

2024 MASTER PLAN CITY OF UTICA

Utica
MICHIGAN



Presented by



2024

MASTER PLAN CITY OF UTICA

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter

1



2024

MASTER PLAN
CITY OF UTICA

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WELCOME

City of Utica “The Pioneer City”

Welcome to the 2024 City of Utica Master Plan. The City of Utica is a tightly knit small town community with a unique historic character, beautiful natural and recreational features, and a traditional downtown setting. This community not only offers an excellent quality of life, but also big market opportunities because of its location in west central Macomb County, in south-eastern Michigan. Utica is located 12 miles north of Detroit and five miles west of Mount Clemens, with direct access to regional arterials (M-59 and M-53) and surrounded by large market industrial and employment centers.

This plan is a comprehensive vision for Utica’s future in transportation, regional position, land use, the economy, environment, and the sociocultural cultivation of our city. The City of Utica Master Plan represents the community’s big picture - how we want to evolve in a way that makes the city an even more desirable place to live, work, and play for both present and future generations.

The Master Plan is a two-year long collaborative effort between residents, business owners, and both city and county officials. It is the culmination of the hopes and desires of all those involved. The Master Plan

builds upon multiple strategies, studies, and best practices — extrapolated into present and future opportunities. The document shall be used as a guide for the management of future development, redevelopment, investment, and as living text that touches all facets of the City’s continued success and long-term sustainability.

The City of Utica will become the vision that is detailed in the following pages if the plan receives support from the community, is included in decisions of civic leadership, and stewarded by planning and development officials.

THE HOW TO

A guide to the Utica Master Plan

In context of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the Master Plan is a general study of a municipality, presenting a single comprehensive view of the community’s desire for their future through identifying specific goals and policies that address land needed for various types of uses and activities. After a Master Plan is adopted, a municipality can then adopt a zoning ordinance to assure that land is available and allocated to meet the community’s long-term needs. As one can see, the plan serves many functions. Here are a few more ways the plan can be used:



1. The Plan serves as an aid in daily decision-making. The goals and policies outlined in the Plan guide the Planning Commission and City Council in their deliberations on zoning, subdivision, capital improvements and other matters relating to land use and development. This provides a stable, long-term basis for decision-making.

2. A second function of the Plan is providing the statutory basis for which zoning decisions are based upon. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P. A. 110 of 2006, as amended) requires that the zoning ordinance be based upon a Plan that promotes the public health, safety and general welfare.

However, it is important to note that the Master Plan does not replace other ordinances, specifically the Zoning Ordinance and Map. Zoning is one of the many legal devices that can be used to implement the Master Plan.

The Plan coordinates public improvements and development. For example, public investments such as road improvements should be located in areas identified in the Plan as having the greatest benefit to the city and its residents.

3. Finally, the Plan serves as an educational tool for all users as it is a clear indication of the City’s direction for the future.

In summation, the Master Plan is an officially adopted document that sets an agenda for achieving the goals and policies that were identified by the municipality and the community. The plan is not a panacea for resolving all conflicts; rather, it is a long-range statement aimed at a unified and coordinated development effort.

WHAT IS *planning*?

Planning is a process which involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, growth, and development of the community. The Master Plan is the only official City document that sets forth policies for the future of the community.

The City derived its authority for the preparation of a Master Plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008. Section 31 of the Act states:

“A Planning Commission shall make and approve a Master Plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction.”

In the preparation of a Master Plan, a planning commission shall do all of the following, as applicable:

- Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction with due regard to its relation to neighboring jurisdictions.
- Consult with representatives of adjacent local units of government in respect to their planning so that conflicts in Master Plans and zoning may be avoided.
- Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social, and physical development within the planning jurisdiction, and seek the maximum coordination of the local unit of government’s programs with these agencies.



8 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

of the Master Plan



Collaborating to create a set of guiding principles for the Master Plan is an integral part of its success. An effective set of principles forms the foundation for how decisions are to be made and paints a colorful picture for what the future holds; they should act as a “north star,” a guiding light toward which communities can organize and act.

By outlining these principles, we create a guide to the implementation of the Master Plan. Guiding principles take stock of existing conditions, account for strengths and weaknesses, provide justification and influence the course of action taken, regardless if goals or objectives change over time. The following is an overview of the City of Utica’s guiding principles:

1. Sustainability

Sustainability is an important concept in land use planning, where it is often described as an environmental initiative. But, according to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, sustainability is defined as, “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.” This concept encompasses not only environmental concerns, but the concerns of economic and social well-being. While many communities find that the conditions and trends relating to the environment, economy, and society are unsustainable, achieving sustainability is an incremental process and not an overnight transformation.

2. Diversity

Diversity can be defined in this Master Plan as the distinction of characteristics, qualities, or elements of the City. The support of this type of diversity can foster imagination and entrepreneurial initiatives. For Utica, diversity will be achieved in two main forms — our built environment and the residents that inhabit that environment. Diversity in our built environment will apply to the function, style, and use, while resident diversity will apply to characteristics such as ethnic origin, age, income, gender, and physical ability. A diverse community encourages ownership of civic and private amenities. The ownership will evolve into a rich and vibrant place to live, work, and play while positioning the City to attract business and investment, increasing economic stability.

3. Economic Vitality

Economic vitality will be achieved in Utica when all industry sectors and stakeholders are viable and work together toward a shared vision. Utica offers an attractive draw for businesses and residents because of its unique character and prime geographic location. To maintain a vital market place, it is imperative that development and redevelopment be located within areas of the City that can provide the necessary zoning, infrastructure, and activity to support such development.

4. Sense of Time and Community

Understanding how the City of Utica came to be must never be forgotten; it should be embraced and celebrated. The 2024 City of Utica Master Plan focuses on building off of historical strengths, leveraging history for the benefit of the present and future community. By valuing this heritage, Utica recognizes the importance of each moment and how it reflects on the City’s identity and prosperity.

5. Environmental Protection

The City of Utica’s natural features (wetlands, waterways, etc.) provide the framework upon which the City was developed. This framework guides much of the City’s current effort in identifying features for which residents and visitors can utilize to connect with nature and enhance quality of life. For the Master Plan, future environmental protection and green space development will be achieved by preserving, enhancing, and celebrating targeted green resources.

6. Connectivity

Physical connections are accomplished through the use of roadways, pathways, greenways, open space, sidewalks, and public transportation services. Providing residents, workers and visitors with viable transportation options serves as an immeasurable value to the city’s future success. Land use and transportation must be planned in consideration of one another to ensure that the connections are designed to make transport comfortable, while meeting the needs of our business community.

7. Strong Leadership

The leadership in a community (elected, appointed, and communally) has the responsibility to plan for and implement the vision of its constituents. Change is not easy, and the decisions that leaders must make to foster change can be difficult. Utica’s leaders acknowledge this and will strive to create future policy that implements the vision set forth in the City of Utica Master Plan.



FUN:

Jimmy John’s Field opened during the summer of 2016 and offers the community a place to watch professional baseball.

8. Fun

A community that provides activities and places for people to have fun will improve the quality of life for its residents and visitors. Utica will be a place where all will want to live, work, and play. Fun opportunities will be achieved in Utica through both active and passive leisure and recreation facilities, public events and festivities, arts and cultural activities, and a vibrant sports and entertainment downtown district.



ORGANIZATION

The 2024 City of Utica Master Plan is organized into chapters describing existing conditions, the plan and future vision for the community, and the steps for implementation.

The Community Profile chapter

is an analysis of the history, current situation and future projections for the City with regard to its population and demographic characteristics.

The Existing Land Use and Character Areas chapter

is a subjective analysis of the conditions, characteristics, physical and environmental qualities, and connective networks in the City of Utica and sub-areas, presenting the City as it exists today.

The Natural and Environmental Features chapter

analyzes the diverse network of natural and environmental features that exist within Utica and in a greater regional context. These features include soil composition, water resources, flood plains, woodlands, and storm water management.

The Open Space and Amenities chapter

outlines the various types of public and recreational amenities that exist within the community and discusses the vision and opportunities for each asset.

The Facilities and Services chapter

is an analysis of public services, utilities, and facilities - including civic buildings - vital to the basic function of the City and the quality of life within the community. It will highlight potential opportunities for improvement and future projects.

The Transportation and Infrastructure chapter

presents and analyzes the circulation systems and utilities that service the community's connectivity.

The Downtown and Corridors chapter

describes the character of the historic downtown and its corridors that serve as the activity centers of the community. The chapter will detail the specific characteristics of these areas, the physical and environmental qualities, the transportation networks, and quality of life and placemaking opportunities that exist within them. Lastly, the chapter will outline recommendations and opportunities for their futures.

The Goals and Objectives chapter

is the visions of the citizens and stakeholders of the City of Utica have for themselves and for their future. The goals are crafted from the analysis of the existing conditions and will be utilized to develop the Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use chapter

will be the guide for future development. Using the citizens' stated goals, it will assist Utica in achieving the goals and vision established in this Plan.

The Implementation chapter

will answer the "how" of the Master Plan. With specific programs, ideas, and regulations, it will guide the City along the path to shaping the Utica of the future.

The Zoning Plan chapter

is the culmination of the Master Plan efforts. The Zoning Plan is a guide for how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the existing districts on the zoning map. Further, it provides an outline.

Regional and Local Planning INFLUENCES



Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

SEMCOG is the primary regional planning agency that serves the seven-county Southeast Michigan region. Its central role is to advance inter-governmental cooperation and to coordinate planning activities that are regional in scale. SEMCOG's principal planning activities involve the following areas: transportation, community/economic development, water/air quality, solid waste disposal, sewage treatment, storm drainage, public safety and land use. SEMCOG also maintains the region's most wide-ranging database that is used for planning and economic development purposes.



Planning and Economic Development

Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development (MCPED)

MCPED is a regional planning agency which provides assistance to local communities through planning services, geographic information systems, data collection and economic development assistance. The County in recent years has conducted or supported a number

of planning studies of benefit to the City of Utica. These include the Macomb County Trailways Plan, Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, Macomb County Thoroughfare Plan and Gratiot Avenue Access Management Plan.



Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)

SMART is the agency responsible for providing mass transportation and paratransit services to the three-County Metropolitan Detroit area. The main component of SMART's service to the region consists of a network of bus routes. Other services provided by SMART include a connector bus service, which provides a more specialized type of service. This is particularly useful for meeting the transportation needs of senior citizens and the handicapped.

SMART also operates a Municipal Credit Program which provides funding to local communities to be used for meeting the transportation needs of its residents. Local communities are responsible for determining how this money will be spent. It can be used to subsidize the cost of providing SMART's connector ser-

vice, provide vans for local service, or underwriting the cost of bus tickets for local residents. Service to the City of Utica is provided via a curb-to-curb connector system that ties into the main-line route operating between Shelby Township and Detroit. This route offers selected weekday trips west along Hall Road to Lakeside Mall.



Department of Roads

Michigan Department of Transportation and Macomb County Department of Roads

Within Macomb County, the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Macomb County Department of Roads employ the greatest amount of control over future transportation initiatives. Planned improvements to the local Macomb County road system are planned, designed and constructed by the Macomb County Department of Roads.



Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA)

HCMA operates three regional recreation facilities in Macomb County: Stony Creek Metropark in Washington and Shelby Townships, Lake St. Clair Metropark in Harrison Township, and Wolcott Mill in Ray Township. These offer a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents throughout the County and region.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Chapter
2



2024
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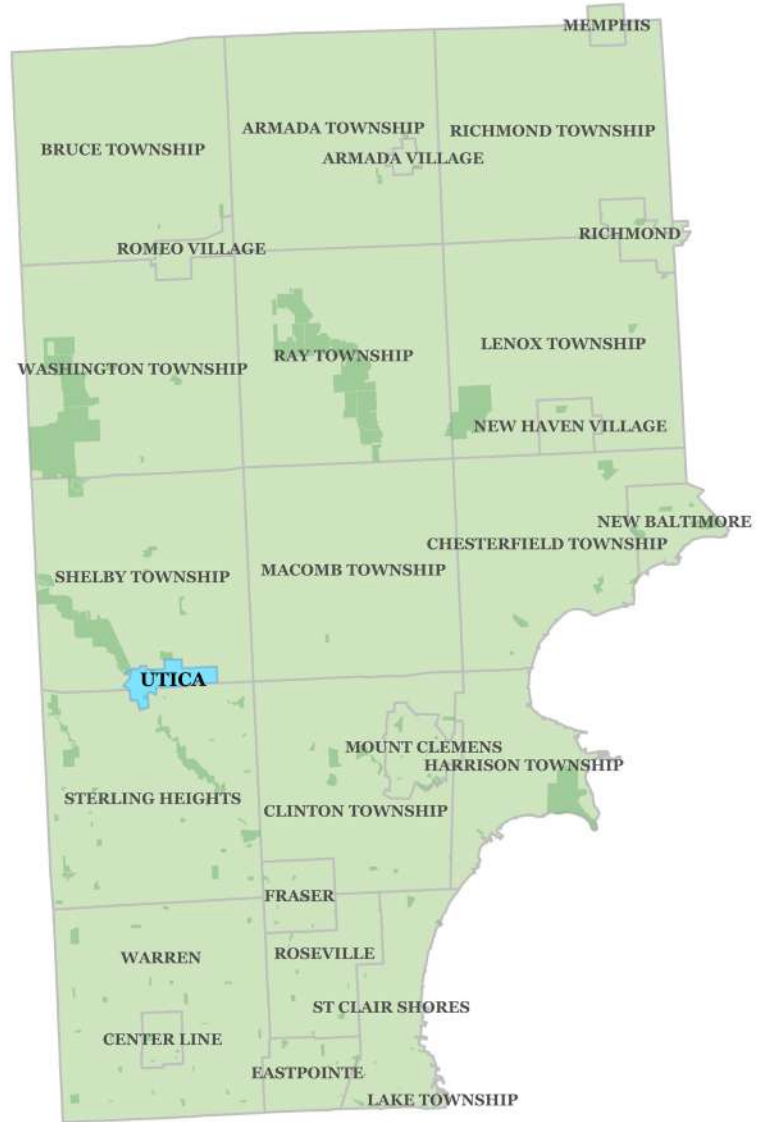
Utica
MICHIGAN

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of Utica

The City of Utica is located in the west central portion of Macomb County in Southeastern Michigan. The City is 12 miles north of the City of Detroit and 5 miles northwest of the City of Mount Clemens, the Macomb County seat. The City of Utica is located at the crossroads of two major regional state highways: M-59 and M-53.

The topography of the City of Utica is predominantly flat with the exception of the Clinton River floodplain which traverses the western portion of the City. The Clinton River drops more than 200 feet in elevation from the City of Rochester, located in Oakland County, to Heritage Park on the City's southern border. This change in elevation has made this portion of the river a regional destination for kayakers. The City of Utica is a predominantly residential community with a vibrant and historic downtown.



HISTORY OF UTICA

In May 1817, Thomas Squires, a Canadian and reputedly the first resident of the City of Utica, moved west along the Clinton River from nearby Mount Clemens, until he came to a topographic high point where the river and two Indian trails crossed. Here he built a cabin, at the southeast corner of Auburn Road and Cass Avenue.

By the end of the summer, newcomers had built two more dwellings. The rapidly growing settlement was known as McDougalville, Hog Hollow, and Harlow.

The first plat of the area was made in November of 1829, by Joseph Stead, under the preferred name of Harlow. The grant was signed by President James Madison. Yankees from New York State, attracted to this region after the English had relinquished control of the area to the United States, changed the name of the Village to Utica, after the name of

the city in their home state. Directly after the legislature of the new state had passed an act permitting the incorporation of villages in March of 1838, Utica became one of the first half dozen Michigan towns to take on the status. It was re-incorporated in 1877 with smaller limits to allow certain farm properties to enjoy lower township taxes. In the pioneer days, the history of Utica was interwoven with the development of the Clinton River and the initiation of the ill-fated Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal. It was the river that attracted the early settlers, and it was the projected and partially built Trans-Michigan Canal of 1837 which was responsible, together with the strap-iron railroad to Detroit, for the great boom in 1838.

The Wildcat Bank of Utica was organized and flourished, and an enormous, three-story Railroad Hotel was built, both near the



terminus of the railroad on the west side of the river. Grim history relates that within a year or so, the bright bubble had burst, the canal project had gone bankrupt, the bank had gone broke, the strap-iron railroad had failed and the hotel had gone up in smoke.

Continued on **Page 14**

Continued from **Page 13**

On a brighter side, a small group formed the Methodist Church Society in 1823. Two of the founders of Utica's first church, the forerunner of Utica United Methodist Church, were Utica's first settlers, Nathaniel and Jemima Squires. Utica Methodist Church was built in 1839. It was later cut in half and moved in two sections from its original site on Brownell near Summers to Cass and Stead.



The first industry in Utica, aside from farming, was the manufacture of pickets by William ("Picket") Smith, who became the first postmaster. The first school was a log cabin, near the site of the present Eppler Jr. High, which started in the winter of 1820. The graduating class of 1884 donated the large rock in the front of Eppler.

In 1904 and again in 1905 (both on Sundays), fires swept through the village, destroying most of the business section, homes, and the renowned Exchange Hotel. In 1905, Charles Ward built a powerhouse on the bank of the canal basin and furnished Utica with its first electricity.

The waterworks was built in 1926, gas mains were brought in from Mount Clemens in 1930, and sewers were laid in 1937. By the summer of 1938, most of the city's streets were surfaced, with either concrete or asphalt. On Aug. 20, 1937, Utica became a fifth-class city.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The characteristics of a community's population are among the key ingredients that are given consideration in the long-range planning process. Historical and current demographic trends have several useful applications. From identifying community needs to strategizing future land use, demographic characteristics provide the foundational resources needed to make effective community-based decisions. The following demographic trends are essential to developing a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the City of Utica:

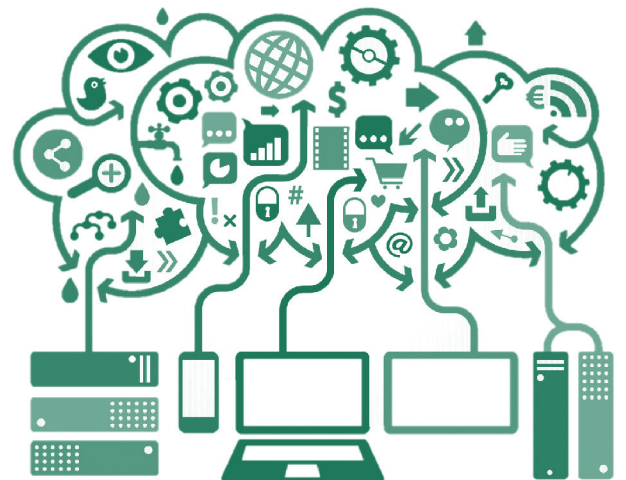
1. **Population change over time**
2. **Population characteristics—age, race, persons with disabilities**
3. **Household characteristics**
4. **Population Projections**

The most current available demographic data for the City of Utica is employed in the examination of each of the noted topics. The City leveraged data from the following sources: U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), ESRI Business Analyst, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. Wherever possible, comparable data for Macomb County has been provided for the purpose of understanding the relationship of the City to its larger geographical area.

DATA

The data and information used in this Master Plan was derived through a multitude of sources, including: Original research and analysis, U.S. Census Bureau, SEMCOG, ESRI Business Analyst, and Google

Maps and Aerial Imagery. We appreciate the resources and efforts put into the data that was made available for the successful completion of this Master Plan.



COMMUNITY POPULATION

Total Population

According to ESRI, the City of Utica’s population is estimated at 5,264 in 2023 (Figure 1). The total population for the past three decennial censuses was 4,620 in 2000, 4,757 in 2010 and 5,245 in 2020.

The City of Utica’s population grew 10.7% from the 2010 U.S. Census to the 2023 ESRI estimate. This rate of growth is double Macomb County’s which was 5.3% in the same time period. The state of Michigan’s growth rate was only 2.2% (Figure 2).

Figure 1



5,264

2023 Total Population (Esri)

Figure 2



10.7%

Percent Change in Population
Census 2010 to ESRI 2023

Age

The City of Utica’s median age is 44.6 according to ESRI in 2023, which is higher than the county’s of 42.3 and the state’s of 41.1 (Figure 3).

Figure 3



44.6

2023 Median Age
Utica



42.3

2023 Median Age
Macomb

Looking at the population's age broken down by generations as ESRI defines, the most noticeable difference between the City of Utica and Macomb County are Generation Z (born 1999 to 2016) and the Silent & Greatest Generations (born 1945/earlier) categories. Compared to Macomb County, Generation Z is 3% lower in the City of Utica, whereas the Silent & Greatest Generations are 3% higher. This difference helps demonstrate the City of Utica's higher median age. But it also indicates a need to accommodate an older population (Figure 4).

The age pyramid shows the distribution of age in 5 year increments and split by male and female. The percentage of the population in those specific age range categories does not quite show the form of a traditional pyramid, as age ranges from 29 and below are lower as a share of the total population than those in age groups older than 29 years old. The totals for each age group by sex are displayed in the chart as well (Figure 5).

Figure 4

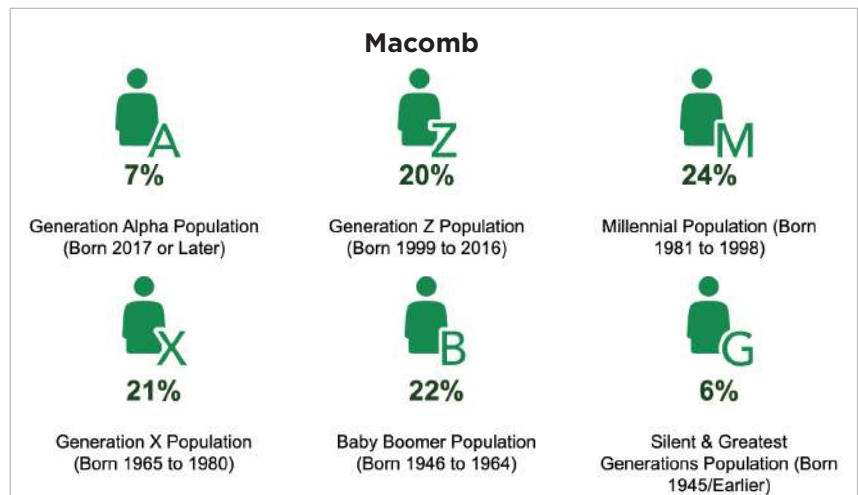
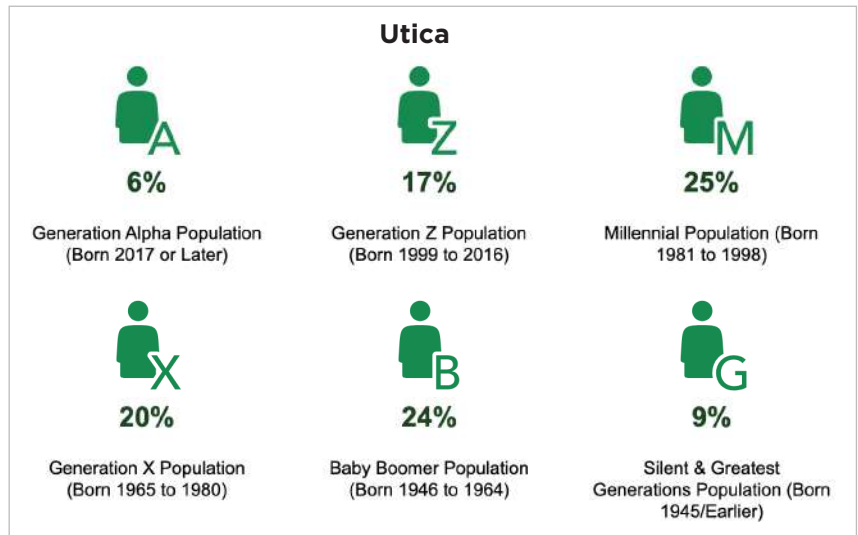
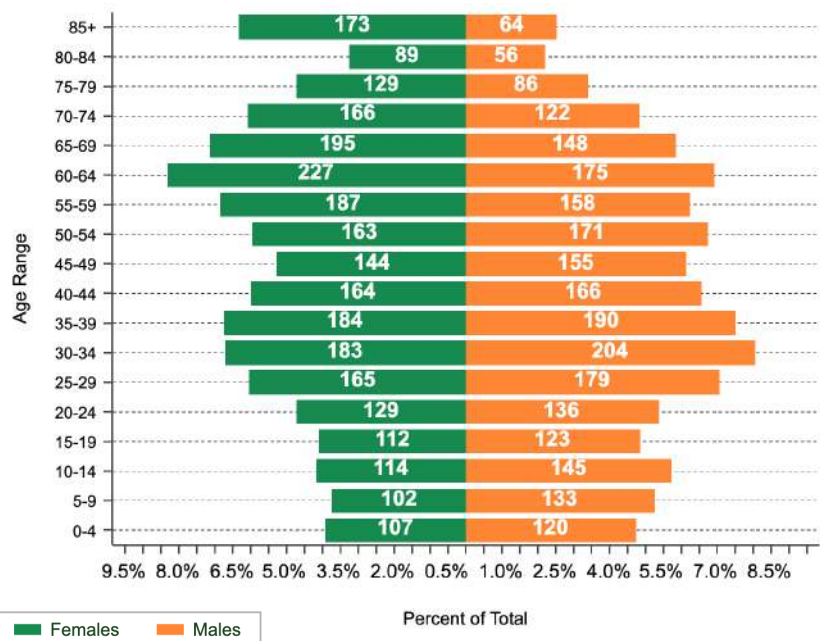


Figure 5



Households

The City of Utica has 2,483 total households, with an average household size of 2.1 individuals. From 2010 to 2023, the City of Utica saw an 11.9% increase in the number of households (Figure 6).

Figure 6



2,483

Total Households



2.1

Average Household Size



11.9%

Percent Change in Households Census 2010 to ESRI 2023



0.1%

2020-2023 Household Population: Compound Annual Growth Rate

Housing

Utica’s 2023 median home value is \$196,158, lower than Macomb County’s and the State of Michigan’s, which are \$227,918 and \$222,633 respectively (Figure 7).

Home values as a percentage of all homes can be found in (Figure 8). Homes valued from \$150,00 to \$250,000 make up over half of the homes in the City of Utica.

Figure 7



\$196,158

2023 Median Home Value
Utica

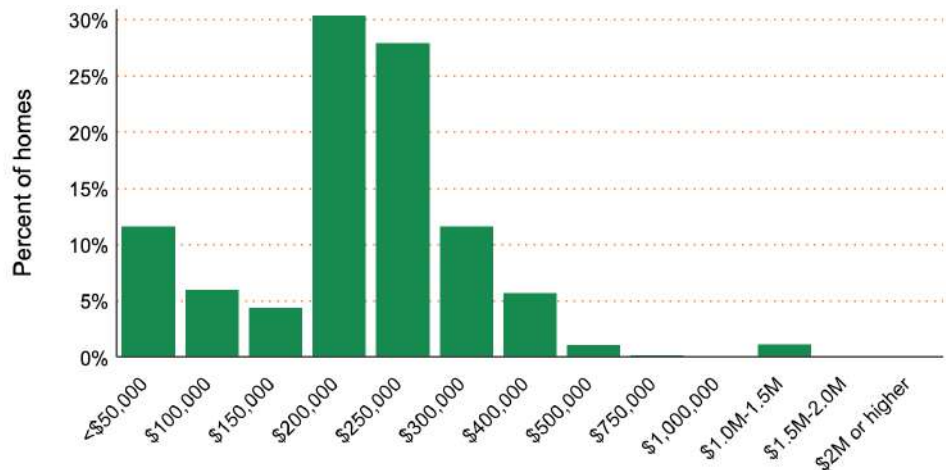


\$227,918

2023 Median Home Value
Macomb

Figure 8

Home Value



According to ESRI, the City of Utica has a Housing Affordability Index (HAI) of 105. HAI has a base of 100, representing an area where the median income is sufficient to qualify for a loan on a home valued at the median home price and not be cost-burdened. Values > 100 indicate increasing affordability. (Figure 9). Macomb County has an HAI of 113 and the State of Michigan 112.

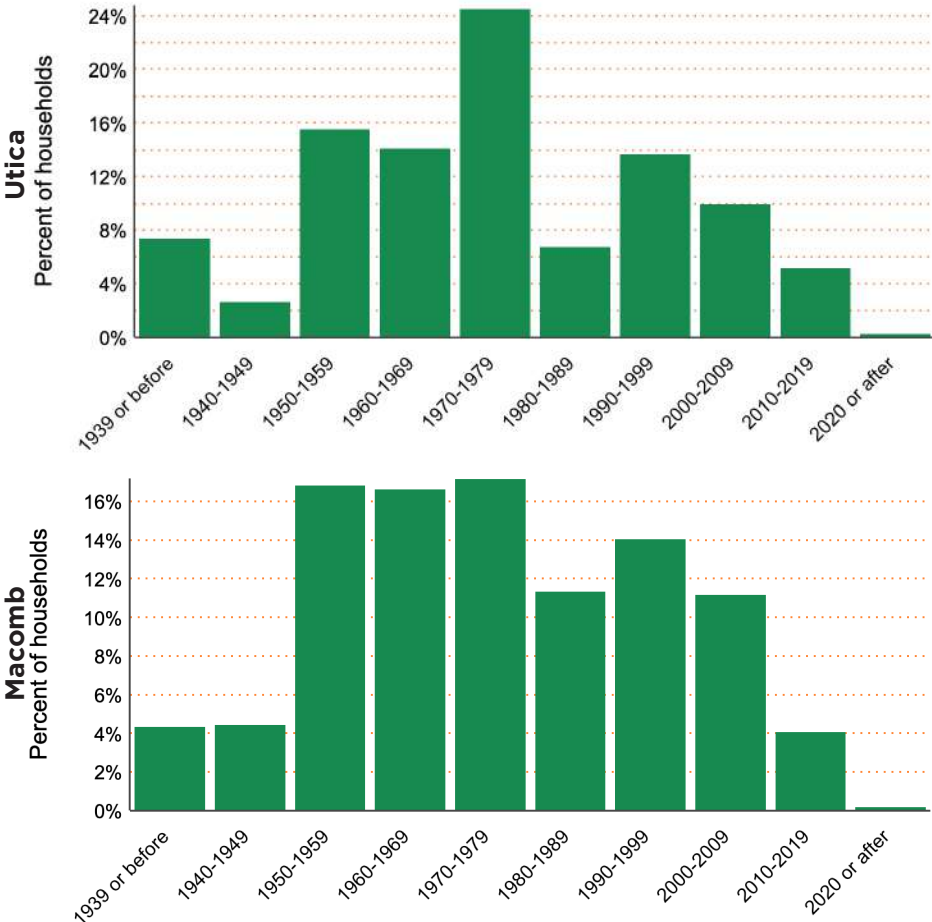


Figure 9
2023 Housing Affordability Index

A quarter of households live in properties built during the 1970's, according to ESRI data (Figure 10). This is a noticeable outlier compared to Macomb County as a whole, as the county's distribution of properties built doesn't have a single decade category in the 20% range or above. The City of Utica also has a larger percentage of properties built prior to 1940 than Macomb County (Figure 10).

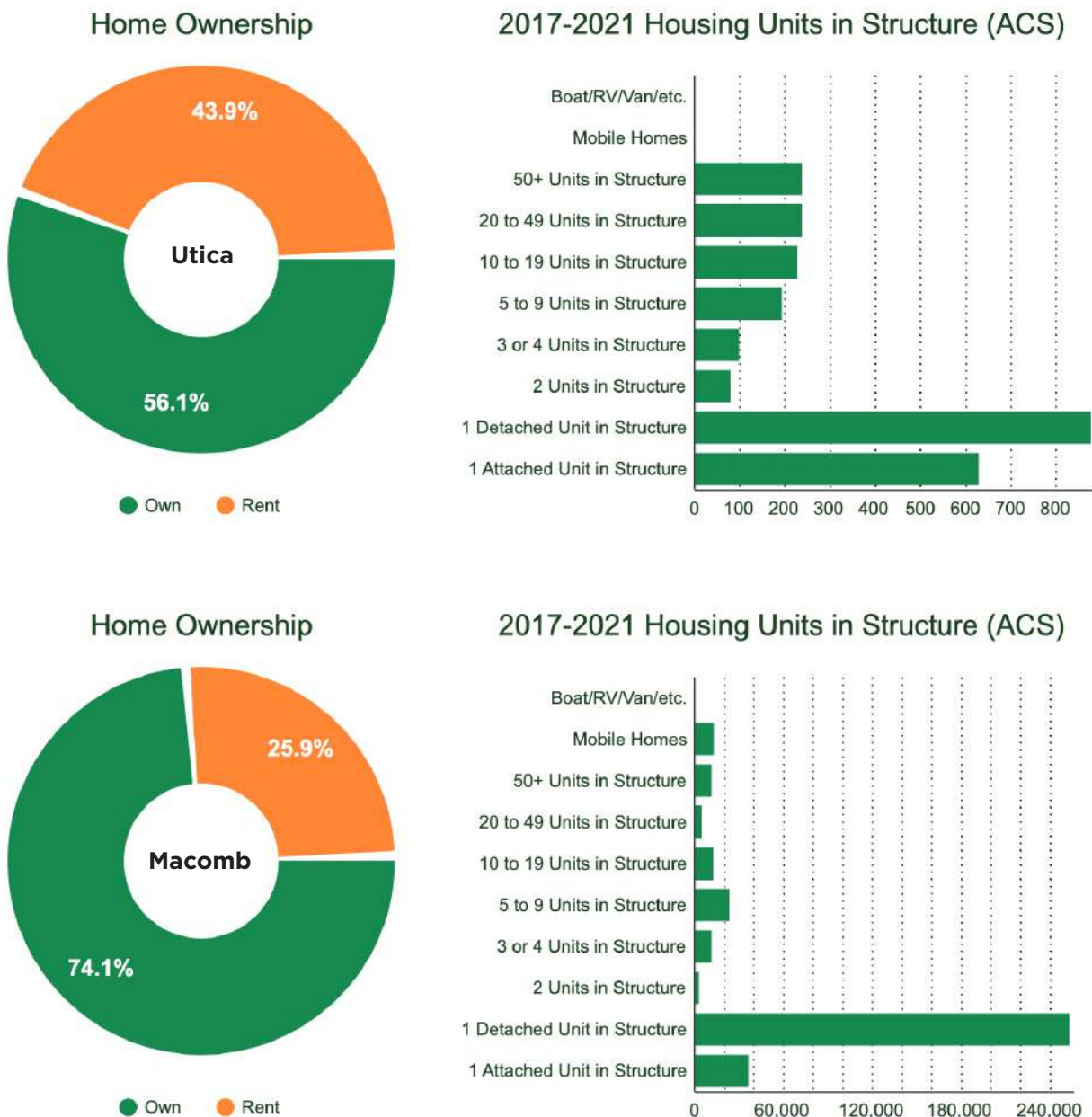
Figure 10

Year Property Built



Housing tenure reveals a stark contrast between the City of Utica and Macomb County. In the City of Utica according to ESRI 2023 figures, renters make up nearly 44% of the housing units, compared to nearly 26% for Macomb County (Figure 11). The City of Utica’s significantly higher proportion of renter housing units compared to the county should inform future development opportunities, weighing what the characteristics of the current community are like by providing ample rental opportunities in this community within the county compared to other communities.

Figure 11

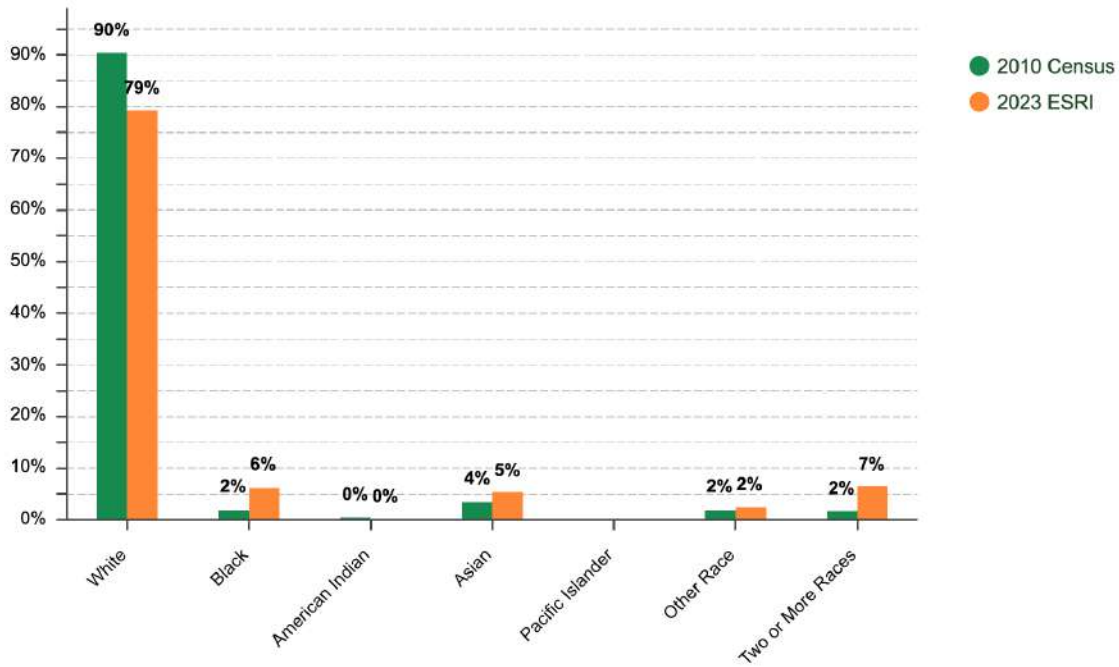


Race

A noticeable trend occurred between the 2010 Census to ESRI's 2023 population estimates regarding the distribution of race in the City of Utica. In 2010, the white population made up 90% of the total population, but by 2023 that figure had dropped to 79% (Figure 12). Gains in other race's proportions were found in black (2% in 2010 to 6% in 2023), Asian (4% in 2010 to 5% in 2023), and the population identifying as two or more races (2% in 2010 to 7% in 2023).

Figure 12

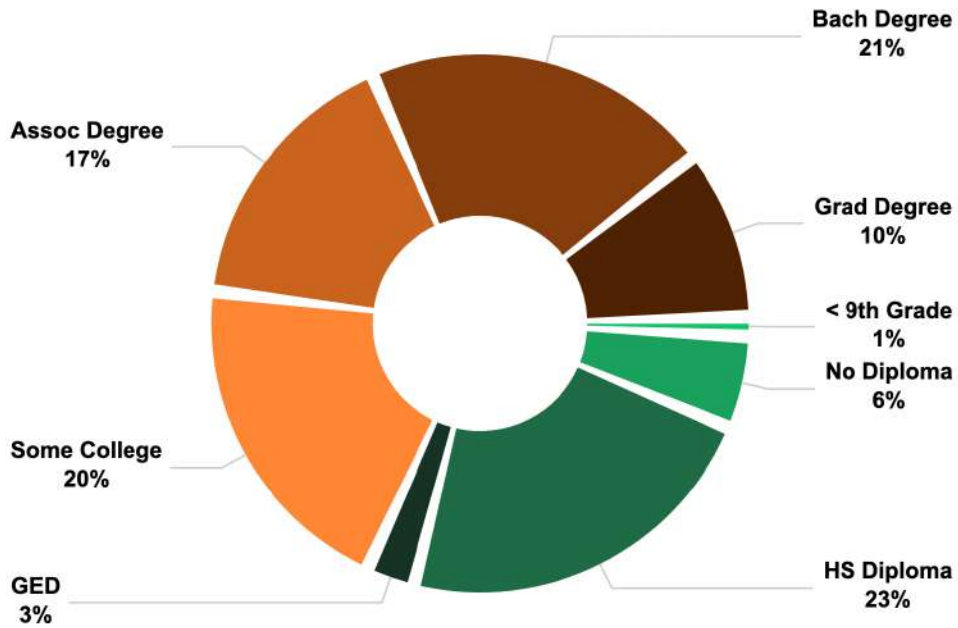
Percent of Population By Race



Educational Attainment

The City of Utica’s educational attainment breakdown shows 48% of the population had a college degree as of 2023. The breakdown is 17% with an associates degree, 21% with a bachelor’s degree, and 10% with a graduate degree (Figure 13). Macomb County’s distribution shows just 40% of the population with a college degree, while the State of Michigan was at 43%.

Figure 13
2023 Educational Attainment



Income

According to ESRI's 2023 estimate figures, the median household income of the City of Utica is \$56,775 (Figure 14). Macomb County's is \$69,803 and the State of Michigan's is \$65,287. This significant difference in median household income can be explained by viewing the different household income brackets, as the City of Utica does not have nearly the same percentage of households with incomes above \$200,000 as the county or state has (Figure 15).

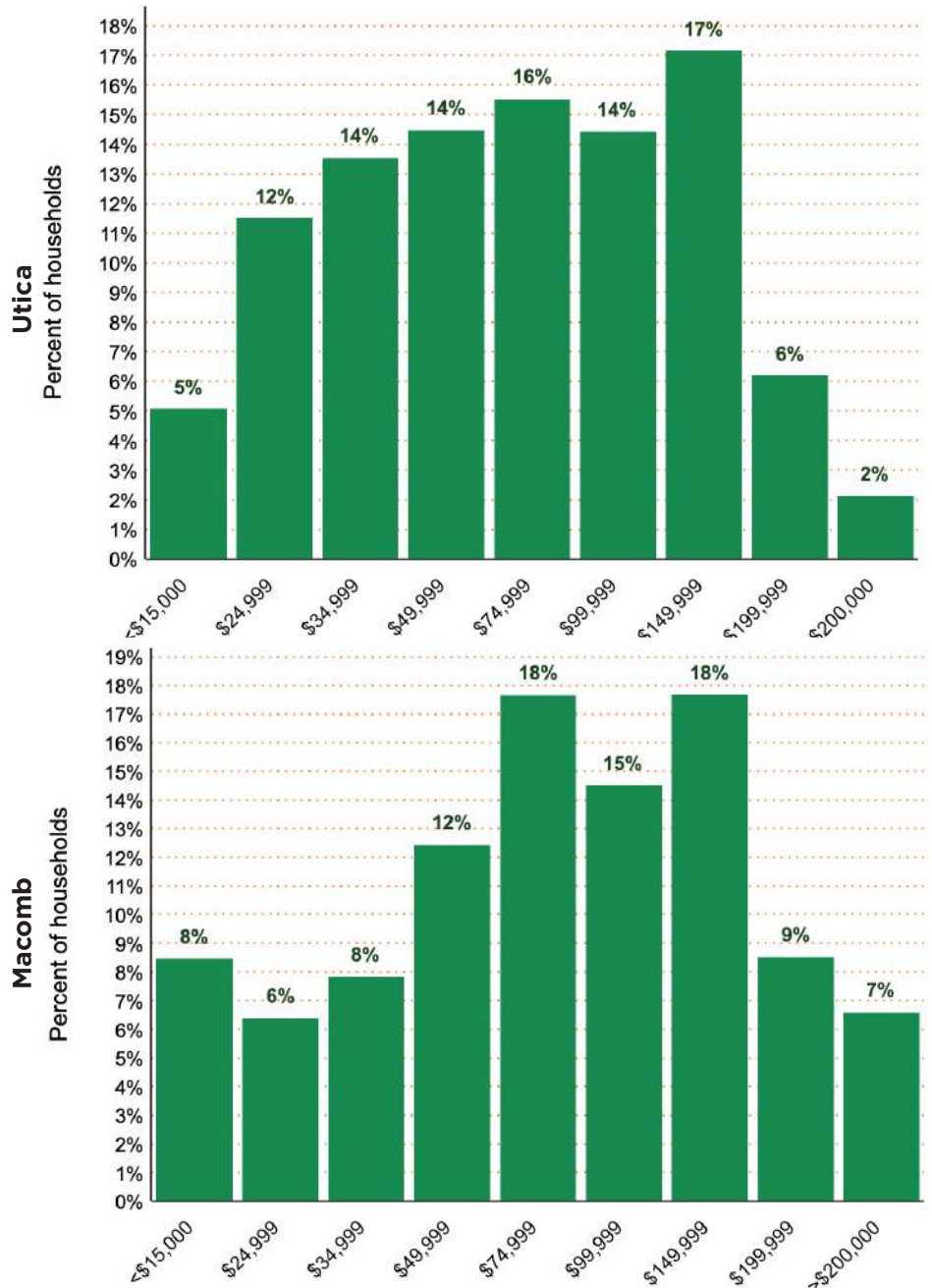
One indicator not often reported is Net Worth, which ESRI defines as follows: "Net worth equals total household assets less any debts, secured or unsecured. Assets include ownership of homes, rental properties, businesses, individual retirement accounts and Keogh accounts, pension plans, stocks, mutual funds, and motor vehicles. Examples of secured debt include home mortgages and vehicle loans; unsecured debt includes credit cards and other bills or certain bank loans. Esri reports net worth for 12 intervals and for seven age of householder groups by 10 net worth intervals." For the City of Utica, it's 2023 median net worth is \$98,766, while the county's is \$190,769. Considering the definition of assets which includes home ownership, and given Utica's high renter percentage, this difference emphasizes the contrast in renter and owner access to capital.

Finally, noting the City of Utica's disposable income helps to show what a household has left to spend after taxes. The 2023 median disposable income is \$48,763.

Figure 14



Figure 15

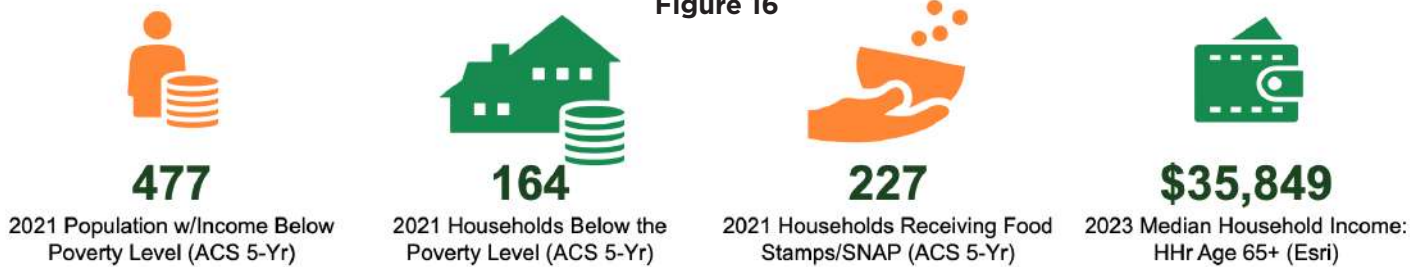


Poverty

Looking at a few measures of poverty via the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) of the Census, the City of Utica demonstrates the following totals in each of these categories (Figure 16).

Also displayed here is the 2023 Esri median household income of householders age 65 and above. For the City of Utica it is \$35,849, while for Macomb County and the State of Michigan it is closer to about \$47,000 for each. This reveals a poorer senior householder population in the City of Utica.

Figure 16



Employment

Just around 24% of the labor force are employed in manufacturing industry related occupations. Retail Trade and Health Care were the two other highest industries the labor force were employed in, according to the 2021 ACS estimates.

According to Esri 2023 estimates which combine several industries of occupations into particular categories, the City of Utica’s employed civilian population is 57.1% White Collar, 24.1% Blue Collar, and 18.8% Services (Figure 18) (A full definition of the occupations combined for each category can be found here).

Figure 18



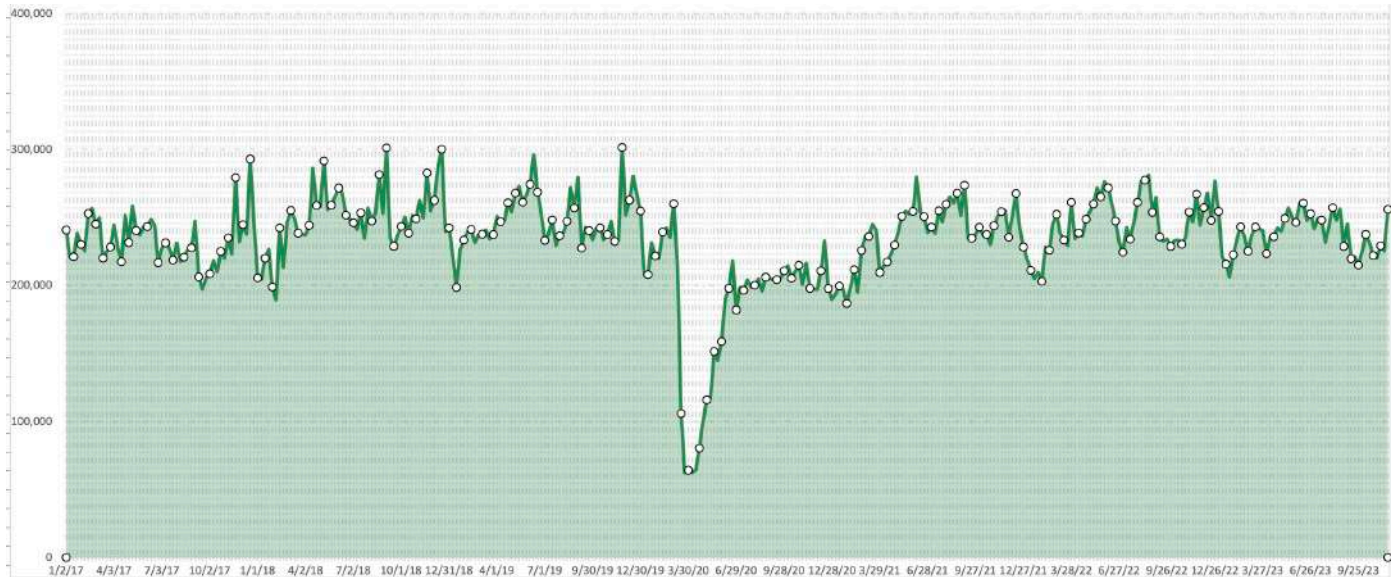
Visitation - Placer

Placer.ai is a data software which estimates the number of visitors to a particular location. Utilizing this dataset, the total number of visits to the City of Utica since January 2017 is shown in the following chart.

The chart is total visits per week from January 2017 to November 2023. Visits are determined via cell phone location. One visit occurs when someone enters the boundary (in this case the city boundary), who lives somewhere other than inside the boundary, and stays at a minimum of 7 minutes.

Looking at individual years since 2020, the total visits to the City of Utica are as follows: 9.7 million in 2020, 12.4 million in 2021 and 12.8 million in 2022.

Utica Total Visits by Week - Jan. 2017 through Nov. 2023



EXISTING LAND USE

Chapter
3

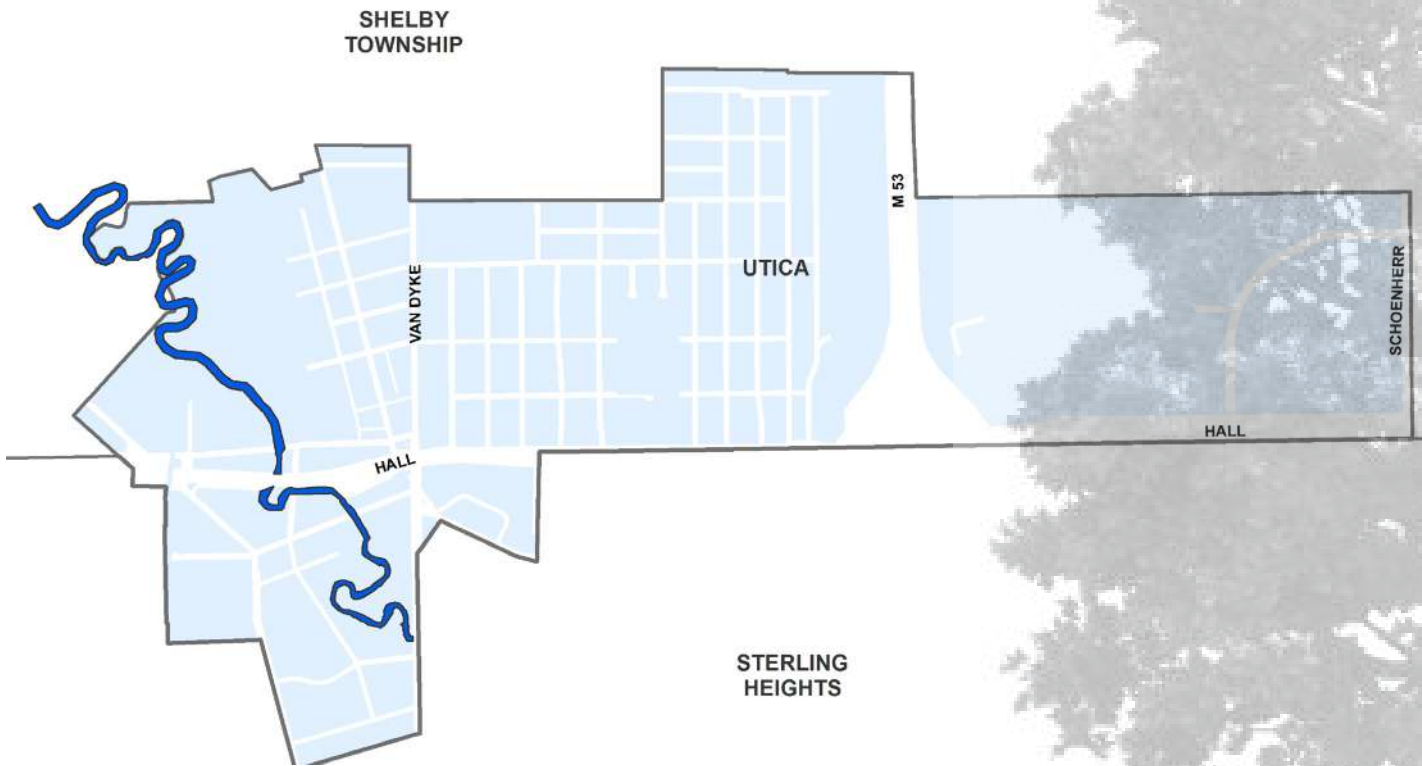


2024
MASTER PLAN
CITY OF UTICA



LAND USE

Working toward a sustainable future



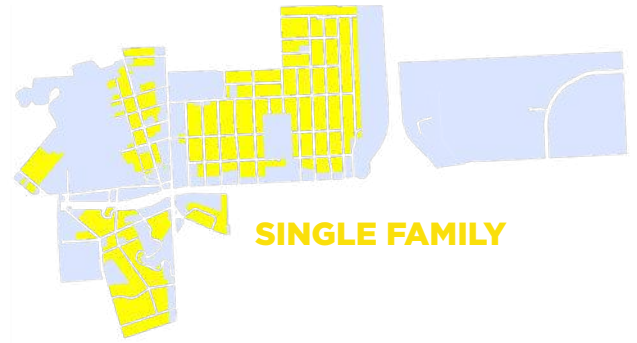
LAND USE REALITY

Analysis, land composition, build out

Development in the City of Utica has been influenced by several key factors which include the Clinton River, major rail lines, and regional connectors with both Van Dyke and Hall Road/M-59. What once spurred the establishment of the historic Cass and Auburn intersection now places ever-evolving economic and development pressures onto the city.

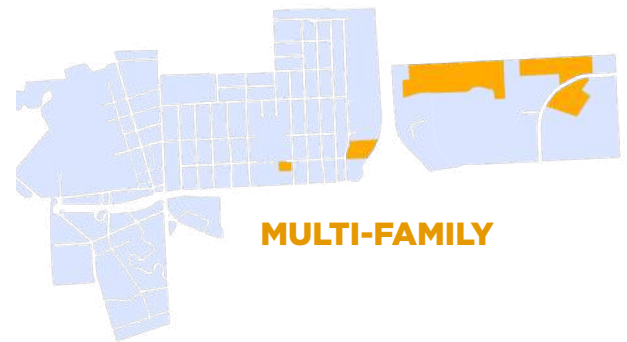
Always resilient, Utica has been able to respond to each challenge by searching and implementing creative solutions. Little by little, the City has grown, expanding away from its traditional center and toward the peripheral boundary near Van Dyke Expressway. Land-locked by hard borders, the City jumped Van Dyke Expressway and annexed a large swath of commercial real estate that expanded the city limits to Hall Road and Schoenherr. This push made available a new inventory of green fields and undeveloped properties otherwise not available to the community. This acquired land has since been developed, and with few vacant sites remaining within the footprint, Utica has once again targeted creative solutions to achieve their goals, leveraging brownfield dollars to redevelop environmentally toxic sites near the downtown.

The City's existing land use pattern, even as one of Macomb County's founding communities, is not written in stone and can be reimagined. This chapter will analyze existing land use patterns within the community, describe the composition of development in comparison to what was originally planned for by the original land use plan, and then project a build-out scenario that will describe what the City could still look like if the Master Plan and vision are used to guide future policy and development decisions.



SINGLE FAMILY

The City of Utica adopted two specific districts associated with single family development, R-1A and R-1B, ranging in densities of six units to nine units per acre. These districts provide a safe space for families separate from non-residential and noxious uses and serve as foundational pieces of the community. Single family developments encompass 37% of the City's total land area and is the largest residential portion of all existing land uses in the community.



MULTI-FAMILY

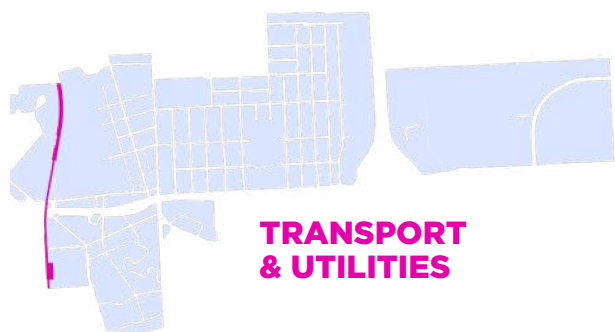
The R-2 and R-3 districts permit the development of multiple-family dwelling units at densities of approximately 9 dwelling units per acre. These districts provide a diverse array of housing options, as well as serve as transition areas from traditionally single-family neighborhoods to higher intensity commercialized uses. The high-density residential areas are well-connected to both corridors as their development has been focused near major transportation nodes. Even though the Multi-Family category does not amass a large proportion of city acreage (5.62%), or consist of the total acreage it was originally planned for, it yields some of the highest return on community investment of any designation.

EXISTING LAND USE



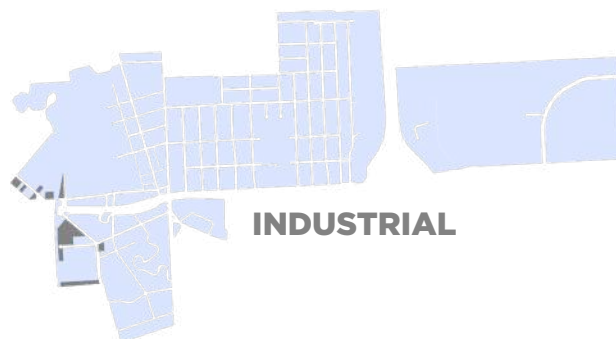
COMMERCIAL

The commercial areas of the City, 44.45% of the City's total land area, will encompass the C-1, C-2, O-1, and MXD designations. The C-1 and C-2 districts distinctly cater to differing levels of consumer needs. These needs range from small retail shopping districts with shared parking areas and walkable environments to larger big-box centers with intense levels of vehicular traffic. The O-1 designation is an office-based zone that permits professional services like lawyers and doctors, establishments that are vital to the day-to-day function and health of the community. Lastly, the MXD district, also known as the Mixed-Use district, provides and maintains an aesthetically attractive working and shopping environment that is conducive to the existing mixed-use downtown character. This dense and diverse space amasses the largest land use category of those analyzed and, when implemented effectively, yields great community and fiscal benefits. All of these uses can be found along the Van Dyke and Hall Road corridors, as well as in the City center where adaptive reuse has played an important role in the preservation of our most historic buildings.



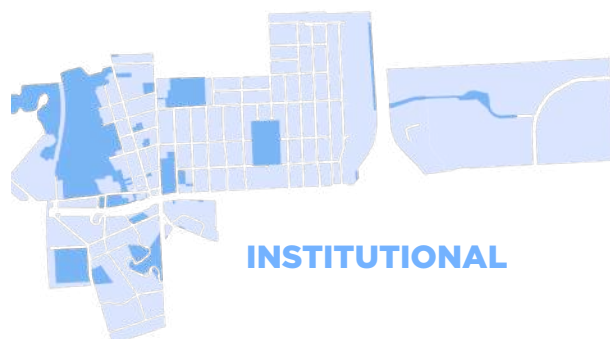
TRANSPORT & UTILITIES

The Transport and Utilities category, 1 percent of the City's total land area, identifies areas of heavy freight activity, specifically the rail services located at the western portion of the local geography. This land use runs directly adjacent to the largest cluster of industrial sites and the historic downtown. The rail is an active freight-hauling line that connects Utica to the metropolitan region's largest city, Detroit, and into domestic and international networks.



INDUSTRIAL

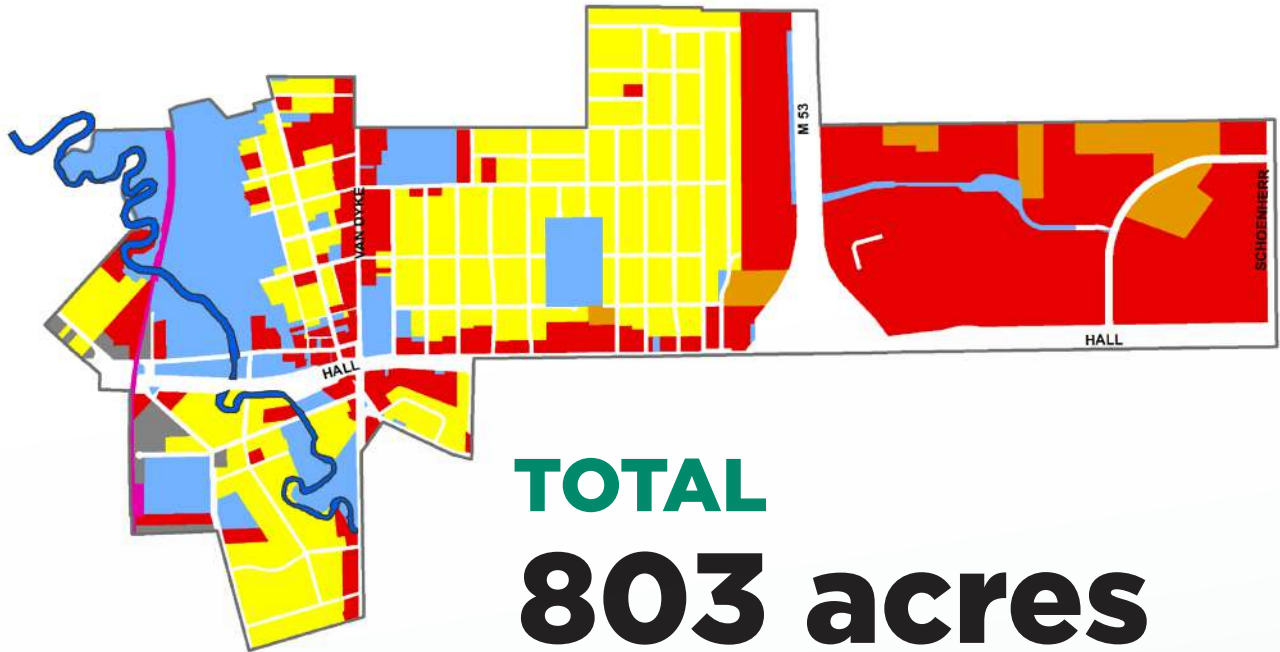
The Industrial district, 1.7% of the City's total land area, is designed to accommodate wholesale activities, warehouses, and industrial operations that are importantly separated from residential areas. These sites are found at the western portion of the City, both north and south of Hall Road, and near rail lines running through the western portion of the community.



INSTITUTIONAL

The City of Utica created and planned for specific sites to serve as sources of community interaction, outdoor recreation, and natural areas of environmental conservation. This land use category consists of 10% of the City's total land area and of parcels and facilities that are held with public interest which are typically exempt from real property taxation. Typical sites in this category include public and privately-owned parks, outdoor sporting areas, campgrounds, churches, educational facilities, governmental offices, assisted living and skilled nursing care facilities, and areas which preserve scarce and natural resources. A few of our most prized sites include three different neighborhood parks (Grant, Heritage, and Memorial parks) that provide an assortment of recreational activities and events, two public schools (Eppler Junior High and Flickenger Elementary), and a number of community churches - including our oldest, St. Lawrence. Over the past decade, Utica and Macomb County have worked together to secure a series of grants and funding sources to develop the Clinton River Walk, a variety of green infrastructure features, soft kayak launches, and an important connection to the recently finished segment of the Iron Belle Trail, a State of Michigan initiative.

TOTAL EXISTING LAND USE



Corridor Development PATTERNS



As was noted early on in the plan, development in the City of Utica has largely been influenced by several factors related to transportation. Two of these most dominating infrastructure features are the Van Dyke and Hall Road Corridors, which represent two of the most potent centers of economic activity in the Southeast Michigan region.

Van Dyke Corridor

The Van Dyke Corridor, stretching north and south through the City of Utica, connects three different municipalities: Sterling Heights, Utica, and Shelby Township. Highly trafficked, this segment of road has developed into a dense commercial area with narrow front yard setbacks and unique aesthetically functional features. Accompanying this commercial character are two community landmarks, Heritage Park and Trinity Lutheran Church, both of which are within blocks of each other near the Van Dyke and Hall Road intersection.

These landmarks, in unison with the corridor's unique design elements, play a vital role in supporting important community connections that provide access and amenities to the larger residential population who are within walking distance of Van Dyke. This area has seen recent investments in streetscape improvements that targeted sidewalk treatments, historically characterized street lighting, and way-finding signage. This is a great first step in the redevelopment and pedestrianization of the corridor where many improvement opportunities still exist.

Hall Road Corridor

The Hall Road corridor, also known as M-59, is a high-volume state road that services an east west travel pattern across two major counties and spans the city from Van Dyke to Schoenherr Road. Most importantly, the City of Utica's Hall Road and Van Dyke intersection functions as the point in which M-59 transitions from freeway-like character to a wide-laned boulevard with dense commercial, office, and residential activity.

Hall Road has been recognized for having some of the most frequented and popular shopping destinations in the region. While there aren't many unique patterned aesthetic features defining this corridor, the diverse array of strip malls, big box stores, as well as interspersed residential and professional office spaces, differentiate Hall Road from surrounding communities and neighborhoods. Recently, efforts have been made to diversify the uses in the area to include a higher-density mixed use atmosphere, including new developments in the Northpointe neighborhood, reflecting an ever evolving residential housing market that seeks to attract a diverse range of families at different stages of their lives and connecting them to the amenity-rich corridor.

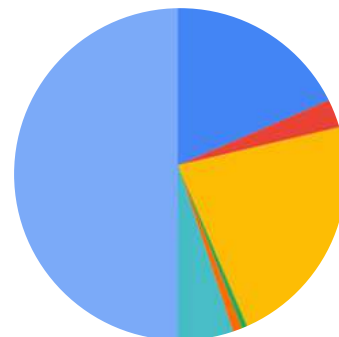
LAND USE COMPOSITION

Land use composition is important to analyze when trying to understand the current state of the City, and how closely it has followed the Master Plan amidst development pressures. To the right are two pairs of charts that depict what the City had master planned for, and what has actually happened on the land use front. The tables break down the physical acreage allocated to each land use category, while the pie chart visually illustrates the proportions of each land use category.

As you'll see in the charts, while similar, the Zoning Plan and Existing Land Use consist of important compositional differences that have impacted the development and current status of the city. Utica has exceeded the land use allocations of nearly every category in the Zoning Plan, where there is a cost benefit unique to each reality. In terms of the highest yielding tax base, commercial uses have developed 30 more acres than what was originally planned for.

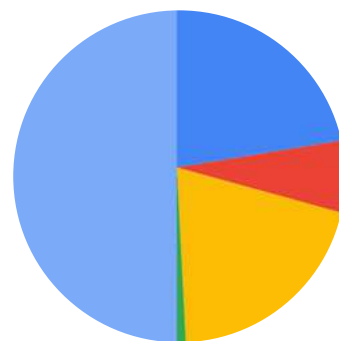
This is a net benefit for the community, although later in this plan we will discuss the implications and long-term viability of big box and strip mall styled commercial centers. Next, we see that both industrial and transportation land uses developed at greater levels than previously expected. Both of these uses support the economic export engine of the city, providing jobs and tax base to the area.

EXISTING LAND USE



- 16.5% Single Family
- 2.8% Multi-family
- 22.2% Commercial
- 0.8% Industrial
- 5.1% Institutional
- 50% Total

ZONING PLAN



- 22.4% Single Family
- 6.8% Multi-family
- 19.9% Commercial
- 0.8% Transport & Utilities
- 50% Total

NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Chapter

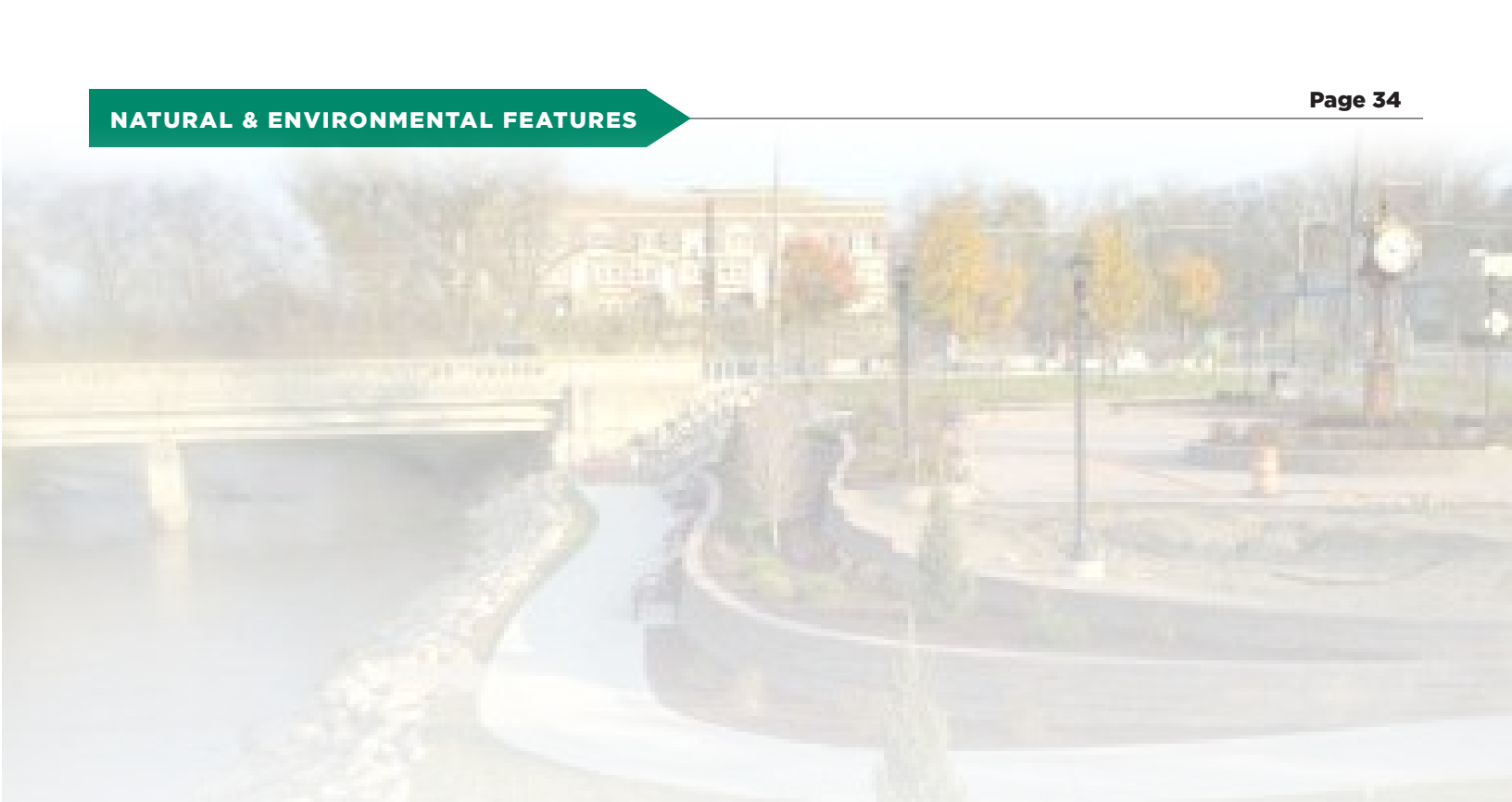
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2024

MASTER PLAN
CITY OF UTICA

Utica
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INTRODUCTION

This section of the Master Plan provides an inventory of natural features and environmentally significant areas in the City of Utica.

The City’s natural environment undoubtedly has an impact on the character of the existing and future development trends. Specific environmental features considered in this inventory include water, flood hazards, wetlands, topography, storm water and green infrastructure. The location of natural features influences the future development of specific areas, positively or negatively depending on the feature and the proposed development. When incorporated thoughtfully into development proposals, features such as wetlands and woodlands are served to enhance the character and appearance of the built environment.

Often natural features are seen as a barrier to development and may be difficult to overcome due to additional regulations and requirements. However, ignoring physical features during development can have significant, long-term negative consequences for the individual land owner, the municipality and the environment as a whole. The City of Utica Master Plan was designed to take advantage of these natural features so that the built environment is in harmony with the environmental characteristics of the natural features rather than attempting to substantially change the surroundings.



WATER

Clinton River Watershed



The City of Utica is located entirely within the Clinton River Watershed, and entirely within the Clinton River East Sub-Watershed. The Clinton River watershed covers approximately 760 square miles in four Southeast Michigan counties-about 40% of eastern Oakland County, about 75%

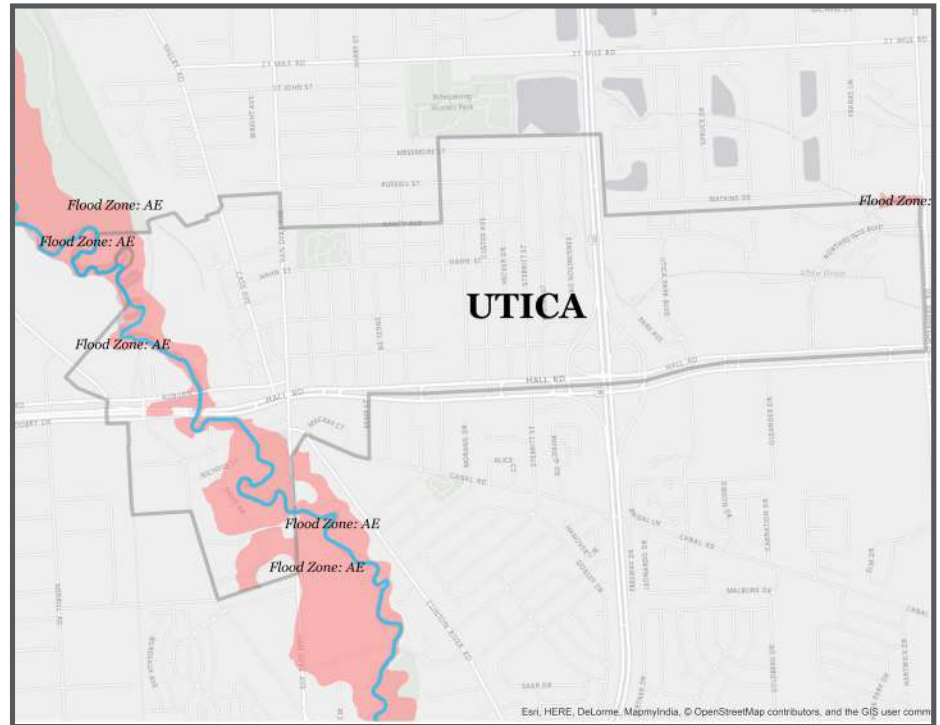
of Macomb County, and small portions of southern Lapeer and St. Clair counties. The river and its tributaries flow through 60 rural, suburban, and urban communities with a total population of more than 1.4 million. The Clinton River and its floodplain, which traverses the western edge of the City, have

provided unique opportunities for the development of a linear greenway park and trail system, as well as recreational access to the river for paddling.

WATER

Flood Hazards

A floodplain is an area of land along a lake, river, or other water feature that is susceptible to being inundated by water as a result of heavy rains, snow melt, or other factors. Floodplains are naturally occurring physical features that provide for the temporary holding of this excessive water until such time as the receiving channel is capable of accepting the water. Floodplain areas and flood-risk zones are designated and regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). After review of information available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and FEMA it is noted that in the western portion of Utica, land located along the Clinton River is extremely prone to flooding. The land is classified as Flood Zone AE, which is defined as areas that have a 1 percent probability of flooding every year (also known as



the "100-year floodplain"), and where predicted flood water elevations above mean sea level have been established. Properties in Zone AE are considered to be at high risk of flooding under the

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These areas are primarily occupied by open space and park space, with some residential.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Wetlands

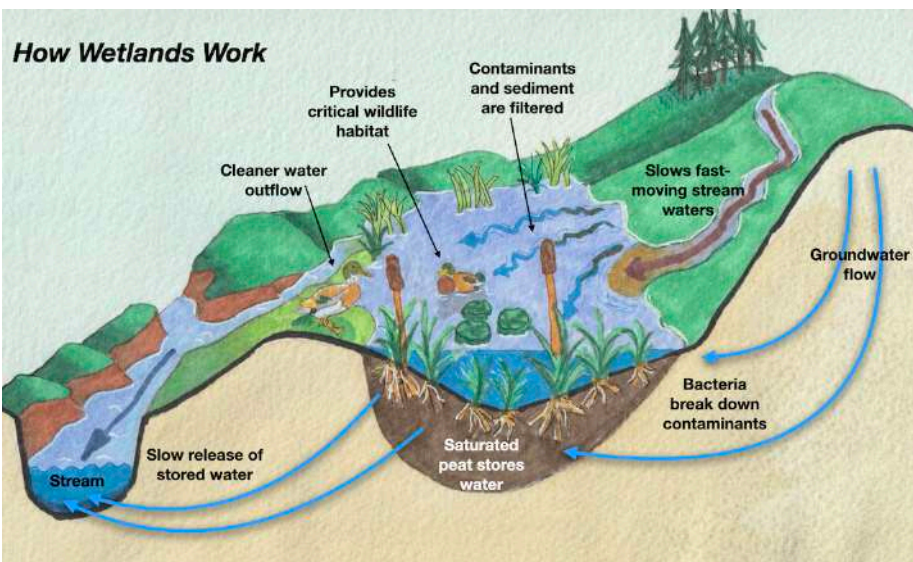
According to the MDEQ, wetlands are defined as “land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances does support wetland vegetation or aquatic life” (MDEQ, 2001). Generally, wetlands are lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining soil types, plant communities, and animal communities (Cowardin, 1979). Wetlands are often found in headwater areas and provide the same ecosystem services as headwater streams. Wetlands and headwater streams are important areas of transition between water and land.

Wetlands are extremely diverse and productive biological systems. Development in or around wetlands are regulated by several State statutes, the most prominent of which is Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (P.A. 451 of 1994 as amended). Wetlands do exist within the City of Utica in small pockets located along the Clinton River and in the northeastern part of the City. The few remaining wetlands are located within the City’s floodplain, and therefore cannot support development. This ensures that these environmentally sensitive and poorly drained geological areas are preserved.



Soils

Soil characteristics have an important influence on the ability of land to support various types of land uses, including roads, buildings, utilities and agriculture. Four specific soil characteristics influence their ability to be used for various purposes. These include the following: bearing capacity, erosion/stability, drainage and resource value. The City of Utica’s soil characteristics were identified as part of the larger Macomb County Soil Survey conducted in 1967 by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. Categories of soils with different characteristics and physical properties were identified as part of the survey.



Continued on **Page 38**

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Woodlands

Woodlands are frequently only considered valuable as a visual amenity enhancing the natural or constructed environment. However, trees serve many other useful environmental purposes including slope stabilization and erosion control. Woodlands also help to conserve water quality, filter pollution from the atmosphere, decrease noise and provide a habitat for wildlife. Integrating woodlands into future development plans can improve the community’s overall environmental quality and enhance the appearance of the community. Presently, few wooded areas remain in the City. They exist

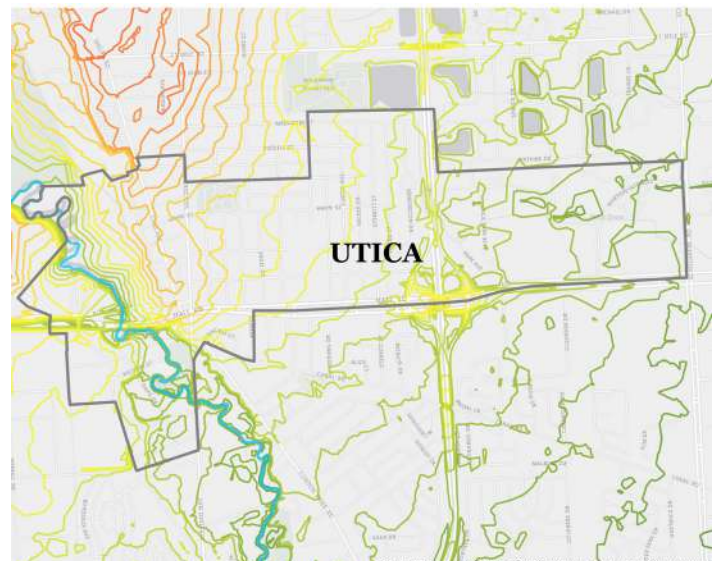


primarily along the Clinton River and lightly scattered throughout some of the residential areas in the northern portion of the City. These areas of mature vegetation should be sensitively considered when

reviewing future development proposals. The wooded areas along the northern portion of the Clinton River are also designated as potential wetlands, and should be protected from future development.

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography can have a significant influence on land development patterns. For example, site location, orientation and design of buildings, roads and utility routes are all influenced by topography. Where slopes are extreme, concerns exist relating to the ability of the land to bear the weight of buildings and the danger of erosion. Sometimes, topographic variations offer opportunities to appreciate the scenic environment. The topography of the City of Utica is predominantly flat with the exception of the Clinton River Floodplain which traverses the western portion of the City. The Clinton River drops more than 200 feet in elevation from the City of Rochester, located in Oakland County to Heritage Park on the City’s southern border. This change in elevation has made this portion of the river a regional destination for kayakers and canoeists. However, this change in elevation also poses issues such as bank erosion and de-stabilization, as well as problems with flooding.



BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional planning agencies including SEMCOG and Macomb County have focused on the preservation and enhancement of green infrastructure elements at the county and regional level. According to SEMCOG, green infrastructure refers to natural elements and related land uses including parks, lakes, ponds, existing and potential wetlands, riparian corridors and similar features. Green infrastructure is increasingly being recognized for its contribution not only to environmental quality, but also to placemaking, economic values, and healthy communities. In 2014, SEMCOG prepared a report entitled Green Infrastructure Vision

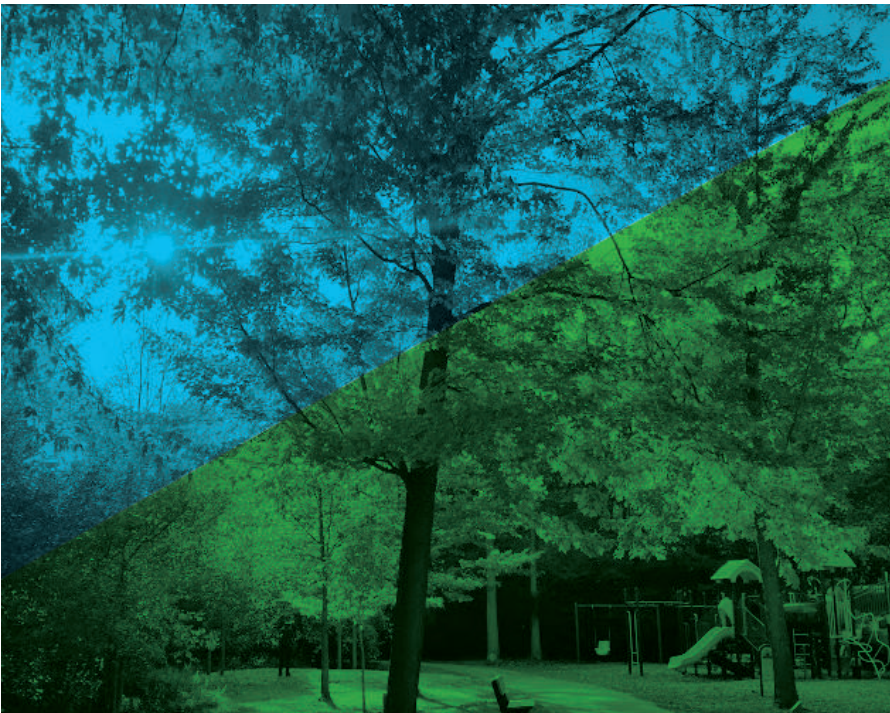
for Southeast Michigan, which is a framework and guide for the preservation and future implementation of green infrastructure within Southeast Michigan. At the county level, Macomb County has mapped existing and potential green infrastructure elements. Within Utica, such elements include potential wetlands, water bodies, Michigan Natural Features Inventory elements, parks, woodlots, and riparian corridors. The principal green infrastructure areas/corridors within the City include the Clinton River and adjacent wetlands, floodplains and recreation areas.

Blue and Green Infrastructure Vision

Embracing the quality of life, placemaking and economic benefits of green infrastructure as well as blue (water-related) infrastructure, Macomb County has identified and adopted a blue and green infrastructure vision of interconnected water routes, trail and natural corridors, recreation areas, walkable downtowns and coastal city hubs. This vision is highlighted in the Macomb County Blue & Green Infrastructure Vision Map. Key contributing elements of this vision within Utica include the Clinton River corridor, Clinton River Trail, Clinton River Water Trail, and the planned Governor's Belle Isle to Wisconsin Trail.

Green Infrastructure Projects

Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments. Green infrastructure refers to the patchwork of natural areas that provides habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. At the scale of a neighborhood or site, green infrastructure refers to storm-water management systems that mimic nature by soaking up and storing water. (United States Environmental Protection Agency.) Several potential Green infrastructure Projects have been proposed with help from the Clinton River Watershed Council and Macomb County. These projects would significantly reduce storm-water run-off by at least 15%. Potential projects include:





Bio-retention cells, as seen along Auburn Road, would result in at 84% reduction.



Native plantings and placemaking elements, such as benches and bike racks at the Historic Canal site on Auburn Road.

GREEN MACOMB

The Green Macomb initiative was created by the Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development to support green infrastructure efforts that strengthen the economic vitality, quality of life, and environmental well-being of the region. Through diverse partnerships, Green Macomb is working with local municipalities, businesses, private residents, and nonprofit organizations in order to enhance our region’s land and water resources.



Urban Forest Partnership

The Green Macomb Urban Forest Partnership is the first project of the Green Macomb initiative. This program is building local capacity to manage and grow healthy urban forests in the most urbanized areas of the county. An extensive and well-managed urban forest provides cleaner air and water, flood control, reduction in energy usage, improvements to public health, aesthetics, increased property values and a better quality of life.

SEMCOG has identified Macomb County, particularly along and below the Clinton River, as a major target for urban tree canopy increases. This area is one of the most lacking in tree canopy in Southeast Michigan with tree loss intensified by decades of Dutch elm disease, the devastation created by the emerald ash borer, as well as from efforts to improve in-ground infrastructure and roadways.

The Clinton River runs through the City of Utica, which makes our municipality a vital member of the partnership. Utica has only a 14% canopy cover due to large commercial zones, which is below the Macomb County average of 26% canopy coverage. Utica also has a high residential occupancy which leaves less opportunity for public plantings. The Urban Forest Partnership has developed a series of goals specific to the City of Utica. These goals include: maintain and increase tree canopy, rate and remove hazardous trees, and preserve natural riparian and floodplain canopy.



The first step in accomplishing these goals took place in November 2016. Volunteers planted more than 330 plants, shrubs and trees along the Clinton River Hike and Bike Trail in downtown Utica. The plantings will help to beautify the trail corridor as well as to reduce and filter storm water runoff to the Clinton River. Next steps for the City of Utica include completing a current tree inventory, drafting a tree ordinance, improving public education and perception and developing a priority planting plan.

The Urban Forest Partnership is working to expand public awareness of the benefits of urban forests, develop technical tools and resources for sustainable local forestry programs, and advance creative partnerships to increase tree canopy in Macomb County through planting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose.

SUMMARY

As this section points out, the natural features of the community are profound environmental characteristics that add to the City of Utica's character. The City must ensure that environmentally significant areas are protected and integrated into the larger community plans. Experience has proven that cooperation with nature, using imagination and creativity, is preferable to removing natural features. The City should carefully examine each opportunity to complete its design in a manner that enhances the community's livability. Planning can best assist in accomplishing this by encouraging designs that respect and work with nature.



RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Chapter

5



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LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

Quality of Life with Quality Attractions

Recreational spaces and amenities in the City of Utica have evolved with the needs and expectations of this tightly knit community. In this, Utica recognizes its importance and understands how they are critical assets for the continued health and prosperity of the City.

These green spaces and events are intricately connected with elements that comprise of a community's quality of life, character, and sense of place. Several national publications annually review the best and worst places to live. Cities perceived to have a good quality of life are typically safe, have available jobs and good schools, an abundance of cultural and entertainment opportunities, a clean environment, and plentiful access to parks and health-promoting activities. Measuring and planning for these quality of life indicators are important to the future of the City. People living or growing up in Utica are more likely to stay in the City throughout their lives and contribute to the community if they see it as a great place to live and raise a family. Planning for a high quality of life will not only shape that perception, but make it a reality. These tangible characteristics comprehensively lift all aspects of the community, attracting businesses, residents, and supporting their diversity and vitality.

Recreational spaces and amenities, many of which are already recognized as staples in the community, are vested assets that can be leveraged and expanded to achieve our goals. This chapter provides an overview of existing recreational features, highlights the characteristics that make Utica a

desirable place to live, work, and play, and identifies a series of strategies that preserve and enhance its recreational spaces and amenities as the City continues to evolve.





GREEN LIFESTYLE

Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Opportunities

A well maintained and accessible park system is one of the more important aspects in supporting a high quality of life, one which promotes a healthy and vibrant community. The City of Utica has four parks, maintained by the City's DPW, comprising of 43 total acres of recreational green space: Heritage Park, Memorial Park, Grant Park, and a preserved space known as the Utica Recreation Area, which

includes a dog park. All of these parks, except for Grant Park, have frontage along the community's major water feature – the Clinton River. In conjunction with these assets, the City of Utica shares recreational programming and services with Shelby Township through a PA 425 agreement. The agreement further expands the footprint of amenities available to local residents, where Shelby Township

provides access to their community center, and over nine additional recreational spaces. Each of these spaces offer their own unique opportunities for both active and passive recreational activities. Whether one prefers to enjoy a winding and picturesque nature trail or utilize the playing fields and picnic areas, there is a park for everyone.

Vision.

Providing quality and accessible recreational spaces and amenities have been, and will continue to be, a priority for the City of Utica. The City's recreation and amenities are a gateway to health and vitality, placemaking and community building, and economic development. The City will strive to improve the network of green spaces and trails within the community, connect and attract the public to these invaluable resources, and promote their usage through best practices that support placemaking while prioritizing the protection of the natural environment. As is demonstrated by this vision, the City of Utica understands the integral role that these recreational amenities play in promoting a desirable and high quality lifestyle for its residents and visitors.



Grant Park

Grant Park is located on the east side of Van Dyke and north of Hahn. It serves the largest portion of the City's residences, of whom make good use of its amenities. These include tennis, volleyball and basketball courts; playgrounds; picnic pavilions; and an internal walking path with bench seating. As best practice shows, collocating a diverse set of uses makes for a healthy and vibrant center attracting people from all walks of life. Supporting its role as a community space, Grant Park hosts the annual summer Old Mill Arts and Crafts Festival. This festival is one of 12 events held annually in the City.



Heritage Park

Heritage Park, located west of Van Dyke and south of M-59, provides direct access to the Clinton River and functions as a key connector to the Lake St. Clair to Stony Creek trail. Heritage Park contains a number of amenities that are designed to allow visitors to experience the river and its surrounding woodlands. These amenities include a kayak/canoe launch, a fishing pier and observation

pier, one of the last merry-go-rounds in the area, new picnic tables and park benches, a handicap-accessible parking area, and a pedestrian/bike bridge over the Clinton River. Because its distinct character differentiates itself from other parks, it received further investment to expand and leverage its uniqueness in the most recent Parks and Recreation Plan.

Jacqueline K. Noonan River Walk Park.

The Jacqueline K. Noonan River Walk Park has developed into one of the City's premier spaces. Located next to the community's public library, this River Walk facility is within walking distance of both the historic downtown and the newly developed independent professional baseball park. In conjunction with Heritage Park, it too acts as a segment of the Lake St. Clair to Stony Creek trail. The park implements many green design elements which include LED lighting, ecofriendly storm water management, and a storm water rain garden. All visitors can enjoy an angling pier and fish lunger (crib), a green kayak/canoe launch, picnic tables, park benches and seating areas, natural and ornamental plantings, bike racks, and ADA compliant access to the hike and bike trail.

Utica Recreation Area

The Utica Recreation Area is an undeveloped eight acre tract of land that straddles the Clinton River in the northeast corner of the City. The site is bordered on the east by the rail line, and on the west by the Clinton River. Recently, a portion of the site has been developed as a dogpark.

There are plans to further develop the site in the future.

Utica Connector Trail

The Utica Connector Trail is part of a multi-jurisdictional partnership between the City of Utica and Shelby Township. The project consisted of a 1.28-mile paved link to River Bends Park, completing the greater Lake St. Clair to Stoney Creek network, and ties into the Macomb Orchard Trail system. The trail network encompasses a 180-mile trail system that branches throughout Southeast Michigan. These projects were funded by a combination of grants from the Federal Highway Administration and the Michigan Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

OPEN SPACE

The City of Utica is a community that is fully developed with very few greenfield opportunities or preserved areas. Any existing open space is dedicated to local recreational use or limited by environmentally restrictive conditions.

Utica Recreation Area

There are approximately 28 acres of undeveloped open space in the community, all of which are located near the historic downtown and new ballpark, containing significant redevelopment challenges. These challenges primarily revolve around the 19-acre landfill that was in operation during the late 1950s

and 1960s. A recent environmental study of the site, performed in 2003, found that if the area were to be redeveloped, there would have to be several use restrictions applied to any site plan application— mainly prohibiting single family residential uses on this land. Luckily, these restrictions will not preclude what can otherwise be an attractive and well-utilized site that complements and leverages the downtown location and major transportation corridors. We recommend that similar brownfield strategies applied to landfills across the country are planned for this site, resulting in projects like golf courses, cross-country ski courses, event reception venues, and higher-intensity mixed-uses and light industrial spaces. While the existing conditions are not optimal, there are resources and opportunities available to this unique location that can catalyze it towards a brighter future—further expanded upon in the facilities chapter.





OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist within the City of Utica to enhance the recreation and amenity resources of the community. This section will detail a range of opportunities that can be targeted and achieved while not negatively impacting the natural environment. The opportunities have been derived from a set of overarching goals, specifically related to recreation and amenities – founded in best practice, to achieve the direction in which the community wishes to go.

With the advent of the new trail connector running through the City west of Van Dyke (including the most recent development of Memorial Park and new baseball stadium in downtown), and the development of the community east of M-53, Utica has an opportunity to leverage all of these assets to improve the quality of life of its residents and the economic benefit of its investments. The following discussion is a recommendation for how the City may achieve its vision for a vibrant, active, and healthy community within the recreational spaces and amenities concentration.

Parks and Trails

The region as a whole has seen a robust increase in health, fitness, and recreational activity in local parks and recreation systems. The push for expanding upon parks and trails has been supported by high levels of usership and interest,

as seen in the nearby Macomb Orchard Trail and other systems that equate to over 180 miles in total hiking and biking paths in Southeast Michigan. The connection achieved by the new trail will most assuredly generate traffic that will provide many spinoff benefits

- more patrons and marketing opportunities that boost that local economy. This, in conjunction with the new independent professional ballpark and associated park programming, will assist in revitalizing the downtown and act as a vital contributor in strengthening

These goals include:

1. **Improve connectivity and access between parks, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.**
2. **Target redevelopment opportunities for the open space areas and underutilized facilities.**
3. **Provide and improve park and recreation facilities to underserved areas and populations.**
4. **Market, expand, and improve the events and activities that take place within our community and recreational spaces.**
5. **Promote and protect the environment and environmental stewardship.**



the Utica community fabric. As opportunities arise, the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that standards for each district support the development and connection to parks and trails throughout the community.

Programming and Events

With the City's dense array of amenities and gathering spaces, these assets could be programmed to generate increased utility outside of passive uses. A strong and frequent set of programming in the parks and on the trails can attract patrons to the downtown and the City's recreational amenities on a more regular basis. The City's Parks and Recreation Commission, along with Utica's partners in the faith-based and philanthropic community, have long championed and hosted a variety of events and activities that already make strides



towards the Master Plans recreational vision. In continued partnership with these groups, and with the advent of the new baseball stadium and citizens council, the potential for a regularly scheduled events expansion should be sought after. Whether it is movies in the park, live music and entertainment, regular art fairs or farmers markets — programming can bring the community together and create a sense of place. These

events can both increase activity and utilization of the City's assets, but also serve as an economic development tool that creates spaces for local entrepreneurs, and provide an accessible stage to those who wish to share their gifts with the community.

Role of Volunteers

The role and importance of volunteers cannot be understated. Civic participation is often a reflection of the community relationships and pride that is developed by the investments and efforts made by both the leadership and the City's residents. Utica already boasts great support and a strong foundation in volunteerism and civic participation, but as recreational spaces and amenities become more popular and attract greater utilization, volunteers will be sought after to help maintain and coordinate these community gems. A programming and advisors board should be developed for the planning and coordination of recreational activities and events. This board should consist of residents, stakeholders, and local organizations who can directly contribute towards these community goals.

Recreational Connectivity and Linkages

It is vital for the City to connect parks and trails to all neighborhoods throughout the community, especially the underserved areas east of M-53. Parks and trails are paramount in ensuring access and equity, economic sustainability, and in increasing the quality of life for all in the City of Utica. From the Grant Park neighborhood to Northpointe, all actors must be engaged in improving these features and networks, supporting the great strides that have already been made



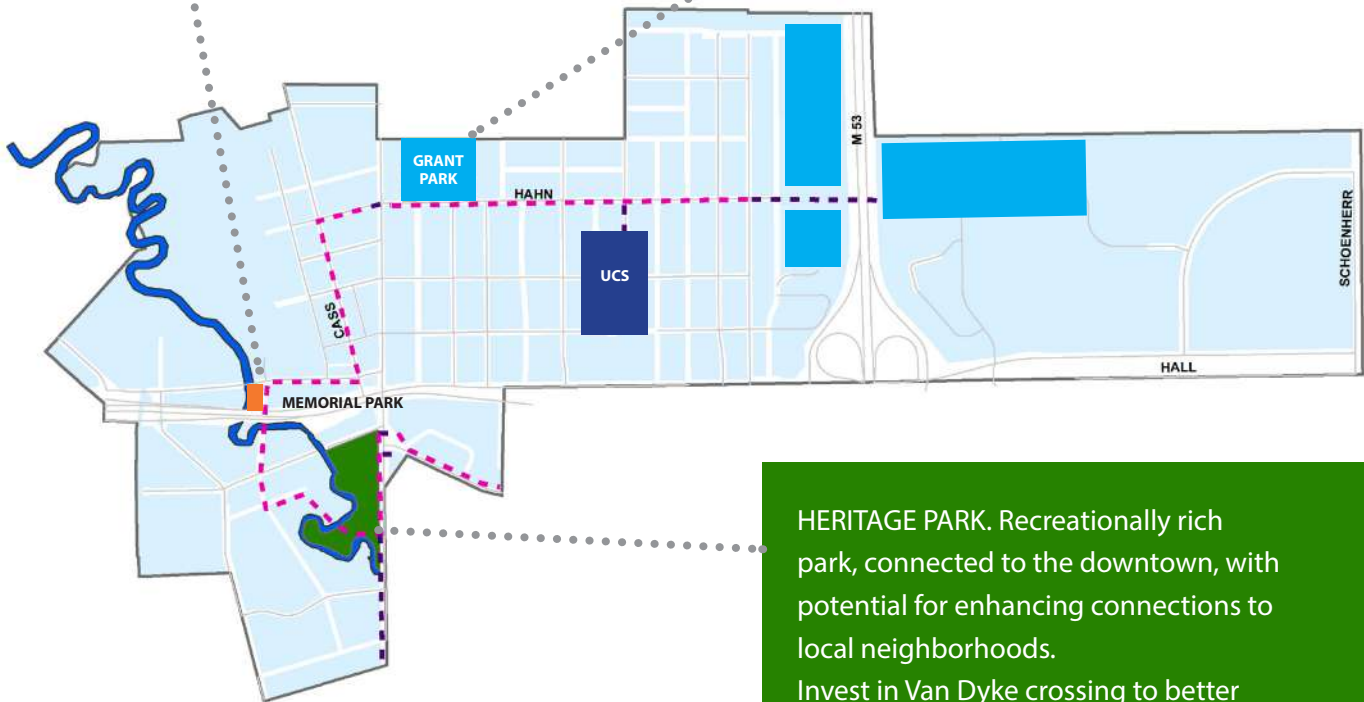
in way-finding efforts invested in recently by the City with the purpose of deconstructing these barriers. For example, M-53 and Hall Road while long established as a high-traffic corridor in the region, do not have to act as a pedestrian chasm if enhanced with proper design measures. Similar community barriers have been redesigned with independent pedestrian bridges, bridges and tunnels that cross over or under these areas to address their disconnected and unwalkable nature. A second example would be to address the sidewalk network gaps of the Grant Park neighborhood. This area has limited access to walkable pathways that should connect to features and amenities that are within optimal walking distances. An improved network would increase property values, improve resident health, and increase visit frequency to the City's local parks and commercial amenities As road work and



reconstruction of these area are planned, the City and residents should be actively engaged in the planning process and advocate for the inclusion of pedestrian-friendly design features in these projects. Investments of this fashion will enhance the City and reinvigorate what is already a vibrant and desirable community. The following map will highlight important recreational linkages, potential recreational opportunities, and connective improvements within the City of Utica.

MEMORIAL PARK. As one of the City's premier public spaces, this park has the potential to increase attraction of residents and visitors alike by focusing on a few different elements. Attract and increase residential density levels within the downtown footprint. Rezone and target sites for high-density mixed-use development. Enhance way-finding signage to include the connector trail and downtown pathways into the greater part of the community.

GRANT PARK. The City's most vibrant park consists of a variety of uses, events, and is surrounded by a dense neighborhood. Even so, there are multi-modal improvements that could increase access. Improve east to west Hahn Street connection to include the Village Square community and the Northpointe neighborhood east of M-53. Connect into Flickinger Elementary via north/south path along Remer Court, into Hahn Street.



HERITAGE PARK. Recreationally rich park, connected to the downtown, with potential for enhancing connections to local neighborhoods. Invest in Van Dyke crossing to better connect with the MacKay neighborhood. Fill in Van Dyke Corridor gaps, tying into both the commercial activity centers and Sterling Heights sidewalk effort.

Preferred Route Legend

- - - - - Improved Routes
- - - - - Proposed Routes

SUMMARY

As this chapter has discussed, the City of Utica has many recreational assets and community events that support its vibrant and unique character. What this section of the plan seeks to achieve is recognizing new recreational opportunities and enhancing the connection to existing features. The following strategies, outlined below, identify several items that can make the City of Utica an even better place to live, work and play as it continues to evolve.

1. Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance so as to include provisions that promote parks, recreation, and network connectivity.
2. Assemble resources, marketing and sales pieces, and lead the redevelopment of the 28-acre area located near the downtown. Leverage these items in conjunction with an RFP to attract the highest and best opportunity for the City-controlled land.
3. Recommit and empower the Parks and Recreation Commission, providing it with a more pronounced role in the community events planning and management, in partnership with long-standing stakeholders, new businesses, and a newly convened citizen council group.
4. Develop a more comprehensive community-wide events and activities notification system that uses social media and community electronic message board signs to better inform residents and visitors of upcoming events and park/community facility locations.
5. Partner with the local DDA, Shelby Township, City of Sterling Heights, Macomb County Blue Economy Initiative, Macomb County Sheriff's Department and Clinton River Watershed Council to:
 - Expand wayfinding signage along new trail extension along the Clinton River
 - Develop emergency response plans and identify river access points
 - Maintain a clean and navigable river and associated amenities.
6. Require a community benefit or some form of community-oriented project for large scale developments. Explore options for development of a community park east of M-53. Engage development community, business community, and local homeowners.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

Chapter **6**

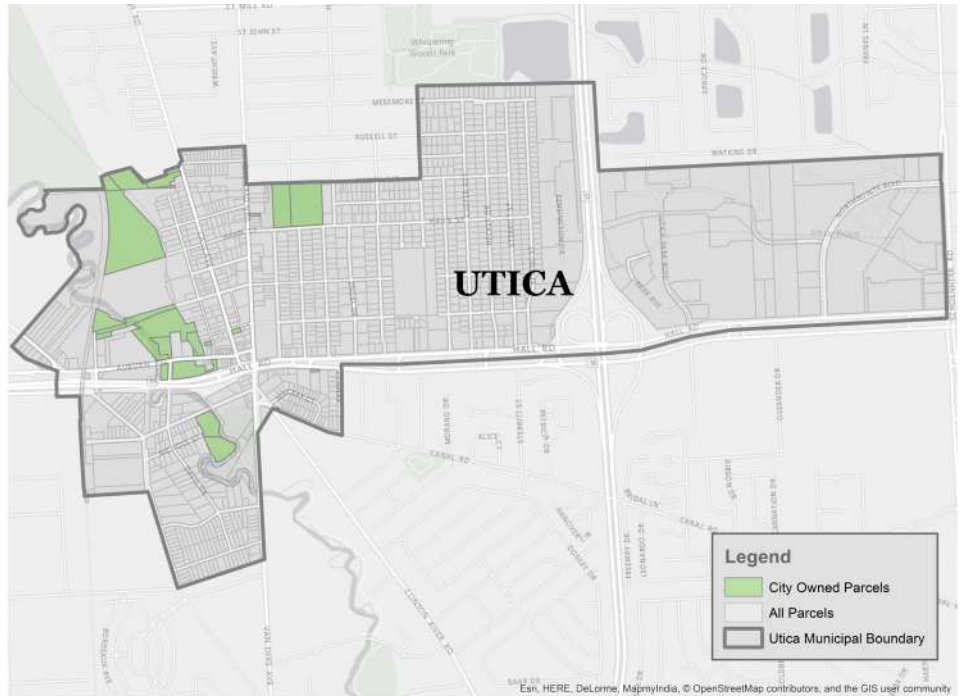


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EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

When considering the development of a community, it is important to assess the provision of community facilities and the protections of environmentally significant areas. The community image is often directly related to the condition or provisions of libraries, schools, and public businesses and services. The extent to which community facilities are developed is predicated on neighborhood needs, the availability and location of suitable land, and available funding to finance the given project. Community-wide facilities normally consist of municipal offices, libraries, fire stations, playfields, community parks, and schools. By the very nature of their individual functions, they serve not only the residential neighborhoods, but the entire community. Through the implementation of the vision and strategies in this Plan, the City of Utica aims to provide improved service and amenities to all members of the community.



Utica Community Schools

Utica Community Schools (UCS) is a public school district located in Macomb County, Michigan. UCS serves the city of Utica, the majority of Shelby Township, the northern portion of Sterling Heights, and parts of Ray, Washington, and Macomb townships. UCS is the second-largest school district in the State of Michigan. Utica Community Schools operates 25 elementary schools, seven junior high schools, and four high schools. Presently, there are two public schools located within the City of Utica: Flickinger Elementary School on Vanker Ave and Eppler Junior High School on Brownell Street. There are also three private schools located within the City of Utica: St. Lawrence Elementary

School located on Utica Road, Trinity Lutheran located on Van Dyke Avenue, and a new Montessori School located on Utica Park Boulevard.

Utica City Offices

The City of Utica Administration Office is located in the heart of the downtown at 7550 Auburn Road. The building houses the Mayor's Office, the City Clerk's Office, the Treasurer's Office, the Assessor's Office and the Building Department. The City Council Chambers are also housed in this building.

Utica Police Department

The Utica Police Department is located at 7550 Auburn. The police department prides itself on being integrated into the community and responding to the demands of our ever-changing City. Together, in partnership with the community, the department will continue to make the City of Utica a great and safe place to live, visit, and do business. The police department goal is to provide professional services while upholding the values of the department, Honor, Courage, Integrity.

The police department is currently staffed by 21 members. Positions within the department include a police chief, sergeants, detective, patrol officers, and dispatchers. Specialty assignments include investigations, attachment to Macomb SWAT, attachment to federal task force, evidence technician, field training officer, firearms instructor, taser instructor, defensive tactics instructor and many more.

The ever-changing world of law enforcement continues to put strains on the department. Moving forward, the department is projected to increase education and training amongst its officers. Some of the immediate goals are to increase the supervision ranks by adding more sergeants and a lieutenant. The current building is not conducive to a modern policing demand and needs either renovation or being rebuilt. Lastly, the department will be seeking accreditation in the future to ensure that it stays up-to date with best practices and maintains accountability and professionalism.

Fire Department

One of the most important services that are provided by a community is adequate fire protection. Firefighting services are important because they protect residences, businesses, and industries from financial loss and personal injury, and because they can substantially reduce the cost of fire insurance.

The City of Utica has one fire station located at 7609 Auburn Road in downtown Utica. The City of Utica also owns a vacant parcel on Utica Park Boulevard that has been designated for a second fire station. The City currently employs 27 fire fighting personnel: a fire chief, assistant chief, captain, lieutenant, sergeants and fire fighters. Their training division has a coordinator and

instructors, which provide about 60 training sessions annually. The duties of the Fire Prevention Bureau include fire investigations, site plan reviews, general inspections and fire prevention program. The Department equipment consists of three engines, one ladder, one heavy duty rescue, two ambulances, a utility truck and a car.

Future enhancements or improvements may include expanding or relocating the current fire station. A secondary option would be building a second station along Hall Road. Due to the high traffic volumes along Hall Road and Van Dyke, the current station faces issues with getting to residents and businesses in a timely manner. If a station was built on the Utica Park Blvd. property, this would address the issue.

Public Utilities

The development potential of a community is directly related to the availability and a adequacy of public utilities. The City of Utica currently provides public water and sanitary services to the City residents, businesses and industries. As the City continues to grow, increased demands are imposed on the capacities of these aging, and in many cases, over stressed, systems to provide the necessary infrastructure. The extent of existing and anticipated public utility service to the City is described in the following narrative.

- Sanitary Sewer Facilities

three pump stations

- Water Distribution Facilities

The City of Utica is serviced by the Great Lakes Water Authority (formerly the Detroit Water and Sewer Department). The City distribution of water closely parallels the sanitary sewer system noted previously.

- Refuse and Recycling

The City of Utica has a contract with Priority Waste, which provides the residents with all their waste removal and recycling needs. Future improvements with regards to refuse management include developing a better plan for the City of Utica's Brownfield sites.

Continued on **Page 56**

Continued from **Page 55**

Utica Library

The City of Utica Library is located at 7530 Auburn Road. The Utica Public Library is the City's local source of information services. A variety of media is offered including books, periodicals, audio books and children's video cassettes. Internet access is also available. The Library is a member of the Suburban Library Cooperative which extends borrowing privileges beyond the local area and offers ready access to inter-library loans. The Library also has local history information including almost 100 years of the *Sentinel Newspaper* on microfilm for public use. The Utica Library also has a large conference room, known as the Gibbing Room.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is jointly handled by the City of Utica Police Department and the City of Utica Building Inspector. Both parties handle issues such as blight, illegal signage, illegal parking, etc.

Additional City of Utica owned property

The City of Utica owns several pieces of property in addition to City Hall, the Fire Department and the Library. One parcel is located on Hall Road east of Van Dyke and has a billboard installed on the site. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) owns three parking lots located on Van Dyke Avenue, on Cass Avenue and on Brownell Street. The DDA also owns the old meat packing plant site and the City has control of the off-street parking on Moscone Road and Auburn Road.

Future Capital Improvement

The City of Utica is a municipality where community facilities and environmentally significant areas are accessible and engaging to all residents and visitors. In order to better serve the community, the City of Utica has a future vision for City Hall that would enhance their ability to serve the public.



Two possible options for the future are as follows:

1. Expanding City Hall: this option would include building a pole barn style facility at the current site, which could house all administrative staff, council chambers and give increased space to the police department. Possible options would be combining the library site and City Hall.
2. Sell the current City Hall site: In the future, as Utica's downtown grows, the city may have the opportunity to sell their existing City Hall site to a developer. This site would be a prime location for commercial development and would help extend the downtown area to Jimmy John's Field. With the income from the sale, the City could construct an entirely new building on the meat packing plant site, which would house all administrative services, council chambers and the Utica Police Department.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Chapter
7



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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals

are broad descriptions on the community's desire for its future. Goals are high-level principles toward which programs, policies and activities are directed by the Master Plan to enhance and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the City of Utica.

Objectives

are the specific and intermediate means to make actionable progress toward achieving the goals, and as a result, achieve the community vision.

By first defining each element of this section, we understand their collective utility for the Master Plan. Each individual goal and objective is not only important in and of itself, but in how each contributes towards the comprehensive development of the greater vision of the community, the policies derived from their intention, and the amendments and actions they represent. This reverence is reinforced by the fact that the goals and objectives were inspired by countless hours of dialogue between the City, business leaders, and concerned residents, in conjunction with accepted best practices and planning standards that have been implemented across the country.

DOWNTOWN & CORRIDORS

GOAL 1: Promote future developments and redevelopments in the downtown, Van Dyke, and Hall Road corridors in a manner that reflects and preserves the historic characteristics of the City of Utica.

1. Create a design guideline and expand the DMXD and MXD Zoning Districts.
2. Review zoning ordinance application and approval processes, specifically expanding discretion on administrative reviews and approvals.
3. Review the City's zoning ordinance to ensure permitted uses align with the City's vision. Make amendments as necessary.
4. Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) of City Hall and Library properties.
5. Improve ordinance enforcement.
6. Perform a parking and access management study.

GOAL 2: Collaboratively work with neighboring communities to ensure a seamless and complementary development pattern across municipal boundaries.

1. Foster corridor planning efforts between Sterling Heights, Shelby Township, and Utica.
2. Invest in, and market the economic opportunities that exist within the community.

NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL 1: Support and enhance community and neighborhood pride by encouraging residential maintenance and rehabilitation of homes, landscaping, and the development of neighborhood block clubs.

- 1. Develop a regular enforcement official and enforcement schedule.
- 2. Install proper signage identifying unique character areas and neighborhoods.
- 3. Support residents in forming block clubs and volunteer community organizations.

GOAL 2: Collaboratively work with the Macomb County Regional Housing Partnership to better provide choices for safe, healthy, affordable, accessible and attainable housing for everyone.

- 1. Incorporate model language for zoning amendments or overlays that remove obstacles to increasing the housing supply.
- 2. Update zoning and building codes to allow missing middle and workforce housing.

INDUSTRIAL

GOAL 1: Maintain a high quality level of service necessary to the operation of present and future industries.

- 1. Assess current and required capacity, including potential areas of improvement.
- 2. Enforce ordinances to protect the standards of the community.

GOAL 2: Accommodate an ever-evolving industry with more flexible use standards, ensuring that Utica is competitive in the 21st century economy.

- 1. Review and amend the zoning ordinance as appropriate to accommodate emerging and evolving industry sector.



PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL 1: Expand and improve recreational facilities and event programming to attract and increase usership of City attractions, enhance community vibrancy, and promote the preservation and appreciation for green spaces.

1. Target and develop a recreational facility for the east side of the community.
2. Support the park and recreation commission, develop a citizen's council, and collaborate with existing boards and commissions to collectively promote community activities and opportunities.
3. Issue an RFP for the brownfield site east of the river and north of Auburn, for the development of a passive recreational facility.

GOAL 2: Improve the environmental compatibility of both structures and infrastructure throughout the community and its activity centers, comprehensively addressing storm water, heat islands, and greening initiatives.

1. Develop a green building and infrastructure treatment standard.
2. Retrofit municipal infrastructure and properties with permeable solutions.
3. Support and regulate green canopy revitalization.

CONNECTIVITY

GOAL 1: Improve the quality and condition of the City's connective infrastructure.

1. Perform an infrastructure condition and maintenance study.
2. Create a Capital Improvements Plan.

GOAL 2: Adopt a multi-modal transportation strategy that better connects residents to local parks, recreational opportunities, and major activity centers in the community.

1. Plan for and develop a network of sidewalks and bike lane infrastructure.
2. Address and improve signalization and crosswalk connections, especially in neighborhoods and the downtown.
3. Promote existing connections to the downtown and community recreational assets.
4. In collaboration with businesses, public and nonprofit organization, create a wayfinding system that guides multi-modal transportation user to the City's activity centers and recreational facilities.



FUTURE LAND USE

Chapter

8



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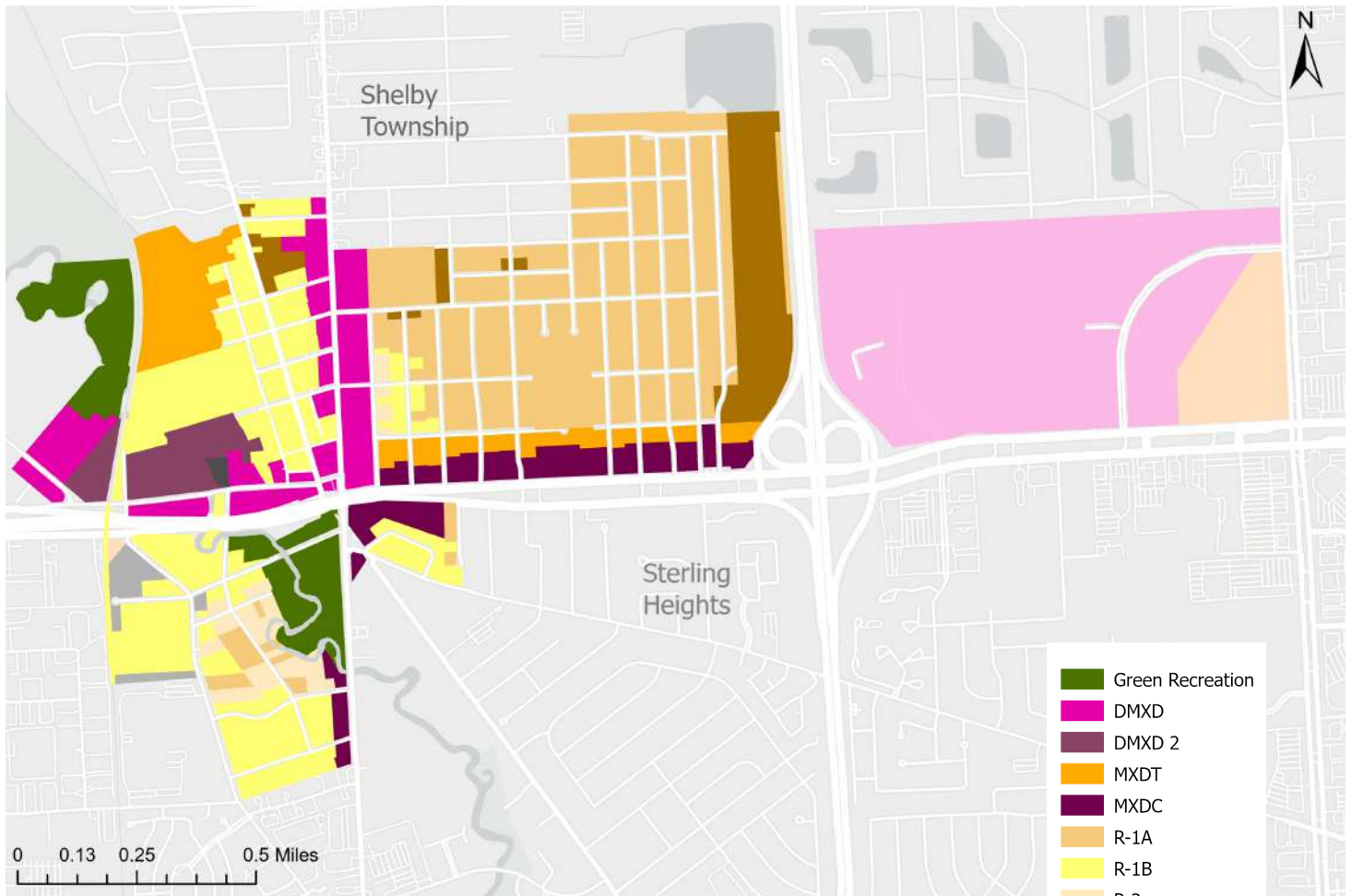
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FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan is an illustrative vision for the City of Utica, constructed on a foundation of inclusive community discussions, the surveying of stakeholders, input of City leadership, and modeled on sound planning principles. The Future Land Use Plan is the culmination of these efforts and reflects what the entire City desires for its future. The Plan’s vision is sensitive of the community’s historic character, its well established community

fabric, the unique environmental features, and its strategic location within the Metro Detroit region. The Future Land Use Plan shall be used to assist the City of Utica and its stakeholders in guiding their development and service decisions, investments, and policy actions that impact their goal of improving the quality of life in Utica while making it a preeminent destination in the region.



REVISIONING

The Downtown, Van Dyke and Hall Road Corridors

The four specific geographic areas and districts described below were designed for targeted redevelopment in the character of Utica’s traditional downtown and with respect to a more intense form along its high-volume corridors. From multi-story buildings to pocket parks and townhomes, this strategy is deliberately planned to protect the neighborhoods while transitioning in an appropriate manor to a highest and best use. The realization of this Plan will not only improve the aesthetic and physical form of the City, but will enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors who enjoy its treasures.

The comprehensive vision of this Plan places Utica on the forefront of enhancing and expanding its small town footprint to growing markets and residents that seek the small town experience and quality of life. The four associated zoning districts charged with the Utica revisioning are seen below. These districts are either existing but redefined, or newly developed to achieve the goals set forth in the Goals and Objectives. Each district has a specific intent, but is sensitive to protecting some of the key characteristics of each unique area within the community.



Downtown Mixed Use - DMXD

Downtown Mixed Use is a designation created for the development of small lot, higher-density residential, commercial, and live-work spaces. This district is comprised of traditional ground level shop fronts, cafes, townhomes, outdoor sales and events, recreational spaces such as plazas and pocket parks, connective streets and trails, all of which are in the spirit of maintaining and enhancing the historic small town character.

Residential Building Types

- Single Family
- Multiple-Unit Single Family
- ✓ Townhouse
- ✓ Apartment/Loft

Nonresidential Building Types

- ✓ Live Work
- ✓ Downtown Mixed-Use
- ✓ Office/Retail/Modern Industrial (office uses must be in combination with a commercial/entertainment type use)
- ✓ Civic/Institutional

Development Standards	Minimum	Maximum
Front Setback	0'	15'
Side Setback	0'	5'
Rear Setback	0'	None
Height	2 story or 20'	3 story or 50'
Bulk	50%	100%

Parking Should be located in the rear yard, in shared structure, or on street.





Downtown Mixed Use 2 - DMXD 2

Downtown Mixed Use 2 is a designation created for the development of larger lot, high density residential, commercial, and office. This district is comprised of 3-story or taller developments near the ballpark, with mixed uses and creative onsite parking designs. The ground floor area should be reserved for commercial and office uses, and residential spaces developed starting no lower than the second level. This part of the community is connected into the street and trail system, promoting walkability and visible activity levels. Architectural styles of these buildings will be complimentary to the historic character of the downtown.

Residential Building Types

- Single Family
- Multiple-Unit Single Family
- Townhouse
- ✓ Apartment/Loft

Nonresidential Building Types

- Live Work
- ✓ Downtown Mixed-Use
- ✓ Office/Retail
- Modern Industrial
- Civic/Institutional

Development Standards

	Minimum	Maximum
Front Setback	-	0'
Side Setback	-	0'
Rear Setback	-	0'
Clinton River Setback	40'	None
Height	3 story or 30'	6 story or 70'
Bulk	50%	100%

Parking Should be located primarily on-site in the rear yard or in shared structure.





Mixed Use Corridor - MXDC

Mixed Use Corridor is a designation for intense commercial, office, light or green fabrication, research and development, and flex-employment uses that are set in proximity to major transportation networks and are developed at larger scales with contemporary or traditional character that frame the corridor. The residential fabric in this district would take the form of multiple-story apartment/loft structures with high-quality design. Public open space would be limited along the corridor, encouraging the formation of shared open spaces, pedestrian plazas, and shared access drives that minimize curb cuts on Hall Road. While this district is of higher-use and intensity than its downtown neighbor, it is still integrated by a tight network of streets, requires a 10-foot safety path along its corridor frontage, and encourages steady tree canopy coverage along the multi-modal pathways.



Residential Building Types

- Single Family
- Multiple-Unit Single Family
- Townhouse
- ✓ Apartment/Loft

Nonresidential Building Types

- Nonresidential Building Types
- Live Work
- ✓ Downtown Mixed-Use
- ✓ Office/Retail
- ✓ Modern Industrial
- Civic/Institutional

Development Standards	Minimum	Maximum
Front Setback	40'	60'
Side Setback	0'	5'
Rear Setback	20'	None
Height	3 story or 30'	5 story or 85', w/ integrated parking design
Bulk	35%	100%

Parking Should be located primarily on-site in the rear yard or in an integrated structure.





Mixed Use Transition - MXDT

Mixed Use Transition is a designation created for the appropriate transition and buffer between the Mixed Use Corridor and Single Family districts. This area gradually tapers off the scale and intensity of development found on the corridors, into a more medium-density, residentially focused district with available live-work space and small-scale corner store opportunities. Given the transition between districts, this district would also possess a small town character with some contemporary structure designs, and require integrated small footprint public spaces and an integrated multi-modal front-yard pathway design.

Residential Building Types

- Single Family
- Multiple-Unit Single Family
- ✓ Townhouse
- ✓ Apartment/Loft

Nonresidential Building Types

- ✓ Live Work
- ✓ Downtown Mixed-Use
- ✓ Office/Retail
- Modern Industrial
- ✓ Civic/Institutional

Development Standards

	Minimum	Maximum
Front Setback	20'	20'
Side Setback	0'	5'
Rear Setback	20'	None
Height	2 story or 25'	3 story or 35'
Bulk	35%	80%

Parking Should be located primarily on-site in the rear yard and maintain alley access.



Green Recreation - GR

The Green Recreation zoning district is consistent in character with the existing character of Utica's recreational resources, supporting space for physical activity and public gatherings. The City recognizes several sensitive areas in need of preservation, enhancing the supply of this natural resource but also improving community access to them. Limited development would be specially permitted, but only as far as being related to various forms of recreational uses. As you'll see in the future land use plan, this expansion is specifically focused in the direct vicinity of Heritage Park.



IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter

9



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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Master Plan serves as vision and blueprint for the future of the City of Utica; it should be considered in shaping policy and guiding decisions made by City leaders, commissions, and citizens. To promote and ensure the Plan’s effectiveness, it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to communicate the Plan to City residents, to encourage compliance with adopted standards and policies, and to actively pursue the implementation of the Plan’s recommendations.

This chapter includes a chart summarizing the recommended actions or strategies along with identifying those positions or groups who are primarily responsible for implementing each action.

Implementation Schedule

This chapter identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this Master Plan. As detailed, the chart on the following pages presents a summary of all the recommended implementation activities, responsible parties for completing the activities, and a projected timeline or priority set for each item.

Acronyms	
Council	Mayor and City Councils
PC	Planning Commission
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
PRC	Parks and Recreation Commission
DPW	Department of Public Works
CS	City Staff

Timeline	
Ongoing	Perpetual effort, consistent revisiting of policy and efforts
Short-term	0 to 4 Years
Mid-term	5 to 7 Years
Long-term	8+ Years



IMPLEMENTATION

Action item	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Revise the Zoning Ordinance and other City ordinances to be consistent with this Plan's intentions for the family of proposed MXD districts and modernized Industrial ordinance, and in reference of the Goals and Objectives	Ongoing	Council/PC/CS
Review and update the city zoning ordinance to ensure affordable, accessible, and attainable housing for all residents	Mid-term	Council/PC
Convene work group to discuss and implement the family of mixed-use district characteristics, design controls, district specific parameters, and intended functions	Short-term	PC/CS
Expand the DMXD District as proposed in the Future Land Use Plan	Short-term	Council/PC/CS
Create, adopt and rezone properties to the new DMXD 2 designation	Short-term	Council/PC/CS
Create, adopt and rezone properties to the new MXD Corridor designation	Short-term	Council/PC/CS
Create, adopt and rezone properties to the new MXD Transition designation	Mid-term	Council/PC/CS
Coordinate with adjacent municipalities regarding land use decisions, design, and marketing for the Van Dyke and Hall Road corridors	Ongoing	PC/CS
Review the City's Commercial and Industrial Ordinances to ensure uses such as car dealerships, pawn shops and other uses of a similar nature are in the desired zoning district and are following special land use standards	Short-term	Council/PC
Create a façade program to fund building improvements within the City's Downtown District	Mid-term	CS
Support the Parks and Recreation commission in developing and promoting community events, festivals, and activities	Ongoing	Council/PRC
Revise city approval and review processes for development and permit applications, promoting a development-friendly environment	Ongoing	PC/CS
Enforce property maintenance and enforcement codes	Ongoing	CS
Perform an infrastructure condition, maintenance, and needs assessment	Mid-term	Council/DPW
Create a Capital Improvements Plan	Mid-term	Council/DPW

Perform a parking and access management study for the downtown and primary commercial corridors	Short-term	PC
Action item	Time Frame	Responsible Party
Create a non-motorized pathway plan, adopting complete streets principles to connect all key segments of the City	Mid-term	PC/DDA/DPW/PRC
Develop proposed non-motorized pathways, trails, and sidewalks when appropriate and consistent with the non-motorized plan, including connection to the Utica Connector Trail	Long-term	PC/DDA/DPW/PRC
Create a green building, infrastructure, and tree canopy landscaping guide for new and existing developments	Short-term	PC/DPW
Identify and secure the protection of valuable green spaces and water resources	Ongoing	Council/PC
Work with County Brownfield Authority to encourage redevelopment of designated sites, including municipality controlled properties	Ongoing	Council/PC
Collaborate with regional organizations on the marketing of sites in the City	Ongoing	Council/CS
Review this Master Plan every five years, and when necessary, update the Plan	Ongoing	PC



ZONING PLAN

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ZONING PLAN

A Zoning Plan is an essential component of any community’s Master Plan document. The Zoning Plan is the primary tool utilized by a community to realize the Master Plan’s goals, objectives and vision. The Zoning Plan is designed to guide in the development of a regulatory framework of ordinances, regulations and permits that support the implementation of the future land uses described in the Master Plan. The Zoning Plan is intended to serve as a recommended guide for how the community should modify its Zoning Ordinance. These recommendations can range from listing very specific changes to be implemented within a certain time frame to that of establishing a focus group to further study a proposed land use and develop criteria at a later date. This Zoning Plan utilizes both of these strategies by proposing some immediate changes to the existing zoning ordinance and suggesting additional community research before implementing others.

Background

The Zoning Plan is a required element for Master Plans as regulated by the Michigan Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts. Section 33(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, requires that the Master Land Use Plan, prepared under this act, serves as the basis for this Zoning Plan. As stated in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, the zoning plan will serve as the basis for Zoning Ordinance development. The plan and its recommended actions are based on an inventory of conditions as analyzed by the Master Plan, information that is pertinent to zoning in the municipality, and supports the purposes for which zoning and modifications may be adopted.

Future Land Use Designation Correlation to Zoning Districts

The following table summarizes the existing zoning districts that most closely correspond in character with each of the Land Use designations found in the Future Land Use chapter of this plan. However, recommendations for changes to height, area, bulk, and location requirements for various zoning districts are described in the Future Land Use chapter.

Future Land Use Designation		Corresponding Zoning District(s)
DMXD	Downtown Mixed Use	DMXD, C-2
DMXD 2	Downtown Mixed Use 2	DMXD, C-1, C-2
MXDT	Mixed Use Transition	DMXD, R-3
MXDC	Mixed Use Corridor	MXD, C-1
GR	Green Recreation	-----

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Plan will require direction, on the part of the City, regarding the best way to develop and apply the land use designations identified in the table on page 73. The zoning described in the Future Land Use table must be reviewed in the best interest of the community, and based on best practice to determine appropriate zoning actions. It is likely that new zoning districts would need to be created in the recommended areas. For example, further analysis by committee and community input may reveal a specific use or character desired for the particular area or areas, not discovered in the Plan but in similar spirit. Each future land use has its own distinct characteristics, requiring different land use approaches. Whether the future land use districts have corresponding zones that are currently in the ordinance or represent something not yet seen in the City, the following summaries will outline a set of methods that can translate the Plan into action.

Adopt New Zoning Districts and Zoning Map

This option of fully implementing the Future Land Use Plan would be the most comprehensive, truest, but time-consuming effort the City could make. This action would require public hearings and planning committees, followed by major amendments to the Zoning Map and Ordinance. However, it will provide the most certainty and realization of the vision set forth in the Master Plan. Adopting new zoning districts or amending existing districts to reflect the desired future land use vision will ensure that development and redevelopment is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. This method would provide a greater level of control and confidence within leadership and the community for what kind of development will occur. It is recommended that for a majority of the areas where the existing zoning district is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map, new and amended districts be adopted in accordance to the Plan.

Planned Unit Development

This choice would likely require the City to adopt new Planned Unit Development language in the Zoning Ordinance to make the existing PUD tool more flexible. The existing PUD tool may also have to be amended to fit the goals and objectives of this Master Plan. If the City chooses this method of implementation, it would be used at the will of the developer and market forces, where an interest may still choose to forego the tool with preference for the original standards set forth in the ordinance. The PUD process is often a disincentive to developers because it can be a lengthy, difficult, costly, and uncertain process. To address this, the PUD standards should be reviewed and amended as necessary to better address the goals and strategies of this Plan, streamline the development process at the municipal level, and address the concerns of the community. This application is only recommended in unique circumstances, and should not be looked at as a solution for achieving the entire Future Land Use vision.

Overlay Districts

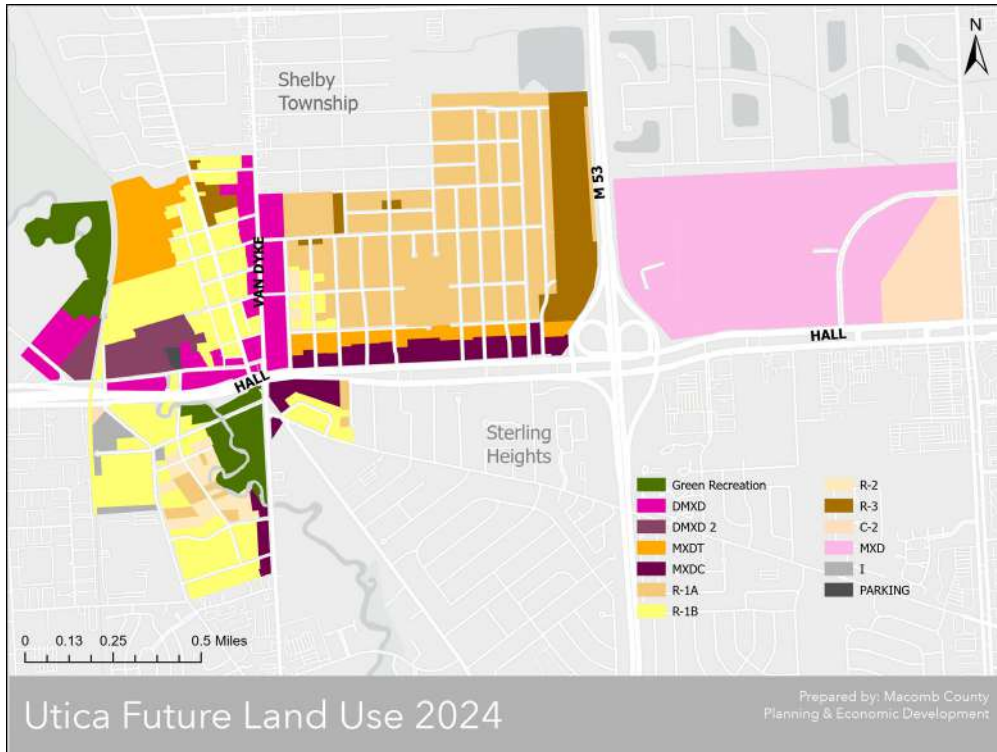
Creating overlay districts would allow the City to more easily permit development that is consistent yet flexibly in-line with the future land use recommendations, and eliminating the PUD negotiation process. This flexibility, however, would mean that developing by the new and desired standards would be optional to the applicant. Owners may opt to develop their property using the conventional zoning standards applicable to the underlying zoning district; in this way, fragmented development patterns and design would still be a possibility. Overlay districts, while effective in strong markets, may not fully achieve the desired outcome.



Future Land Use/Zoning Map Comparison

A modified version of the Future Land Use Map is attached following this section. This map identifies areas within Utica where the Future Land Use Map differs from the current zoning map. The purpose of this map is to indicate areas where there are inconsistencies between the two maps and identify possible changes to the Zoning Map that could be implemented to reconcile these differences. It is important to note that the changes shown on the following map are not intended as a mandate for future zoning changes, but are intended to be a tool that assists in future zoning decisions. Also, the inconsistencies shown on the map are not intended to limit future zoning changes; in other words, future decision makers are not bound to only make the zoning changes that are explicitly shown on the map or recommended in the plan. It is important to use the future land use designations as described in the Future Land Use chapter of this Master Plan when considering any of the zoning changes as described on the following page.

City of Utica Future Land Use



City of Utica Zoning Map

