and Offices Uses in the Urban Residential Core Areas

These areas were constructed in an era when there was less separation of residential uses and nonresidential uses. This mixture of uses should continue with the following considerations:

- The creation of new commercial or office uses should be focused toward buildings originally designed for nonresidential uses, mixed use buildings (nonresidential first floors), or at the corners of major roadways. While these areas are located in more walkable areas of the city, this plan recognizes the continued reliance on cars for transit and as such, new nonresidential uses will require better access.
- Uses should be limited to neighborhood scale development such as small retail shops or offices.
- The density and design of any new nonresidential building should blend in with the character of the surrounding neighborhood in scale and massing. Big box stores or similarly large scale commercial or office buildings should be discouraged.
- Where there is a larger redevelopment project that contains some nonresidential uses, consider utilizing multi-family housing options as a transitional use between the nonresidential uses and nearby single-family homes.

Multi-Family Residential

There are a number of high density multi-family residential buildings in Wheeling that include older mansions converted to apartment buildings and large, high-rise apartment buildings. These stand-alone residential structures provide a housing option necessary to a community like Wheeling. The future land use plan illustrates the continued use of land for multi-family residential uses that consist of the highest density residential uses in the city that are not part of a mixed use building that contains nonresidential uses as part of the mix.

Mixed Residential

Example of a neighborhood block with a mix of housing types

Many of Wheeling's neighborhoods have a variety of housing types intermixed amongst each other that developed naturally over the course of history. While the preservation of this mixture is encouraged in areas designated as urban residential core, the primary intention of these areas is the preservation of the existing housing stock. In other areas of the community, there is the potential for broader redevelopment activities that could see the clearing of large areas for residential redevelopment. For example, the ridgeline areas of East Wheeling and the southern portion of Wheeling Island are two areas where there are a larger number of vacant lots, deteriorating housing stock, and natural development constraints including floodplain and steep slopes where redevelopment may remedy certain development issues.

The following are development principles that should apply to Mixed Residential areas on the future land use map:

- Maintain historically significant structures to the maximum extent feasible but ease restrictions for the demolition of other structures to allow for the consolidation of lots that will allow increased redevelopment opportunities
- Redevelopment should be accomplished in a manner that will protect homes from flood hazards and minimize grading of steep terrain. This may include designing new buildings so they are elevated above base flood elevations (parking on the ground level) and/or clustering homes in areas with the flattest topography.
- Allow for higher density housing where the effect will be to protect the natural resources described in this plan.
- Encourage a mixture of housing types within a single development to increase the housing choices in Wheeling. This may include a mixture of detached homes and attached housing adjacent to one another.

Urban Mixed Use Development

The area designated for urban mixed use development comprises both Downtown Wheeling and a portion of Center Wheeling around Centre Market. This area has traditionally contained a mixture of uses with buildings designed to be either a mix of commercial and office uses or any combination of commercial, office, and residential uses. The area also has several public and institutional uses that are important landmarks within these neighborhoods. The future of these areas should be for the continued development of primarily mixed use buildings that could include residential space, offices, commercial, or public and institutional uses. This should be a priority area for redevelopment of properties for urban living and activities as described throughout the plan. The design of the area should promote compact, higher density development to create dense, walkable neighborhoods.

The scale of buildings in Downtown Wheeling should continue to be larger than surrounding neighborhoods but any new development should be limited to a maximum height of three or four stories in keeping with the scale of new development desired for downtown. The older buildings that are currently downtown should be renovated and reused in their current form. New infill development is encouraged to mimic the historic characteristics of the older mixed use buildings (e.g., first floor commercial designs, window orientations, massing, etc.) Additionally, the community desires to see the development of new, urban living options within this area that includes affordable housing located above commercial space.

Mixed use development or redevelopment in Center Wheeling should also be in keeping with the character of nearby mixed use buildings, depending on the location of the project. In general, mixed use buildings in Center Wheeling will not be as tall or as dense as similarly used buildings in downtown.

Mixed Use Development (Overlay)

There are several areas of the city where there is the potential for the development or redevelopment of a number of different types of use. In order to provide some level of flexibility within this plan, the future land use plan incorporates a mixed use development category as an overlay to other future land use categories. In these areas, owners have the option to develop based on either the base land use category or propose an alternative under this mixed use development area that is shown as an overlay on the map. In these areas, the mixed use development may take the form of vertical mixed use within a single building (e.g., residential uses over a commercial first floor) or could simply take the form of what is considered general mixed use where residential uses or office uses may be interspersed with commercial uses in stand-alone buildings.

Mixed Use Development along Grandview Avenue

The area along Grandview Avenue in East Wheeling has good street access and distinctive views overlooking the river and Wheeling Creek valley that creates the potential for the development of some neighborhood-scale commercial or mixed use development. The following are development principles that should apply to any commercial or mixed use development that contains a nonresidential use:

- The commercial uses should be limited so as to not create a small business district but enough that it could provide some local neighborhood services.
- The scale (size and height) of the uses should be in keeping with the residential character of the surrounding development.
- Uses should be limited to restaurants, small retail, small office spaces, or a combination of those uses and residential uses that will serve the immediate neighborhood. Auto-heavy uses such as gas stations or fast-food restaurants should be prohibited to minimize impacts on surrounding residential uses.

Mixed Use Development on Wheeling Island

There are a lot of potential redevelopment opportunities on Wheeling Island that could range from all residential to a mix of uses that creates a corridor between the interstate and the casino complex. The purpose of establishing the mixed use development overlay in this area is to provide flexibility that might be necessary to allow for any mixture of uses on Wheeling Island, especially if such redevelopment is designed to protect buildings from flood hazards. The following are development principles that should apply to any mixed use development on Wheeling Island:

- Industrial uses should be prohibited.
- Even though the overlay calls for a mixture of uses, residential uses should not be a required component in the mixture, although it should be encouraged.
- Given the flood elevations in this area, the scale of buildings will have to be relatively tall with parking the likely use of the ground level. Any new development in the area should be encouraged to be creative in creating aesthetic treatments of any ground level parking to buffer the appearance of the parking areas from pedestrian views.

- Encourage development that capitalizes on the views and access of the Ohio River, especially for restaurants and other commercial uses that can serve both customers who come from the land as well as those who might gain access from the river via boats.

Other Areas of Mixed Use Development

In the other areas of mixed use development, any type of mixed use should be allowed including vertical mixed use (i.e., not mixed within a single building) as well as mixed use within a single building. In these areas, auto-oriented commercial uses may be acceptable if there is adequate access.

Commercial and Office

The commercial and office land use category covers areas of the city that would be appropriate for commercial retail, office, and service uses that cater to both the local and regional market. The areas typically lie along major road corridors or at key intersections where there are high volumes of traffic. General commercial uses are the primary shopping locations for the community and include, but are not limited to, grocery stores, wholesale clubs, large-scale general retail, discount department stores, specialty retail, restaurants, banks and gas stations. The heavy retail focus of these areas makes them primarily auto oriented. However, this plan strongly encourages development that establishes pedestrian access between nonresidential buildings and surrounding residential development.

Office/Light Industrial

Wheeling has seen a significant transition from the heavy industrial of the past to office space and light industrial uses that are generally located within an enclosed building. The areas shown as office or light industrial on the future land use plan should be used for such office space or business that manufacture or assemble goods in low-impact settings. Uses should be those that do not have extensive outdoor storage or activities. Any outdoor storage or activities should be appropriately buffered from adjacent properties.

Industrial

This land use category encompasses much of Wheeling's older industrial properties that are still viable but consist of more intense manufacturing uses or ones that are reliant on heavy truck traffic or river access that can potentially create conflict with adjacent land uses. These areas should be maintained as industrial uses with a focus on redevelopment to light industrial uses, where appropriate, and minimizing the impacts to the environment.

Parks and Recreation

The parks and recreation category designates land currently used for public or private park and recreational uses including, but not limited to, city parks, playgrounds, open space, walking trails, golf courses, and similar uses. While the future land use map only designates existing parks and recreational uses, such uses may also be appropriate in other areas of the city, regardless of the future land use designation. When considering the siting of a future park and recreational use, the city should consider the impact the buildings or use will have on the surrounding area and apply appropriate conditions to help mitigate those impacts such as buffering or access management.

Public and Institutional

The public and institutional uses shown on the future land use plan only identify major public and institutional sites that include the schools, hospitals, cemeteries, universities, or college campuses. These uses have a significant impact on the community and several are major employers that the city supports from a business and cultural standpoint.

While the future land use map only designates the larger, existing public and institutional uses, other public and institutional uses such as future schools, government uses, and churches may also be appropriate in other areas of the city, regardless of the future land use designation. When considering the siting of a public or institutional use, the city should consider the impact the buildings or use will have on the surrounding area and apply appropriate conditions to help mitigate those impacts such as buffering or access management.

2	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy & Neighborhoods**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Update the Zoning Ordinance**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	No formal partners but all stakeholders should be engaged in the process
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Investment Planning Grants (federal), Community Development Block Grants (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Two years
	Working Group:	None

One of the most direct methods of implementing the recommendations of the future land use plan, as well as the overall vision, is to update sections of the zoning ordinance and other land use regulations or guidelines. While the zoning ordinance is not the only tool for implementing the plan, it is one of the tools that can be directly tied to the plan strategies. The following is an outline of some changes the city should consider in furthering the recommendations of this plan:

- In general, the city should make it as easy as possible to develop within the city or to renovate existing buildings without requiring excessive levels of review. This should not apply to actions such as the demolition of historic buildings. This can be accomplished by establishing clear and predictable standards for review and allowing for administrative level review as much as possible.
- Reconsider utilizing minimum setbacks and other site requirements for buildings in older neighborhoods where the historic character of the neighborhood should dictate how buildings are setback. For example, in the East Wheeling Special District, there is no minimum front yard setback. While this would allow someone to construct a building right up to the sidewalk, similar to neighboring uses, it also would allow a building to be setback as far back from the street as possible, which can change the feel for the neighborhood.
- In some areas, such as downtown, the city may want to consider developing a form-based zoning district/code for a particular area. At its core, form-based zoning is where the character and form of the development takes precedence over the use of the land and buildings.

Form-Based Zoning

Form-based zoning is a technique where the **form** of development takes priority over the **use** of the land or buildings. When a community regulates the form, they are focusing on the type of building, how the building is situated on a site, the relationship of the building to the street, scale of the building, and in some cases, the architecture. This type of zoning usually allows a broader mix of uses than the traditional zoning that Wheeling has now, which focuses on what uses are allowed or prohibited. Form-based zoning recognizes that in some cases, it is not the individual use of the property that drives the character or feel of the area but the appearance of the development. A number of communities are using this type of zoning to require new development that reflects the style and character of their older neighborhoods rather than traditional single-family only subdivisions. Others are using this to establish clear expectations for development in areas such as downtowns or along major corridors.

- Revise the nonresidential zoning districts to allow for more mixtures of uses (both within a building and within the district) in accordance with this plan. In some instances, such mixture of uses is allowed but in other cases, the city may need to expand the list of permitted uses in the commercial districts or add a mixed use zoning district.
- The city should incorporate standards for clustering of homes or lots, especially in areas designated for conservation development. Currently, the easiest approach to clustering homes is through a master planned development district that requires extensive review at all levels in the city. It is possible to allow for the clustering of homes or lots through the general permitting process if the city establishes clear standards for such uses that would not increase the permitted number of housing units but would allow for an easier method of developing the units.
- Determine where the city might want to provide incentives for certain development approaches including, but not limited to, developing a housing type envisioned by this plan and not found in significant numbers within the community; protecting natural resources by building outside of the floodplain or away from steep slopes; or constructing green buildings, etc. Zoning incentives can take multiple forms from allowing such actions with only administrative reviews or increasing the number of housing units/density allowed on the site. Incorporate the incentives within the zoning ordinance.
- The city should ensure that certain sustainable features are allowed including solar panels, green roofs, and energy efficient materials. Also consider how such features can be incorporated within historic buildings and the historic guidelines.
- Review the overall list of permitted uses and expand it, where practical, to include modern development options and uses. Some uses the city might consider allowing include, but are not limited to, live/work units as a transitional use between commercial and residential districts or alternative housing options that may not fall under the city's existing list of permitted use types (e.g., garage apartments or cottage homes).

Cottage houses provide compact, high-density housing options that are particularly well-suited for infill sites. The photo is a cottage house development in Kirkland, Washington – Photo Source: The Cottage Company

Above are examples of urban scale attached residential that would be appropriate in a number of areas within Wheeling.

- The city should establish some open space and/or urban plaza requirements for large scale developments to help create additional green spaces or gathering spots within the community based on the type of development (e.g. suburban versus urban, commercial versus residential, etc.) and the overall impact the development will have on the surrounding area. The more urban and dense the project, the smaller the open space can be but at the same time, such smaller spaces should have more improvements such as seating, public art, water features, or unique designs that will help in the creation of a sense of place.

Image of a small urban open space with landscaping, public art, and seating areas.

- A large amount of the city is affected by the presence of floodplains or steep topography. The city should develop natural resource protection standards that would allow for reasonable development of all lands but in a manner that minimizes the cutting or filling of any steep slopes and shifts development out of the floodplains to the maximum extent feasible. There are a number of creative options available to the city that will achieve the purposes of protecting the resources, preventing future damage to structures, and allowing property owners to realize the development potential of their properties. For example, as described under the Conservation Development category in the future land use plan, the city can allow for the clustering of detached or attached housing on smaller lots within areas that are not comprised of floodplains or steep slopes.

3	Plan Initiative:	**Diverse Economy & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Evaluate Changes to the Historic Building Code**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Developers who work with older buildings and local preservationist groups
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Investment Planning Grants (federal), Community Development Block Grants (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Five years
	Working Group:	None

One of the issues facing reinvestment in and/or the adaptive reuse of older buildings, beyond single family homes, is often the building code. The current building code is designed for new, modern construction and can require wider hallways, accessible bathrooms, accessible primary entrances, sprinklers, fire escapes, and many other requirements that cannot always be accommodated in an older building designed 50 years before the advent of current building codes. The city currently uses the International Building Code (IBC) that does provide some limited flexibility to adapt or vary the requirements for older and historic buildings but may create a liability to the owner, city, or even the architect that can hinder a redevelopment project. In order to open up more opportunities to redevelop historic buildings rather than force a demolition, the city should reevaluate the building code that is currently in place for older buildings and identify more ways to create flexibility in the requirements so that the most severe life/safety requirements (e.g., clear access) have to be met but others may be more easily varied. There are a growing number of examples of model historic code that moves away from the IBC example such as the North Carolina Rehab Code, the California Historic Code, or the New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode. These codes may allow things such as:

- A complete waiver of certain life safety requirements such as a whole building sprinkler system if the developer installs more heat and smoke monitors through the building;
- The installation of a sprinkler system only in high-risk areas whereas the current building code requires a system that would evenly sprinkle water across all areas;
- An exemption of a wide access hallway at the primary entrance when a secondary entrance can be provided; and
- Other waivers where essentially the building is no less safe than before any renovations began.

This is a high priority issue for the city but there is a recognition that this will take five years or possibly more to implement because it will require input from stakeholders as well as potential changes to state mandates and legislation.

4	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy & Neighborhoods**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Establish and Use a Land Reuse Agency**
	Responsible Agency:	Ohio Valley Area Development Corporation (OVADC) and the City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	WNHAC, Reinvent Wheeling and local and regional housing agencies
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Neighborhoods Working Group

The city currently owns a number of vacant lots and vacant buildings throughout the community that were acquired for a number of reasons including acquisitions from foreclosure as well as acquisitions for the general elimination of blight. At this point, there has been no clear plan of attack on how to process these properties as a method of encouraging redevelopment. Up until this point, the city has largely dealt with the properties on a case-by-case basis. In order to further the goals of this plan, the city needs to establish a land reuse agency, as authorized in West Virginia, as a long-term tool for redevelopment. A land reuse agency operates in a similar manner as what other may refer to as a land bank. The land reuse agency and land banks are tools communities are using more often to help address the issues of vacant or dilapidated properties. This tool can be used for work such as:

- Acquiring property and clearing liens and the title in order to sell the property for redevelopment where the property may have otherwise been left to deteriorate.
- Acquiring housing for rehabilitation and then reselling or leasing the building as an affordable housing option.
- Acquiring a series of properties to assemble into a single large tract of land for redevelopment. This concept would be highly beneficial for Wheeling where there are numerous small lots in the areas that have been identified for priority development.

Land Banking Example

The Cuyahoga County Land Bank in Cleveland, Ohio, has been very successful in removing blight from struggling neighborhoods by purchasing blighted properties and rehabilitating the structures, where feasible. The rehabbed properties are then sold for private use. Where rehabilitation is not financially feasible, the land bank has worked to demolish the buildings and either sell the vacant lots to neighboring property owners (side lot program) or they have allowed those lots to be used by the neighborhoods for community gardens or public open spaces. The land bank also has a strategic land assembly program that targets acquisitions in the urban core. Between 2009 and May 2014, the Cuyahoga County Land Bank has acquired 4,000 properties, demolished structures on 2,500 properties, and renovated 860 properties.

In order to be successful, the city needs to develop a specific plan for utilizing this tool to determine where it may be appropriate to hold properties for a longer period of time for land assembly and where short-term use of the tool (rehab of housing, clearing of titles, etc.) is more appropriate.

This strategy is a high priority but with a recognition that it will be ongoing because actions such as land assembly require the agency to buy up properties bit-by-bit and essentially wait for some properties to come on the market or run through the city's enforcement procedures. However, the benefits of such a tool to a community like Wheeling far outweighs the time it takes to assemble larger groups of parcels because it opens up opportunities to new investments that may not be available if a private investor has to acquire and assemble the properties. This tool has been used successfully across the country to clean up and reuse vacant lots, either through redevelopment or consolidation with an adjacent lot. They have also been used for larger redevelopment projects where the land bank authority can purchase and process properties far easier than a private developer.

5	Plan Initiative:	**Community Partnerships & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Work on Efforts to Retain the Younger Population**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Public and private schools, all the local universities, major employers, etc.
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding and a wide variety of state and federal grant opportunities depending on the project
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Population Retention Working Group

In order to retain and attract a younger population, the city will need to collaborate with the local universities and schools as they provide a significant pool of people that the city and region can target in trying to define strategies on attracting them to stay in the area. The three main strategies the city can actively participate in include:

- Focus on reinvestment in the priority redevelopment areas discussed in Strategy 14. These are the areas where this plan proposes the housing, commercial, and entertainment activities that will help create a sense of place that is desired by the younger population and by students in general. This will in turn create a place where they feel they can stay after graduation to find work or even develop their own business.
- Partner with the various institutions to develop programs that show students all that Wheeling has to offer and how they can be involved in the community through groups such as the Ohio Valley Young Preservationists, OV Connect, or others. By taking an interest in the city and participating in its future, the students will have more of a vested interest in staying.
- Create a Mayor's Commission called the "Presidents' Club" and have a regular meeting of college presidents, superintendents, and other representatives of local educational institutions.

These strategies are designed to help attract a younger population, but they also meet the needs of the city's older population who desire living options in urban, walkable neighborhoods as well as access to restaurants, services, and activities.

6	Plan Initiative:	**Diverse Economy**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Promote Entrepreneurial Efforts**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	RED, the Chamber of Commerce, Reinvent Wheeling, and all the local universities
	Potential Funding Source:	WV Land and Water Conservation Fund, WV Economic Infrastructure Fund, Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Economic Development Working Group

In order to promote entrepreneurial efforts, the city should consider the following strategies:

- Work with West Liberty University to identify potential joint efforts to expand the new business incubator to ensure that it will be accessible to all people.
- Review the city's ordinances to identify any potential barriers to co-working space where people, especially freelancers or those who work from home, have a place where they can come together in an office setting and where costs are shared amongst those who use the space.
- Ensure that the city ordinances do not limit home occupations too severely as many businesses get started as a home-based business.
- Consider making a commercial space available for pop-up commercial activities where a potential business can test out the market of their goods or services on a temporary basis at little to no cost. This type of activity is most successful when tied to community or neighborhood events such as First Fridays or other events that brings people to the business.

7	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Neighborhoods, & Diverse Economy**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Develop a Housing Market Study**
	Responsible Agency:	WNHAC, RED, Reinvent Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Funding Source:	Community Development Block Grant (federal), Investment Planning Grants (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/One Year
	Working Group:	None

The need for housing was an issue consistently raised by all of the stakeholders and members of the public who participated in the planning process. While it may be clear to the community that there is a desire for more housing options such as urban living in a mixed use setting, smaller homes closer to community activities, and new housing in different price points, the demand for this housing has only been established at a broad, public policy level. The next step in furthering the plan's housing goals is to develop a housing market study that will provide detailed housing market and demand information for use by the city, property owners, and financial institutions. A housing study can provide information to financial institutions to better assess any lending possibilities and risks in an area where certain housing loans, such as those for rehabilitation, can be difficult without supporting data. This may lead to better financing options or, in some cases, better support for financing loans where banks may have previously avoided such investments.

In order to really open up the city to the potential for new development and interest from developers who may simply not be aware of the local housing market, the city needs to rethink its marketing strategy to include promotion of the city to outside housing developers, not just outside businesses. This strategy will be most successful if undertaken on the heels of the market study to illustrate the benefits and need for certain housing types in the city. The ways the city can market the area to developers will vary depending on how aggressive the city wants to be on certain projects. Some options include:

- Distributing the housing study to developers who have successfully completed projects in other communities, especially where the population has decreased and/or where there has been significant reinvestment in older neighborhoods.
- If the city assembles a piece of property that they are willing to either give away or sell at a small cost in return for a quality development, the city could host a design competition or issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) as discussed in Strategy 14.

8	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable & Community Partnerships**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Enhance Digital Mapping and Communications**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling and Ohio County Assessor
	Potential Partner Agencies:	RED for marketing purposes
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, and various state grants
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/ Website: One Year Digital Mapping: Five Years
	Working Group:	None

Wheeling needs to take a leap forward with its technology including upgrading the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, enhancing the city's website, and generally embracing other methods of digital communication. The city and its partners should invest in:

- Updating and expanding the amount of digital mapping and offering up online, interactive maps.
- Reevaluating the city's entire digital communication strategy, including its website and use of social media to maintain accurate information as well as create new data, link digital mapping to local websites to allow access to basic information on properties, and use the mapping as a tool to identify priority sites and development information on the site.

9	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy & Infrastructure**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Expand Access to Technology**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Cable, internet, and fiber optic service providers, WV Brownfields
	Potential Funding Source:	Connect America Fund and local foundations
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Five to ten years
	Working Group:	Infrastructure Working Group

Wheeling has reasonable access to high-tech infrastructure, which is an asset that local agencies use to promote economic development. The city can help expand this effort through the installation of enhanced infrastructure to its business areas and the provision of wireless internet in key areas of the city. This could be of great benefit to boosting the profile of brownfields sites and the adaptive reuse of older buildings that do not currently have fiber optics or other related infrastructure. Upgrading communication infrastructure could also give the city an edge in really promoting high-tech businesses in the region with a primary benefit of setting Wheeling apart from other areas of West Virginia. The city should initially target downtown and the various brownfields in the community to increase marketability of these sites. To undertake this project, the city will have to work closely with local providers on expanding the necessary facilities, but the city should also seek out grants to help fund this expansion.

10	Plan Initiative:	**Community Partnerships & Infrastructure**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	WVDOH, Belomar, and other outside service providers and agencies
	Potential Funding Source:	None Required
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

The city needs to establish a regular meeting schedule with key members of the WVDOH, Belomar, and other infrastructure agencies to improve communications and discuss upcoming projects, potential opportunities to coordinate activities, and concerns that each agency might have with the projects. This type of communication will allow all parties to be proactive in taking the next steps needed for future transportation improvements.

11	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable & Infrastructure**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Establish Minimum Requirements for the Use of Green Infrastructure**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	WVDOH and Belomar
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Investment Planning Grants (federal), Community Development Block Grants (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Two years
	Working Group:	Sustainability Working Group

Within the last decade, communities have been moving away from a complete reliance on gray infrastructure and encouraging the installation of green infrastructure. Examples of gray infrastructure include culverts, ditches, streets, and other components of the city's infrastructure that are constructed of asphalt, concrete, and other hard surfaces. Green infrastructure relies on natural solutions to the same infrastructure (e.g., a natural bioswale). This shift comes at a time when the same communities have realized the long-term costs of maintaining and replacing older gray infrastructure systems. In order to be a more sustainable community, Wheeling should also join the ranks of the communities who are going green through revisions to zoning and subdivision requirements as well as reconsidering policies on how to deal with stormwater runoff. This approach will allow for green infrastructure improvements for both private and public improvements. Some simple ideas the city can implement include:

- Promoting the use of rain barrels on private properties through education and incentives (fee reductions) to help reduce the overall amount of stormwater that runs off into the streets and sewer system. Rain barrels allow private property owners to collect stormwater runoff for watering yards and gardens with the added benefit of reducing stormwater runoff into the city sewer systems.

- Revise the zoning ordinance to require natural stormwater retention or detention on-site rather than using concrete vaults or other gray infrastructure approaches. This could include allowing for the use of porous pavement surfaces and the installation of bioswales instead of landscaping islands.

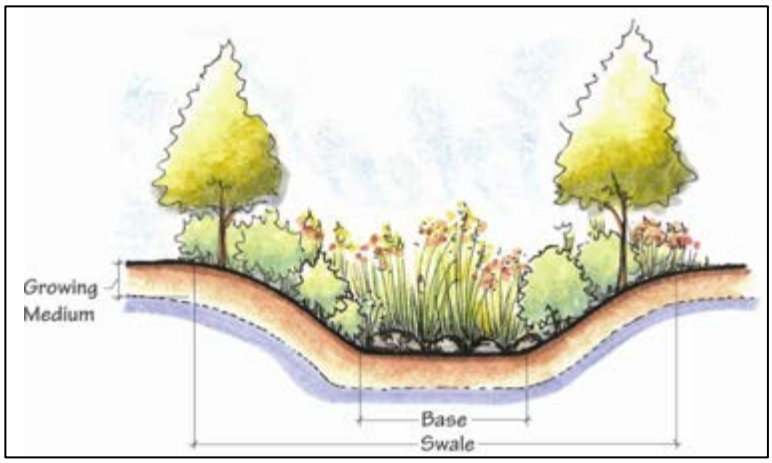

Illustration of a natural bioswale that could be used to replace concrete ditches.

- The same natural stormwater options and porous pavement alternatives are also available for public infrastructure. The city can institute a policy of considering green options when upgrading its own systems as well as when a developer installs improvements. The initial costs may be higher than gray infrastructure but the long-term maintenance costs are a lot less, leading to a better cost-benefit ratio.
- Incorporate green infrastructure with any public improvements to the streetscape. For example, when the city upgrades the streetscape downtown, they should include natural solutions to stormwater as both a way to be sustainable as well as incorporating more natural areas in downtown.

Use of green infrastructure in urban streetscape improvements.

12	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Community Partnerships, Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Complete a Transit Study for the Region**
	Responsible Agency:	Ohio Valley Regional Transit Authority (OVRTA)
	Potential Partner Agencies:	City of Wheeling, WVDOH, Belomar
	Potential Funding Source:	There are multiple federal grants from the U.S. DOT to support planning and capital investments in transit.
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Seven Years
	Working Group:	Infrastructure Working Group

In order to increase ridership, provide a transit option that people want to use, and improve neighborhoods in general, the region needs to rethink its bus transit through a transit study that completely reevaluates routes, costs, and services. Given the changing demographics of the community and the priorities of this plan, now is the time to undertake a master plan for bus transit in the region to help grow businesses and provide needed services to the citizens. Such a plan will require extensive discussions with residents and business owners to determine their needs and wants as it relates to bus transit. This study should include the larger region and needs to have an extensive amount of public input to help shape the future of bus transit in the Wheeling area. It will be important to look for ways of connecting students, families, and older adults to areas with a concentration of restaurants, shops, and entertainment during more than just the prime daytime hours.

13	Plan Initiative:	**Community Partnerships & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Maintain Quality Levels of Safety and Educational Services**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Ohio County Board of Education, all local and regional service providers
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

The Ohio County Board of Education, City of Wheeling, and its county counterparts are typically the major providers of what most see as the basic governmental services including K-12 education, police protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, and utilities. As the population of Wheeling and the region continues to change in both size and age, these agencies and their services will have to also evolve. The overall goal of this strategy is that the city and the related agencies need to constantly work to meet or exceed the service levels that create the quality of life people have come to expect. This will include actions such as:

- Maintaining above minimum response times for fire and emergency service responders as established by national standards;
- Striving to meet or exceed any minimum national standards for staffing the fire and police department to provide a safe community in which to live and work;
- Continuing the neighborhood watch activities to assist the local police in their activities to protect the community;
- Working to build on the high quality educational system available to local children through both the public and private school systems; and
- Updating the capital improvement plans for infrastructure improvements to target replacement of older infrastructure systems in coordination with street or other infrastructure improvements and/or to address constant service interruptions or breaks.

14	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy & Neighborhoods**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Focus on Priority Development Areas**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	None
	Potential Funding Source:	None required
	Priority/Timeframe:	**High Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

There is a lot of potential for development and redevelopment across the city but there is a definite desire to target certain areas where redevelopment and reinvestment will help initiate additional private investment, further stabilize the neighborhood, and provide the types of development envisioned by this plan. Map 9 identifies some of these key areas where the city should focus their efforts when considering actions such as development incentives, partnering with private or public agencies on projects, or providing funding assistance, etc. Map 9 identifies the areas in two manners. The larger areas that are outlined in red are where the community would like to see large scale redevelopment. Within those areas is the identification of even more focused areas where there are a significant number of vacant lots and where there is a more immediate priority for redevelopment. As an example, much of Downtown Wheeling is going to be a focus of redevelopment in the future but there are clearly some sites within downtown that are more of a priority including the 1100 Block that the city currently owns.

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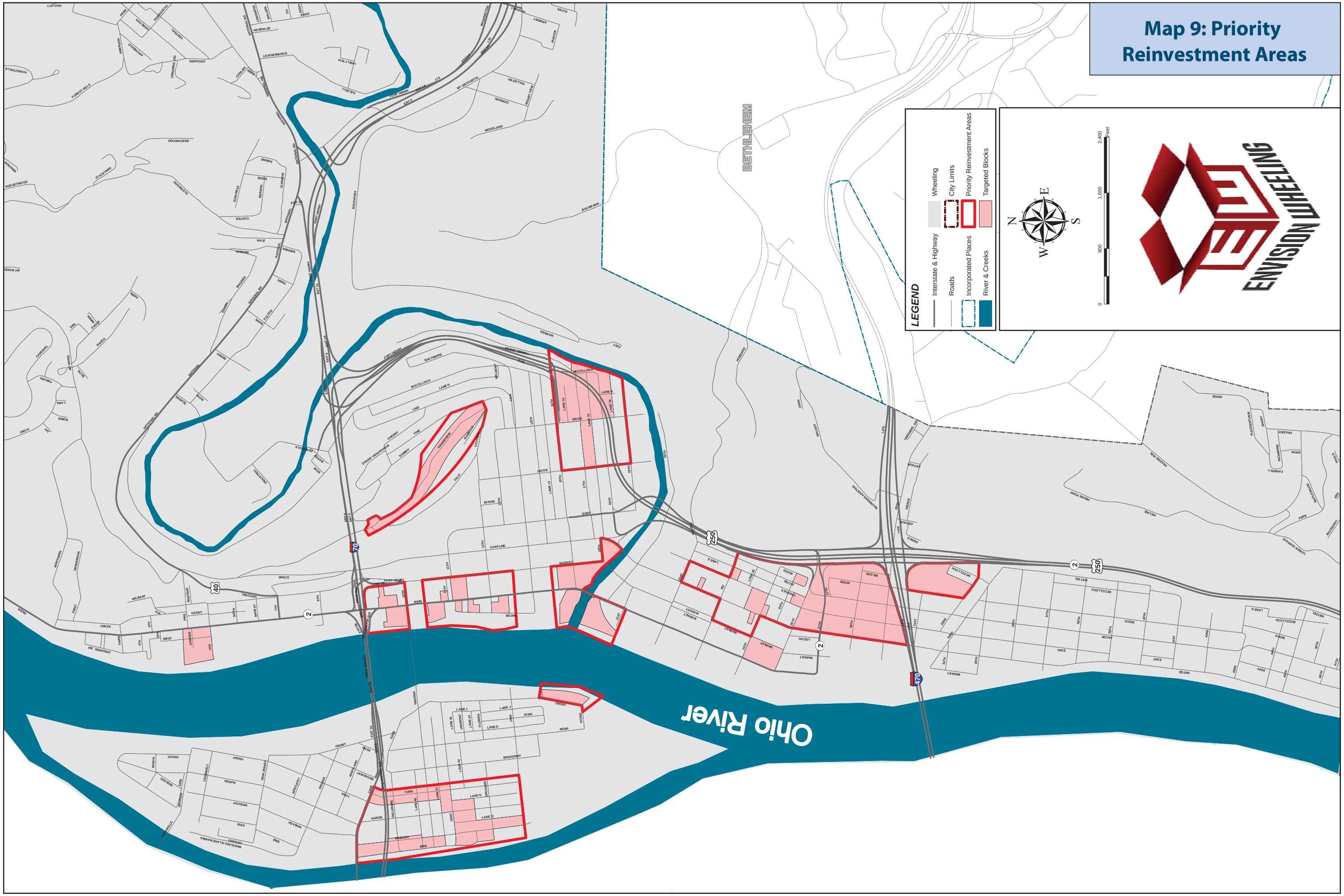
Map 9: Priority Reinvestment Areas



For city owned properties, the city maintains a significant level of control in how the property is redeveloped. In order to be more aggressive in seeking out developers, the city should initiate a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. In order to identify interested development partners, the city should:

- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for development based on the land use plan;
- Be willing to give away or sell the property for a small amount in return for a high quality development;
- Choose the best candidate based on the proposal and the ability of the proposer to complete the work and then enter into negotiations to facilitate the project.

The city should focus on sites that are located within the priority reinvestment areas identified in Map 9 but should begin with the 1100 Block.

15	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Neighborhoods, & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Utilize Vacant Lots**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Wheeling Park Commission, local non-profit groups and Religious Organizations
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding and a wide variety of state and federal grant opportunities depending on the project
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/One Year (for development of policies)
	Working Group:	Neighborhoods Working Group

Many of the lots the city owns remain vacant and, if the city establishes a land reuse agency (See Strategy 4), could remain vacant for a long time while the community seeks to assemble larger pieces of land. In an effort to avoid the appearance of vacant properties and to capitalize on opportunities to use the lots for the benefit of the community, the city should work to establish some basic guidelines that could allow for the use of vacant lots by local neighborhood organizations, institutions, and non-profit agencies for open spaces, picnic areas, neighborhood beautification projects, and urban agriculture.

16	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Be More Sustainable as a City**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Ohio County Solid Waste Authority, Belomar, West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOH), and other local service providers
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Community Development Block Grant (federal), other grants as may be appropriate depending on the specific action
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Sustainability Working Group

A core part of the community vision is to be a sustainable city. This can mean a lot of things to different people but it basically comes down to not doing anything today that will sacrifice the future for our next generations. Some of the other plan strategies address how new development and redevelopment can be sustainable but there are other ways the city can work on being more sustainable. Some examples of ways the city can work on being sustainable include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation of the existing recycling program.
- Promote recycling, beginning with a bigger push to utilize the recycling drop-off centers currently available in four locations within the county. Long-term, the county can look to increasing recycling options through curb side pick-up of recycled goods.
- In line with promoting recycling, the city itself can take steps to cut back on waste by shifting to online application submittals that will reduce the amount of paper documents the city has to maintain. This also goes along with updating the city's digital mapping and communications to make things easier to use. However, it is still important to remember that not everyone has access to the internet so it is still necessary to provide options for those without access to the internet or computers.
- Install more bike racks throughout the city and require bike racks with all new developments, just like the city requires parking spaces for cars.
- Create incentives for constructing sustainable buildings as part of any large-scale developments including the potential for more density or perhaps financial incentives.

17	Plan Initiative:	**Diverse Economy**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Focus on Local Businesses**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	RED and the Chamber of Commerce
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, the WV Small Cities Block Grant, Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs (federal), local foundations
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Economic Development Working Group

Focusing on the health of our local businesses will help with the overall economic health of the region. The city should work on development programs to identify the needs of the local businesses (e.g., space to expand, services, access, etc.) and work to address those needs so that the existing businesses can continue to be a success. Additionally, the city and its economic development partners all promote Wheeling as a great place to do business with a fantastic quality of life and low cost of living. While this approach is working, it is also important to highlight specific business success stories to show how businesses thrive in the area. Currently, the Regional Economic Development Partnership (RED) highlights some of the key success stories of businesses that have moved to Wheeling but they have not highlighted any success stories of businesses that started up in the city and continue to grow. The city should work with RED to identify additional success stories as an additional economic development marketing tool and as a way to promote the entrepreneurial spirit in Wheeling.

18	Plan Initiative:	**Diverse Economy**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Reevaluate the Economic Development Position in the City**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	None
	Potential Funding Source:	None Required
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Two Years
	Working Group:	None

In order to really achieve some of the economic goals of this plan, the city needs to reconsider the purpose and time commitments of the economic development staff. This staff member should be charged with working on business attraction programs, in partnership with RED, but also in working within individual businesses that already exist within the city to help promote their expansion and/or identify their needs. This modified position would assure the city, its residents, and its businesses, that there is always someone who is working on their behalf.

19	Plan Initiative:	**Neighborhoods, Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Undertake a Neighborhood Assessment Program**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Neighborhood Task Groups
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy, 1-2 neighborhoods a year
	Working Group:	None

The city should develop a neighborhood assessment program to facilitate a neighborhood-by-neighborhood review where the city will have representatives from major departments come together to evaluate each neighborhood. The assessment should evaluate things such as building conditions, infrastructure conditions, crime, and other safety service concerns to determine where there may be a need for targeted public improvements, property acquisition, enhanced code enforcement, or other efforts to prevent the deterioration of neighborhoods. This will allow the city to concentrate efforts where they will have the most benefit instead of, for example, trying to undertake extensive code enforcement actions across the city when it may only be necessary in certain areas.

This neighborhood assessment may not be based strictly on the boundaries of the official neighborhoods shown in Map 1. The areas to be assessed may be smaller based on a preliminary discussion amongst staff members. For example, the city may choose to undertake an assessment of Wheeling Island and identify specific blocks where targeted building code enforcement over a year will help stabilize areas of the neighborhood that are on the verge of deterioration. At the same time, there may also be areas of the neighborhood that have higher calls to the police department where the city may engage in a stronger police presence to help minimize crime rates. This approach allows the city to identify problem areas in a more strategic manner rather than trying to pinpoint issues on a citywide level.

20	Plan Initiative:	**Neighborhoods**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Evaluate Programs to Enhance Property Maintenance**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Local housing agencies and organizations
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Investment Planning Grant (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Five Years
	Working Group:	Neighborhoods

The city should work to develop rules and ordinances that will ensure reasonable property maintenance for both owner-occupied structures and rental properties. The intent of the rules should be to find a balance between private property rights and the greater good of the neighborhood. The city should review different approaches as an ongoing effort with a more specific task of identifying needed improvements after the neighborhood assessment discussed in Strategy 19.

As part of this strategy, the city should specifically undertake the following efforts:

- Continuously monitor and facilitate an outside review of the Vacant Building Registration program to augment or enhance the program to ensure that it meets the intended goals; and
- Pursue a rental unit evaluation or registration program to address the maintenance of rental housing in the city.

21	Plan Initiative:	**Diverse Economy & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Continue with the On-Trac Program**
	Responsible Agency:	WNHAC
	Potential Partner Agencies:	City of Wheeling and ReInvent Wheeling
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Downtown Working Group

ReInvent Wheeling is currently part of the West Virginia On-Trac program that provides assistance in encouraging economic development and revitalization of the city's downtown and main street areas. The program is useful because it can open the door for Wheeling to additional grant and funding resources that will support the downtown and surrounding areas. The purpose of this strategy is to support the continued work with the state in this program to further reinvestment in Wheeling.

22	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Expand the Trail System**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Belomar, Ohio Valley Trail Partners
	Potential Funding Source:	WVDOH Recreational Trail grants, federal transportation grants
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Infrastructure Working Group

The city has well established plans for expansion of the trail system throughout the city (See Map 7.) that will one day connect with the broader regional trail system that could draw more people to the area. At this time, the major issue for trail expansion is the funding required to implement the plans. In order to continue to make progress with this important element of the transportation network, the city will have to continue to submit for annual grants where the city can leverage local money with larger funding sources.

23	Plan Initiative:	**Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Promote Arts and Culture in Wheeling**
	Responsible Agency:	Reinvent Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	City of Wheeling, Wheeling Arts Commission, local art organizations
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding and local foundations. Some limited federal grants may be available based on the specific project
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	Culture and Arts Working Group

Some people may be quick to write off the need for arts and culture when financial resources are sparse but it is art and culture that comprises a significant part of a good quality of life; something that benefits all of the city's population. Additionally, the arts and cultural aspects of the community are an asset that, along with access to recreation and effective transit, have been shown to be a major attraction for the younger population. The arts and cultural community of Wheeling is driven by a number of agencies with the city often serving in a supporting role or as a partner in the promotion of events and activities. This plan recommends that the city continue in this role of working as a partner in projects such as the establishment of an arts district, preservation of cultural or historic sites, and promotion of community events.

24	Plan Initiative:	**Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Wheeling Park Commission, local recreational groups, Ohio County Board of Education
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, the Governor's Community Partnership grant (state), Community Development Block Grants (federal), local foundations
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Medium Priority**/Five years
	Working Group:	None

The city should undertake a master plan for the entire parks and recreation system that identifies all the existing parks and recreational facilities (public and private), the use of such facilities, and any deficiencies. Additionally, the plan needs to establish goals and recommendations for the future based on potential growth and changing demographics.

25	Plan Initiative:	**Modern and Sustainable, Diverse Economy, Infrastructure, & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Modernize the Downtown Streetscape**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Wheeling National Heritage Area Commission (WNHAC) and ReInvent Wheeling
	Potential Funding Source:	Preserve America Grants (federal) and transportation enhancement grants (state and federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Low Priority**/Incremental over 5-20 years
	Working Group:	Downtown Working Group

One of the long-term projects the city needs to undertake is an update of the streetscape in downtown. It has been almost 40 years since the installation of much of the existing street benches, trees, and even some of the signage that is still present today. This has led to an outdated, and in some cases, deteriorated streetscape experience in the main area of downtown. However, the streetscape around the Centre Market is thriving and there is a high quality pedestrian experience.

Upgrading the streetscape in downtown will be a costly venture and will have to be considered in phases; perhaps building a connection with the Centre Market area that has grown as an extension of downtown. The city should also incorporate green infrastructure into the downtown area (See Strategy 11.) to include more vegetation in the area that will have the added benefit of addressing stormwater runoff. Prior to any major investments, the city will need to establish a theme or brand for the downtown area, a process ReInvent Wheeling is working on at the time this plan was under development. That theme will help tie the area together and provide an attractive foundation for reinvestment.

One approach to consider is to select a priority block and completely redesign and rebuild it complete with facades, innovative sewer system, street trees, banners, baskets, recycling bins, bicycle racks, etc. to serve as an example as to what downtown could look like with an updated streetscape.

Downtown Wheeling

Centre Market

26	Plan Initiative:	**Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Develop Guidelines for Preservation of Historic Districts**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Local preservationist groups
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, Investment Planning Grants (federal), Community Development Block Grants (federal)
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Low Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

The city has some basic rules for development and renovation of historic buildings as well as the demolition of existing buildings but they are fairly general and are not tailored to the individual historic districts. The city has initiated a process to develop historic district guidelines for the different historic districts based on the district's individual characteristics. Currently, the city has adopted special guidelines for the Chapline Street Row District and is working on guidelines for Centre Market Square. The city should identify a priority order for developing the design guidelines for the remainder of the historic districts and proceed with the guidelines as resources allow.

27	Plan Initiative:	**Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Update and Expand the Wayfinding System**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	WNHAC
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding, local foundations
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Low Priority**/Ten Years
	Working Group:	Downtown Working Group

The city and the Wheeling National Heritage Area Commission (WNHAC) have both installed wayfinding systems to help identify major attractions and/or historical areas of the city. WNHAC's signs are the newest form of wayfinding in the city and are quite unique but they are largely centered on identifying major neighborhoods and key spots in the downtown area. The city's wayfinding system has been around much longer and has begun to show its age. As the city considers upgrades to its downtown streetscape and other areas of the community, they should also consider upgrading the wayfinding system based on a branding concept that could be based on the National Heritage Area signs or other theme that reflects a modern community and its many attractions.

28	Plan Initiative:	**Infrastructure & Quality of Life**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Evaluate Traffic Calming Techniques Along Major Truck Routes**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	WVDOH and Belomar
	Potential Funding Source:	Local funding for smaller projects and enforcement. State and federal transportation grants for any major enhancements.
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Low Priority**/One year for enforcement , 7 to 10 years for installation of traffic calming techniques
	Working Group:	Infrastructure Working Group

The increase in truck traffic that runs along state highways through urban neighborhoods is having a negative effect on the quality of life for those residents who live in homes directly on these routes. This is an issue that has specifically be raised in the North Wheeling, Warwood, Center Wheeling, and South Wheeling neighborhoods where trucks use the narrower streets and where the homes are built up to the sidewalk. The simplest solution to address the residents' concerns is to work with the state to increase enforcement of existing speed limits and in certain cases, reduce those speed limits to slow the traffic. In the longer-term, the working group can discuss options for slowing traffic through the use of traffic calming techniques such as sidewalk bumpouts, rumble strips, or other treatments that will naturally slow the traffic.

29	Plan Initiative:	**Community Partnerships**
	Implementation Strategy:	**Promote New Leadership and Public Involvement**
	Responsible Agency:	City of Wheeling
	Potential Partner Agencies:	Ohio County
	Potential Funding Source:	WV Flex-e Grant
	Priority/Timeframe:	**Low Priority**/Ongoing Strategy
	Working Group:	None

The intent of this action is not to suggest that the city needs to purge all of the existing leadership and start fresh, but it is a way to encourage the involvement of different people on city boards and committees, where appropriate. The city can do this by:

- Establishing a protocol for selecting people to fill new positions on city boards or committees.
- Establishing term limits for membership on boards or committees.
- Continuing to work with agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley on their leadership programs to promote the growth of our young leaders who will eventually lead the city.

Implementation Summary

Table 5 provides a summary list of the various plan strategies in a matrix form with information on the priority of the strategy, plan initiatives they support, and identification of the proposed working groups as discussed in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter. In addition to the specific strategies outlined in this chapter, the city also needs to undertake the following efforts as it relates to this comprehensive plan.

Monitoring the Plan

The city will have to review this plan every ten years in order to comply with state law but the reality is that policies, priorities, and available resources can change much quicker. In order to make sure the plan is implemented and that funding is made available for priority strategies, the Implementation Committee and City Council should both review the plan, and more specifically this chapter, on an annual basis. This annual review will allow for the community to check off completed strategies and add new strategies as may be appropriate. Additionally, the city will also have an opportunity to review priorities and establish what strategies the city should work toward over the upcoming years.

Engaging the Stakeholders

This comprehensive planning process was one of the first opportunities that many of the residents and stakeholders in the community were able to come together with like-minded groups to discuss joint issues and opportunities. This type of interaction was extremely beneficial in defining the issues outlined in this plan as well as identifying needs for the future. Residents and stakeholder groups should be engaged as part of the implementation of the plan and development of additional strategies as the city moves forward. The various stakeholders should also be brought in to assist with the working groups that will help implement this plan.

Table 5: Implementation Strategies and Actions									
Priority	**No.**	**Strategy**	**Plan Initiatives**						**Working Group**
			Modern & Sustainable	Community Partnerships	Diverse Economy	Neighborhoods	Infrastructure	Quality of Life	
High	**1**	Encourage a Sustainable Mix of Future Land Uses	X		X	X		X	---
High	**2**	Update the Zoning Ordinance	X		X	X		X	---
High	**3**	Evaluate Changes to the Historic Building Code			X			X	---
High	**4**	Establish and Use a Land Reuse Agency	X		X	X			Neighborhoods
High	**5**	Work on Efforts to Retain the Younger Generation		X				X	Population Retention
High	**6**	Promote Entrepreneurial Efforts			X				Economic Development
High	**7**	Develop a Housing Market Study	X		X	X			---
High	**8**	Enhance Digital Mapping and Communications	X	X					---
High	**9**	Expand Access to Technology	X		X		X		Infrastructure
High	**10**	Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements		X			X		---
High	**11**	Establish Minimum Requirements for Green Infrastructure	X				X		Sustainability
High	**12**	Complete a Transit Study for the Region	X	X			X	X	Infrastructure
High	**13**	Maintain Quality Levels of Safety and Educational Services		X				X	---
High	**14**	Focus on Priority Development Areas	X		X	X			---
Medium	**15**	Utilize Vacant Lots	X			X		X	Neighborhoods
Medium	**16**	Be More Sustainable as a City	X				X	X	Sustainability
Medium	**17**	Focus on Local Businesses			X				Economic Development
Medium	**18**	Reevaluate the Economic Development Position in the City			X				---
Medium	**19**	Undertake a Neighborhood Assessment Program				X	X	X	---

Table 5: Implementation Strategies and Actions									
Priority	**No.**	**Strategy**	**Plan Initiatives**						**Working Group**
			Modern & Sustainable	Community Partnerships	Diverse Economy	Neighborhoods	Infrastructure	Quality of Life	
Medium	**20**	Evaluate Programs to Enhance Property Maintenance				X			Neighborhoods
Medium	**21**	Continue with the On-Trac Program			X			X	Downtown
Medium	**22**	Expand the Trail System	X				X	X	Infrastructure
Medium	**23**	Promote Arts and Culture in Wheeling		X				X	Culture and Arts
Medium	**24**	Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan						X	---
Low	**25**	Modernize the Downtown Streetscape	X		X	X		X	Downtown
Low	**26**	Develop Guidelines for Preservation of the Historic Districts						X	---
Low	**27**	Update and Expand the Wayfinding System					X	X	Downtown
Low	**28**	Evaluate Traffic Calming Techniques along Major Truck Routes					X	X	Infrastructure
Low	**29**	Promote New Leadership and Public Involvement		X					---

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Compliance with West Virginia Code

Chapter 8A, Article 3 of the West Virginia Code defines the mandatory requirements of a comprehensive plan that a city must meet in order to utilize certain tools such as zoning. While a community has a significant amount of flexibility in how they development a plan and the various issues the plan must address, at its core, a comprehensive plan must have background studies, goals, and recommendations for land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, public services, rural, recreation, economic development, community design, preferred development areas, renewal and/or redevelopment, financing, and historic preservation.

This plan complies with all of the requirements of the state code including the process the city undertook to develop and adopt the plan. That being said, many of the required plan components overlap in the issues they address and have been grouped together in an effort to streamline this document and make it as easy as possible to read and understand the recommendations of this plan. For example, the first strategy that defines the future land use plan addresses recommendations for land use, housing, public services, recreations, economic development, etc., all within a single strategy. While other strategies are more targeted, this plan does include recommendations for all the mandatory topics identified in Chapter 8A.

Appendix B: Public Participation Details

Initial Comprehensive Plan Public Meetings

The City of Wheeling held a series of initial public meetings regarding the update of the Wheeling Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of these meetings was to highlight the process and related schedule as well as have the audience assist in identifying major issues the city will need to evaluate as part of the plan. Two public meetings were held on October 29 and October 30, 2013, with a total attendance of more than 100 people. During the meetings, the audience helped develop a master list of issues and opportunities as a group and then each individual participant was given four stickers with each sticker counting as a vote. The participants were allowed to place the stickers next to the issue that they felt was of the highest priority with the ability to place all four stickers next to one issue or spread them out on multiple issues. The following is a summary of the issues and opportunities that were identified at each meeting and the vote counts. Please note that not everyone voted.

October 29, 2013 – Comprehensive Plan Update Meeting	
Issue/Opportunity	**# of Votes**
Attract the younger generation to Wheeling and avoid the Brain Drain	16
Create more sustainable jobs	14
Find ways to adaptively reuse historic structures	13
Capitalize on the Ohio River and nearby streams and waterways	11
Enhance the vibrancy of Downtown Wheeling	8
Develop new housing for all age groups	7
Find responsible ways to extract energy resources – no fracking water	7
Establish criteria for rental units	7
Address the division within the city and county/The feeling of segmented neighborhoods	6
Grow the local universities	4
Create more activities for the youth and for tourists	4
Develop more opportunities for recycling/recycling businesses	3
Need for better land uses	2
Save what we can as far as existing buildings	2
Develop Wheeling as an energy hub (oil and gas boom)	1
Develop Wheeling as a medical center/city	1
Enhance Oglebay and other Wheeling tourism elements	1
Develop smaller, single-family units for senior living	1
Make Wheeling a retirement community	0
Encourage Wheeling natives to give back to their hometown	0

October 30, 2013 – Comprehensive Plan Update Meeting	
Issue/Opportunity	**# of Votes**
Rehabilitate historic buildings	14
Celebrate and foster the growth of arts in the community	13
Protect our open spaces and hillsides	8
Make Wheeling a pedestrian and bike friendly community	8
Make Wheeling a green city for the 21st century with air, water, and health protection and promotion	7
Develop urban living in downtown	7
Enforce the city's ordinances	7
Develop a trolley line	6
Develop more young professional and/or mid-priced housing	6
Create more (new) independent housing options for senior residents.	6
Resize the city	5
Encourage specialty shopping for downtown	5
Make downtown a vibrant area – all of the time	5
Encourage more grocery stores	4
Attract more white collar, service and high-tech jobs/businesses	3
Capitalize on the river's potential impact for downtown	3
Expand park and recreational services	3
Make sure sidewalks are more accessible	3
Enhance the downtown area with beautification efforts	2
Make sure the city keeps up with dead animal removal	2
Make Wheeling a youth sports hub of the country	2
Leverage the higher educational opportunities to support existing businesses	2
Encourage pet-friendly housing/properties	2
Develop community orchards and gardens on vacant lots	1
Develop more parking options in downtown	0
Make Wheeling a business-friendly city	0

Planning Week Meetings

In December 2013, the city hosted another series of meetings to gather additional input from the public including an interactive workshop where citizens could identify areas where there were opportunities for change as well as places that should remain unchanged. Map 10 on the following pages highlights some of the key recommendations that came out of that series of meetings that was eventually used in the formulation of this plan.

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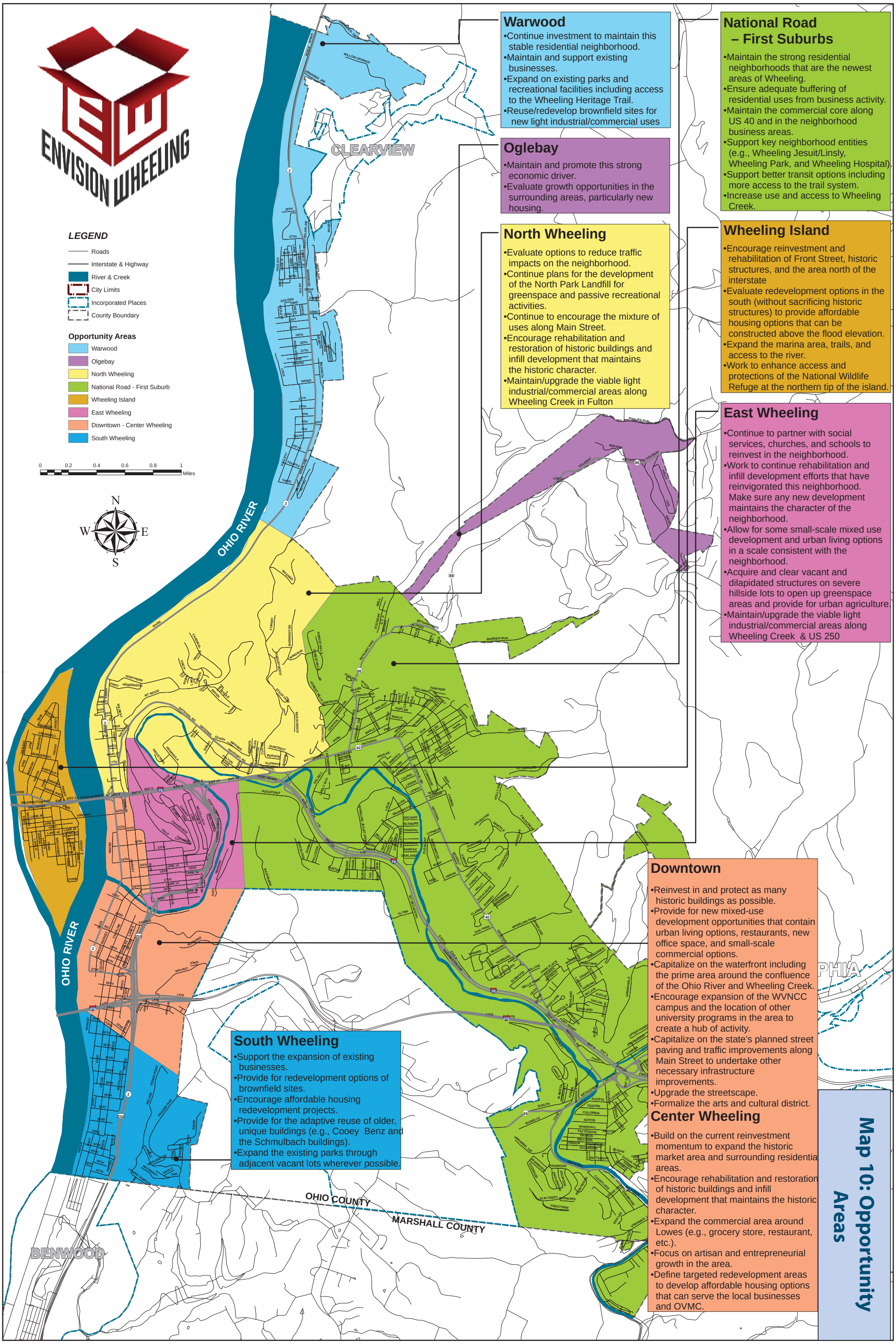
ENVISION WHEELING



Warwood

- Continue investment to maintain this stable residential neighborhood.
- Maintain and support existing businesses.
- Expand on existing parks and recreational facilities including access to the Wheeling Heritage Trail.
- Reuse/redevelop brownfield sites for new light industrial/commercial uses

Oglebay

- Maintain and promote this strong economic driver.
- Evaluate growth opportunities in the surrounding areas, particularly new housing.

North Wheeling

- Evaluate options to reduce traffic impacts on the neighborhood.
- Continue plans for the development of the North Park Landfill for greenspace and passive recreational activities.
- Continue to encourage the mixture of uses along Main Street.
- Encourage rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings and infill development that maintains the historic character.
- Maintain/upgrade the viable light industrial/commercial areas along Wheeling Creek in Fulton

National Road – First Suburbs

- Maintain the strong residential neighborhoods that are the newest areas of Wheeling.
- Ensure adequate buffering of residential uses from business activity.
- Maintain the commercial core along US 40 and in the neighborhood business areas.
- Support key neighborhood entities (e.g., Wheeling Jesuit/Linsly, Wheeling Park, and Wheeling Hospital).
- Support better transit options including more access to the trail system.
- Increase use and access to Wheeling Creek.

Wheeling Island

- Encourage reinvestment and rehabilitation of Front Street, historic structures, and the area north of the interstate
- Evaluate redevelopment options in the south (without sacrificing historic structures) to provide affordable housing options that can be constructed above the flood elevation.
- Expand the marina area, trails, and access to the river.
- Work to enhance access and protections of the National Wildlife Refuge at the northern tip of the island.

East Wheeling

- Continue to partner with social services, churches, and schools to reinvest in the neighborhood.
- Work to continue rehabilitation and infill development efforts that have reinvigorated this neighborhood. Make sure any new development maintains the character of the neighborhood.
- Allow for some small-scale mixed use development and urban living options in a scale consistent with the neighborhood.
- Acquire and clear vacant and dilapidated structures on severe hillside lots to open up greenspace areas and provide for urban agriculture.
- Maintain/upgrade the viable light industrial/commercial areas along Wheeling Creek & US 250

Downtown

- Reinvest in and protect as many historic buildings as possible.
- Provide for new mixed-use development opportunities that contain urban living options, restaurants, new office space, and small-scale commercial options.
- Capitalize on the waterfront including the prime area around the confluence of the Ohio River and Wheeling Creek.
- Encourage expansion of the WVNCC campus and the location of other university programs in the area to create a hub of activity.
- Capitalize on the state's planned street paving and traffic improvements along Main Street to undertake other necessary infrastructure improvements.
- Upgrade the streetscape.
- Formalize the arts and cultural district.

Center Wheeling

- Build on the current reinvestment momentum to expand the historic market area and surrounding residentia areas.
- Encourage rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings and infill development that maintains the historic character.
- Expand the commercial area around Lowes (e.g., grocery store, restaurant, etc.).
- Focus on artisan and entrepreneurial growth in the area.
- Define targeted redevelopment areas to develop affordable housing options that can serve the local businesses and OVMC.

South Wheeling

- Support the expansion of existing businesses.
- Provide for redevelopment options of brownfield sites.
- Encourage affordable housing redevelopment projects.
- Provide for the adaptive reuse of older, unique buildings (e.g., Cooey Benz and the Schmulbach buildings).
- Expand the existing parks through adjacent vacant lots wherever possible.

Map 10: Opportunity Areas

Stakeholder Groups

In addition to facilitating traditional public meetings as part of the planning process, the city hosted a series of stakeholder interviews where representatives of different groups and organizations who had a shared interest could come together to discuss the future of the city. This allowed the city and consultants to hear direct input from over 150 people in a small group setting. The following are a list of groups and organizations that participated in the different stakeholder groups. Please note that other organizations may have been invited to the different group interviews but were unable to attend.

- **Transportation Group** – West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), Ohio Valley Regional Transit Authority (OVRTA), Bel-O-Mar Regional Council, and the City of Wheeling
- **Seniors Group** – Good Shepherd, Elmhurst, Upper Ohio Valley Family Services, and Peterson Hospital
- **Nonprofits Group** – United Way, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Youth Services System (YSS), Community Foundation, Holy Family Child Care & Development Center, and the Wheeling National Heritage Area Commission (WNHAC)
- **Economic Development Group –** City of Wheeling, Crest Investments, Regional Economic Development Partnership (RED), the Wheeling Chamber of Commerce, Market Street Now, LLC, Century Equities, and GC&P Development
- **Neighborhoods Group –** North Wheeling, East Wheeling, Downtown, Mozart, Wheeling Island, Washington Avenue Business Association, Elm Grove Business Association, Centre Market, Warwood, and Woodsdale
- **Financial Group –** Chase Bank, Main Street Bank, Progressive, and 1st Choice Bank
- **Education Group –** West Virginia Northern Community College, West Liberty University, The Linsly School, Wheeling Country Day School, Ohio County Schools, and Wheeling Jesuit University
- **Housing Group –** City of Wheeling, WesBanco, Wheeling Board of Realtors, Wheeling Housing Authority, Vandalia Heritage Foundation/Redevelopment Corporation, and the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless
- **Health Group –** MedExpress, Wheeling Health Right, Inc., the Independent Physicians Association (IPA), the Ohio Valley Medical Center (OVMC), Peterson Hospital, Wheeling Hospital, and the Wheeling/Ohio County Health Department
- **Business Group –** Ziegenfelder, Kalkreuth Roofing, Sledd Company, Orrick, Warwood Armature, Panhandle, and Williams
- **Tourism –** Wheeling Convention & Visitors Bureau, Wheeling Island Casino, Oglebay, and West Virginia Independence Hall
- **Green/Sustainability Group –** Smart Center, Rebuild Ohio Valley, East Wheeling Community Gardens, West Liberty University, Reinvent Wheeling, US Green Building Council/Create West Virginia, Oglebay Foundation, and Hays Landscape and Architecture Studio
- **Recreation Group –** City of Wheeling, Wheeling Yacht Club, Reinvent Wheeling, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Ohio Valley Trail Partners, WNHAC, Oglebay Foundation, Wheeling Amateur Hockey Association, and the Wheeling Area Soccer Association

- **Arts and Culture Group –** Wheeling Arts Commission, Reinvent Wheeling, Wheeling Arts Fest, Artworks, local artists, Artisan Center, Wheeling Symphony, West Liberty University Hilltop Opera, and the Friends of Wheeling
- **Business Incubation Group –** West Liberty University and RED
- **Preservation Group –** Ohio Valley Young Preservationists, Friends of Wheeling, Market Street Now, LLC, Ohio Valley Civil War Roundtable, WNHAC, Ohio County Public Library, Chapline Row homeowners, and the Victorian Old Town Association,

MindMixer

In addition to the public meetings, workshops, and stakeholder group interviews, the Envision Wheeling planning process also included an online engagement forum through the MindMixer called EnvisionWheeling.com. This forum allowed the city to pose questions and instant polls for online comment. Participants on the site could offer ideas as well as vote in support of other's ideas to show where there was significant support for ideas. This online approach allowed the city to engage over 160 residents with an average age of 44 years old although. The following is a brief summary of the questions posed online and the top suggestions or poll results for each question.

What should be our main goal from this point forward (poll)?

Response	% of Votes
Moving forward with a goal of growing the population but focusing on diversifying business and population to prevent decline.	65%
Other	11%
Focus on what we have but don't worry about population loss or gain?	11%
Doing whatever it takes to get back to where we were in the 1930s and 1940s?	7%
Moving forward with a goal of stabilizing losses but not worrying too much about increasing the population numbers?	4%

What is an idea you have to better the City of Wheeling?

- Use technology.
- Establish a technology incubator.
- Create more affordable housing for young adults.
- Create an art business district.
- The buildings downtown.

What do you think is the biggest challenge that Wheeling will face over the next 10 years?

- Holding on to the younger population.
- Jobs
- Lack of significant careers
- Attracting tech companies

What are the places you value about Wheeling and/or the places that define Wheeling as a community?

- Oglebay Park
- Heritage Port
- Victoria Theater
- The need for more apartments downtown

Which of the following topics do you believe need to be a priority (poll)?

Response	% of Votes
Economic Development	23%
Demographics	19%
Housing	14%
General Land Use and Development	11%
Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability	10%
Parks and Recreation	6%
Infrastructure	6%
Cultural Resources	5%
Non-Vehicular Transportation	3%
Vehicular Transportation	3%

How can our community grow and expand, while protecting the character of each of our neighborhoods?

- Participation in over 20 urban gardens.
- Finding industries willing to start or relocated to the area.
- Expanding on shopping, housing, restaurants.
- Improving aesthetics.
- Doing things that make living in Wheeling FUN for young people
- Addressing the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act.

What is your vision for Downtown Wheeling?

- Heritage Port Dinner Night
- Advertise that it is the best city in West Virginia.
- Utilize a combination of solutions.
- Incorporate mixed use housing, not just upscale housing.
- Do research on cities that have been successful at reinvestment.

Submit your best ideas and strategies for historic preservation.

- Tax vacant properties so there is an incentive to put it to use.
- Save what can be saved and demolish the rest.
- Incorporate tech and energy.
- Stop tearing down our older buildings.
- Secure significant monies to support projects.

How can we make our community's heritage part of our brand, and use it to attract new businesses and residents?

- Modernize old buildings and look broadly at our history.
- Hold a "paint what matters" contest.
- Look for ideas beyond the heritage to attract businesses and residents.

How do you think the city needs to deal with the oil and gas drilling boom that is currently underway?

- Support it in all ways possible.
- Earmark the money.
- Preserve the quality of life.

Where do you think there are issues with the existing uses in Wheeling?

- The city building – revamp the building.
- Reuse the old Skate Arena for an indoor dog park.
- A need for sidewalks along National Road.

If you had $500,000 for physical improvements in the city, how would you spend it? (In order of ranking)

1. Expanded waterfront improvements
2. Downtown streetscape
3. Parks and recreation
4. Extension of trails
5. Sidewalks

Appendix C: Additional Community Data

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a quick snapshot of additional community data that can be useful for future planning efforts and to tell more of a story about Wheeling. This table of information is from the U.S. Census.

People QuickFacts		
Population	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Population, 2013 estimate	28,009	1,854,304
Population, 2012 estimate	28,211	1,856,680
Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base	28,479	1,852,999
Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013	-1.7%	0.1%
Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012	-0.9%	0.2%
Population, 2010	28,486	1,852,994
Age	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2010	5.1%	5.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2010	18.5%	20.9%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2010	20.6%	16.0%
Gender	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Female persons, percent, 2010	53.1%	50.7%
Race	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
White alone, percent, 2010 (a)	91.2%	93.9%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2010 (a)	5.1%	3.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2010 (a)	0.2%	0.2%
Asian alone, percent, 2010 (a)	0.9%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2010 (a)	Z	0.0%
Two or More Races, percent, 2010	2.4%	1.5%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2010 (b)	0.9%	1.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2010	90.6%	93.2%
Residency	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Living in same house 1 year & over, percent, 2008-2012	85.5%	87.9%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2008-2012	1.6%	1.4%
Language	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2008-2012	3.4%	2.4%
Educational Attainment	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012	90.3%	83.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012	26.6%	17.9%
Veterans	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Veterans, 2008-2012	2,668	164,979

People QuickFacts		
Commuting	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2008-2012	17.9	25.4
Drove Alone	76.5%	81.9%
Carpooled	9.6%	10.4%
Public Transportation	2.2%	0.8%
Walked	5.9%	2.9%
Other Means	1.2%	1.0%
Worked at Home	4.5%	3.0%
Housing	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Housing units, 2010	14,661	881,917
Homeownership rate, 2008-2012	62.8%	73.7%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2008-2012	31.3%	12.0%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2008-2012	$92,800	$97,300
Households	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Households, 2008-2012	12,772	742,674
Persons per household, 2008-2012	2.13	2.43
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2012 dollars), 2008-2012	$22,822	$22,482
Median household income, 2008-2012	$35,245	$40,400
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2008-2012	18.3%	17.6%
Business QuickFacts		
Veterans	**City of Wheeling**	**West Virginia**
Total number of firms, 2007	3,061	120,381
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	S
American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	S
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	0.0%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	0.7%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	23.5%	28.1%
Manufacturer shipments, 2007 ($1000)	D	25,080,573
Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 ($1000)	D	11,036,467
Retail sales, 2007 ($1000)	402,129	20,538,829
Retail sales per capita, 2007	$13,855	$11,340
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 ($1000)	76,523	2,553,258

NOTES:
(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.
(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.
D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
F: Fewer than 25 firms
S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

Source: U.S. Census Bureau