



# CITY OF Sturgis



MASTER PLAN  
FEBRUARY 2020



CITY OF  
**Sturgis**

**MASTER PLAN**

FEBRUARY 2020



I hereby certify that the attached is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Sturgis, County of St. Joseph, State of Michigan, at a regular meeting held on **February 18, 2020**, and that public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan 1976.



Kenneth D. Rhodes, City of Sturgis Clerk/Treasurer

Members Present: Garry Allen, Mike Brothers, Mike Caywood, Don Eaton, Jim Liston, Pete Stage

Members Absent: Eric Jones, Rick Mahler, John Mikulenas

Moved by Comm. Stage and seconded by Comm. Eaton to approve the resolution for adoption of the Community Master Plan as presented.

**Voting Yea: Six**

**Absent: Jones, Mahler, Mikulenas**

**Voting Nay: None**

**MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF STURGIS, MICHIGAN  
CITY OF STURGIS PLANNING COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
CITY OF STURGIS COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("MPEA," PA 33 of 2008) authorizes municipal planning commissions to prepare a "master plan" pertinent to the future development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sturgis Planning Commission has prepared a draft master plan for the municipality, to update and replace its previous community master plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Sturgis City Commission authorized the distribution of the draft City of Sturgis Community Master Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Community Master Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA, and a public hearing thereon was held by the Planning Commission on February 18, 2020 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds the proposed Master Plan as submitted for the public hearing is desirable and proper, and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City of Sturgis Planning Commission hereby resolves to adopt the new Community Master Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended to form the complete Master Plan, including the Future Land Classification Map.



# Acknowledgements

## CITY OF STURGIS CITY COMMISSION

Robert Hile, Mayor

Mark Dvorak, Vice Mayor

Jon Good

Jeff Mullins

Richard Bir

Justin Wickey

Travis Klinger

Suzanne Malone

Karl Littman

## CITY OF STURGIS PLANNING COMMISSION

John Mikulenas, Chairperson

Garry Allen, Vice Chairperson

Michael Caywood

Don Eaton

Pete Stage

Rick Mahler

Jim Liston

Michael Brothers

Eric Jones

Denotes Master Plan Steering Committee members.

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# Background

## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) enables municipalities to create a Master Plan that broadly guides development to meet current and future needs and promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. The process of creating a Master Plan allows a community to pause from daily operations and look to the future. A Master Plan is a policy document that comprehensively inventories and analyzes the elements that makes a city tick, (i.e. housing, transportation, recreation) and seeks to understand how residents rate their “quality of life.” Through community engagement, the Master Plan illuminates the community’s vision and defines the goals that could help achieve that vision and preserve Sturgis’ uniqueness.

The Master Plan serves many roles as a vision statement, an Action Plan with specific strategies, a tool for making coordinated land-use decisions, an assessment of useful and outdated programs, services, structures, and infrastructure, and a document to educate its citizenry on where and how the city will plan for its future.

## RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING ORDINANCE

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) requires a community to review its Master Plan every five years to ensure that it accurately reflects the community’s values and future aspirations. As a policy document, the Master Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that detail where development can locate and the exact specifications of how it must be built (height, bulk, lot coverage, density, etc.).

The Zoning Ordinance implements the Master Plan. The MPEA also requires a direct relationship between the two documents. For example, if it emerges through community engagement and research that the housing types available do not adequately serve the population, then a vision statement in the Master Plan could read “to plan for housing types that meet all the preferences of all age groups, income levels, and disabilities.” To ensure that this vision is implemented, a municipality would revisit the zoning ordinance to determine if the land use code is preventing a particular

type of development through height restrictions or lot size requirements. Only when the two documents are in sync can they be effective planning tools.

## HISTORY

John Sturgis and his wife Ardilacy arrived in this area in 1828 with seven children - all under the age of eleven. It took 21 days to travel from Detroit to Sturgis along a dusty dirty road with seven young children all in one covered wagon. The ability to survive such a trip practically guaranteed the family's success in this new land.

George Thurston, George Buck, and Hiram Jacobs also settled in this area at the same time. Hiram Jacob's house, built in 1843, still stands in Sturgis today. When it was first built the barn was used for public meetings and religious services, and the backyard served as the village cemetery. The graves that Mrs. Jacobs could see out her kitchen window were moved to Oaklawn Cemetery in 1890.

The road through the center of Sturgis began as a footpath for Native Americans. Early on it was called the Sauk Trail, because the Sauk Indians traveled it yearly to receive benefits for their displacement to the west. In the 1820's the trail was surveyed as a national road from Detroit to Chicago which became the main thoroughfare for those traveling west. That simply means that in the middle of the 19th century, if you were heading west, you most likely passed through Sturgis.

The Sturgis Hotel was located on the northeast corner of Chicago and Nottawa streets. The three-story structure was considered large in its day. It was built in 1838 by Frank Watson and later purchased by Judge John Sturgis who put a stone tablet outside the hotel crediting himself as the first settler.

The first public school classes in the settlement of Sturgis were held in the winter of 1830 in the upper room of Philip H. Buck's log cabin on the north side of Chicago Road just east of Monroe Street. Now, after almost 200 years and the construction of more than a dozen major schools in the area, Sturgis continues to make quality education one of its highest priorities. The Union School on the corner of Nottawa and West Street was built in 1862 for \$10,178.00.

The first railroads came to town in the 1880's. Their arrival was significant because unlike other villages in the area, Sturgis was land-locked - it had no river access. Having railroads running east and west (the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern) and also running north and south (the Grand Rapids & Indiana) contributed greatly to the community's early industrial success.

Today, Sturgis is fortunate to have one of the best small town community museums in the country housed in its

1895 depot. The building has been restored to its 19th century character with 21st century exhibits throughout.

In 1843 the Methodists built the first church in the center of town. The Baptists and Presbyterians were soon to follow. At one time Sturgis was home to the only "Free Church" in the world, a denomination open to many religious points of view. Today, the Christian faith is the most dominant in the area. However, Sturgis is also home to Jews, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians.

On June 20th, 1859 the Sturgis town council bought its first fire engine together with a hose car and 200 feet of hose. In 1884 all that was required to protect the community against crime was a two man police force, one for daytime and one for night.

In the 1820s the first mail from Sturgis was carried on horseback by John Winchell of White Pigeon. Mail was delivered once a week in the summer and once every two weeks in the winter. In Sturgis' early days, the location of the post office was determined by the postmaster, usually being in his home or the place of his business. The post office in its present location was built in 1932-33 for \$125,000.00.

In 1863, men from Sturgis and the surrounding area mustered at Camp Tilden in White Pigeon. From there they traveled by train to Indianapolis and then on to Kentucky. After spending a week in Louisville the regiment walked 38 miles to Bardstown to join supporting forces before their final surge to war. This was the journey of the 11th regiment of Michigan. Stone's River, Chicamauga, Missionary Ridge were the major battles along the way.

In 1911 the City of Sturgis built a dam near Centerville to generate hydro-electric power. This one visionary act, the first in the Midwest, allowed City leaders to erect street lights throughout the town, pave most of the streets, reduce city taxes to the lowest in Michigan and provide inexpensive energy to industry. This is why Sturgis is called "The Electric City."

In May of 1890, after having been a cabinetmaker in Germany and also Pittsburgh, Pa., Christian Wilhelm came to Sturgis to work for the Grobhiser & Crosby Furniture Company. He eventually began his own furniture factory, pictured left. At the turn of the century Sturgis was a leading manufacturer of furniture in Michigan, second only to Grand Rapids.

## Icons of Industry

They were nothing less than entrepreneurial geniuses – forward thinking leaders of industry whose 20th century accomplishments made Sturgis what it is today. Jonathan Wait, Charles Spence, C.W. Kirsch and Newell Franks, just to



name a few. These were men with bold ideas and the energy to make those ideas come true. These were the Icons of Industry of Sturgis, Michigan.

During its 66 year history, the Sturgis National Bank was robbed three times. In 1890 officers and staff locked the doors and went for an hour lunch. Someone sawed through grating on a rear window and made off with \$3000. The suspect was never caught. In 1926 four armed men entered the bank and yelled “hands up!” Wilson Roose, a cashier and also the mayor of Sturgis at the time, said, “I’ll die before I let you into that vault.” A scuffle ensued and one of the robbers hit Roose on the head with his revolver. A young boy who was with his mother in the bank was screaming at the top of his lungs which seemed to scare away the robbers without any booty. In 1928, four men (police later conjectured it was the same four that had been thwarted in 1926) armed with revolvers and sawed-off shotguns walked into the bank when a skeleton lunchtime force was on duty. They made away with \$20,000 in cash and \$60,000 in negotiable bonds.

Commercial air freight service arrived in Sturgis at 12:45 p.m. Wednesday, September 3, 1919 when a single engine plane landed in a field at the John J. Kelley farm northeast of town with two packages of men’s clothing consigned to Carl Rehm’s Clothing store. Since then hot air balloon, blimps, bi-planes, Cessnas and corporate jets have been seen in the skies of Sturgis.

William Grobhiser left \$25,000.00 in his will for the construction of a hospital. City leaders determined that a 35-bed hospital adequate for Sturgis’ needs at the time (population, 6,000) could be built for about \$100,000.00. The new hospital was completed in 1925.

The Sturges-Young Auditorium opened in 1955. The 986 seat multipurpose facility was much larger than would be expected for a small community like Sturgis. The venue has hosted many famous musicians, comedians and public figures.

Today the population of Sturgis is approximately 11,000. The City is managed by a Council-Manager form of government with a nine- member City Commission, divided into four precincts with two members of the Commission representing each precinct and one member elected from the city at large. For many years Sturgis served as the kickoff city for Michigan Week, a statewide celebration. In 2011 the celebration turned into “Sturgis Dam Days” in honor of the 100th anniversary of the hydroelectric dam. The June celebration today is called “Sturgis Fest!”

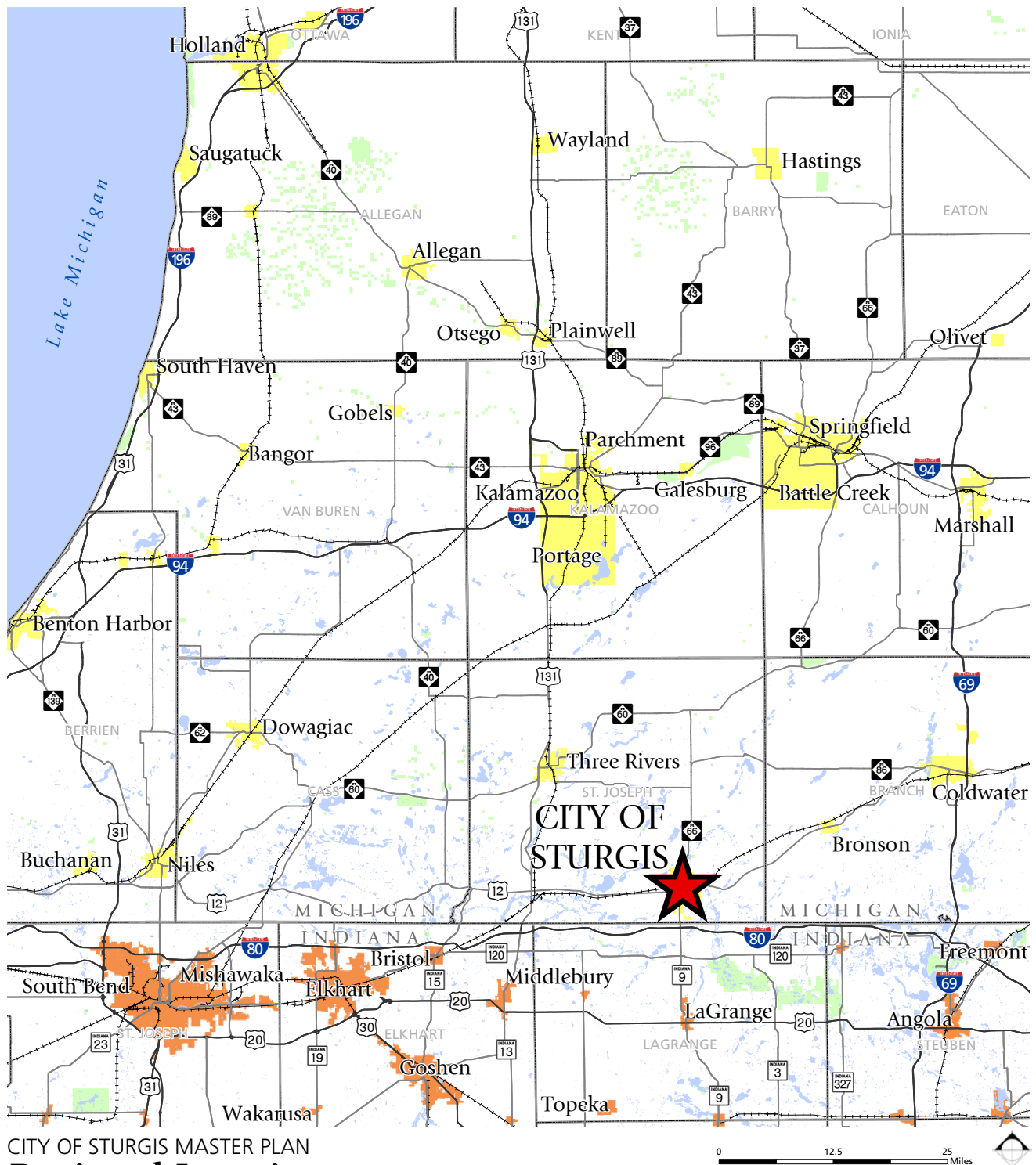
## REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Sturgis is located in St. Joseph County in southwestern Michigan, less than three miles from the Indiana border. Sturgis is about one hour south of both Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, and northeast of South Bend, Indiana. Geographically, the City sits almost equidistant between Detroit and Chicago, while no longer a common stopping point for travelers making that journey, it is a key logistical location for transporting goods for the region. Sturgis is well-served by two major highway trunk lines, Chicago Road (US-12) and Centreville Road (M-66), that criss-cross through the city. Along with the Indiana Toll Road (Interstates 80/90) one mile south of the City, Sturgis is easily accessible throughout the region by vehicle.

The Kirsch Municipal Airport and the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport provide general aviation access that accommodates corporate jet service and the South Bend Regional Airport provides full airline services. The Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport, does in addition, offer limited commercial domestic flights. The Southern Michigan Railroad that traverses the city provides freight rail service but not passenger service. Access to air, freight, and highways is abundant and benefits the local economy’s capacity to send and receive materials and value-added products. Sturgis’ position among important transit lines prove to be just as advantageous in the modern economy as in its inception close to 200 years ago.

The City covers 6.5 square miles of area of which is mostly flat and surrounded by a patchwork of agricultural land and open space. The closest bodies of water are small inland lakes that lie outside of the city’s borders. Despite population growth and demographic changes over the last 30 years, Sturgis continues to value and preserve its semi-rural setting and small town charm.

MAP 1. Regional Location



## CITY OF STURGIS MASTER PLAN Regional Location

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Michigan DNR Open Data Portal, Indiana MAP, Indiana Department of Transportation, Graphics Engineering

- Freeways
- State Trunklines
- Railroads
- County Boundary
- State Boundary
- State DNR Lands
- Michigan Cities
- Indiana Incorporated Places
- Lakes / Ponds
- Rivers / Streams



*Downtown Sturgis*



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# Community Engagement

## THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is the cornerstone to productive long-term planning. In addition to being a requirement of the Michigan Enabling Act, it is best practice to reach a representative sample of the population and incorporate the community's wide-ranging thoughts into a cohesive and feasible set of actions. The City of Sturgis attempted just that with an ambitious agenda to reach students, native Spanish-speakers, event-goers, prominent stakeholders, and a cross section of the population through an online survey. This section summarizes each group's engagement session and the findings.

## STURGIS FEST

The community engagement series began at Sturgis Fest on June 23rd, 2017. Planning Commission meetings are the traditional venue for community input but when the City goes to the public, it sends a strong message of proactive engagement. Between 3:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. during the popular Classic Car show, 46 surveys were taken in both

digital and paper form. The residents were asked about their broad long-range planning priorities and why they chose to live in Sturgis. Most important to the respondents when deciding where to live in order: was the City's low crime rate, welcoming to new business, quality of the school system, and parks and recreation facilities. When asked, "What can Sturgis improve?" 61% responded the condition of streets, 59% responded the parks and recreation facilities, and 55% think the downtown needs more shops and dining. A few residents made comments about wanting to see more family activities, kid-friendly opportunities, and improved sidewalks throughout the City. Their top priorities were schools (28%) and again condition of streets (22%). Zero votes were in favor of creating upper story residences downtown, or for reducing the amount of rental properties throughout the City; only one vote was made for the appearance of Centerville Road (M-66).

Gathering demographic data is an important step for understanding the perspectives of responses received. The residents were asked how many children age 17 or younger live in the household. Half (50%) responded having no children in the household, which is substantially higher than

39.4% of households in Sturgis without children present in the home. The age of survey-takers was also asked, and the highest percentage fell into the age range of 40-49, followed by equal representation among 20 to 29 year olds, and 60 to 69 year old. The 20-29 and 40-49 age cohorts fall on either end of the median age of 32.5 but also reflects the growing elderly age groups. Residents also reported how long they have lived in Sturgis. Half of the residents polled have lived in Sturgis for over 20 years, with the next largest groups tied at about 15% with relatively short tenure in Sturgis of “less than 2 years” and between “2-5 years.” Respondents were also asked if they are homeowners, renters, or none of the above: 56% are homeowners while 24% are renters, both of which under represent true homeownership and renter figures. Lastly, survey takers supplied the zip code of their place of employment as way for the City to gauge commuting patterns. Of the 74% that responded to this question, 88% work in the local Sturgis zip code of 49091. The other 12% of survey takers reported working in Coldwater, Bronson, Three Rivers, and also Angola, Indiana.

STUDENTS

In an earnest attempt to reach all demographic groups, the City of Sturgis engaged its High School for the unfiltered views of today's youth. The planning horizon for a Master Plan could extend upwards of five years, and many times much longer. At that point, high school seniors will be entering the workforce and choosing where to set down roots; it only makes sense to find out now what they think about where they grew up. A Student Workshop was held on November 7, 2017 at Sturgis High School for the purpose of gathering input from young citizens for use in formulating the long-range priorities, goals, and strategies for the plan. Eighty-eight students and six teachers attended the session. The process used was as follows:

- » Attendees from a mixture of different courses sat in a lecture-style hall. The facilitator gave a short presentation about planning in general and the Sturgis Master Plan.
- » The facilitator asked a series of four questions to which students responded using the “Plickers” voting system. Answers were immediately reported to the group.
- » Students were then paired and given paper packets with seven questions on them. For each question, students were asked to generate as many accurate answers as possible. Once the list had been developed, each group selected its top preferred response and marked it with a circle.

PLICKERS: REVERSE REPORT CARDS

Because Plickers exercises can easily replicate report cards, an idea students are dreadfully familiar with, the tables were

turned and students were asked to grade the City of Sturgis on four different subjects: providing fun places to go, fun events to attend, safety, and cleanliness. Plickers is an online program designed to collect and record data in real time. After projecting the four questions programmed into the Plickers app, students raised a card that at an angle that corresponded with the grade they felt was appropriate. As it turns out, the adults did not fare well by student standards.

It may be that teenagers, with waning interest in family-friendly events and not enough independence for more mature pastimes, always find their hometown boring. The City of Sturgis received a satisfactory grade for providing fun places, and a slightly less favorable grade for fun events. In perhaps more important measures of what makes a city a good place to live, Sturgis received better marks. Sturgis teenagers believe it to be a relatively safe and clean place to live, although not resoundingly. Because this exercise is one-dimensional in that it only recorded a grade with no rationale behind it, follow-up exercises were conducted to obtain deeper insight on the student’s opinions.

TABLE 1. Reverse Report Card Grades

Subject	Grade
Providing fun places to go	C
Providing fun events to attend	C-
Providing a safe place to live	B-
Providing a clean place to live	C+

GROUP EXERCISES

In pairs, students were then given a packet with seven questions to brainstorm responses. The questions were:

1. What one word best describes Sturgis?
2. What one word would you like to describe Sturgis in the future?
3. What are the key attributes you would use to describe good leadership?
4. If you could tackle one issue in Sturgis, what would it be?
5. What are the barriers for fixing that issue?
6. What do you consider to be fun things to do in Sturgis?
7. When you leave Sturgis for fun, what do you do?

Description of Sturgis: Now & in the Future

The most commonly used words to describe Sturgis now were either neutral or negative. Far and away, the most popular description of Sturgis was “boring.” Mentioned 35 times in varying degrees, the students responded audibly that Sturgis is not an eventful place. Another common



negative phrase used to describe the City was “dirty Sturg,” a phrase also heard often from Sturgis Fest’s attendees. It is not clear exactly what this refers to but other adjectives give the impression that the perceived dirtiness comes from the perceived prevalence of drugs and the City’s overall unattractive physical appearance. The second and third most frequently written words were “small,” mentioned 26 times, perhaps a reason for it boringness, and “little Mexico,” mentioned 10 times, a reference to the sizable Mexican population but with no positive or negative qualifiers attached. Pejorative references to race and class were invoked in phrases like “rednecks” and “white trash.” Teenagers are already keenly aware of how race and class overlap even if sometimes they do not have anything other than slurs to explain this relationship.

Correspondingly, the words they wish to use to describe a Sturgis of the future are the antonyms of the prevailing adjectives. Where it is described as “boring” now, they want to see Sturgis as “fun.” References to wanting a more “exciting” and “eventful” city with places to go and events to attend were mentioned 59 times and this is their highest priority. The other references give the impression that this could be achieved with more restaurants and social and recreational activities, presumably geared towards teens. As an antidote to being “a small town,” the City should be “bigger” in the future with a “larger population,” as well as “cleaner” and “safer,” with a particular mention of cleaner parks. Three times “Clean Sturg” was mentioned to counter the City’s unclean image. It also did not go unnoticed that the City could use “more” and “better jobs,” which is likely an echo of what teenagers hear within their household.

## Key Attributes to Leadership

Students were perceptive in attributing positive personal characteristics to leaders. Receiving equal mentions, “good listener” and “open-minded” were reported 11 times, and “respectful” and “caring” were reported 10 times each. Following these attributes in popularity were “kind,” “helpful,” and “organized.” It is an important distinction that in a data-driven, expert-aspiring world that there were no references made to levels of education, experience, or expertise requirements. Instead, students believe that leaders should act responsibly and kindly as a voice of the people they are serving.

## Tackling Issues

Despite complaints of being a boring small town, students wanted to get back to basics before boosting the entertainment options. The number one priority among students is fixing Sturgis’ drug problem. To them, knowing “people getting strung out on meth” is a major issue and was mentioned 20 times, or by more than 22% of the students. Next, they turned to infrastructure. If given the

opportunity, teenagers would fill in potholes because as they see it, it is “not very welcoming” to have uneven roads. The third most common response was tackling the “lack of things to do.” Again, this can be accomplished in two ways: create more variety of places to go, and throw more events. The student’s comments are more than reproachful, but as an issue that makes it into their top three priorities, it is worthwhile for the city to explore ways to make the City more fun. The question to ask is: does the fact that teenagers find their community boring with a serious drug problem cause them to leave or invest less in the City as they age? The current age distribution indicates that previously Sturgis has not had trouble keeping young people in town, but the descriptors of the City’s image show what those who leave may be setting their sights on.

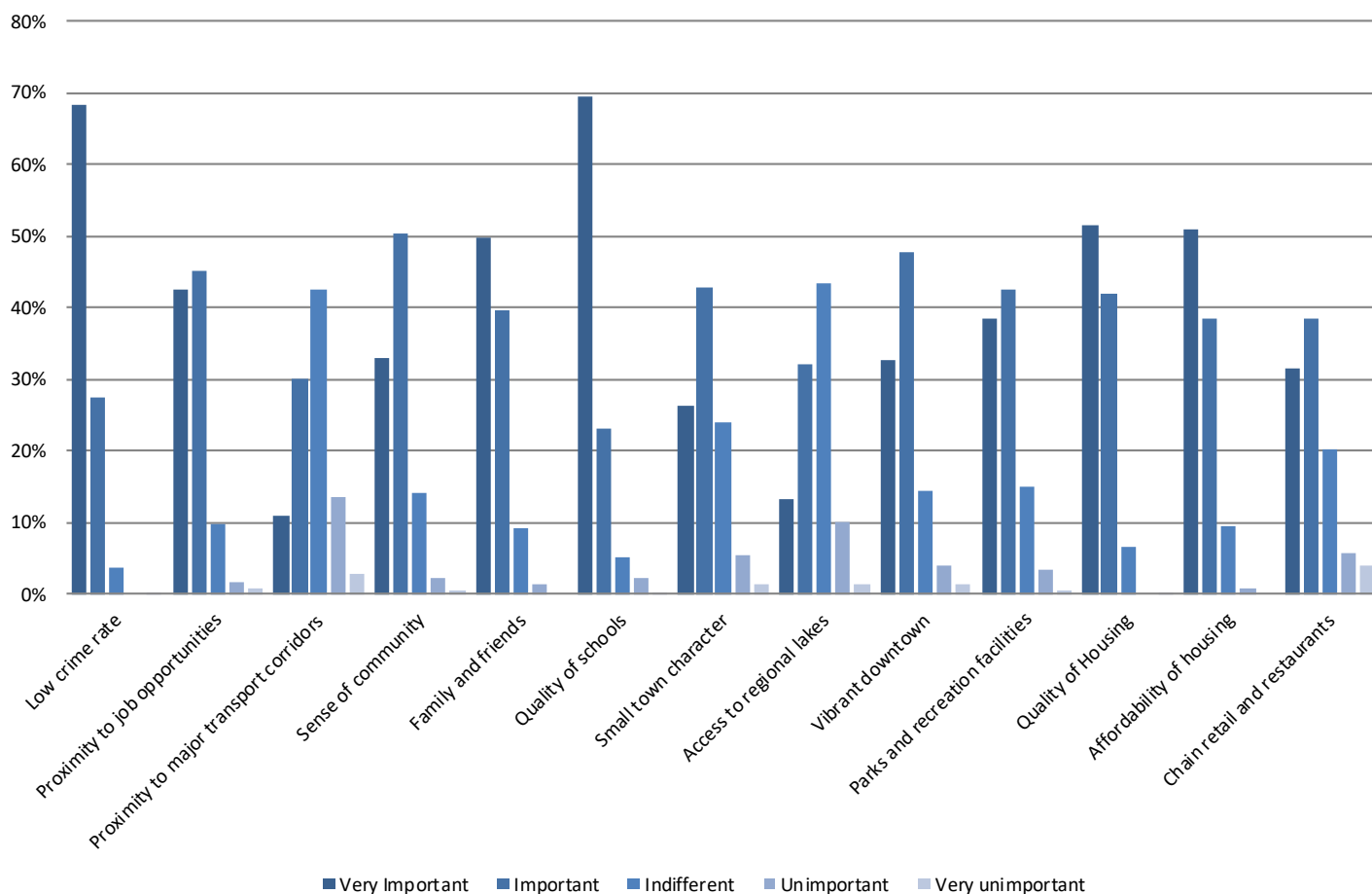
## Barriers

The student’s responses span physical, social, and economic barriers, but overwhelmingly, teens believe the lack of funding is the culprit for fixing the City’s issues. Secondly, “people” for various reasons are a barrier to success. Written as “people’s interests” and “people who actually care” among other responses points to either the residents of Sturgis or the City’s leadership. The remaining responses are scattered across several topics but drug addiction makes an appearance, as do other important issues that don’t gain much traction with the students such as recruiting good doctors to work in Sturgis, insufficient space for more development, lack of workers, and government regulations.

## Fun

The top locations mentioned for fun places to go are a mix of new and older establishments. The movie theatre, bowling alley, restaurants, and the coffee shop are favorite spots. While not at the tip top of the lists, students begrudgingly put Meijer and Walmart as places they go for fun, wishing they didn’t have to find entertainment at big box stores. The only active forms of fun mentioned was Doyle’s indoor soccer court, laser tag (no longer in business), sports, and the tennis courts, but these were not recorded with high frequency. It appears that if they want to engage in more action, they leave the City. When going elsewhere to find fun things to do, the most common reply was SkyZone in Kalamazoo, go-carts, and roller skating rinks. Aside from Kalamazoo, Coldwater, Battle Creek (mall), and Centerville are trendy destinations with more to do. More thorough analysis would have to be done before bringing some of these types of businesses to Sturgis, but some of the infrastructure is already available. The outdoor rink at Oaklawn Terrace Park, now that it is repaired, could fulfill one of the recreational wishes of Sturgis’ youth.

**FIGURE 1. Q1: Which of the following items are important to you when deciding where to live?**



## COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

The community-wide survey is generally the most efficient way to reach as many constituents as possible. In an effort to reach out to the large Hispanic population, the survey was also translated into Spanish and disseminated through non-profit channels that provide services to Spanish-speakers. The survey was open for just over a month, from November 1st to December 4th, 2017 and between the two surveys, 418 responses were collected, 395 in English and 23 in Spanish. Where there are major differences between the two responses, the results will be called out, otherwise the results were combined and will be expressed as one finding.

### Q1: Which of the following items are important to you when deciding where to live?

The most commonly selected options were “low crime rate” and “quality of schools” when explaining where they choose to live. The most popular responses described a city with family-oriented values where exposure to a safe

environment with access to a good education ranked highest among the 13 options provided. The responses for these two factors hit 95.9% and 92.6%, respectively. These two options also received the highest percentage of votes from the survey distributed at Sturgis Fest.

In regards to housing, the quality of the housing is a highly valued factor and when combined, 93.3% of respondents selected this as a response. However, attitudes about housing diverge and tradeoffs have to be made. For example, 100% of Spanish speakers chose “affordable housing” as an important factor compared to 89% of English speakers, meaning that price points for housing are a more important determinant for selecting a house than housing quality for native Spanish speakers. Another difference was that “close proximity to job opportunities” was again selected as “important” or “very important” by Spanish-speakers 100% of the time compared to 87% of replies in English.

Q2 &3: What can the City of Sturgis improve? Which is your #1 priority?

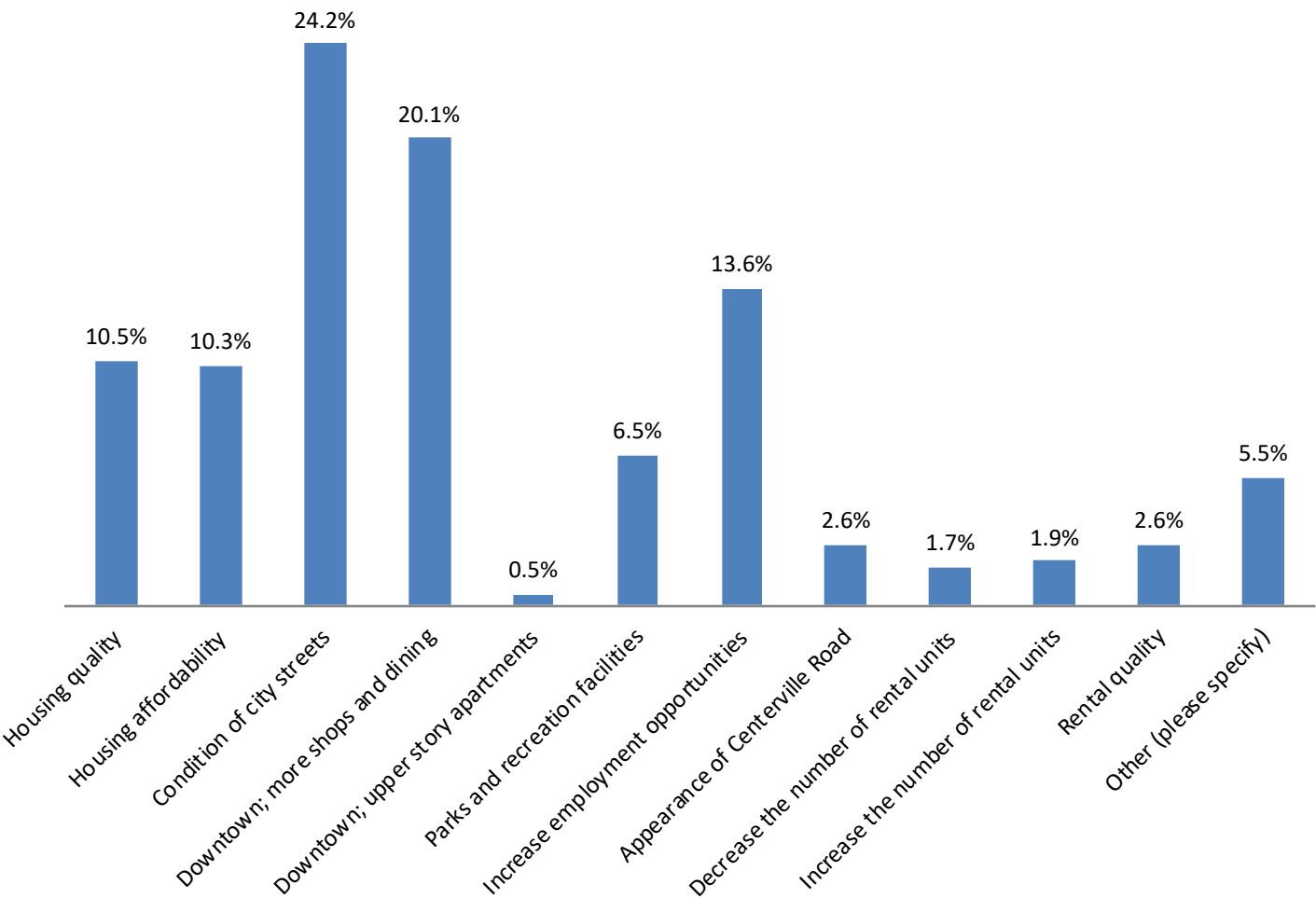
Improvements

The distinction between the English and Spanish responses is stark and illustrates the major differences among these groups. For this question, survey-takers were allowed to choose as many responses that applied. The top three answers for English speakers were condition of streets (70.6%), more shops and dining downtown (58.5%), and nightlife (54.4%). Only the response “condition of streets,” also number one from the Sturgis Fest results, overlaps with the top choices from the Spanish survey (as a two-way tie for second place with housing quality at 73.9%). The highest number of votes for Spanish-speakers went to “affordable housing” receiving 78.3% votes, while “affordable housing” ranked ninth in popularity from the English responses. Surprisingly, increasing the number of rental units was held more favorably among English responses with 20.5% of respondents selecting this as an improvement compared to 17.4% of Spanish responses.

Priorities

When asked to select their number one priority, the responses consistently mirrored their wishes to improve the City: condition of streets (24.3%) and more shops and dining downtown (21.0%) for English-speakers, and housing quality (26.1%) and affordable housing (21.7%) for Spanish-speakers. The dissimilar priorities tell a story: Spanish and English speakers have different experiences within the City. While the English-speakers hope for more entertainment-driven improvements to become the City’s priorities, the Hispanic survey-takers seek more fundamental change. The results appear to say that Spanish-speakers are still working on the basics of finding housing of decent quality that fits within their budget where English-speakers feel housing-secure. In that regard, English-speakers appear to have more options available to them and can spend less energy looking for housing.

FIGURE 2. Q3: What is your #1 priority?



Economic Development

Q4 &5: How satisfied are you with the NUMBER and VARIETY of retail opportunities downtown?

English-speaking responses are generally less satisfied with the number of retail opportunities downtown in comparison to Spanish-speaking survey-takers. When the responses “satisfied” and “very satisfied” are combined, only about one-third (32.2%) of replies in English expressed satisfaction, compared to 56.5% of responses in Spanish. Overall, levels of satisfaction are grouped in thirds between “satisfied,” “indifferent,” and “unsatisfied.” The responses for levels of satisfaction with the variety of retail opportunities downtown communicate the same message: Spanish survey-takers are generally more satisfied with the retail options by a similar margin. Again, most of the votes clustered in the middle with few responses selected on the extremes.

Q6: What type of retail opportunities would you like to see downtown?

The top two answers were the same across both surveys: residents want to see more clothing and accessories stores, and food and beverage retail. Together, food and beverage garnered two-thirds of all votes, followed by clothing and accessories (54.5%), and general merchandise (38.5%) in third place. In the open response section, some requests

were for a bakery, a food co-op, Aldi’s, and a brewery. The clothing and accessory suggestions were mixed. While some want to see big box stores in Sturgis for the convenience they offer, others urge the City not to cave to this temptation, claiming that big box stores could hurt small businesses. On the other hand, the boutique-style shopping offered downtown may out price many residents’ purchasing power. This is an ongoing debate in many communities about how to balance an upscale retail experience that caters to destination shoppers, and retail that provides what residents need at affordable prices.

Q7: If you leave Sturgis to shop for items needed, where do you go?

The most commonly selected answer was not within Michigan. About an hour away, Mishawaka, Indiana is the favored shopping destination for Sturgis residents, presumably because of the University Park Mall. Together, about 23% of all survey respondents selected Mishawaka. Elkhart and Fort Wayne also appear on the list as well but with fewer votes. Sturgis residents stay in Michigan to shop but travel to Three Rivers (14.1%) and Portage (11.5%), on average 30 to 45 minutes away, to reach desired retail options. When cross referenced to a retail report compiled by ESRI Business Analyst, residents leave Sturgis most often to make lawn and garden equipment purchases, visit drinking establishments, and shop at book stores.

FIGURE 3. Q6: What type of retail opportunities would you like to see downtown?

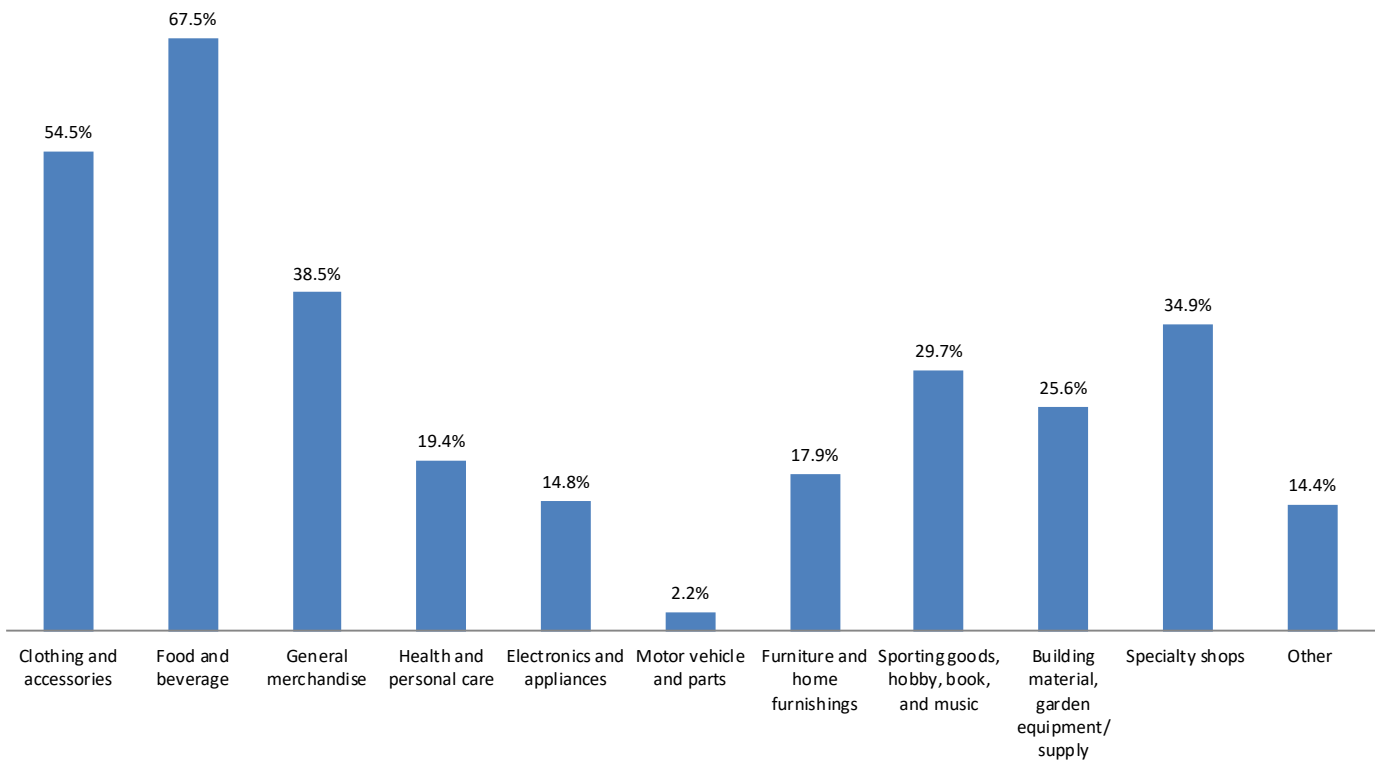
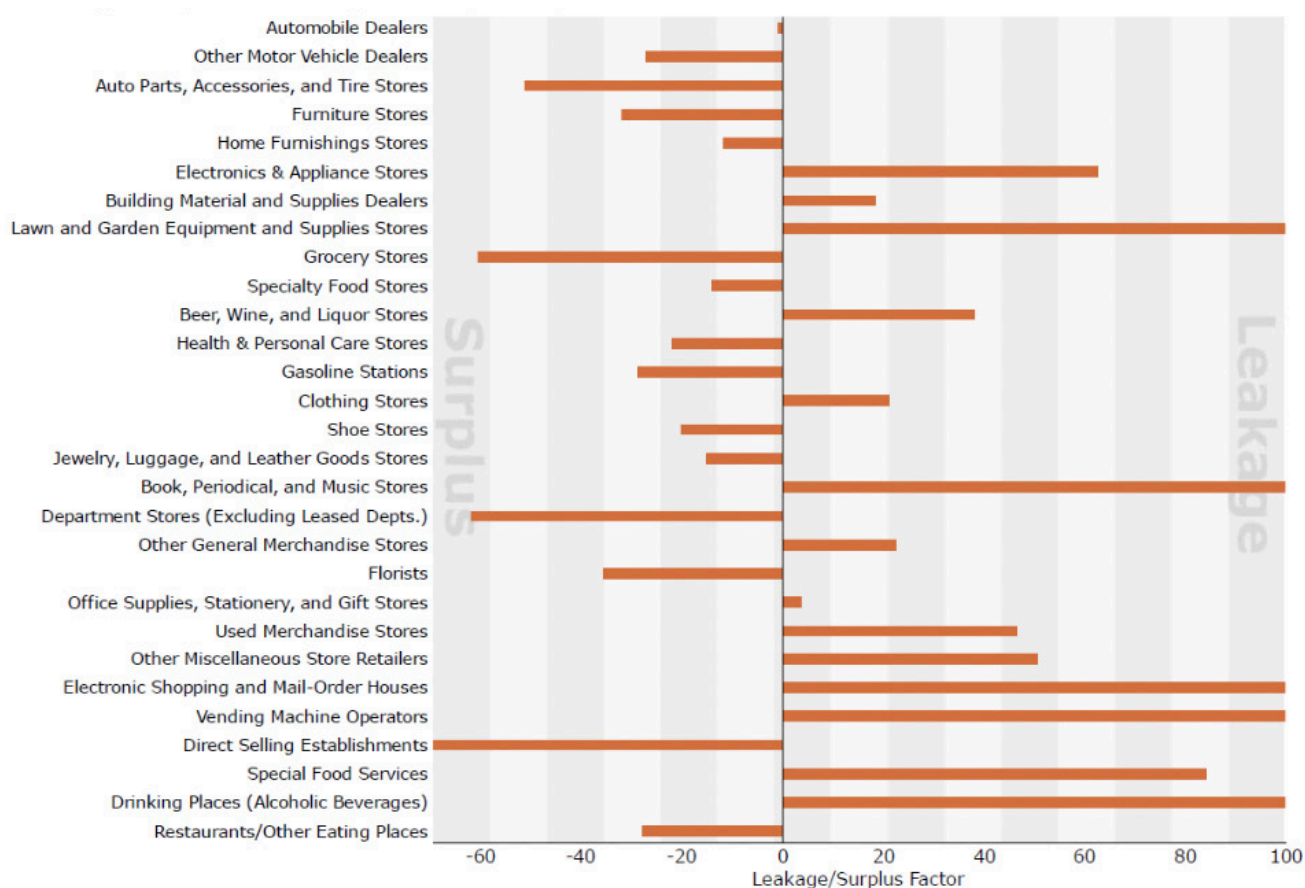


FIGURE 4. Leakage / Surplus Factor by Industry Group



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2017

Q8 &9: How satisfied are you with NUMBER and VARIETY of dining opportunities downtown?

In terms of the number and variety of restaurants downtown, the English and Spanish results are undeniably dissimilar. Overall, the city residents are displeased, with 59% of survey-takers reporting that they feel some degree of dissatisfaction. However, this poor response is buttressed largely by the native English-speakers: almost 63% of them were either “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” compared to 13% of native Spanish-speakers. The finding is the same for variety of dining opportunities. Almost 60% of responses are either “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” but this figure stems from the English-speaking cohort’s discontent: 62% of them expressed dissatisfaction compared to 21.7% of native Spanish-speakers.

Q10: What type of dining opportunities would you like to see downtown?

Sturgis residents most commonly selected “family restaurants” (51.7%) but in a close second, they wish to also

see “breweries” downtown. The interest in more adult-centered dining was confirmed by the third choice “bar/ restaurants” (37.6%). Farm-to-table restaurants fell closely behind in fourth place, a call for healthier, local options. These responses reinforce that first and foremost Sturgis is a family-oriented City but also that like the teenagers, adults would like to see more to do which comes in the form of improved night life choices.

Q11 &12: If you leave Sturgis to dine out, which community do you go to? What type of restaurants do you leave Sturgis to eat at most often?

Surpassing all other cities by a landslide, Kalamazoo won 46% of all votes. The next most common responses were Elkhart and Mishawaka, Indiana receiving 16.5% and 15.3% of the votes, respectively. When combining all of the cities in Indiana mentioned, 37.3% of residents dine out in our neighboring state instead of in Michigan. While impossible to know with certainty, this could translate into thousands of dollars spent annually outside of the state, especially when retail sales are added. The ESRI Marketplace Profile reports



leakages by industry, but does not detail where this money is being spent. From this survey, it appears that some of the leakage is crossing the state border but in undetermined amounts.

Interestingly, while the majority of participants wanted to see family restaurants come to Sturgis, this is not the primary motivation for leaving the City to dine out. The most common answer was “chain restaurants” (41.3%) which likely has a large overlap with family dining in the minds of the survey-takers, for example restaurants such as Applebee’s could fall in both categories. Next, residents visit “breweries” (37.9%) and then “family restaurants” (33.8%). The largest difference between the English and Spanish survey is that English-speakers often leave for fine dining (37.6%) and native Spanish-speakers for family restaurants (65.2%).

*Housing*

Q13: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “The type of residence that I would like to live in over the next 10 years is available in Sturgis.”

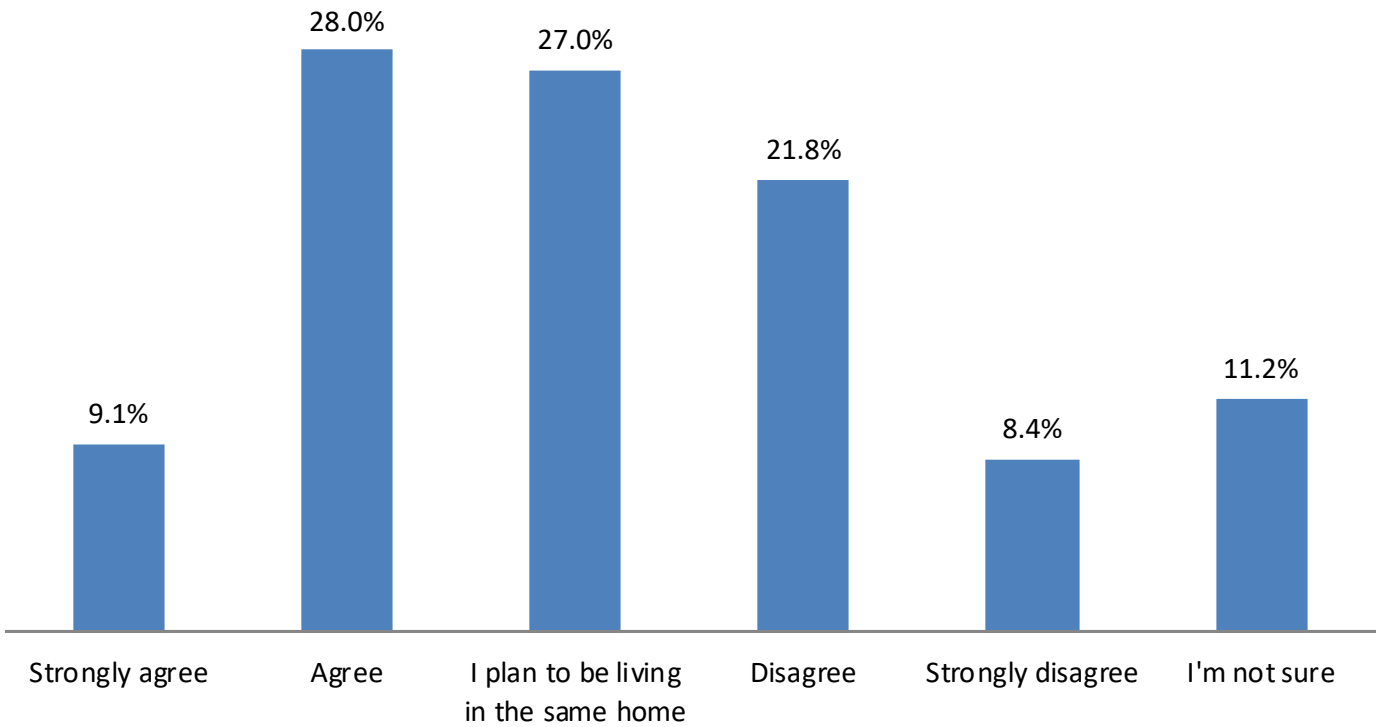
The results do not deliver a straightforward answer. Overall, 37.1% of respondents either “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement and 30.1% either “strongly disagree” or “disagree.” The remainder plan to live in the same home

(27.0%) or are “not sure (11.2%).” This is a difficult question to answer because several major events could take place in a decade that affect where and what type of housing a person prefers or can afford, but the idea is to gauge the respondent’s perception of the housing market and if it will serve them as they age. For example, a 25 year old renter who is planning to have children may want to buy a larger home in the coming years, and conversely a person in retirement may wish to downsize to an attached unit with no yard. As of 2017, the City’s constituency is divided on whether they feel they can age into their desired housing type. It remains to be seen if these households will have to leave the City or can find what they are looking for in the city limits.

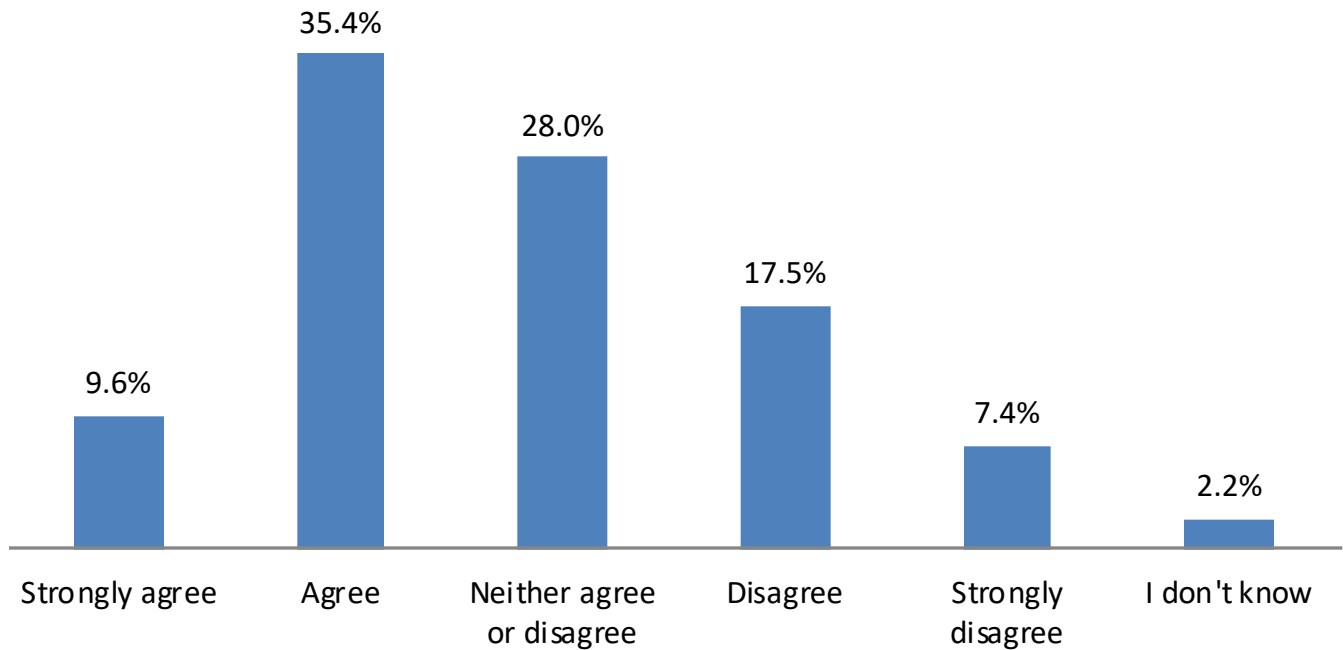
Q14: What type of residence do you prefer to live in the next 5 years?

Unquestionably, residents want to be single-family homeowners, either in detached or attached units. Almost 58% of respondents chose “single-family detached, owner-occupied” and 24.7% selected “single-family attached, owner-occupied.” Interestingly, none of the votes for attached homeownership came from Spanish-speakers. Neither did votes for second floor units downtown or “tiny houses.” Responses in English are only slightly more popular, receiving about 2% each for downtown second story apartments and tiny houses. The strong dismissal for smaller units from the

**FIGURE 5. Q13: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “The type of residence that I would like to live in over the next 10 years is available in Sturgis.”**



**FIGURE 6. Q15: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “With my household’s current budget, I feel the housing options in Sturgis are affordable.”**



Spanish survey could be due to having on an average much larger household sizes. As of 2000, the average Hispanic household size in Sturgis was 4.7 persons compared to 2.5 persons in white households (Census Tables P017A & H01H).<sup>1</sup> With two extra people on average, Hispanic families may not feel that a second-story unit could provide adequate space. Several of the open responses stated that homeowners, from both surveys, want to trade in homes in the city for more land “out in the country.”

**Q15: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “With my household’s current budget, I feel the housing options in Sturgis are affordable.”**

More participants than not agree to some degree that the housing options are affordable. About 45% reported either “strongly agree” or “agree” with this statement compared to 24.9% who either “strongly disagree” or “disagree.” There is over a 10% difference in agreement between the English and Spanish survey, indicating that native English-speakers can more easily find housing affordable to them. There is a substantial percentage of respondents who are indifferent. Overall, 28% “neither agree nor disagree.” This number is boosted from the Spanish survey where 47.8% answered this way, or almost 20% higher than the combined responses. This finding implies that residents think their housing expenses are just right, not unaffordable but not too affordable either.

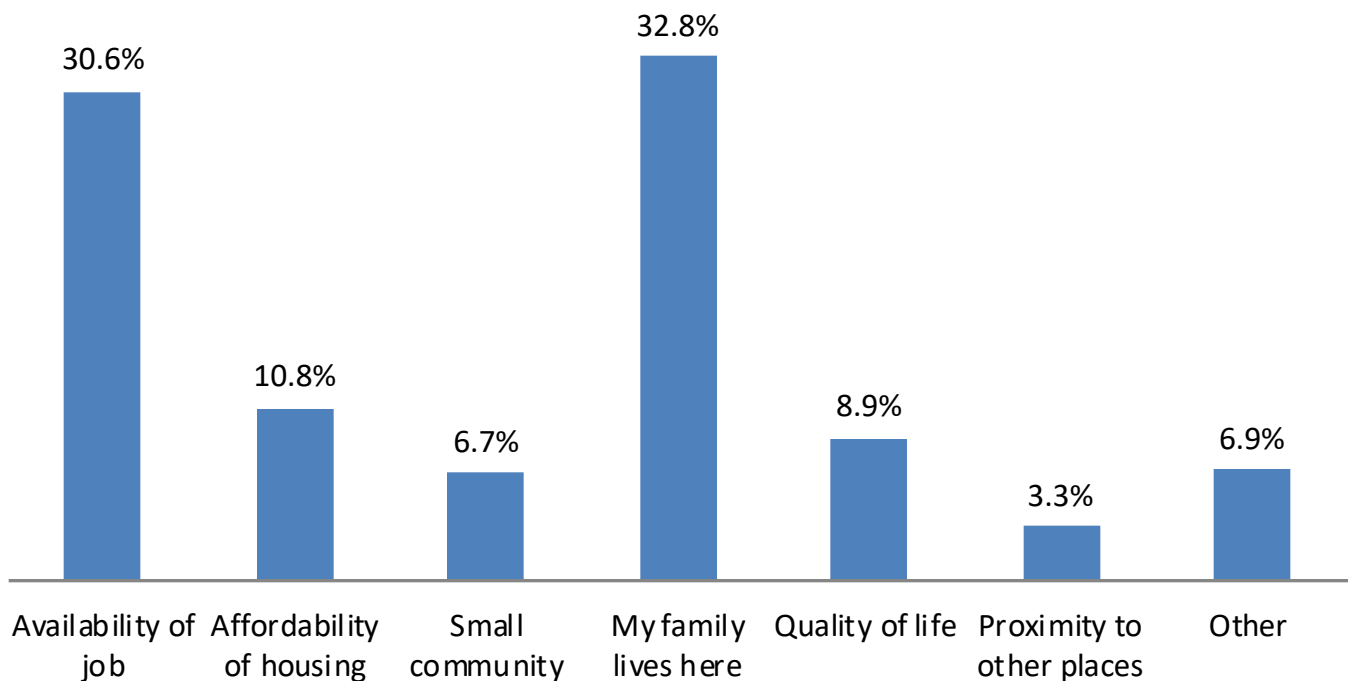
**Q16: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “The housing stock in Sturgis is in excellent condition.”**

The responses were not positive. Close to 57% of respondents replied that they either “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” And, almost one-third “neither agree nor disagree,” leaving only 7.4% to respond affirmatively. The statement is strongly-worded deliberately, choosing the word “excellent” instead of “good.” Those who disagree with this statement could still believe that the housing conditions are fair or good, but as the backbone to a city, Sturgis strives for excellence.

**Q17: Would you like to see “tiny houses” (homes less than 400 sq. ft.) permitted in Sturgis?**

Tiny houses are a trend on the rise with several TV shows dedicated to the construction, design, and mobility of portable homes. Some cities are considering them as alternatives to affordable homeownership options in the face of waning funding from the federal Housing and Urban Development agency. There is general support for the idea among residents. About 46% of respondents expressed support compared to 23.3% who opposed tiny homes. Almost 31% are indifferent, perhaps for a lack of understanding of their appearance and impacts on the housing market and property values. If the City were to

**FIGURE 7. Q18: My residency in Sturgis depends primarily on:**



move forward with zoning for tiny houses, an outreach effort to the community with an educational component is suggested.

**Q18: My residency in Sturgis depends primarily on:**

Residency depends on familial and historical ties. More commonly than any other option (although availability of job comes in a close second place), “my family lives here” was selected by 32.8% of respondents as the reason for living in Sturgis. This makes sense given the maxim “it takes a village” to raise a family and care for aging parents; people choose to live near loved ones where they can benefit from a supportive network. For others, being close to family may be a financial decision to keep childcare and housing costs down or care for an ill loved one. Just over 30% of participants live in Sturgis primarily for employment. This means that employment is a steady anchor within the City, or that its proximity to other hubs makes Sturgis a convenient place to live. Both are positive outcomes.

Despite finding housing less affordable than English-speakers, Spanish-speakers more commonly selected “quality of life” (26.1%) as the primary reason for living in Sturgis. This is consistent with other findings where they are generally more satisfied with retail, dining, and housing options.

**Parks and Recreation**

**Q19: How would you rate the following characteristics of Sturgis’ parks and recreational facilities?**

Generally, most characteristics of the park were most often rated “fair.” There were two exceptions. “Size of parks” (49.5%) and the “number of parks” (39.2%) were largely considered “good.” Relatively few characteristics were rated “excellent.” Sturgis residents are also concerned with what goes on within the parks, as “festival and cultural events” received the highest portion of “poor” votes (30.8%). Based on lower ratings, there is also room for improvement on variety and quality of facilities, organized recreation programming, and connectivity to parkland.

**Q20: What prevents you from using the recreation facilities more frequently in Sturgis?**

The intent of this question is to see if it is within the City’s control to spark interest in the parks system or if what prevents residents are external factors. Residents report that they do not use the recreation facilities more frequently because their “schedules are too busy.” This is problematic because this reasoning also signifies that recreation, at least on public grounds, is not integrated into the residents’

lives. The following options selected may explain why. For example, 27.8% of respondents said that “the programming does not suit my interests” and another 10% say the “weather” prevents them from using public facilities. Understanding these two limitations together allows for the design and implementation of facilities tailored to alleviate the resident grievances with different types of programs perhaps in sheltered spaces for extreme heat and cold. Even though “weather” is out of the City’s control, it is valuable to understand the extent that it precludes visitors, and how to design with that in mind.

The comments section raises other prohibitive issues. The high cost of a membership to the Doyle Center was repeatedly mentioned, 19 times out of 69 total comments. Secondly, limited hours of operation and lack of child care prevents residents from signing up for its services. In reference to the parks, respondents felt that there are not enough bathrooms available to make a trip there worthwhile, especially with young children. The desire for more walking and bicycle pathways was reiterated, mirroring the feedback from engagement sessions for the 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan. In addition to mismatched programming, 26.1% reported that the “lack of facilities” keep them from visiting the City’s facilities. The next question elaborates on the type of lacking facilities.

Q21: What type of facilities or activities should the City prioritize when planning for parks and recreation?

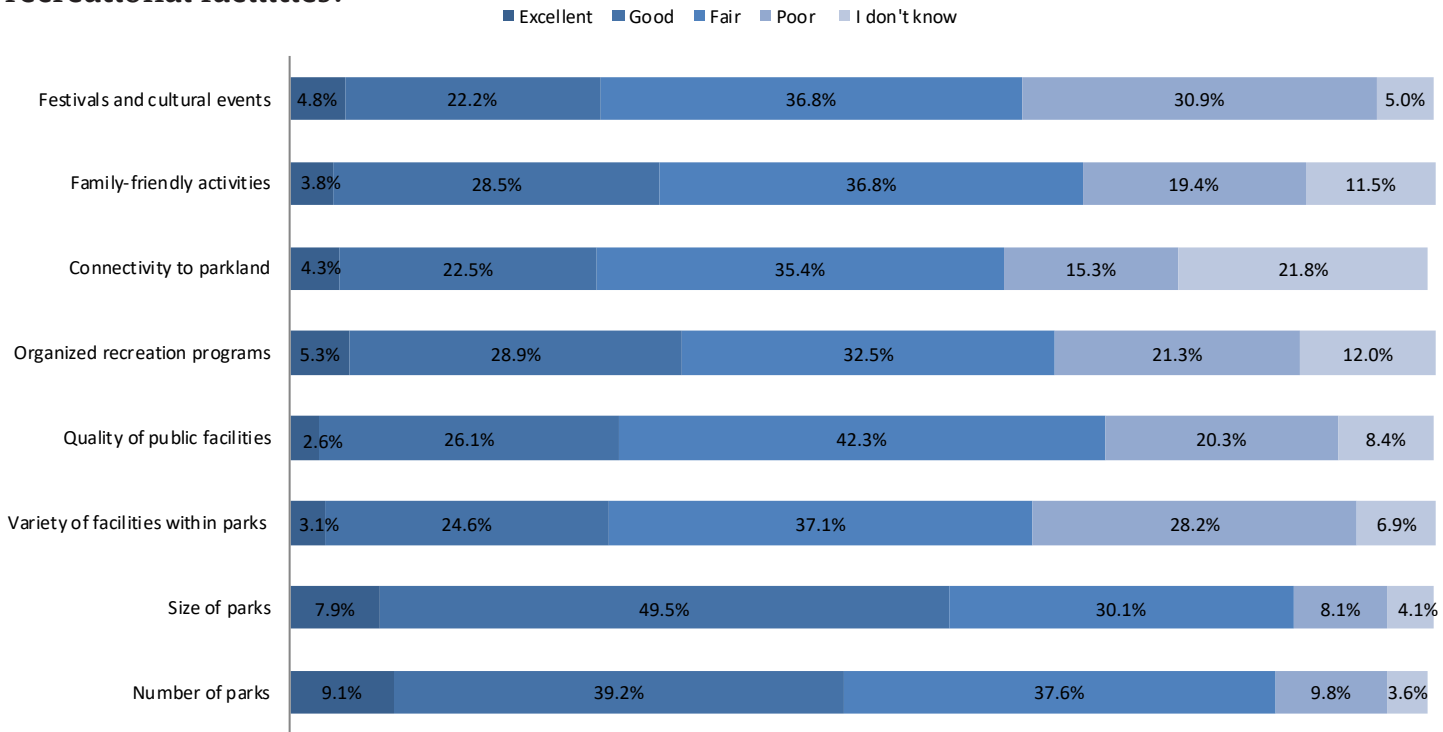
In this open response question, preferences for facilities rise assuredly to the top. Out of 333 comments, trails, bathrooms, and a splash pad were top choices. These preferences reflect a desire for a balance of family-friendly, mature, and accessible recreation: a splash pad for the children, a trail for more active recreation, and a handicap accessible bathroom for all. The only divergence in survey responses was a few requests for more soccer fields by native Spanish-speakers. Making a prominent appearance on the list of activity priorities were family-friendly and kid-friendly activities. Some ideas were scavenger hunts, music or movies in the parks, festivals, food trucks, and block parties. Parents are looking for places to bring their children that will educate and entertain them. There is a small contingency of survey-takers who wish to see parks maintain an adult ambiance mostly in the form of space for more intensive sports such as disc golf, hiking, races, sports tournaments, and live entertainment.

Public Safety

Q22: How safe do you feel crossing US-12 downtown as a pedestrian?

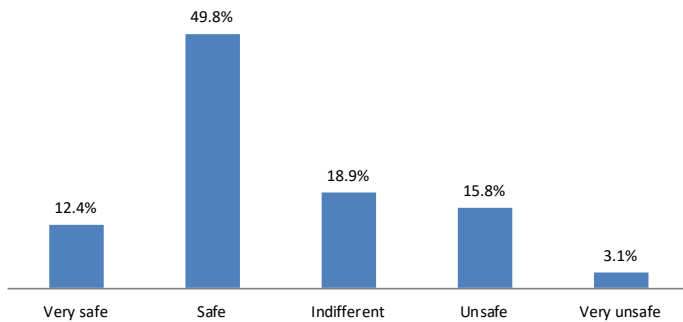
Most pedestrians do not consider crossing US-12 downtown an unsafe experience. Between the options “very safe” and “safe,” 62.2% marked one of these responses in comparison

FIGURE 8. Q19: How would you rate the following characteristics of Sturgis’ parks and recreational facilities?





**FIGURE 9. Q 22: How safe do you feel crossing US-12 downtown as a pedestrian?**



to 18.9% who find it “unsafe” or “very unsafe.” In 2006, street work was completed downtown to help protect pedestrians, namely in the form of an extended median running down Chicago Road, bulb-outs, and crosswalks. These findings indicate that the roadwork has improved the pedestrian experience.

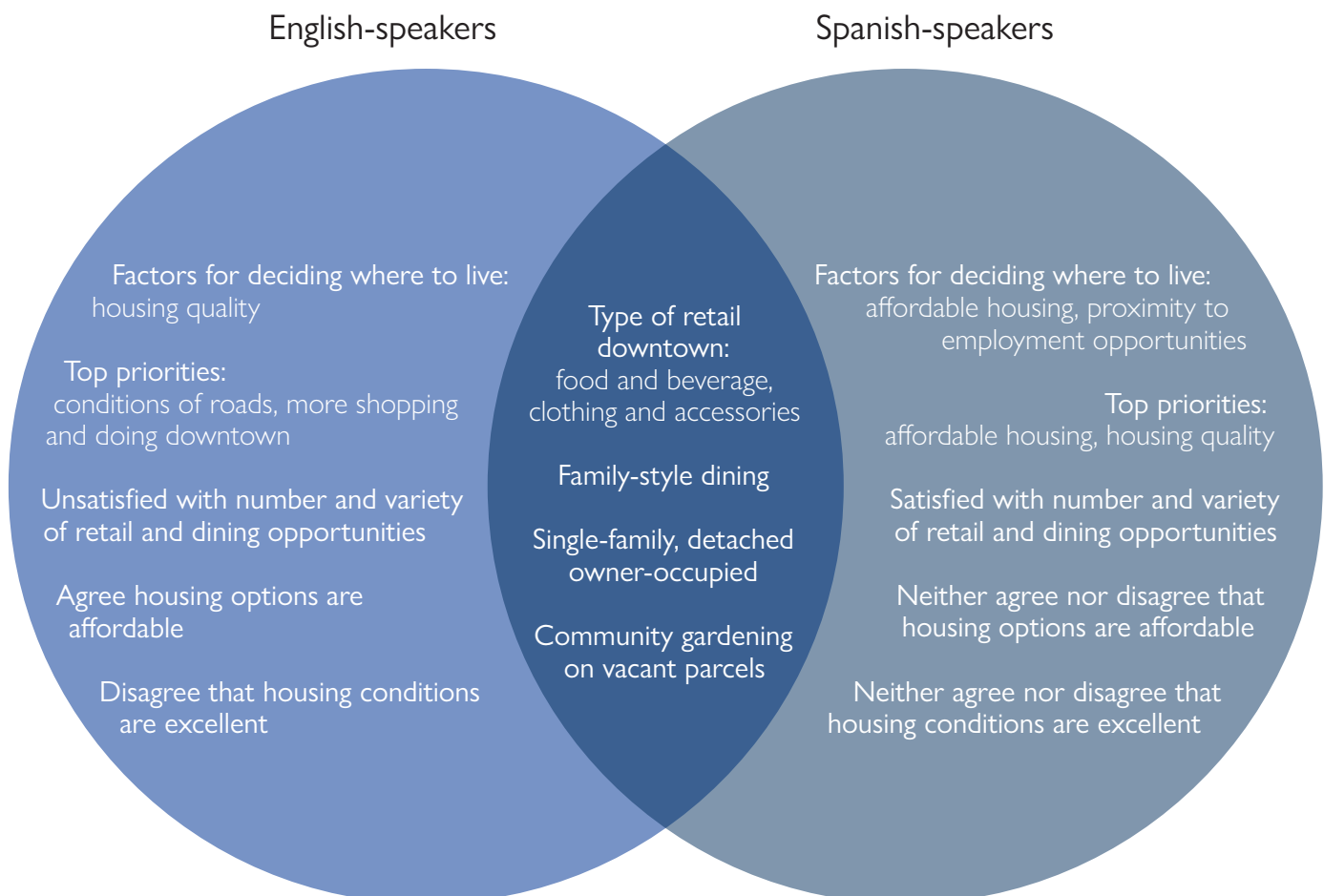
**Q23: How strongly do you support the City of Sturgis exploring the option of a semi-truck bypass for US-12?**

As a follow up question, the City is gauging the residents’ response to possible solutions for making US-12 safer and more pleasant for pedestrians downtown. In general, this idea is supported by a wide margin. Forty-five percent of survey-takers agree to some extent that the City should consider a bypass, compared to about 25% who oppose this alternative. A considerable percentage, 30.1%, is indifferent to pursuing this option.

**Q24: Please select the type of urban agriculture currently not allowed in the City that you would support.**

The results are unambiguous. With a clear lead, “vacant parcel community gardens” took first place representing 46.2% of the votes. The respondents have a preference for smaller-lot gardening because the option for “vacant parcel farming (commercial)” received much less attention (4.5%). Another attractive option was “raising chickens” (23.2%), a growing trend in cities as a part of the local food movement. Cities have achieved ways to incorporate coops in residential

**FIGURE 10. Survey Venn Diagram**



neighborhoods. Should Sturgis update ordinances to permit chickens, there are some successful examples to review. Still, plenty of residents oppose urban agriculture (16.3%), likely because it raises several questions about upkeep, zoning, and property rights.

Figure 10 is a Venn diagram that summarizes, based on the results from the survey, the major differences and similarities between native English and Spanish speakers. Where the two circles overlap, the two groups found agreement on the types of retail, dining, and housing they wish to see. The major differences lie in why they live in Sturgis and how they would prioritize city-wide improvements.

Demographics

Q25: How long have you lived in Sturgis?

Not surprisingly, over half of the responses (51.6%) were from residents who have lived in Sturgis for more than 20 years. As a general rule, the longer residents live in a community, and the more master plan cycles they've lived through, the more involved they are in the planning process. This cohort is largely represented by Caucasian residents, because as noted in the demographic section of this plan, the Hispanic population did not come to Sturgis until closer to the year 2000. Native Spanish-speakers do have roots in the City, with the most votes in the 11-20 year range of residency. Overall, 71.5% of replies were from residents who had lived in the City for more than 11 years.

Q26: In which precinct do you live?

Each precinct is fairly well represented and in alignment with its corresponding population density. Precinct 1 was selected by 124 residents and is also one of the densest sections of town. Another dense area of town is Precinct 4, which was the second-most selected option with 89 votes. Precinct 2 was the most infrequently selected option because it borders a major corridor that is primarily dedicated to commercial and industrial uses. Precinct 3 received a considerable number of votes considering it is dominated by the airport. About 20% of those who took the survey do not live in Sturgis. Their interest in the welfare of the City is presumably because it serves as their urban hub, and any changes within Sturgis would affect their lives as well.

Q27: Do you rent or own the place where you live?

Homeowners completed this survey at a higher percentage than the homeownership rate: 78.4% of respondents were homeownership when the homeownership rate in Sturgis is 60.5%. The opposite is true with renters. While 39.5% of the City is renter-occupied, only 15.6% of renters replied, reaffirming the theory that owning property compels people

to be civic participants. The results also show that Sturgis does not have a large seasonal population with only 6 people reporting themselves as seasonal homeowners.

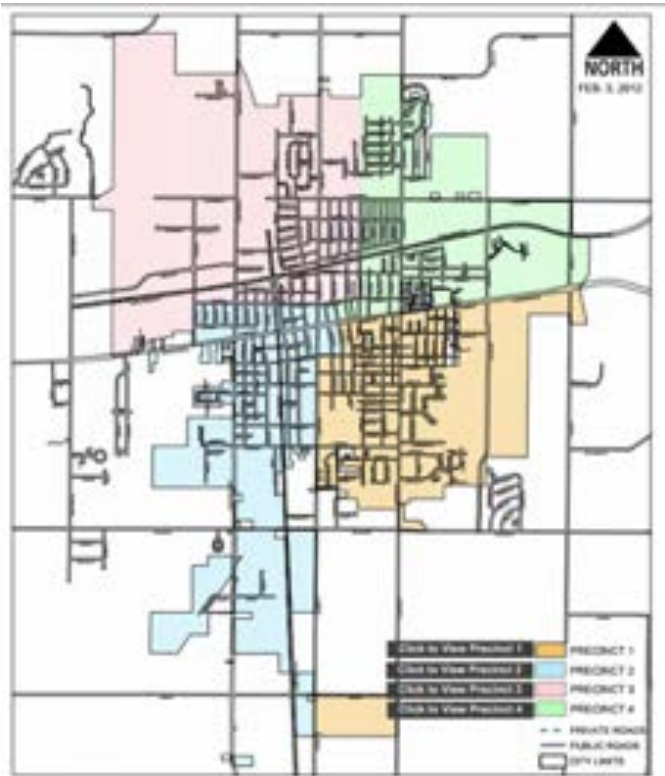
Q28: Please indicate the age for each person in your household, including yourself.

The replies to this survey come primarily from two age cohorts: 26-34 and 35-44 (54.6%), known as the prime family formation years. It is within these age groups where the largest gaps between the respondents and the census data occur. These age groups are overrepresented in the survey in comparison to their presence in the community. Otherwise, the other cohorts are almost perfectly

TABLE 2. Survey Respondent Age

Age cohorts	Survey respondents	Census
25 years or younger	13.0%	~39.2%
26-34	29.5%	~14.3%
35-44	25.1%	11.8%
45-54	15.5%	12.4%
55-64	10.1%	9.6%
65-74	5.4%	5.6%
75 years or older	1.3%	7.1%

FIGURE 11. Sturgis Precincts



represented with another gap in the eldest groups, “75 years or older.” It is possible that the online survey was not readily accessible to this age group.

Q29: What racial or ethnic group do you identify with?

When the results of both surveys are combined, 80.2% of respondents identify as Caucasian, just below the Census estimate of 88.7%. Despite distributing a survey in Spanish, the Hispanic population was still underrepresented. With about 21.4% of the population identifying as Hispanic, only about 8% who completed the survey marked “Hispanic/Latino.” In fact, almost 10% of participants selected that they “prefer not to answer.”

Q30: What is your household’s annual income?

Among the six options provided, almost half of the respondent’s income fell between \$41,000 and \$80,000, with slightly more falling in the lower end of this range, consistently higher than the \$36,293 median household income. There are major discrepancies between the household incomes of native English and native Spanish speakers. For example, none of the responses from the Spanish-speaking survey reported making more than \$100,000 annually when 14% of English-speakers do. Also, substantially more Spanish-speakers make less than \$40,000 annually, 65.2% compared to 21.2% of English-speakers. Some of these differences are to be expected where a language barrier exists.

STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to hearing from the community at large through the online survey, stakeholders who represent the planning areas of “live,” “work,” and “play” were invited to a two

TABLE 3. Stakeholder Focus

Stakeholder Group	Focus
Live	Housing, ethnicity, age
Work	Workforce, education, employment
Play	Parks, recreation, adult and youth activities

hour session to share their insight on topics tailored to their expertise. Through a series of exercises, each group was asked to elaborate on the major issues of their respective group.

“Live” Stakeholders

The “live” group consisted of five stakeholders who kicked-off this series by describing the Sturgis housing stock. The existing homes were described as “rustic” and “aging” but the larger issue was that there was a shortage both in

terms of number of units and in quality. The problem of the “missing middle” emerged not only in the types of housing that are missing, but more specifically the size of units. As a community planning concept, the “missing middle” trend refers to the lack of housing types within the range of single-family homes to high-rise apartment buildings (i.e. triplexes, courtyard apartments, townhouses, etc.). While this is apparent in Sturgis’ housing market, it was also mentioned that rental units with three to four bedrooms are in demand to house larger families. The missing middle also suggests that the middling price points are missing as well. As the stakeholders described, there is lower end and higher end housing, but few homes are on the market for \$100,000-\$150,000.

The stakeholders understand the importance of housing on larger community issues and expressed as much in their hopes for Sturgis’ future housing stock. They hope age-friendly units are built, and that improved housing conditions, increased density near downtown, and places to live for all income brackets can provide a solid tax base for the City and support the recruitment of more workers into the local economy.

To serve a multi-generational and multi-cultural housing market, certain formats or features are needed to accommodate differing demands. Of the list of features that would benefit the city’s residents, the stakeholders believe that the “dream of homeownership with a yard” is alive and is a need that must continue to be fulfilled. There was also a note of affordable senior housing or assisted living facilities. These can take many forms but typically are single-story units that include repair and maintenance services. Lastly, the option to rent is critical to a healthy market. Prior to purchasing a home, most people rent and may continue to do so if they feel they cannot take on the financial pressure of a mortgage. This is especially prevalent post-housing crisis where people may have lost their homes or took a hit to their credit that delays their ability to buy another home soon.

The stakeholders were also asked to name the barriers to providing excellent housing stock, and then vote on their top two responses. Everyone voted for “cost,” which reflects the rising costs of land, labor, and materials without the ability to raise the rent or selling price to compensate. This sentiment was expressed with the claim that “prospective tenants cannot afford excellent” housing. Another barrier mentioned was that small-scale landlords are compelled to sell their rental properties because of the burden of the rental inspection program, leaving fewer rentals available to residents. Complaints surfaced about the rental inspection program being “too petty” because, in their view, the requirements demand repairs that exceed basic and health and safety measures. Some of the landlords present hoped that the City would lengthen the time between inspections,

and move to a complaint-based system once a landlord has demonstrated a good track record of compliance. However, the City's rental inspection program was a response to units that were previously subpar and the requirements are strict to ensure that everyone has a decent place to live.

### “Work” Stakeholders

With a cadre of 10 employers, educators, and economic developers present, the questions were geared towards discovering any broken links that prevent the workforce and employers from connecting to fill both parties' needs efficiently. To start, stakeholders were divided into two groups and given a series of question to answer together. First, they were asked how the workforce could improve. The only issue raised by both groups was “drug/alcohol treatment,” reinforcing the severity of Sturgis' drug problem. The other responses circled around educational gaps such “soft skills,” “basic work skills,” and “technical training” and the subsequent follow through of connecting the workforce to employers through “career development” and “co-op programs.” The stakeholders believe that the workforce can improve by enhancing its soft and hard skills through networking and mastering a trade.

According to this group of stakeholders, the list of responses to the question “what jobs go unfilled in Sturgis” demonstrates that lower-skilled jobs are harder to fill. Among the nine types of jobs mentioned, only “physicians” and “commercial lenders” are considered highly skilled, whereas sales, customer service and retail, healthcare support staff, and trades are lower to mid-skilled jobs. When the stakeholders voted, there was a two-way tie between trades and customer service and retail (with seven votes each) as jobs that typically go unfilled in Sturgis.

It is believed that workers leave, and don't go far, for higher wages and better benefits. This is not surprising considering that jobs that go unfilled most often in Sturgis are generally low-paying. It seems workers are making the trade-off in favor of a longer commute for a higher salary. When asked how Sturgis can attract and retain talent, the only response repeated twice was “better housing options.” In addition to lower wages, Sturgis does not offer its workforce high-quality homes available to purchase.

One group remarked that employers could simply treat their employees better. The suggestions were to invest in their upward mobility and improve their benefits package. Other suggestions were to invest in the school system and to be more “youth focused” for retaining talent that might otherwise leave.

The next couple of questions were aimed at understanding how to grow or inspire new businesses. If workers commute out for better jobs, what can be done to reverse that

outward flow? When asked the barriers to starting or expanding business in Sturgis, some replies were reiterated from previous questions: drugs and the workforce. But, the most prominent answer was “space.” This was expressed in two ways. Both groups reported a lack of “incubator space” for those who want to test or build a new product but do not have the capital to invest in a fledgling idea. The other comment was specific to the lack of space downtown; even if a person had the money to invest, there is no real estate or land left in the core to develop. Second to insufficient room to grow were issues of zoning and the “length of the permitting process.” Both groups implied that zoning is restrictive and that if time is money, a lengthy permitting and approval process is expensive. With such a small market, extended periods of time spent on pre-development could negatively impact their return on investment. Specifically, attracting desired businesses downtown was reported as merely a matter of marketing and providing the infrastructure that supports business, and to others the market for higher-end products and services was not available in Sturgis.

The stakeholders then imagined Sturgis 10 years down the road, supposing that barriers are eliminated and all of their suggestions are executed. What does successful economic development look like? After brainstorming and voting on their top answers (that would become priorities), each group shared their responses with one another. The “work” stakeholders see “improved community involvement” where resident enthusiastically participate in accomplishing common goals. They would see new industries, such as tech, that support workforce development. Sturgis would have “improved housing options” and would be a place with more activity and opportunities to socialize. After hearing from

TABLE 4. Collective Priorities

Rank	Collective Priorities	Votes
1	Good connection between school and work	9
2	Diversify industries and welcoming other industry	6
3	Businesses supporting workforce development	5
4	Improved, affordable housing	5
5	Improved community involvement and volunteering	4
6	Smoother, more collaborative permitting and regulatory process	1



each group, the priorities were compiled and there was a final vote. The six final collective priorities are below:

### **“Play Stakeholders”**

The “play” stakeholders were comprised of civic, volunteer, and recreational groups from the area that host or sponsor clubs, organizations, or provide a venue for people to spend their leisure time. The activities range from gardening, youth soccer, the parks and recreation department, musical groups and charities, among several others. The goal with meeting with diverse stakeholders in this group is to relay any connection to quality of life in Sturgis, to gauge the level of support for investment in community, and to investigate claims made by students and survey-takers that there is little to do in the City.

Once divided into two groups, the stakeholders ruminated over their role they serve in the community. And, a multi-faceted role it is! These stakeholders see that “play” can be a form of relaxation, an activity that sparks interaction with fellow community members, an opportunity to learn, have fun, exercise, create memories, and form lasting friendships. After identifying their role, the stakeholders explained that the groups they represent can be used to strengthen the social fabric of the community in many ways. Through “play,” people meet new and different types of people and learn civility through personal connections with people in different circumstances.

The stakeholders were then asked to identify gaps in recreational opportunities. They found that most importantly, a gap exists in giving people a “chance to try new things.” The adult enrichment classes are helping to fill this need. Others described a lack of opportunities to do “meaningful work in a joyful way.” This sentiment reinforces that recreational experience must be planned so that people who invest their free time feel rewarded by participating in a bigger cause.

Next, the barriers to starting or expanding opportunities for fun are explored. The largest barriers are lack of capacity: the time it takes to plan and implement new programs and/or events, leadership, the lack of proper facilities for hosting, funding, and land. Stakeholders also mentioned that Sturgis is a small city that will often lose to competing larger cities which can more easily fulfill expectations for fun events and programming. But, still there are actions the City can take to support activities put on by “play” stakeholders. On their list of supportive actions is help from the City in marketing their events, and improved facility maintenance with lighting, signage, and handicap accessible features.

The next exercise was to look at an aerial view of the City and using two different colored sticky dots, place a green dot on places considered to be community assets, and a white

dot to spatially connect a fond memory. Community assets cover a range of institutions but primarily speak to thriving and well-appreciated communal spaces, most of which are parks and/or city-run buildings such as the library, Sturges-Young Civic Auditorium, and Doyle center. A handful of private downtown businesses were mentioned between the two groups, but enough were lacking to confirm the feeling that downtown is still lackluster, but gaining momentum. While the community has found fault with several of the places on the map, they still consider them to be assets, and therefore what helps anchors them to the City.

As expected, memories and assets are clustered together. The act of sharing memories was designed to provide a positive counter balance to analyzing all of the City’s unsettled issues, as well as more intimately pulling out what glues residents to this particular place. Memories are intangible but powerful links in building a perception of where you live, as it’s the accumulation of positive memories over time that create the fondness for home. Community members shared ordinary and joyful memories of taking their children to the carousel in Willer’s shoes as well as more extraordinary memories of the Merchante’s women’s softball team winning the state championship in 1968! This exercise was a reminder that the social fabric of a city, while hard to define, is rooted in the memories formed from having a place for interaction outside of home and work.

## **VISIONING**

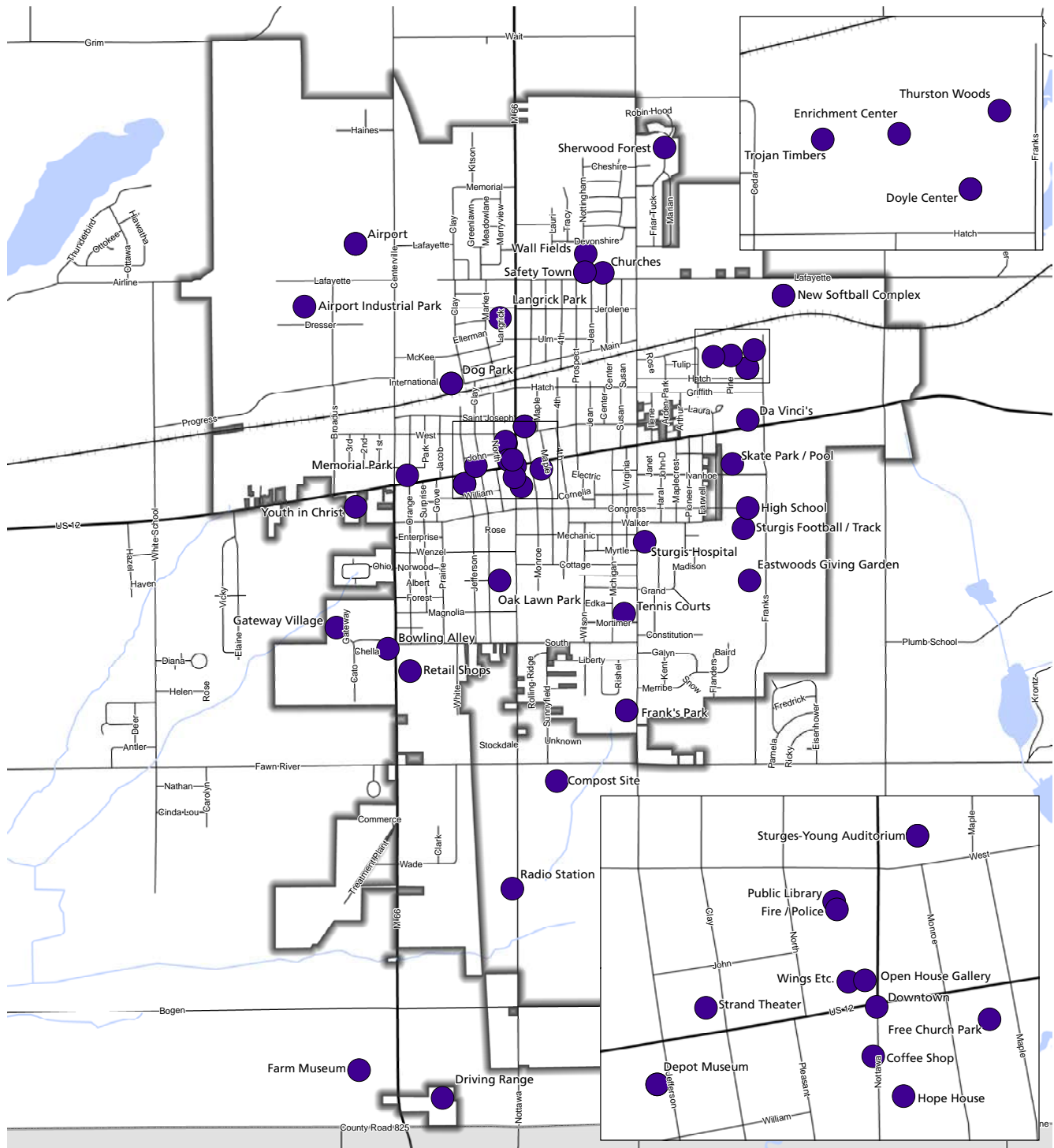
On December 6th, 2017 a visioning session was held in the Sturges-Young Civic Auditorium at 6 p.m. With 10 people in attendance, the evening was spent in two small groups of residents brainstorming responses to the following questions:

- » What one word best describes Sturgis?
- » What is one word or phrase you would like to use to describe Sturgis in the future?
- » What has Sturgis accomplished well?
- » What are the barriers to Sturgis’ success?
- » What does our community look like 10 years in the future?
- » What are our collective priorities?

### **Description of Sturgis: Now and Future**

The attendees feel fondly for Sturgis with over a dozen positive descriptions. Words used by both tables refer to Sturgis as “livable” and “comfy.” In fact, one table felt the City was “unappreciated” considering how much it offers for such a small place. Attendees remarked on the City as a “great place to raise a family” and that it has a “good school

## MAP 2. Community Assets



### CITY OF STURGIS Community Assets

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

● Assets as identified by Visioning Session / "Play" Stakeholder Group



system.” In contrast, the only purely negative comment describes Sturgis as “boring if you are single,” which is consistent with comments in the community-wide survey about the lack of night life and activities geared towards young adult residents. For the future, the residents have big aspirations. Both groups hope Sturgis will be a tech “powerhouse” thriving in a “vibrant” city. The other words describe a forward-thinking community that is “wireless,” “sustainable,” “entrepreneurial” and “renewable” with all the basics covered such as good “utility and street system(s).” In comparison to the students, who wish to live in a bigger, more exciting city, the adults participating in this exercise want a greener city, desires that are not mutually exclusive. Perhaps with a joint session, a vision that incorporates both aspirations could be achieved.

Accomplishments

As a community embarks on improvements, looking to the past to review what it has achieved can provide more balanced insight on where the city is headed. There are several places and/or changes that the community felt were well accomplished. Broadly, one table reported that the City “maintain(s) and house(s) outstanding facilities.” Some of those were spelled out more specifically as the “dog park,” “Doyle Center,” “Community Enrichment Center,” “industrial parks,” and the “airport.” Also, reduction to the crime rate, street improvements, and downtown development were called out as accomplishments.

Barriers

The only barrier to success listed by both groups was “resistance to change.” Community members felt that the City is stuck in a “business as usual” approach instead of exploring alternative ways to run the City. Other references to the City were “red tape” and a “communication breakdown” where unsuccessfully embracing the “tech evolution” means that misinformation spreads. Other barriers were related to housing—it is believed that a lack of upscale housing and the high proportion of rental units compared to owner-occupied homes are barriers to the City. On the other hand, “lack of affordable housing” and “limited transportation modes” are seen as barriers, to another segment of the population. Economic barriers were also mentioned. If the city only succeeds when its residents succeed, then low “wages,” “low level(s) of education,” and therefore a “limited labor force” can stifle Sturgis’ economic prosperity. While the City has no control over the wages that private firms pay their workers, it does in fact deal with the consequences. When personal barriers are listed, it shows on a grander scale what the City as well has to overcome in order to succeed.

Vision for 10 Years in the Future

The question asks community members to imagine a hypothetical: if the City were to do everything perfectly, or to follow precisely what the community lays out, what would Sturgis look like in 10 years in the future? The members solidly want to see a community with “better housing” and a community that is “environmentally friendly.” Environmental-friendliness was described in several ways: “solar roofs,” “embraced renewables,” and “public charging stations” for electric cars and/or golf carts. They described a downtown with no vacancies, rehabilitated buildings, “cultured eateries,” nightlife, fine dining, and entertainment with “predictable, annual new events,” all taking place on “smoother roads.” Despite a desire to become a more animated city, they also wish to retain families.

Group members were then asked to vote on their top three priorities. Once they were compiled to form six total priorities, each person then voted on their top two of the collective priorities. Becoming a “technology-driven community” rose to the top with nine votes. A close second was having a variety of eateries that make Sturgis a food destination. Falling towards the bottom was the idea of a homeowners association, which would be a gated community primarily to serve the elderly who are unable to keep up with the demands of yard work.

TABLE 5. Community Collective Priorities

Rank	Collective Priorities	Votes
1	Technology-driven community	9
2	Destination eateries (cultured bakery, brewhouse, niche, etc.)	8
3	Rehabilitated downtown buildings	7
4	Predictable, annual new events and community parties	5
5	Retention of families	4
6	Homeowners association	3

Plickers

At the beginning of each stakeholder session and the community visioning meeting, attendees were asked a series of the same questions and their answers were collected in real time using the Plickers app (same app as was used with the students). The content of the questions were geared

towards the “live,” “work,” and “play” groups as well as two larger questions to see if there was a major difference between perception and reality among the “expert” and “non expert” groups.

Three of the responses provide definitive answers. According to the stakeholders and vision session participants, Sturgis does have a drug problem, ethnicity does affect a resident’s quality of life, and the youth do not have enough recreational opportunities. The remaining questions have less precise results. The questions about housing availability, the school system preparing students for the workforce, and adequate

employment opportunities had nearly tied votes between “yes” and “no.” Some differences in viewpoints materialized. For instance, all stakeholders from the “live” group believe there are housing options for all demographic groups when several of the other groups reported, “no.” As individuals who work in the field, it seems that the “live” stakeholders are aware of information that the rest of the public cannot easily access. In the same vein, the “work” group represented by some employers in the area more frequently said there are not adequate job opportunities in Sturgis, while others were more optimistic.

TABLE 6. Plickers App Stakeholder Responses

Question	Responses		
Are there housing options available in Sturgis for all age, incomes, and abilities?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	3	8	0
PLAY	3	2	4
WORK	4	4	2
LIVE	5	0	0
TOTAL	15	14	6
Does Sturgis Public School system properly prepare students to join the workforce?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	3	4	2
PLAY	4	2	3
WORK	3	5	3
LIVE	2	1	2
TOTAL	12	12	10
In Sturgis, does ethnicity play a role in quality of life?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	6	3	1
PLAY	6	0	3
WORK	3	5	3
LIVE	4	1	0
TOTAL	19	9	7
Are employment opportunities in Sturgis adequate?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	6	4	0
PLAY	5	2	2
WORK	2	8	1
LIVE	3	2	0
TOTAL	16	16	3
Does Sturgis have a drug problem?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	9	0	0
PLAY	6	0	3
WORK	9	0	2
LIVE	3	1	1
TOTAL	27	1	6
Do youth in the community have enough opportunities for recreation?	Yes	No	Not sure
General session	3	6	1
PLAY	3	2	4
WORK	2	5	4
LIVE	1	3	1
TOTAL	9	16	10



## MAJOR THEMES

After reviewing the results from the survey (i.e. Sturgis Fest, English and Spanish versions), stakeholder, student and visioning sessions, some major themes surfaced. Housing, brought up by survey-takers and stakeholder groups, is not adequately meeting the residents’ varying demands. Neither in terms of number and type are new developments fitting the residents’ needs for higher quality rentals, larger rental units (3-4 bedrooms), middle of the range housing prices (\$100k-\$150k), and senior housing that offers property maintenance. It was noted that the lack of appropriate housing types could be preventing workers from living in the City. The connection between the “missing middle” housing stock and a faltering economy is taking place statewide and deserves a pointed and strategic response. As the most basic unit of a city, if there is trouble in the housing market, there is trouble elsewhere.

Drugs were also noted as a major problem. Students, stakeholders, and visioning session participants almost unanimously commented on its negative effect on the economy and public safety. Stakeholders from the “work” group stated that potential employees who could not pass a drug test were a barrier to prosperity. From the students’ perspective, the drug problem made them feel unsafe, and could be the basis for the less than endearing label “dirty Sturg.” Also from the “work” group, the issue arose that workers are leaving Sturgis to find jobs with better wages and benefits. Students also noticed this and wished to see better jobs in the City, a testament to the stress of a household struggling on their current income trickling down to their children. Low wages have a tremendous effect on

the City. While the City cannot mandate private entities to boost wages, it does have to be cognizant of its effects. Low-income residents will need different types of services, attracting high-end boutique and niche restaurants will be more difficult, and the quality of the housing stock will suffer.

Some of the themes are interrelated. A lack of things to do was expressed in different ways, namely, not enough organized events throughout the year for all ages, a downtown that lacks desirable retail and dining options, or inadequate recreational opportunities for youth (or adults in the form of trails). Repeatedly, adults have requested the development of trails throughout the City. The trails found within the parks are not enough to satisfy their recreational needs. Residents are looking for longer, inter-connected non motorized pathways. If progress was made in these areas, residents would begin to see the vibrant city they envision.

After speaking with the “play” group who is well-versed on the myriad recreational opportunities, it could be a matter of poor communication to the public about what is offered. Even though there are more platforms to communicate than ever before, the plethora of options can be stifling. Whereas historically, a blurb in the local newspaper would suffice, now one message must be disseminated through digital and physical media. During this transition, Sturgis has not yet landed on the correct combination of media to reach enough residents, according to some community members. One recommendation was for an online calendar that displayed all the daily events taking place, which the City has now established. A well-advertised, one-stop shop for obtaining information about events will go far in improving the perception of the City as boring.

TABLE 7. Community Engagement Major Themes

Major themes	Survey*	Students	Stakeholders	Visioning
Insufficient housing	X		X	X
Drugs		X	X	
Condition of roads	X	X		
Walking, bicycling, hiking trails	X			
Low wages		X	X	
Poor communication between city and residents			X	X
More family-friendly and age-appropriate events	X	X	X	X
Resistance to change				X
Upgrading downtown	X			X
“DirtySturg”		X		
Insufficient recreational opportunities for youth		X	X	

\*Survey refers to Sturgis Fest, community-wide survey (both Spanish and English versions)



*Community members participated in a mapping exercise.*

SOURCES

1 2000 Decennial Census. Tables P017A and H01H

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# Demographics

Understanding the City of Sturgis' current demographic make-up, and how it changes over time, is fundamental to planning responsibly for its future. It is an essential step to ensuring that the local government is planning for a community's collective needs. This section compares Sturgis to St. Joseph County, the State of Michigan, and the U.S. as a way to provide context for where the City falls in line within the larger geographic units.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SOURCES

The figures used in this section have been taken from the following sources in this preferred order:

**2010 U.S. Census.** This is the gold standard for demographic data. It measures 100% of the population and offers comparable data points at regular intervals throughout most of the United States' developed history. However, available data is limited to population and housing information, and the ten-year interval between data points means it is rarely "fresh."

**American Community Survey.** The ACS program replaced the "long form" Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of detailed information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a rolling basis instead of once per decade. Statistical validity of the ACS depends on sampling. In larger communities (those with populations of 65,000 or more), it is possible to gain a valid sample within twelve months, which the ACS calls a "one-year estimate." For mid-size communities (population 20,000-65,000), it takes 36 months of data collection to achieve a valid sample size, and for communities smaller than 20,000, it takes 60 months. This system exposes the statistical tradeoff between the reliability gained by increasing sample size and the currency that is sacrificed in the time it takes to do so. The dataset used for this project was 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

**ESRI Business Analyst.** This proprietary software presents privately-generated market research data. In addition, it estimates Census and ACS data for geographic configurations other than Census-defined tracts, blocks, and places.



POPULATION

As of 2015, Sturgis was a city of an estimated 10,916 people, which signifies a slight drop in population since 2010 (0.7%), in a city with a history of growth otherwise. Since 1960, the decennial census shows that Sturgis has experienced modest growth in comparison to St. Joseph County until 1990, when Sturgis’ rate of growth surpassed the County. At first, Sturgis’ growth outpaced the County marginally but by 2000, Sturgis was growing at double the rate: 11.4% compared to St Joseph County at 5.9%. Despite its brisk growth in previous decades, Sturgis’ population has leveled off. ESRI Business Analyst projects the City will have a population of 10,806 by 2023. However, there are several difficult-to-predict factors that could affect population projections such as natural disasters, large employers moving in or out of the city boundaries, a change in fertility rates, immigration policy, amongst several other “unknown” factors.

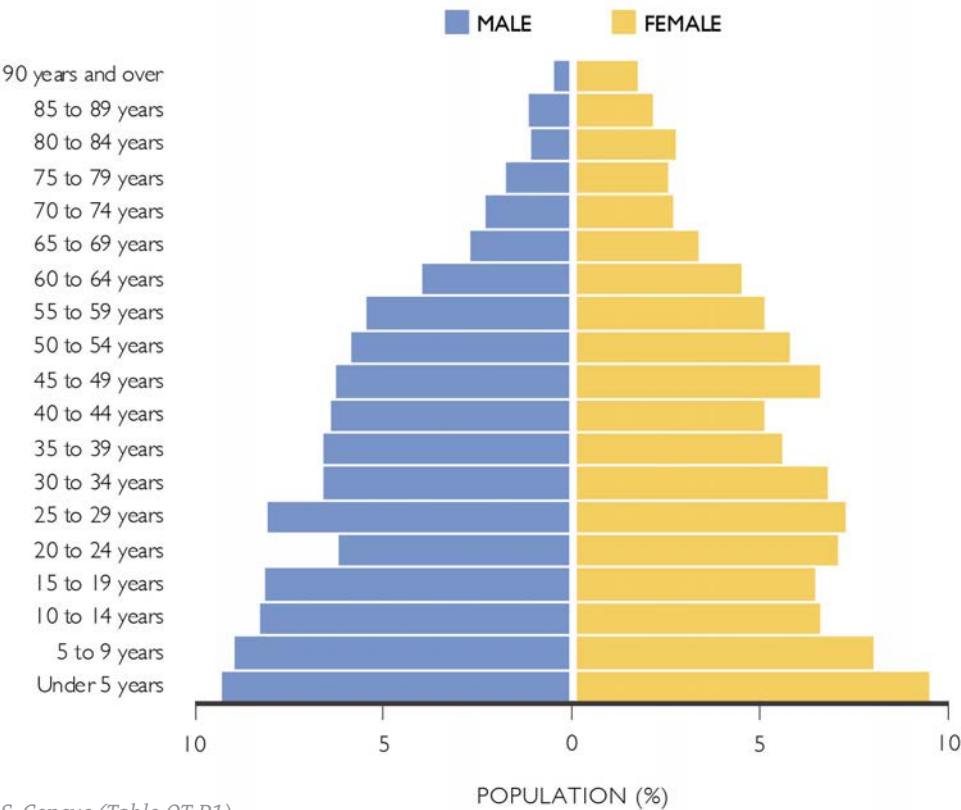
Residents are most densely clustered around the central axis of the City, the intersection of US-12 and M-66. These blocks house up to 15 people per acre. Residential neighborhoods are surrounded by edge-of-city developments such as industrial (northwest), commercial (southern “arm”), and public land uses (east) that likely grew up around the original neighborhoods and keep the City center fairly dense.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution presents an atypical situation in Michigan. While many communities are aging, Sturgis’ pyramid is bottom heavy, meaning there is a larger proportion of children than senior citizens. For instance, the four youngest age brackets (0-19) accounts for 32% of the population, more than double the four oldest age brackets (70-85+) which accounts for 12.4%. The median age of 32.5, which has remained nearly the same since 2010, also reflects a younger population (35.8 years of age for women and 29.4 years of age for men) when compared to the County’s median age of 39.2 and the State of Michigan at 39.5.

Even as a “younger” community, the population aged 70 years or older is still growing, from 9.6% in 2010 to 12.4% in 2015. The age cohorts beneath them, ages 60-69, also represent some of the largest proportions of the adult population. While still outnumbered by future generations, Sturgis will likely have to prepare for a larger elderly population in the next decade. Note that women commonly outlive men, which is expressed in the pyramid where the proportion of women over the age of 85 years old is three times higher than men. As a society, it is important to recognize this trend and respond accordingly with appropriate services and housing.

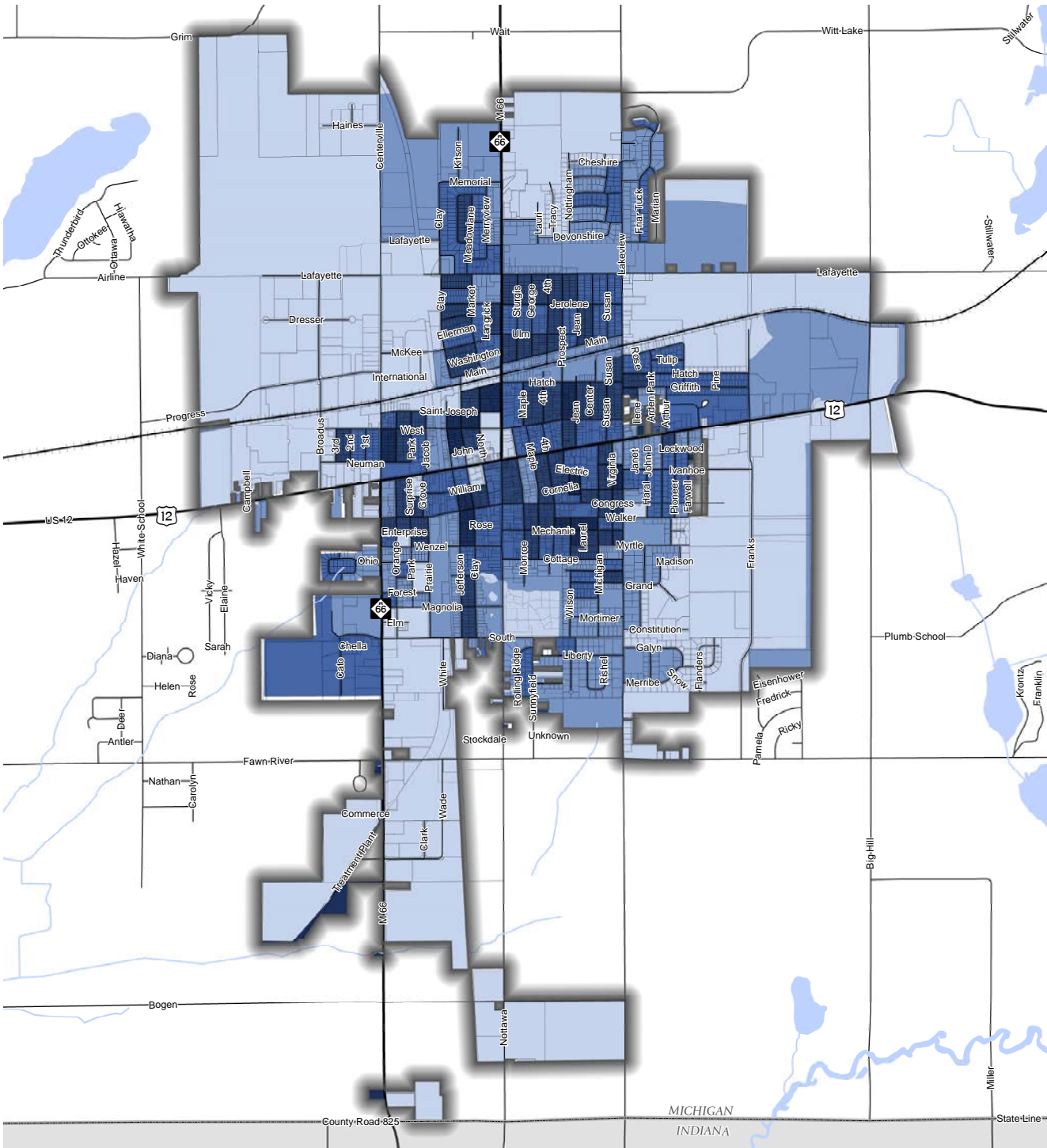
FIGURE 12. Population Pyramid



Source: 2010 U.S. Census (Table QT-P1)



MAP 3. Population Density



CITY OF STURGIS  
**Population Density**

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

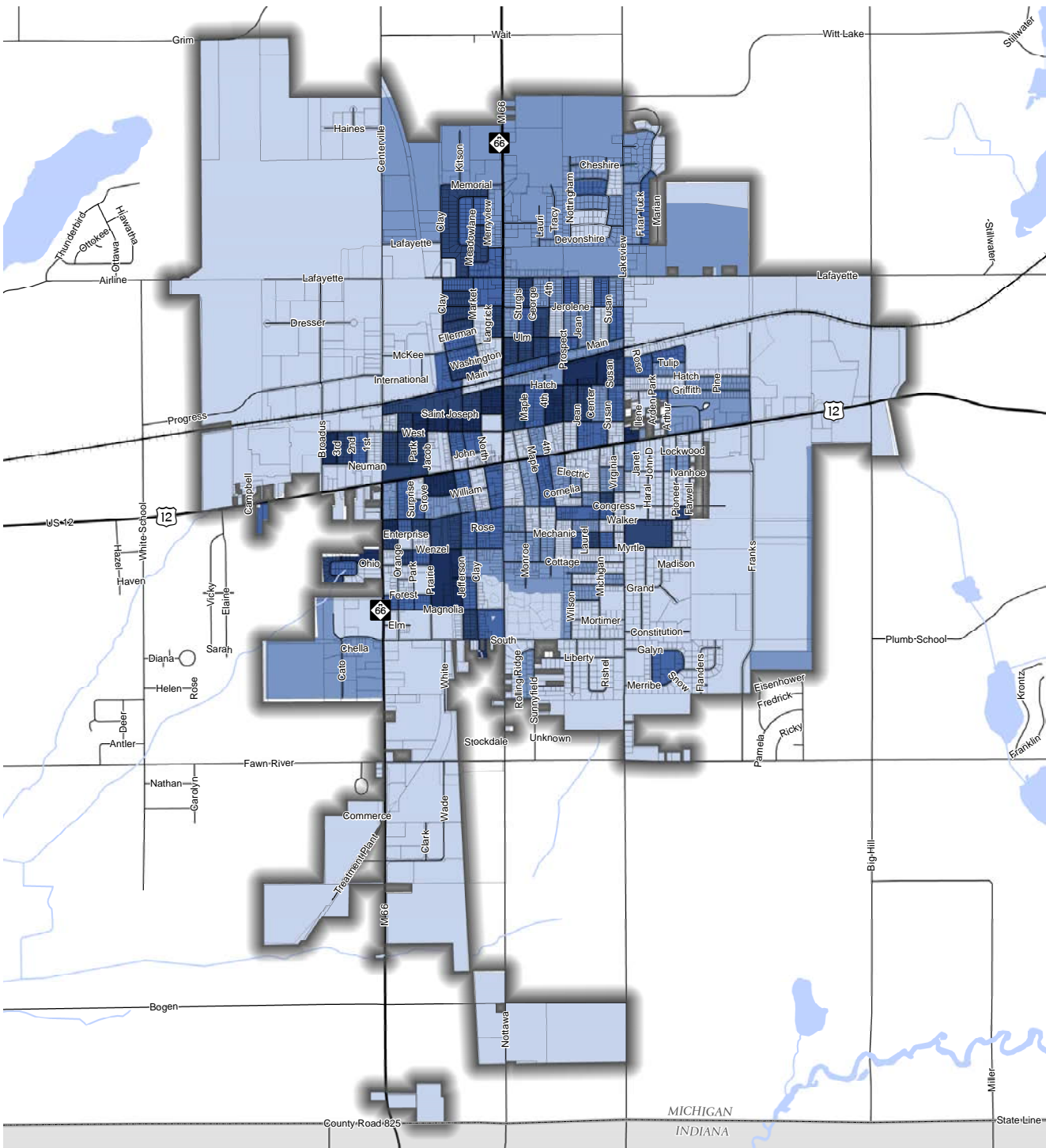
- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

People per Acre by Block:

- 0.0 - 1.03
- 1.04 - 2.93
- 2.94 - 5.21
- 5.22 - 8.14
- 8.14 - 15.19



MAP 4. Hispanic Population



CITY OF STURGIS  
**Hispanic Population**

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

**Percent Hispanic Population by Block:**

- 0.0% - 8.57%
- 8.58% - 24.39%
- 24.40% - 39.13%
- 39.14% - 61.18%
- 61.19% - 100.0%



## RACE, FOREIGN-BORN, AND LANGUAGE

Sturgis residents almost homogeneously identify as “one race.” Among the 97.1% that selected “one race,” the most prominent racial group is “white” at 88.7% of the population. The next largest group, or 6.6% of Sturgis residents, identify as “some other race.” This category is designed to capture those who do not identify as any of the five racial groups listed, but nationwide “some other race” has grown to be the third most selected category, capturing Hispanics who “reject” this categorization provided in the census because they identify more closely with a race over the “Hispanic” ethnicity.<sup>1,2</sup>

In the Census, “Hispanic” is recorded as an ethnicity because Hispanics may identify as any race. As an ethnicity, Hispanic or Latino account for 21.4% of the City, most of which are of Mexican heritage. Accompanying this sizable group is a fairly large group of foreign-born residents. Just over 8% of residents were born abroad, the large majority of which were born in Latin American (69.0%). Correspondingly, 18.7% of residents speak Spanish at home, a substantially higher proportion than the state (5.7%). The data suggests that most of those who speak Spanish at home are bilingual, as only 6.1% of them report speaking English “less than very well.” Still, 6.1% is much higher than the state (1.8%) and even slightly higher than the U.S. (5.5%).

The history of the Hispanic population in Sturgis is relatively recent. As of 1970, only 1.8% of the population was foreign-born, and across the entire State of Michigan, only 1.35% of the population was classified as “persons of Spanish language.” It appears there was no Hispanic category on the U.S. Census as the racial categories were “white,” “black,” and “other.” In Sturgis, 0.17% or 15 residents, selected the “other” category. The next two decades remain relatively stable with only 1.3% choosing of “Spanish origin” (mostly of Mexican heritage) in 1980, and still only 2% foreign-born in Sturgis in 1990. In 2000, 13.3% of Sturgis was Hispanic, with 10.2% foreign-born, mostly from Latin America.

The “Hispanic Population” map shows where there are high Hispanic concentrations. The blocks that have between 61% and 100% Hispanic persons are clustered near the Michigan Southern rail line or on the western portion of the City, which has some overlap with the higher concentrations of poverty in the City.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, INCOME, AND POVERTY

Educational attainment is a stepping stone to economic stability. There is a negative correlation between level of education attained and poverty status: typically, the higher level of education achieved, the less likely a person will live in poverty. It is concerning, then, that 18.9% of residents aged

25 years and older do not have a high school diploma, 4.1% higher than St. Joseph County and 8.5% higher than the State of Michigan. The link between education and income is evident in Sturgis where a person with a high school diploma (or equivalency) is over 6 times more likely to live in poverty. Less than 3% of residents with a bachelor’s degree live in poverty, compared to 13.6% of high school graduates (B1501).

By the same token, only 9.6% have a bachelor’s degree with a noticeable disparity among white and Hispanics. Whites are almost twice as likely to hold a bachelor’s degree (14.1%) when compared to Hispanic residents (7.9%), as is also true at the national level. Despite being located in a manufacturing hub, advances in technology could mean that jobs in factories will increasingly require a bachelor’s degree to operate machinery on site. The median household income (MHI) in Sturgis is low at \$36,293, about 20% lower than the MHI in St. Joseph County (\$44,449), and 33% lower than the national MHI (\$53,889). However, the wage disparity by educational level is not that wide in Sturgis. The median income for a person with a bachelor’s degree is \$33,558 compared to a high school graduate earning \$27,141, a difference of just \$6,400 per year. In fact, the median wage is higher for those with less than a high school degree (\$28,750). The wage difference is notable among residents with a graduate or professional degree where the median earnings are \$83,618 annually, about 2.5 times higher than a bachelor’s degree-holder.

## INCOME DISPARITY & POVERTY ASSISTANCE

Another wage disparity that shows up in Sturgis is the female-to-male earnings ratio. The median earnings for year-round, full-time female employees are about 78% of their male counterparts, slightly better than in St. Joseph County where women the median earning 74% of men, and just below the U.S. (79%). When looking at the table “Income by Industry and Gender” for all workers, women out earn men in agriculture, finance, professional and administrative services, and the arts by relatively small margins. When comparing full-time, year-round earnings for the all sectors (except for the arts), women earn between 50.6%-96.3% of men, with the lower end of the scale representing educational services. It could be that when all workers are considered, women on average hold more part-time jobs and receive a slightly higher wage than men in those professional fields in Sturgis. The narrowest disparity is in professional and administrative services. At just 67% of the median earnings, retail is a low-paying job that is occupied primarily by women (62.4%).

Consequently, the poverty rate for families with a female householder and no husband present is six times higher than for families with a married couple, partly due to a considerably lower wage. This is also significant considering



that 50% of women who gave birth in Sturgis were unmarried, 16% higher than the county. Moreover, 72 per 1,000 women are giving birth between the ages of 15 to 19, again demonstrably higher than the county (17), state (18), and the nation (18). Teenage mothers will struggle to make a livable wage without a strong support network as child-rearing has shown to interfere with attaining higher levels of education.

Almost one-quarter of people in Sturgis live in poverty (23.4%). The “Poverty” map shows three areas with the highest concentrations of poverty, where apartment complexes are tucked away behind commercial corridors on the southwestern and northeastern corners of the city. In these areas, approximately one-quarter to one-third of residents live below the poverty line. When neighborhoods hit a “tipping point” where poverty rates exceed 20%, negative effects such as crime, school truancy, and prolonged poverty grow. The levels of poverty exceed this “threshold” in several areas in Sturgis indicate some potential to severely limit an individual’s socio-economic mobility.<sup>3</sup>

Over one-third (33.5%) of the population living in poverty are under 18 years old. Unfortunately, Sturgis’ poverty status among families is higher than the County (17.2%), the State of Michigan, (16.7%) and the U.S. (15.5%). The same is also true for elderly (65 years and older). The U.S. has set up a safety net to help those in need or in transition, but it is likely that a smaller proportion of people in poverty are receiving aid. For example, in 2015 4.1% of households received public cash assistance which may not reach the entire 23.4% of people in poverty. This gap could under serve a sizable number of people experiencing financial hardship. On the other hand, the percentage of families in poverty (18.2%) is exceeded by the percentage of SNAP benefits awarded to households (22.2%). It appears that people have greater access to support for food purchases than other essential services.

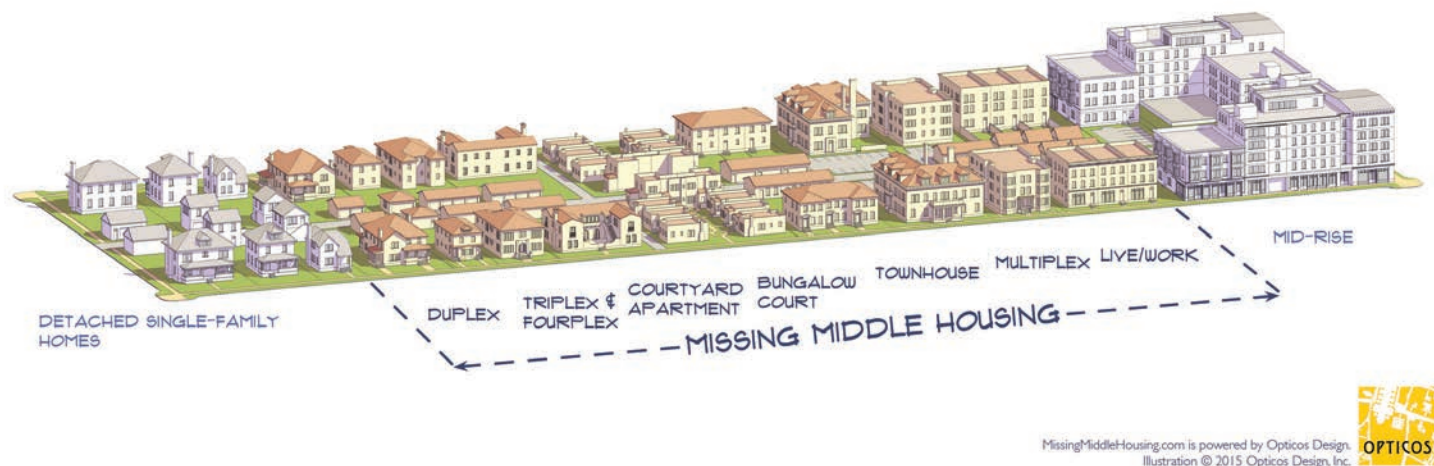
Another measure of financial hardship comes from ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) which studies the households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county (ALICE, 2017). The ALICE report of Michigan, produced by United Way, found the City of Sturgis to be experiencing the highest rate of families that were below the ALICE threshold or below the poverty level throughout St. Joseph County. Tied with Three Rivers City, 52% of the households in Sturgis are struggling to make ends meet. 19% of households are living in poverty, and another 33% of households are living with the financial hardships identified by ALICE. The report estimates a Household Survival Budget for St. Joseph County and equates \$17,712 dollars as the annual survival costs for a single adult and \$48,300 dollars for a 2-parent, 2-child household. These survival costs represent the bare-minimum costs for basic necessities, categorized by housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and taxes, respectively. In the City of Sturgis, over half of the households are struggling to afford their Household Survival Budget, and approximately 1 in every 5 households are living below the Federal Poverty Line.

## HOUSING

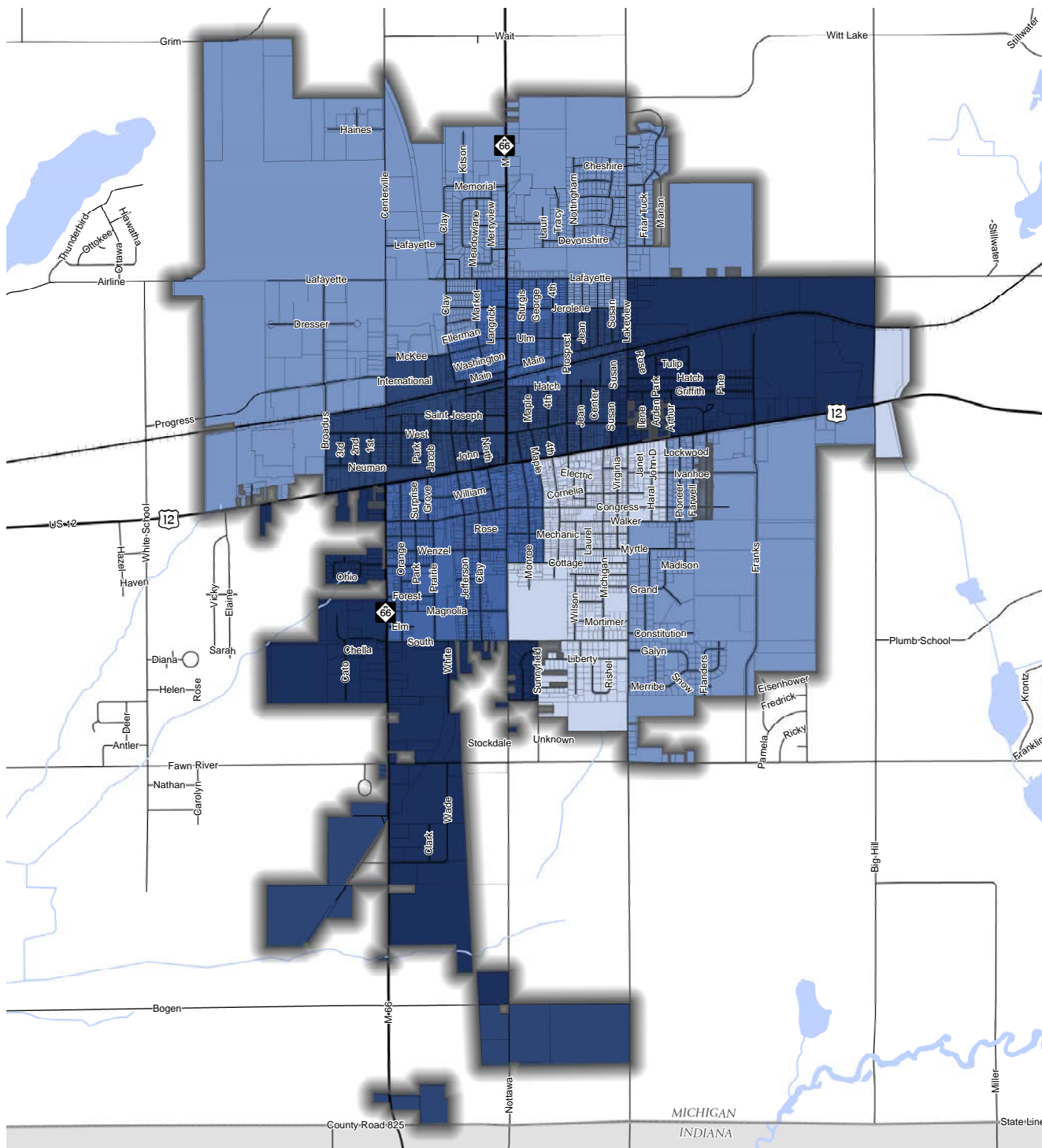
The population of Sturgis is spread among 4,545 housing units. Along with the population boom, the rate of housing development matched the decades of growth between 1950 and 1990. As a result of the Great Recession stemming from the mortgage crisis, and in Sturgis dating back to the early 2000s, housing construction came to a halt; since 2010, only seven units have been built in Sturgis. With the population now on the decline, the decrease in housing construction may not carry a large negative impact on the housing market.

Most of the housing units are single-family detached homes (71.0%). It appears that the housing ramp-up before the crash in 2009 focused largely on building single-family homes.

**FIGURE 13. Missing Middle Housing**



## MAP 5. Poverty



CITY OF STURGIS

### Poverty

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

#### Individuals Below the Poverty Line by Block Group:

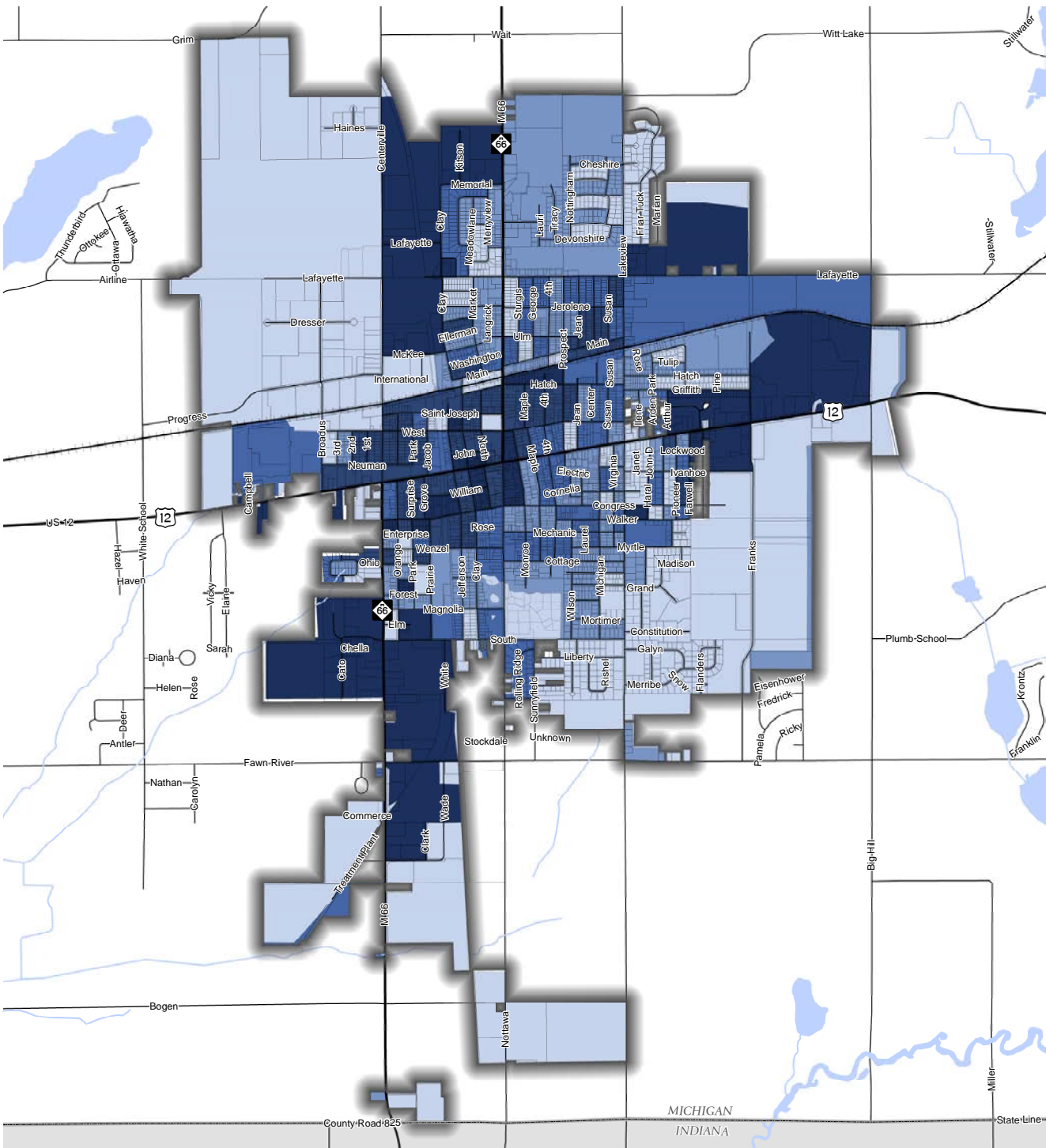
- 5.81% - 8.24%
- 8.25% - 11.54%
- 11.55% - 21.82%
- 21.83% - 24.51%
- 24.52% - 31.62%



**B R I**  
Beckett & Raeder



MAP 6. Renter-Occupied Housing Tenure



CITY OF STURGIS  
**Renter Occupied Housing Tenure**

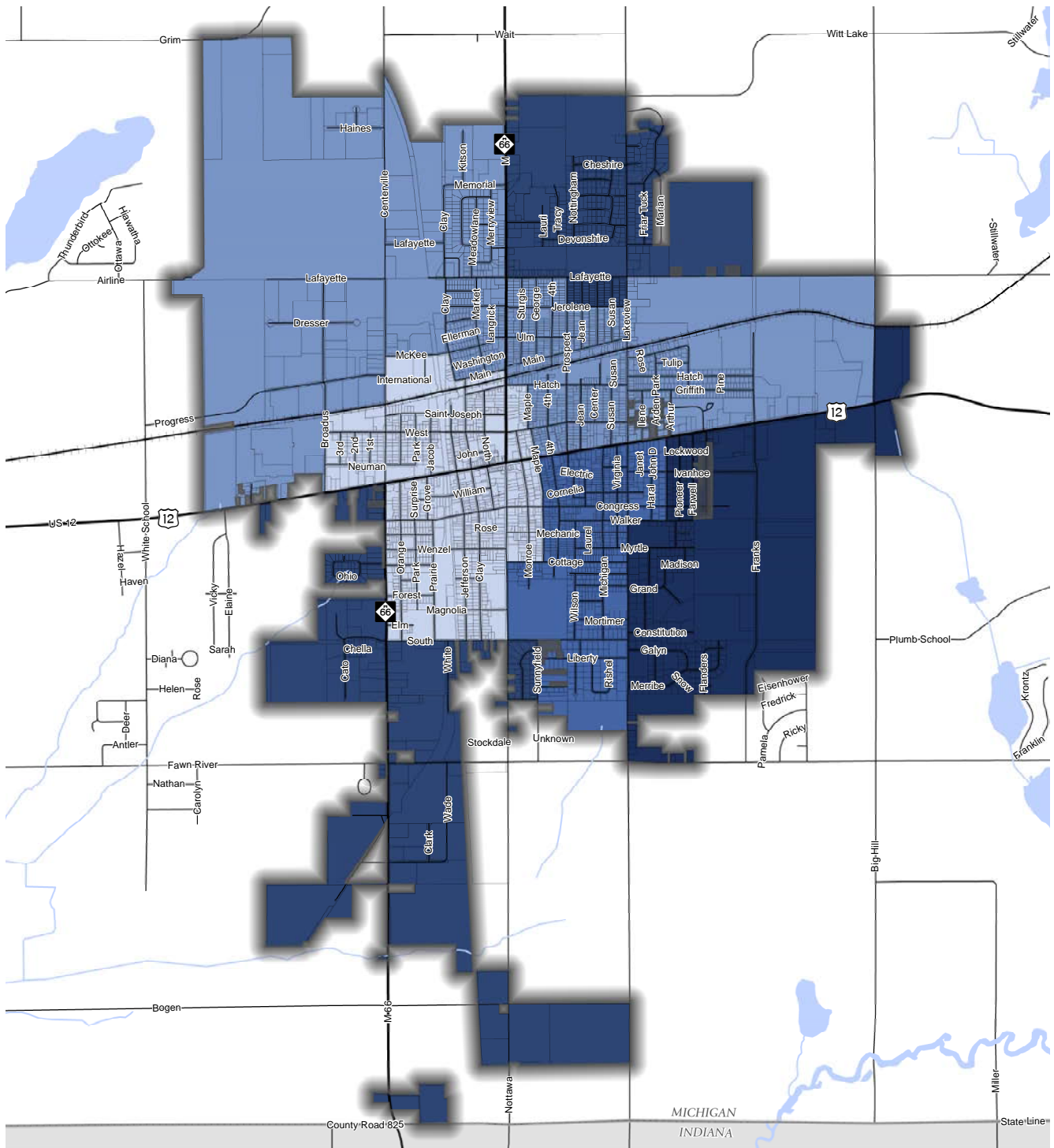
Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

**Percentage of Renter Occupied Housing by Block:**

- 0.0% - 7.69%
- 7.70% - 23.07%
- 23.08% - 42.85%
- 42.86% - 75.00%
- 75.01% - 100.0%

## MAP 7. Median Home Value



CITY OF STURGIS

## Median Home Value

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP, U.S. Census Bureau

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

### Median Home Value by Block Group:

- \$66,000 - \$68,600
- \$68,601 - \$73,400
- \$73,401 - \$96,100
- \$96,101 - \$116,700
- \$116,701 - \$147,000



**B R I**  
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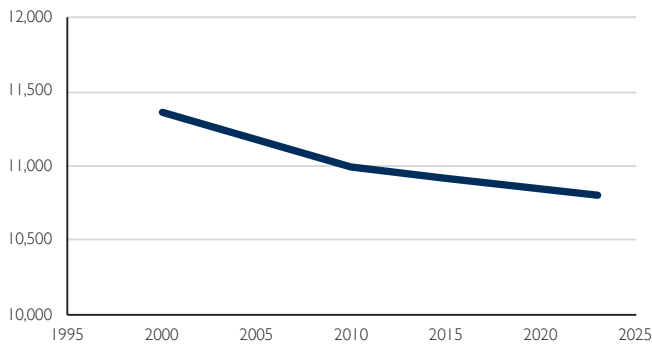
# City of Sturgis Dashboard

Figure I: Demographic Dashboard

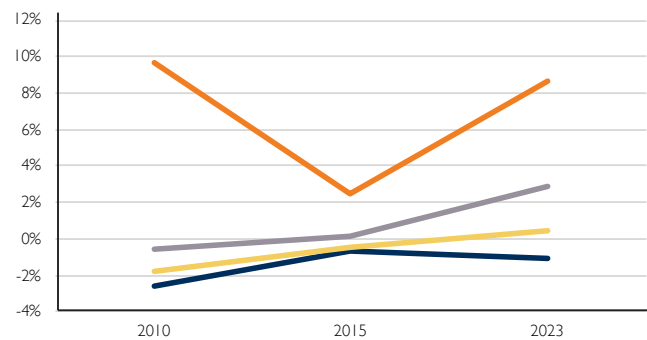
Key for Population and Prosperity Index Graphs:

City of Sturgis   St. Joseph County   Michigan   United States

Population Growth

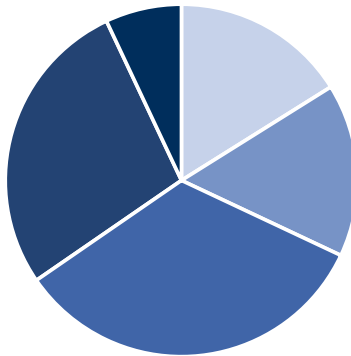


Population Growth Rate



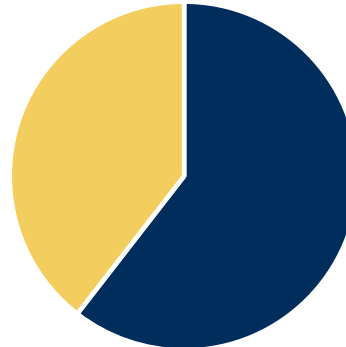
Household Income

Very Low Income (under \$14,999)  
Low Income (\$15,000-\$24,999)  
Moderate Income (\$25,000-\$49,999)  
High Income (\$50,000-\$99,999)  
Very High Income (\$100,000+)



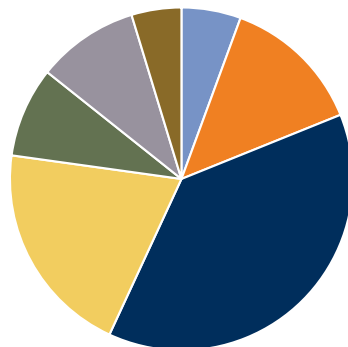
Housing Tenure

Owner-Occupied  
Renter-Occupied



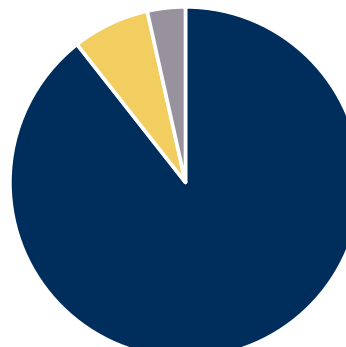
Education

Less than 9th grade  
9th to 12th grade, No Diploma  
High School Graduate or Equivalent  
Some College, No Degree  
Associate's Degree  
Bachelor's Degree  
Graduate or Professional Degree

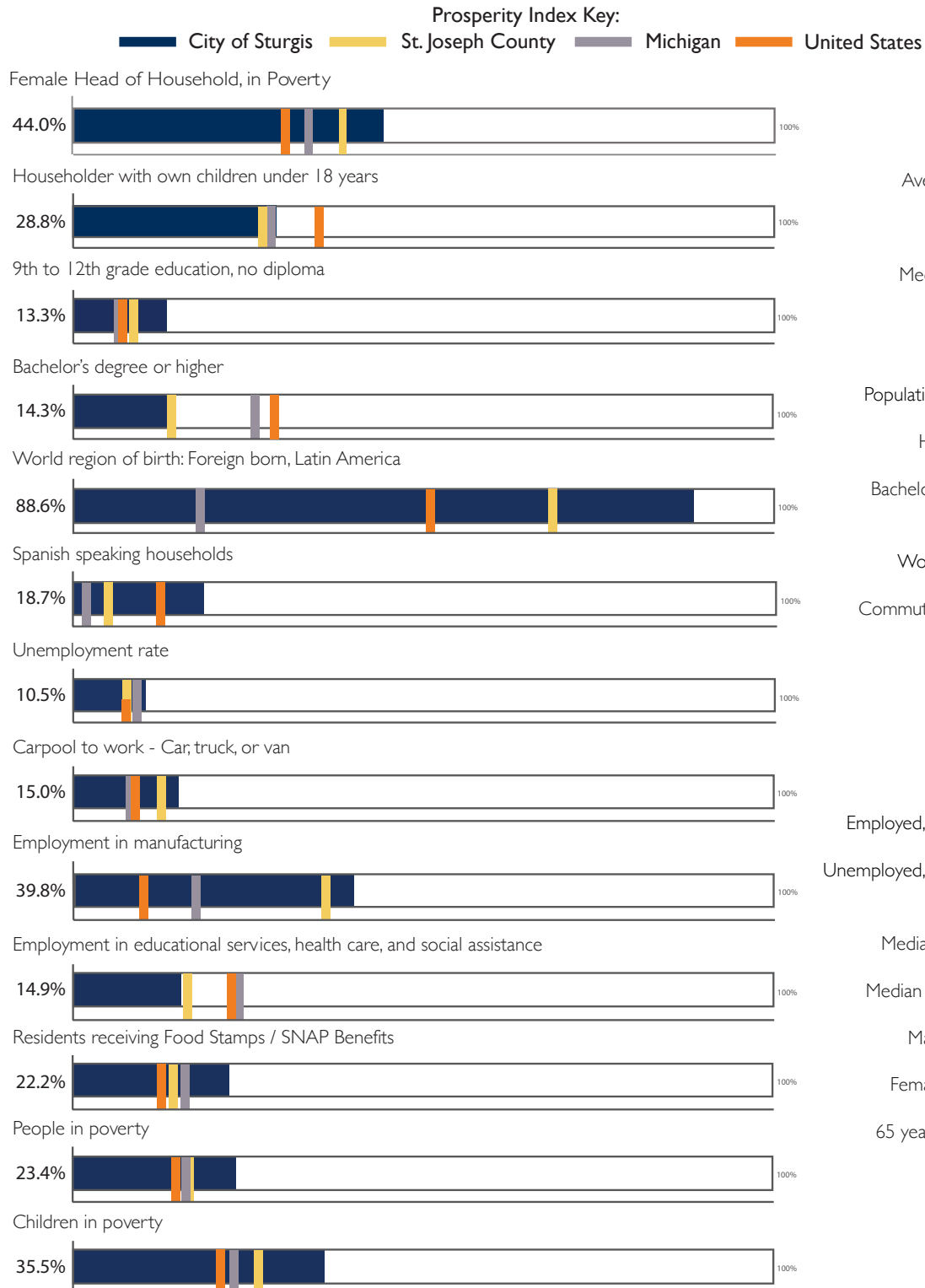


Work

Private Wage and Salary Workers  
Government Workers  
Self-Employed



# City of Sturgis Prosperity Index



<b>Households</b>	
Total Households	4,150
Average Household Size	2.6 People
Average Family Size	3.2 People
Median Household Value	\$80,900
Median Gross Rent	\$658
<b>Education</b>	
Population Enrolled in School	28.1%
High School Graduate	38.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14.3%
<b>Commuting</b>	
Workers who Commute	92.9%
Commuters who Drive Alone	78.0%
Average Commute	17.3 Minutes
<b>Employment</b>	
In the labor force	62.8%
Civilian Veterans	7.4%
Employed, No Health Insurance	14.4%
Unemployed, No Health Insurance	36.8%
<b>Income</b>	
Median Household Income	\$36,293
Median Earnings for Workers	\$26,160
Male Full-Time Earnings	\$36,341
Female Full-Time Earnings	\$28,285
65 year and over in poverty	11.6%
<b>Industrial Sectors</b>	
Manufacturing	39.8%
Retail Trade	9.0%

By Michigan standards, the percentage of single-family detached housing is common but is still 10% higher than the U.S.

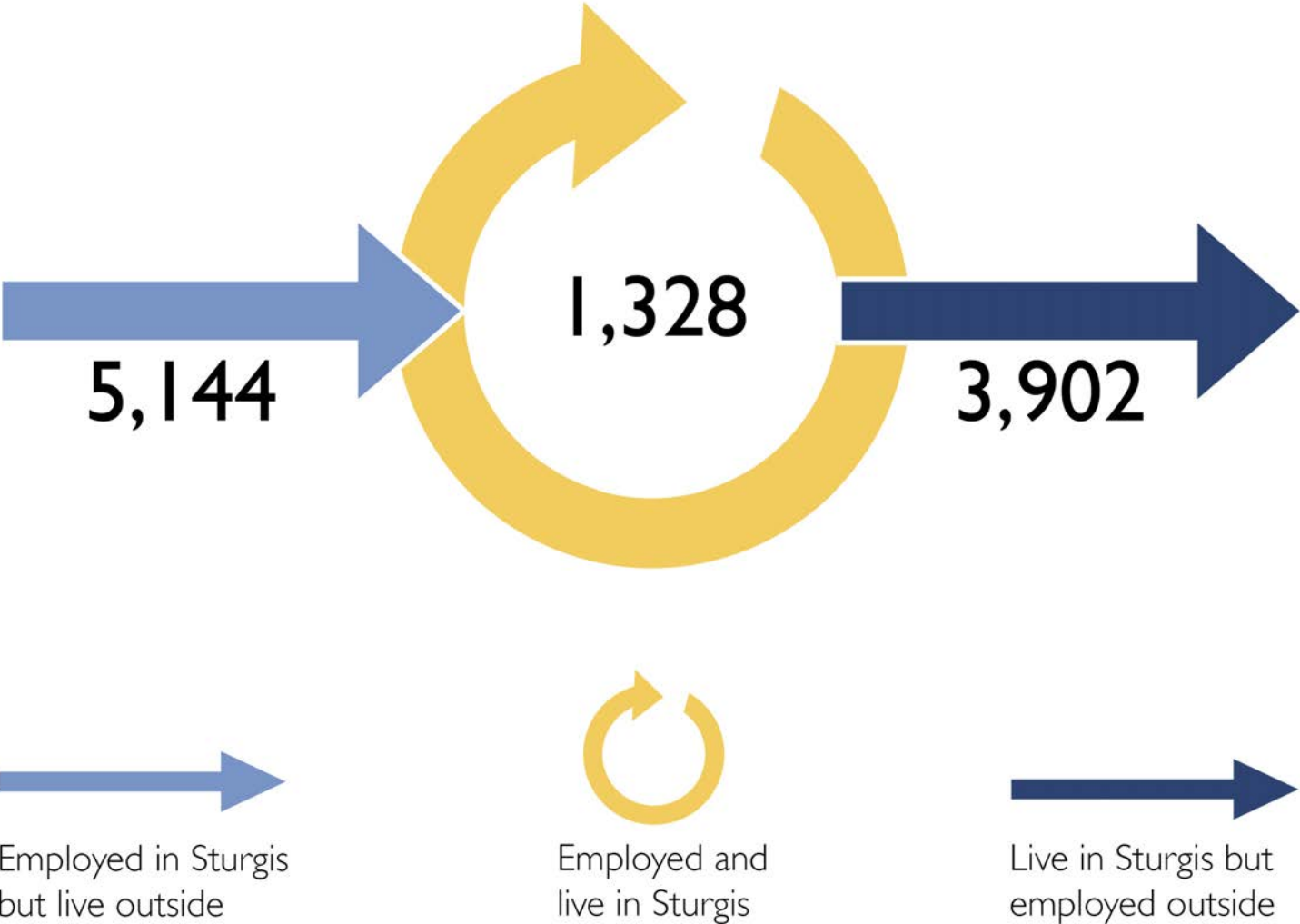
The remaining 29.0% of housing types are spread among eight different types of housing structures. The next most commonly available structure type are multi-family buildings with 3 or 4 units, 5 to 9 units, or 20 or more units, each comprising about 6% of the total types of housing. These figures reveal a general lack of housing variety, a phenomena known as the “missing middle.” Missing middle refers to the housing types that exist on the spectrum between single-family detached units and apartment tower blocks. A lack of housing variety has become more noticeable in recent years as demographics and preferences have changed in favor of smaller homes on smaller parcels. Retirement age folks who wish to downsize in their community and young couples who are waiting longer to have children may be looking

for smaller, easier to maintain units. The examples below demonstrate that housing variety does not compromise highly regarded values such as “small town character.” The lack of high-quality multi-family units adds to any apprehension about building more of this housing format, especially with the ongoing trend of converting single-family homes into multi-family units.

TENURE

In smaller cities, housing tenure status most commonly leans towards homeownership as is the case in Sturgis. The homeownership rate is 60.5% and renter-occupied housing is 39.5% with little change since 2010. The homeownership rates are lower than the County (75.0%), the State of Michigan (71.0%), and the U.S. (63.9%). The largest change was among rental units, which jumped 18.1% between 1990 and 2000. Since then, they have leveled off settling just

FIGURE 14. Commuting Graphic



Source: On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau LEHD, 2017



below 40%. Local governments are concerned when rental units are concentrated because if landlords do not maintain the properties well, there is a possibility for a neighborhood to fall into disrepair, creating pockets of blight. The renter-occupied units are concentrated in large swatches of land along M-66 and US-12, with almost direct overlap of the poverty-stricken areas.

## HOUSING VALUE & COST-BURDEN

As in many cities in Michigan, home values dropped as a result of the Great Recession. In 2010, the median home value in Sturgis was \$92,500 and within five years, the median value dropped to \$80,900 with a median monthly mortgage payment of \$925. Over two-thirds (65.5%) of homes are valued at less than \$99,999. The highest valued homes are squarely located on the southeastern part of the City buffered from the lowest valued homes by blocks of moderate home values. These homes enjoy a neighborhood with few nuisances from commercial and industrial corridors.

The federal agency Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that households spend 30% or less on housing costs; if a household spends more, it is considered “cost-burdened.” Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of cost-burdened households stabilized around 30% but the severity of their burden has shrunk as those paying 35% of their income on housing was halved during those five years from about 24% to 11%. Renters, on the other hand, have become more cost-burdened during the same time period. As of 2015, 51.9% of renters were cost-burdened, compared to 49.1% in 2010. This makes sense considering rent has increased by 10% over five years, and mortgages remained basically the same.

## COMMUTING

Transportation is often the second largest expense in a household at a recommended 15% of the household budget, but is often ignored when factoring in the true affordability of housing. When combined with housing costs, these expenses total 45% of a household's income. Including transportation cost can discredit the notion of buying a cheaper home on the fringe of a city or region, because the savings in purchasing a home are offset by the expense of car maintenance over time. The annual transportation costs in Sturgis are \$11,968 annually, despite high access to a variety of jobs, and a relatively short commute.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics dataset from the U.S. Census Bureau (see Figure 14), there are 1,328 residents that live and work in the City, representing about 25% of the workforce. The other 3,902 residents, approximately 75% of the workforce, travel outside of Sturgis for employment. Another 5,144 people are estimated to work in Sturgis but live outside of the City, contributing to an influx of 1,242 workers within city boundaries.

According to a “housing and transportation affordability index,” Sturgis’ residents fare moderately well in this regard. The average person spends 48% of his/her income on these aggregated costs. Still, up to 21% of the population is spending 54-66% of its income, allowing for very little disposable income for other necessities in these households.<sup>5</sup> In Sturgis, 12.7% of occupied housing units do not have access to a vehicle. In a rural setting, this can have major implications on whether residents can access jobs outside of the city limits, which may contribute to a higher proportion of residents carpooling (15.0%) compared to the State of Michigan (8.8%) in addition to the fact that one-third of the Hispanic population in Sturgis carpool.

## SOURCES

- 1 Ashok, Sowmiya. *The Atlantic*. “The Rise of the American Other.” August 27, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/08/the-rise-of-the-others/497690/>
- 2 *The Economist*. “Some Other Race: How Should America Count Its Hispanics.” February 9 2013. <https://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21571487-how-should-america-count-its-hispanics-some-other-race>
- 3 HUD. *Evidence Matters*. “Understanding Neighborhood Effects of Concentrated Poverty.” Winter 2011. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/winter11/highlight2.html>
- 4 Center for Neighborhood Technology. *Housing and Transit Index*. <https://htaindex.cnt.org/map/index.php?mapR=35,-85.4191482,41.799217,9,place,12059>
- 5 Center for Neighborhood Technology. *Housing and Transit Index*. <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=41.799217&lng=-85.4191482&focus=place&gid=12059#fs>

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# 4

## Existing Land Use

### PURPOSE

It is the combination of demographic and land use trends that make a Master Plan such a valuable tool. This section sets out to see if the people-land dynamic is in sync; for example, do residential uses follow the same trajectory as population growth? Secondly, land use analysis helps determine if changes to land use support planning and development best practices, and provides insight into whether the current land use distribution hinders or contributes to the City's overall success. The land use categories were developed by the City of Sturgis and are more granular departure from the broader land use categories used in 2009 from the Michigan Center for Geographic Information. The observable land use trends over time reported below are based on a comparison of the former and current Existing Land Use maps.

### CURRENT LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

Few easily developable parcels of land remain in Sturgis as it almost entirely "built out," but the City has many notable features such as a traditional downtown, historic neighborhoods, infill development, a variety of commercial and industrial enterprises, high connectivity via M-66 and

US-12, and the Kirsch Municipal Airport. Below is a more in-depth look at how land uses are distributed throughout the City.

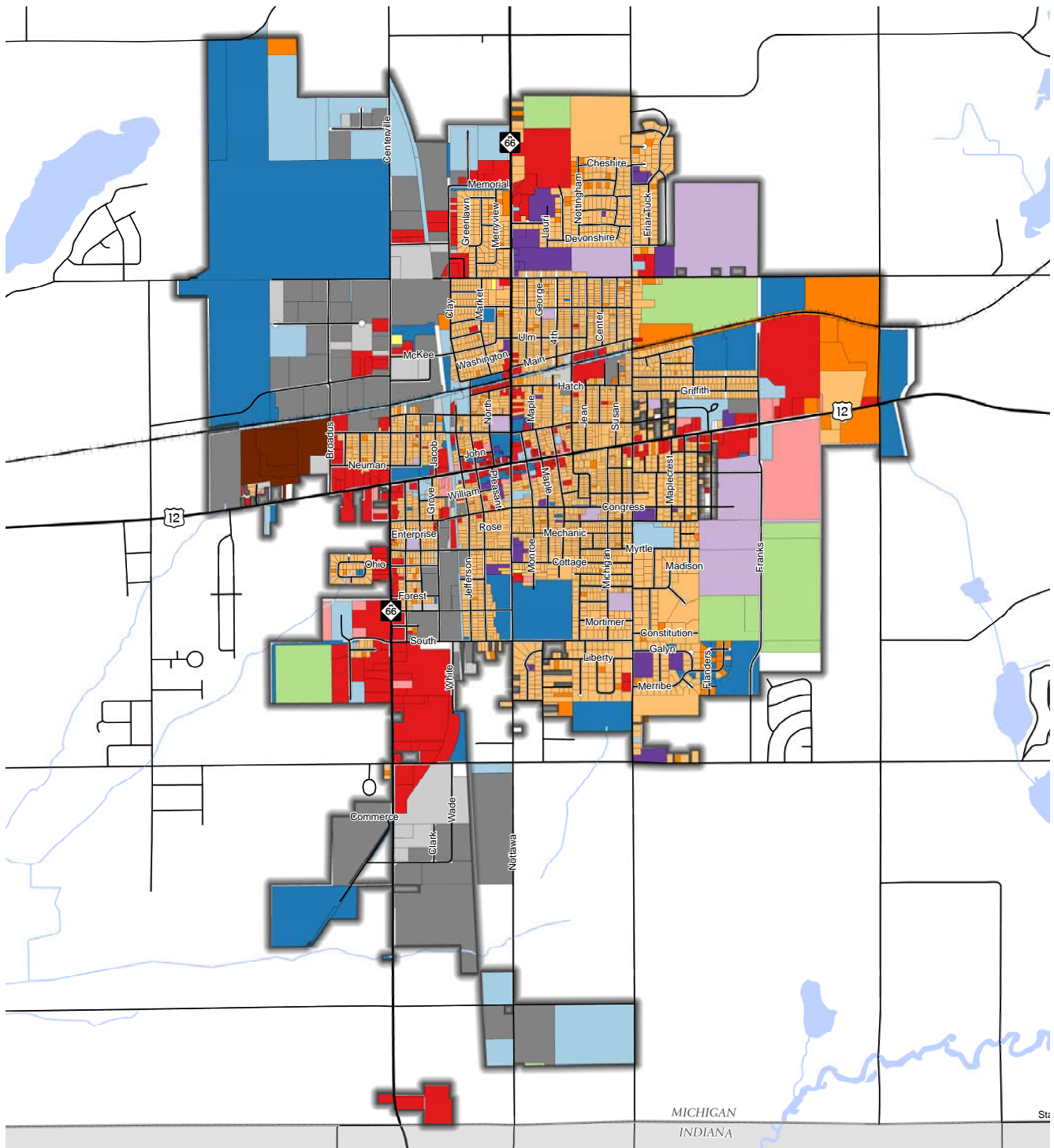
Land use categories are typically divided into the following major categories, and the table below outlines their corresponding subcategories:

- » Residential
- » Commercial
- » Industrial
- » Exempt
- » Agriculture

### Residential

The primary purpose of residential land use is to provide housing to the city's population, although other complementary uses can also be permitted such as parks and churches. Following traditional land use patterns, historic homes, built before the wide use of automobiles, are located within walking distance to downtown. From this central node, newer residential development fans outwards toward

## MAP 8. Existing Land Use



### CITY OF STURGIS Existing Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

City Boundary	Commercial Improved	Industrial Improved	Retired Split / Combined
State Roads	Commercial Vacant	Industrial Vacant	
All Roads	Agriculture Vacant	Exempt County / City	
Railroads	Residential Improved	Exempt Other	
Rivers / Streams	Residential Vacant	Exempt Schools	
Lakes / Ponds	Industrial Condominiums	Exempt Religious	



TABLE 8. Existing Land Use Categories by Acre

Land Use Category	Number of Parcels	Total Acreage	Percentage of Land
Agriculture Vacant	9	224.7	6.1%
Commercial	301	480.6	13.0%
Commercial improved	267	398.5	10.8%
Commercial vacant	34	82.1	2.2%
Industrial	109	621.0	16.7%
Industrial improved	75	513.5	13.9%
Industrial vacant	34	107.5	2.9%
Industrial condominiums	3	52.5	1.4%
Residential	3,317	1,064	28.7%
Residential improved	3,159	902.6	24.4%
Residential vacant	158	161.4	4.4%
Exempt	208	1,260.6	34.0%
City/county	87	688.8	18.5%
Schools	16	195.3	5.3%
Religious	39	66.8	1.8%
Other	66	309.8	8.4%

Source: City of Sturgis Assessing Data, 2017

the city limits. Most of the residential neighborhoods are located primarily east of M-66, closer to Sturgis' parks and public schools than industrial uses. Currently, 28.7% of land is committed to residential uses. This is a relatively low percentage dedicated to housing for a city, but Sturgis is in the rare position of having one parcel, the Kirsch Municipal Airport, cover a large swath of the city's land. Just over 4% of residential parcels were categorized as vacant, which equates to 158 properties that are unoccupied. Knowing that the City has a lack of housing diversity, it is worthwhile to consider using these parcels for new types of housing units.

## Commercial

The commercial land uses in Sturgis cluster along major vehicular corridors and near complementary industrial uses. Commercial land uses comprise almost 13.0% percent of total land with approximately 480 acres spread across 301 parcels.

Parcel size has an impact of a visitor's overall experience in a commercial district. In the central business district (CBD), smaller parcels laid out in contiguous storefronts contribute to a walkable "downtown experience." The difference in parcel size alone indicates which parts of the City have embedded hardware for "placemaking" and which commercial parcels are convenience-oriented. This distinction becomes important when a City strategizes over where and how to direct resources to get the "biggest bang for your buck" with economic development.

## Industrial

Sturgis has a proud history of manufacturing that is still apparent today in the amount of land consumed by industrial

uses. Almost 17% of land is used for industry, which cover 140 more acres than commercial properties. On average, the parcel size is about five times larger than parcels used for commercial enterprise and due to their size, appearance, and noise levels are clustered around the Kirsch Municipal Airport and extend southbound between M-66 and the Michigan Southern Railroad. Interestingly, both industrial and commercial land categories have 34 vacant parcels, although this represents a greater proportion for commercial uses. The largest concentration of vacant industry is situated on the east side of M-66 on a grassy patch near Auto Park Ford, Oak Press Solutions, and Sturgis Molded Products.

## Exempt

Public and quasi-public land is defined as properties owned by governmental, non-profit, or religious institutions. Combined, 208 parcels, or 34 % of land in Sturgis is publicly owned. As mentioned before, this is exceptionally high in Sturgis due to the Kirsch Municipal Airport. Although public land does not collect revenue for the City's general fund, it enables the city to provide essential services to its residences such as education, wastewater treatment, cemeteries, and rights-of-way.

## Agriculture

There is no active agriculture taking place within the city limits. However, there is still about 225 acres of vacant agricultural land. Logically, most of these parcels remain on the edges of the City where Sturgis continues to be surrounded by open land. The one exception is the large parcel that sits between Sturgis Middle School and the Doyle Community Center. Denser development pattern, both residential and commercial in the city center help to preserve agricultural land in the long run.



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# 5

## Natural Features

Natural features are an important pillar in planning. They can dictate as strongly as people's preferences where and how development can take place. This section is an inventory of Sturgis' naturally sensitive areas, how those may change over time, and how they interact with already established and future development. Aside from nature's influence on development, nature has significant intrinsic value with great meaning to the community, especially to those who choose to live in rural settings. Its preservation is key to maintaining the character of a place. Below is a survey of the natural features that live in the City of Sturgis.

### WATER

#### Flooding and Droughts

Climate scientists are in agreement that temperatures are rising globally. The past three decades of data are the warmest recorded since systematic data collection began in the late 19th century. The Midwest is one of 10 regions where the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funds research on climate change predictions and the implications of a less stable climate. Predictions

currently expect the weather in Michigan will paradoxically become drier and wetter. How is that possible? Instead of precipitation occurring as it has over time, it will fall in shorter, more intense bursts, resulting in more extreme flooding and drought. Over the next 50-100 years, it is expected that an additional two to three inches of precipitation will fall per year, and an additional 30 to 70 days will be over 90 degrees (F) annually.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), almost no land in Sturgis is at risk of a 1% annual chance flood hazard. Once called the "100-year flood" because a flood of this magnitude was only predicted to occur once every hundred years, this term is proving to be misleading as the instances of flooding are outpacing that rate. The FIRMs created by FEMA for Sturgis were last updated in 2010, but increased and concentrated bursts of precipitation can expand the FIRM's designated flood zone (links to the most updated version may be found in the endnotes to this chapter). This would mean that more parcels are at risk of flooding than appear on the map.<sup>2</sup>

## Impervious Pavement

Approximately 37.72% of the overall land in Sturgis is covered by impervious materials. As expected, the highest percentage of impervious surfaces falls in areas along major corridors, with short setbacks, parking lots, and bigger building footprints. Impervious surfaces make vehicular and pedestrian travel easier in inclement weather but have several negative side effects. When water cannot penetrate the ground, it runs off into local water bodies carrying all of the contaminants on a pavement's surface, or ponds and increases the risk of flooding. "Run off" water also does not filter down to recharge the natural underground aquifers. Areas with 0% impervious pavement are open spaces where water can follow the natural filtration cycle along the edges of the city in agricultural tracts of land. By blocking the natural system, impervious pavement degrades water quality and reduces ground water replenishment. When the water is not absorbed at close to the rate at which it falls, the City is responsible for managing the excess stormwater.

Besides its negative effects on water quality and flooding, impervious pavement exacerbates a phenomenon known as the "urban heat island" effect. Areas with vast stretches of pavement absorb heat and make cities hotter. Several studies have confirmed that cities are degrees hotter than the surrounding area as a result of black asphalt trapping and concentrating heat. The urban heat island effect will become increasingly important to address as average temperatures continue to climb.

## WATERSHED

Sturgis is a part of the St. Joseph River watershed. Like all watersheds in Michigan, the rivers, creeks, and tributaries eventually drain into one of the Great Lakes; the St. Joseph watershed empties into Lake Michigan. The watershed crosses the Indiana border, and is the third largest river basin in Michigan. It includes 3,742 river miles that meander through the metropolitan areas of Kalamazoo, Benton Harbor, and the Indiana communities South Bend and Elkhart. A watershed is a connected hydraulic system and should be treated as such; contamination occurring outside of a city's boundaries can still affect Sturgis' water quality. As such, coordination is best managed by organizations that have a larger geographic scope than a jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

## WETLANDS

Wetlands are areas where water covers land seasonally or year-round. Wetlands are an integral component of a watershed because they help to improve water quality, absorb excessive floodwaters, and are a vital ecosystem for fish, amphibians, and mammals alike. Development pressure and lax environmental regulation in the 20th century contributed to the rapid disappearance of more than half of America's wetlands. Due to their importance in storing and

cleaning water and as an asset that will only grow in value with climate variability, state and federal agencies through the Natural Resources and Environmental Act of 1994 (NEPA) require the preservation and responsible management of wetlands. In a municipality, this regulation would be enforced through the zoning ordinance.

The Sturgis Zoning Ordinance requires applicants to submit a wetland survey for a condominium or subdivision site plan review, when necessary. The open space plan for such developments may take up to 25% of any wetland in an R-2 zone that has to meet the minimum requirements, but the plan for this land must also demonstrate the open space supports recreation or communal uses for the residents. This ordinance is an attempt to preserve nature and accommodate demands for denser housing.

As a highly developed city with few natural water features, there are few wetlands and minimal flood hazards. The two types of wetlands within the city limits are scattered along the fringes where population density is low. Almost eight acres are freshwater forested wetlands that flood for only a portion of the year, typically during the growing season. More common in Sturgis, but still a rare find in the landscape, are freshwater emergent wetlands. Taking up 14 acres, these wetlands are characterized by perennial plants and vegetation that are present for most of the growing season.

## Potential Wetland Restoration

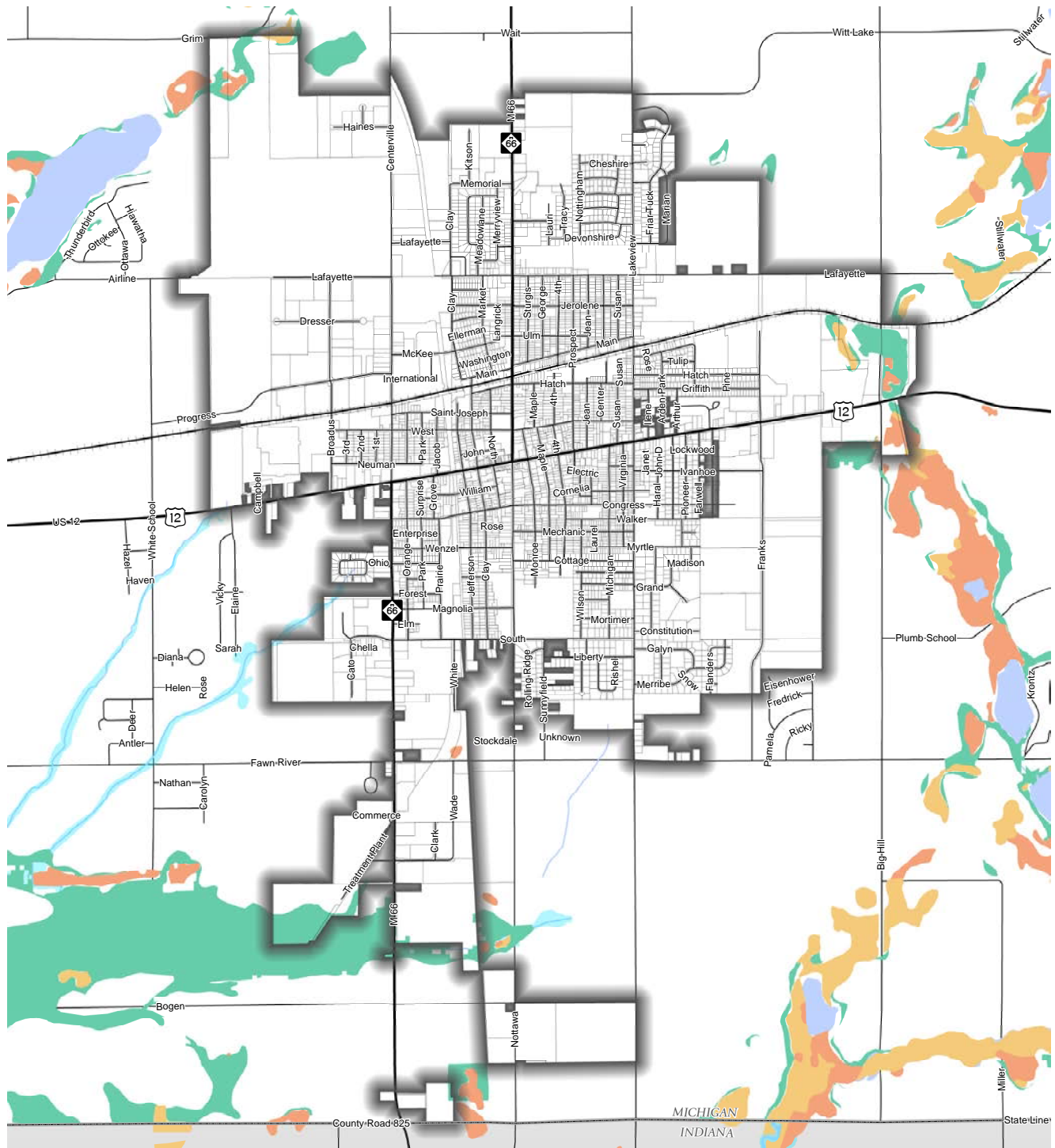
Areas designated for potential wetland restoration surround or exist in between the remaining wetlands. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), areas for potential restoration have the capacity to return from their degraded state to their "pre-existing naturally functioning condition, or...as close to that as possible."<sup>4</sup> Sturgis has 113.3 acres of potential wetland restoration areas, five times the number of current wetland acres. This represents an opportunity to harness natural assets and make them community assets as well.

## FOREST

Sturgis has sparse forested land. The largest forested area is close to the eastern border surrounding US-12, and the largest area for wetland and potential wetland restoration. In total, there are over 400 acres of trees (National Land Cover Database, 2011). The forests within Sturgis are home to deciduous trees, the type of trees that make for a colorful autumn. "Deciduous" literally means "falling off at maturity," a reference to the common pattern of leaves falling in the autumn, bare branches in the winter, blooming in the spring, and a green and leafy summer. To be considered a deciduous forest, 75% of the trees must shed their foliage.<sup>5</sup> The darker green spots on the map are labeled "evergreen," and as the name explains, they remain green all year.



## MAP 9. Hydrologic Features



CITY OF STURGIS

### Hydrologic Features

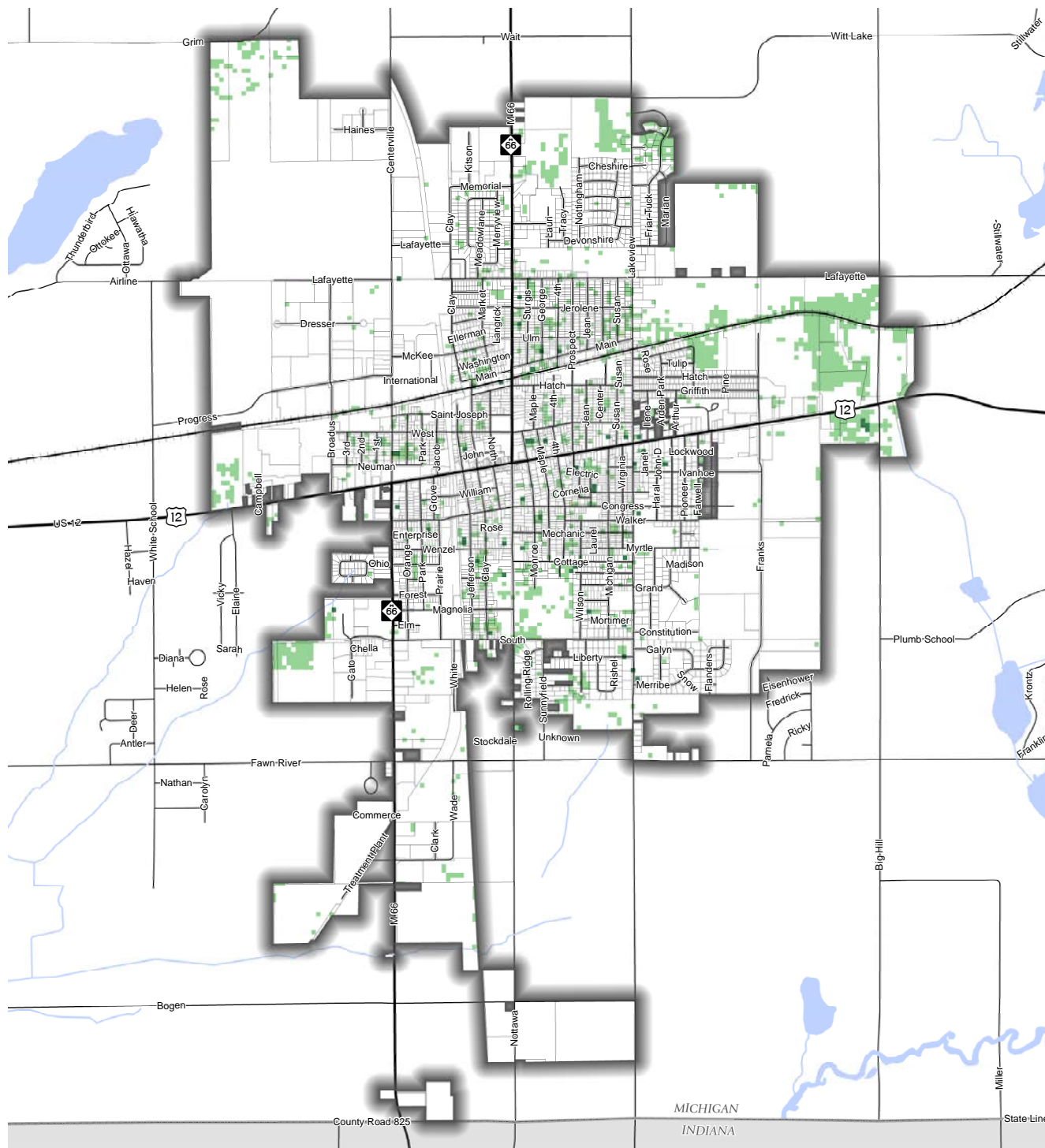
Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Potential Wetland Restoration
- Freshwater Emergent Wetlands
- Freshwater Forested / Shrub Wetland
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard



**B R I**  
Beckett&Raeder

## MAP 10. Forests



CITY OF STURGIS

### Forests

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

#### Forest Types:

- Deciduous Forests
- Evergreen Forests
- Mixed Forests





SOIL

On the bright side, climate change predications anticipate the growing season will increase by 40 to 50 days by 2100 —a boon for agriculture production, if the other climate pattern variations and pests have not degraded the land’s productivity beforehand. Because of the intensity of development within the city, there are no soil samples available to rate its agricultural capability. The Land Capability Class, used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency to determine soil suitability for agriculture, rates soil based on slope, depth of soil, texture, erosion and run off, shallowness, hardpan layers, and climate. On a scale of 1 to 8 for non-irrigated land, scores of 1 to 4 can produce common crops without negatively affecting long-term productivity. Scores of 5 to 8 are better suited for less intense uses such as pastures, forestland or recreation. Sturgis is surrounded by high-quality soil suitable for agricultural purposes; none of the soil along its perimeters is severely limited for cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the “Agricultural Capability” map is to inform decision-makers of development options in the case that Sturgis feels the pressure to annex land for a growing population. According to planning best practices, a city should first assess the viability of infill sites for development. If compelled to expand the borders, a city should avoid consuming prime agricultural land, or it could be jeopardizing the land’s “highest and best use.” Michigan’s soil and climate create a productive environment that can cultivate over 300 agricultural products. St. Joseph County is a rural county with yield earning millions of dollars of crop and livestock production according to the 2012 Agricultural Census. Based on the rating scale used in the map, just beyond the northeastern corner of the City represents the most efficient tradeoff, where prime land is not compromised for potential development.

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (USTS)

In many communities with commercial or industrial land uses, there is a soiled legacy. Many businesses rely on an

underground storage tank (UST) to store materials. An UST is any tank or underground piping connected to the tank which has at least 10% of its combined volume underground, most of which contain petroleum. Until the 1980s, most USTs were made of bare steel, a material susceptible to corrosion over time, causing the contents to leak out into the soil. There are eight open USTs in Sturgis.<sup>7</sup> An open leaking UST (LUST) site means that a release has occurred but no corrective action has been completed to meet the land use criteria. The table below shows who currently holds the land where a release occurred, but does not attribute responsibility to this entity. It is possible that the leaks occurred prior to this business or entity using the land, but it is also possible that there is more than one confirmed leak since that date provided below. One common scenario is when a gas station closes and a new business moves in before the leak was properly tended to. Three of these contaminated sites are located in residential areas, three in business districts, and two in industrial areas.

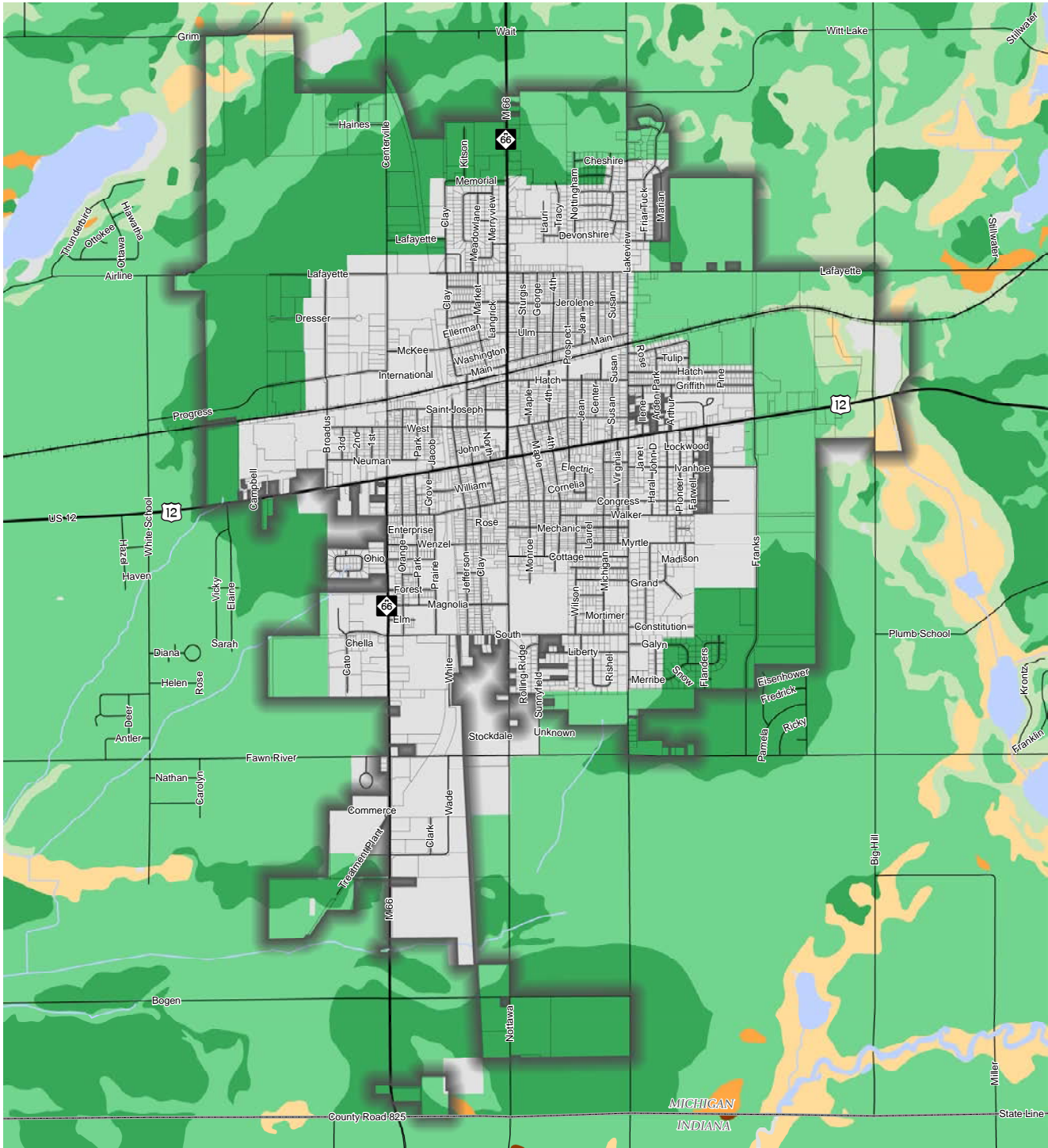
In addition to leaking USTs, Sturgis has a Superfund site, a designation given by the U.S. EPA to the country’s most contaminated sites. In 2016, three homes were evacuated in Sturgis so the air could be remediated, and 38 more have been tested due to unsafe levels of trichloroethylene (TCE) vapor found in homes close to the Superfund site. One family in Sturgis was reported to have lived in the home for 23 years before the air was tested. Exposure to TCE for a sustained period of time is linked to increased risks of cancer and neurological damage, and chronic respiratory diseases. Consequently, the EPA has strengthened protections by including vapor intrusion testing into its practice. Michigan’s industrial past means that Sturgis is not alone with this problem; people were also evacuated in Grand Rapids and Detroit. Between May 2016 and February 2017, 276 Michiganders have been evacuated and prevented from entering structures where the threat of TCE looms, with the possibility of up to 4,200 sites subject to potential vapor intrusion across the state. With so many potentially contaminated sites, Michigan is facing a widespread public health threat.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 9. Open Leaky Underground Storage Tanks

Establishment on Site	Year Contaminant Released	Existing Land Use
Shell-Spee-D-Mart	1999, 2011	Single and Two-family residential
Sturgis Hospital	2010	Single and Two-family residential
Drury Oil Co.	2017	Single and Two-family residential
Payless (SuperAmerica)	1985, 1991	Central Business District
Anette’s Shell	1992	Central Business District
Bofa Inc.	2009	Central Business District
J & M Service Center	1998	Business Highway 2
Sturgis Iron and Metal Co., Inc	1999, 2018	Industrial

Source: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

MAP 11. Agricultural Capability



CITY OF STURGIS  
**Agricultural Capability**

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, ArcGIS Online Soil Resource Center

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

- Least Limitations**
- Slight Limitations
  - Moderate Limitations
  - Severe Limitations
  - Very Severe Limitations
  - No Data / Urbanized Lands

- Most Limitations**
- Limited Uses, Erosion Hazards
  - Moderate Limitations on Use, Hazards
  - Severe Limitations, Grazing Only
  - Only Recreational Use / Aesthetic Use



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Groundwater that could be affected by the Superfund site has been tested regularly for volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Exposure to VOCs can have adverse health effects ranging from minor to serious. Some of the health effects include headaches, nausea, skin reactions, but also liver and kidney damage.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, in October 2017, 38 groundwater samples were collected and analyzed. The results are mixed. The data from the last 26 years show that levels of VOCs vary every six months, but the areas immediately surrounding the Superfund site have the highest concentration of VOCs, up to double the concentration of areas within a two block radius. Because of the risks associated with VOCs, Sturgis municipal wells are also tested for VOCs. Fortunately, no contamination has been detected.

## BROWNFIELDS

Industrial land uses also result in brownfield sites. A brownfield site is one that has complications for reuse, expansion or redevelopment due to the presence of hazardous substances or contaminants. The State of Michigan's Brownfield Program uses tax increment financing (TIF) to reimburse brownfield related costs incurred while redeveloping contaminated, functionally obsolete, blighted or historic properties.

The Sturgis Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) is a nine member board which oversees the City's efforts to redevelop brownfield properties. This includes the establishment of brownfield plans and the use of this TIF. The City of Sturgis currently has three active brownfield plans which have been utilized or are available for incentive

redevelopment. The BRA and City work with all eligible developments to investigate the use of brownfield TIF funds for redevelopment projects. Below is a list of the three active brownfield sites in Sturgis:

- » 200 E. Chicago Road (Arkwright's property)
- » John Street (Moso Village LLC)
- » 210 Broadus (Kirsch Industrial Park)

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

An interest in urban agriculture emerged from the recently conducted community survey. Of the five options provided, residents were most interested in community gardens on vacant parcels (46.2%). As a semi-rural community within the larger context of a prime agricultural county and state, it is no wonder an agricultural culture is found within the City. The link to local produce has been strengthened by the seasonal and weekly farmer's market. Since 2014, its popularity has grown by the number of vendors hosted and extended hours of operation.

Converting vacant land into a garden generates many positive effects such as turning eyesores into potential assets, boosting neighboring property values, and providing a communal space for residents to mingle. Prior to design and development of a garden, precautions must be taken if digging directly into the earth. The history of the property should be researched and soils tested to ensure the soil is not contaminated. If this proves to be prohibitive, raised beds with clean soil is a work-around.

## SOURCES

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# 6

## Community Facilities & Services

The facilities and services that a city provides have ramifications that can either pull residents into the City or push them away. Households and businesses alike consider a municipality's facilities, infrastructure, and service such as the quality of the school and hospital systems, transportation infrastructure, recreational programming, and police presence when deciding where to live. It is the combination of these services that define a high "quality of life." Results from the community-wide survey confirm the importance of a city's offerings. Residents reported that quality of schools and low crime rates were the most important factors to consider when deciding where to live. The following section is an inventory of Sturgis' facilities and services run by both public and non-profit entities.

### FACILITIES

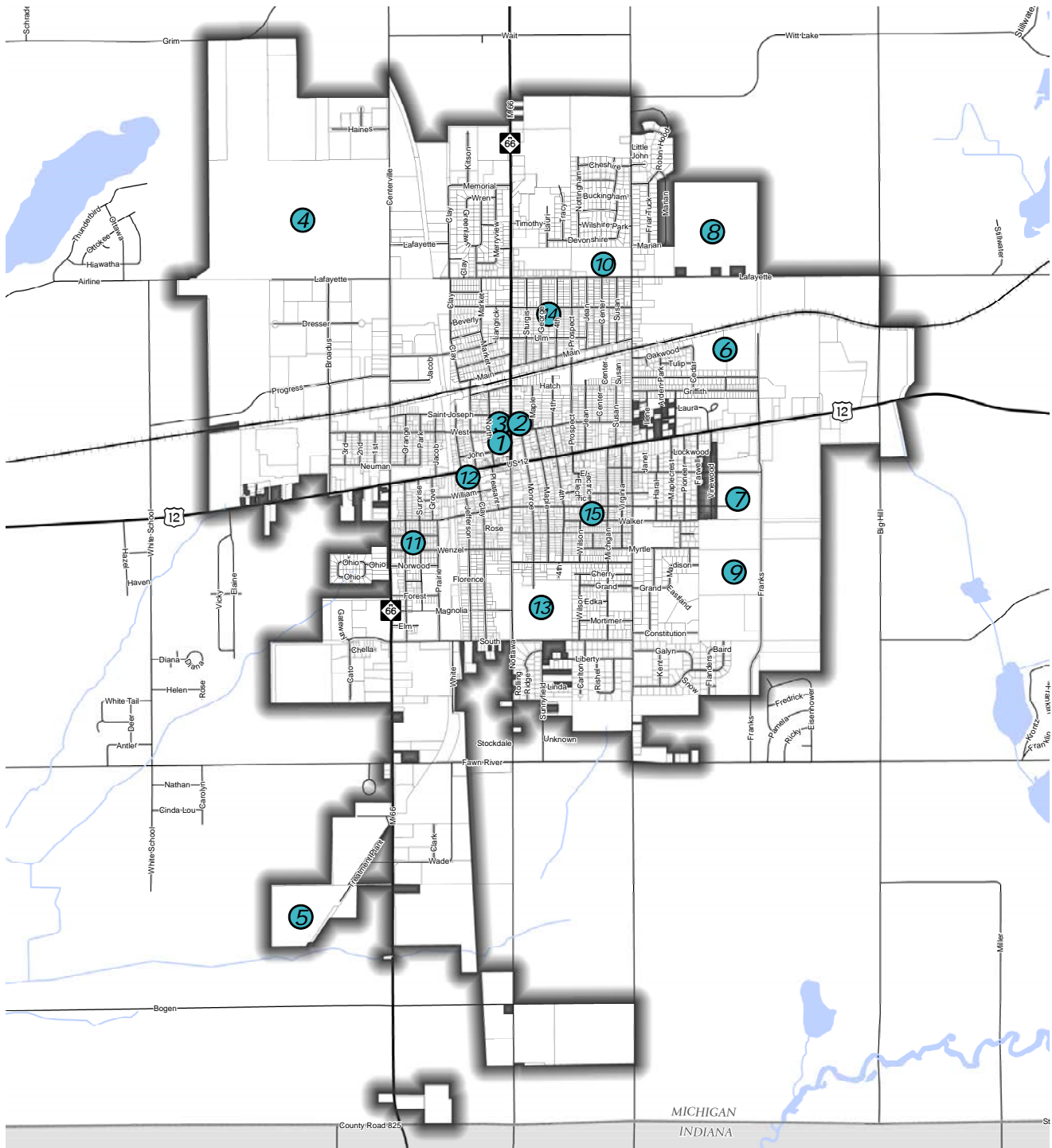
The Department of Public Services is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure that keeps the city operating on a daily basis, including services such as water, storm, and sanitary sewer systems streets, street parking lot snow removal, and the City's compost facility and brush pick up,

amongst other services. City facilities—their extensiveness and general upkeep—are visible indicators of how well a city functions. And for residents who rely on them, their appearance does not go unnoticed. Sturgis remained proactive in maintaining services even with depleting funds during the Great Recession and continues to do so today.

### CIVIC SPACES

Close to downtown sits Sturgis' "civic center." Where M-66 and West Street intersect stand well-known public institutions: Sturgis City Hall (connected to the Sturgis District Library), Sturges-Young Auditorium, and Sturgis Public Schools District office building. These institutions are of great value because they are open to the public and provide environments where people can learn, recreate, socialize, disseminate information, and share ideas. Having these institutions clustered on one corner makes them a valuable placemaking landmark and a destination for its residents.

## MAP 12. Community Facilities



CITY OF STURGIS

### Community Facilities

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

- 1 Sturgis City Hall
- 2 Sturges-Young Auditorium
- 3 Sturgis Public Schools
- 4 Kirsch Municipal Airport
- 5 Treatment Plant

- 6 Thurston Woods
- 7 Sturgis High School
- 8 Sturgis Middle School
- 9 Eastwood School
- 10 Wall School

- 11 Wenzel School
- 12 Chamber of Commerce
- 13 Oak Lawn Cemetery
- 14 Jerolene School
- 15 Congress School

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## SCHOOLS

While there is no formal legal link between the management of cities and public schools, their successes are mutually dependent. For families, the quality of the school system weighs heavily on parents when deciding where to raise children. In addition to the 10 public schools, Sturgis has an impressive suite of educational programs that range from pre-school to tertiary level of schooling.

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a means-tested pre-school program that offers free care for children four years or younger (as of September 1st, 2017) whose household income meet the eligibility requirements (\$47,7000 for a family of four). This program is open to all children who live in St. Joseph County; for students whose household income exceeds the threshold, space may be saved once qualified children have enrolled. Located at Jerolene School and Sturgis Central Commons, the full-day program has bilingual staff and free transportation.

For high school students, there are two programs that stand out as alternatives to a bachelor's degree. Sturgis' historically prominent industrial base makes investment in its students' vocational programs prudent since they contribute to the long-run prosperity of its local economy. Trojan Manufacturing Solution Center (MSC) is a vocational education program that gives high school students skills needed for manufacturing jobs upon graduating High School, or to enter a trade school. Sturgis Public Schools offer introductory and advanced manufacturing courses along with welding programs. Community partners have donated machines to help modernize the program and can continue to support the program if it were to expand. Funded by the Department of Education, Early Middle College (EMC) is a collaborative effort between St. Joseph County Intermediate School District, county high schools, St. Joseph County College Access Network, and Glen Oaks Community College, and ISD Career Technical Education to boost the level of education attainment in the county. For the fall of 2017, there are 40 students who work on their "13th year" while in high school so that upon graduation, they will have a high school diploma and an associate's degree or certificate from Glen Oaks Community College. The program is tuition-free and takes half the time of pursuing them separately. Sturgis Public Schools also offers adult education courses to earn a high school diploma or GED or to attend ELL classes.<sup>1</sup>

## WATER

### Wastewater Treatment

The wastewater treatment plant serves over 3,500 residential and industrial customers that recycles on average 1,420,000 gallons of wastewater daily. The plant has ample capacity to accommodate development in the City. It is designed to treat double that amount on average, with a maximum capacity to treat up to 3.6 million gallons per day. The water is treated until it reaches acceptable federal clean water standards and then is discharged into the Fawn River. The treatment plant is located on the City's southern periphery.

Sturgis has a separate stormwater system and is working on infrastructure solutions to help reduce the instances of flooding. One key site, Memorial Park, is prone to flooding. To help mitigate any negative effects after a heavy rainfall, rain gardens have been strategically installed to absorb a portion of the stormwater runoff. This is known as green infrastructure, the practice of using nature to manage water to protect the natural water cycle, as opposed to using conventional grey infrastructure. Rain gardens are effective ways to capture and filter water to prevent rainfall from collecting and ponding on streets. Another site, across from Walmart, known locally as the white elephant, has a detention pond that is designed to hold excess water. However, its location abutting a private business has led to some unintended flooding. The City is looking into solutions.

### Water as Energy

In 2011, the City of Sturgis celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Sturgis Dam. Located outside of the city limits, 18 miles north in Centreville, the Sturgis Dam extends across 30 gates on the St. Joseph River. The dam has been generating hydroelectric energy since 1911, the first municipality in the state to build a hydro electric dam. Its development was crucial in the City's development as an industrial base in the region. As of 2008, the dam generated more than 10.4 million kilowatt hours of electricity, equivalent to 4% of the City's electricity demands. The dam operators report that 163 feet of water per second pass through the gate, and although the dam has 30 gates, there has never been more than 22 open at once. The kilowatts of electricity produced will depend on the amount of water passing per second, and therefore varies by year.<sup>2</sup>



## Airport

Kirsch Municipal Airport is a publicly owned airport. No scheduled passenger service is provided, however charter service is available. Full airline services for commercial passenger travel can be found nearby at South Bend Regional Airport or the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport. Kirsch Municipal is used frequently by general aviation pilots as well as business air traffic serving local manufacturers. In addition, the airport is home to several aviation businesses including sales, maintenance, aircraft painting, and charter flights that contribute to traffic at the airport and the economy of the community. Section 125.3203 of the Zoning Enabling Act, Act 110 of 2006 requires that the Community Master Plan contain the Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC) officially approved Airport Approach Plan in order to provide an additional level of protection for the airport. The Kirsch Municipal Airport Approach Plan is in the Appendix of this Master Plan, and it outlines the safety zones around the airport along with their associated land use guidelines and strategies.

## Sturgis Hospital

Sturgis Hospital is an 84-bed nonprofit hospital that is an active stakeholder in the City. The building was constructed in 1970 with two expansions taking place since then in 1981 and 2005. Sturgis Hospital completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2016 as a part of the Affordable Care Act requirements for nonprofit hospitals to identify how, or if, healthcare services are benefitting the community, specifically if their services response to the community's health needs. This assessment found that within its service area, which covers most of St. Joseph County, physical inactivity (and obesity as a result) is a significant need to be addressed. The St. Joseph County Hospital CHNA found the same results and recommended as public policy to expand parks and recreational programming, build trails,

and help form walking clubs. Sturgis Hospital was the biggest financial contributor to Sturgis' Nonmotorized Trail Master Plan.<sup>3</sup>

There is also a need for bilingual health providers, translators, and information provided in Spanish. Transportation was identified as a barrier for low-income residents to access healthcare. The assessment's social vulnerability analysis placed Sturgis in the highest quartile using this definition for vulnerability: "resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disaster, or disease outbreaks." In other words, it is the opinion of these health experts that Sturgis residents are not well-equipped to recover from health stressors.<sup>4</sup>

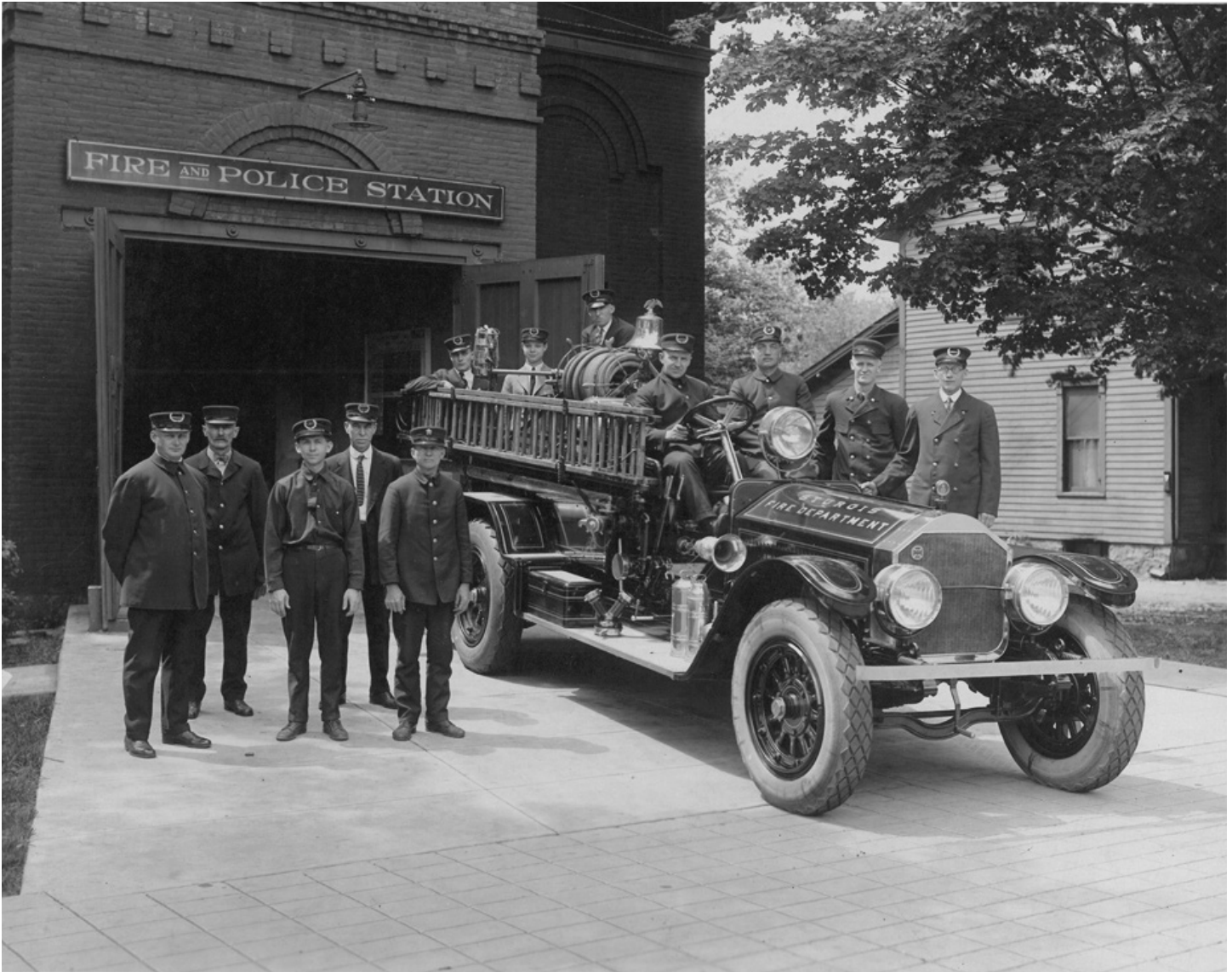
## Fire and Police

The Sturgis Police Department has 19 sworn officers including a detective and a Youth Services Officer who works with schools. The officers are supported by five full-time non-sworn staff along with six reserve officers, and four volunteers in police service (VIPs). In addition to road patrol duties, officers are also assigned to specialized units such as Multi-Jurisdictional Narcotics Team, bike patrol, as well as with other multi-jurisdictional teams within the County. The police department provides 24-hour road patrol, three officers per day and four per night. As a part of public safety awareness and youth services, the police department also sponsors Safety Town, a summer camp where children learn about pedestrian, bicycle, bus, the internet, and personal safety on a miniature model of the City of Sturgis.<sup>5</sup> The City of Sturgis has one fire station with nine full-time firefighters and several part-time firefighters. They have four front line vehicles. In addition to fighting fires, the Fire Department helps prevent them from starting by providing free smoke detectors to qualified residents.

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*Historical Fire and Police Station Photograph*

Source: [http://www.sturgismi.gov/fire/archive\\_2\\_large.jpg](http://www.sturgismi.gov/fire/archive_2_large.jpg)

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# Open Space & Recreation

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The City of Sturgis not only provides recreational opportunities for its residents but serves as a hub for the four surrounding Townships: Sherman, Burr Oak, Sturgis, and Fawn River. The recreational facilities include 14 parks, two indoor facilities, and 10 public schools spread across 227.4 acres of public or quasi-public land. Quasi public land denotes privately owned land that serves a public function, a common distinction for recreational facilities. Following the Michigan Department of Natural Resources standards, the City of Sturgis parks are organized below based on their size (in acres) and function.

## MDNR PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the state agency that is dedicated to managing the state's natural and cultural resource, developed a classification system for parks that describes ideal size, locational reach, and broadly how park should be used. When inventorying Sturgis' park system, these categories were used.



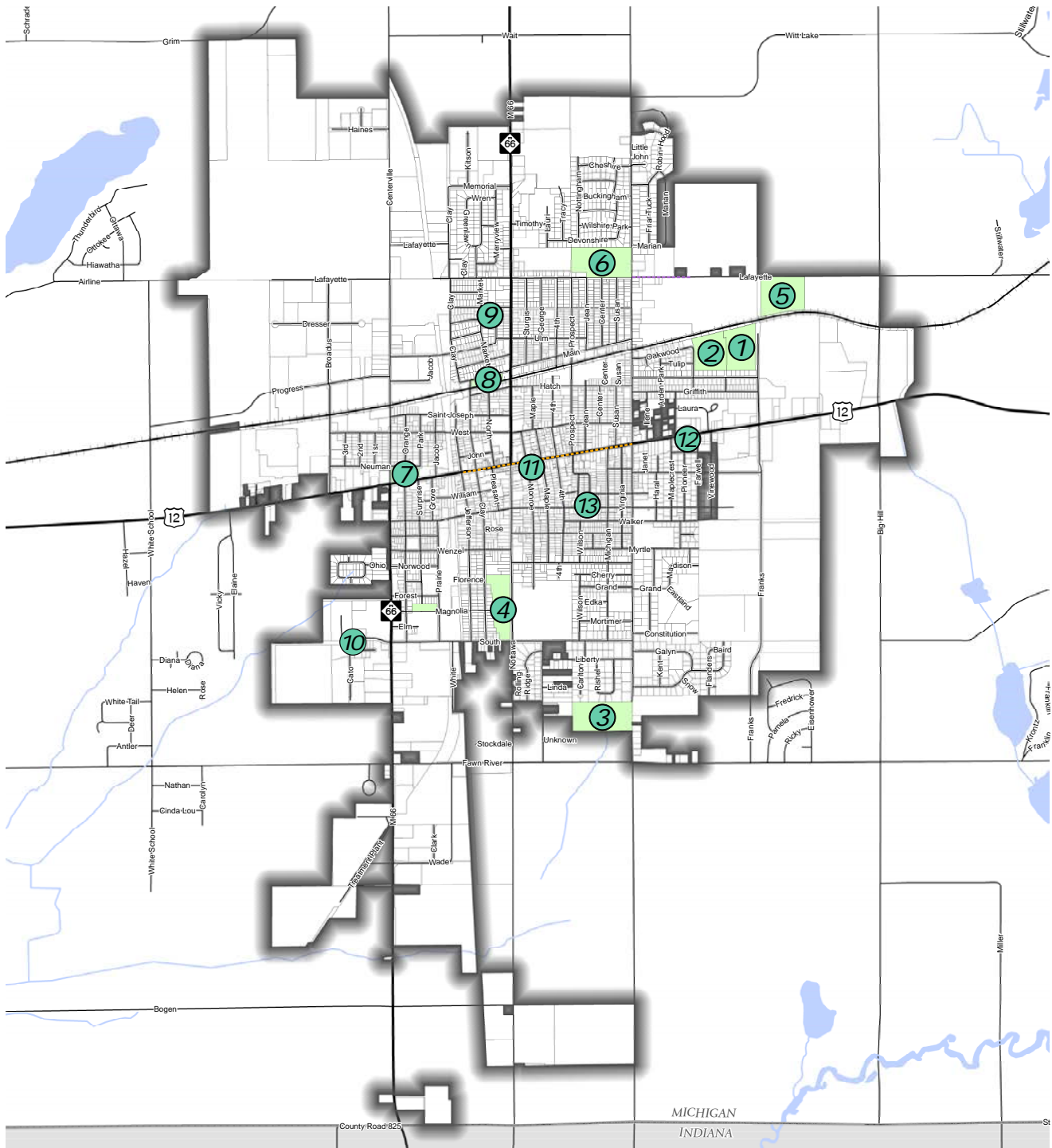
TABLE 10. MDNR Park Classifications

Classification	General Description	Location criteria	Size Criteria
Mini park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile in residential setting	2,500 sq ft to 1 acre
Neighborhood park	Serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and interrupted by nonresidential roads and other physical barriers	5-10 acres
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus on meeting community-based recreation needs, and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3-mile distance	Usually between 30-50 acres
Large Urban Park	Serve a broader purpose than community parks; used when community and neighborhood parks are inadequate. Focus on community-based recreational need and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community	Usually a minimum of 50 acres, 75 acres or more is optimal
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single- purpose use	Variable dependent for special use	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.
Park trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists / in-line skaters. Type II: Multipurpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians and bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians. Hard- or soft-surfaced.	

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources



## MAP 13. Parks & Nonmotorized Trailways



### CITY OF STURGIS Parks & Nonmotorized Trailways

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

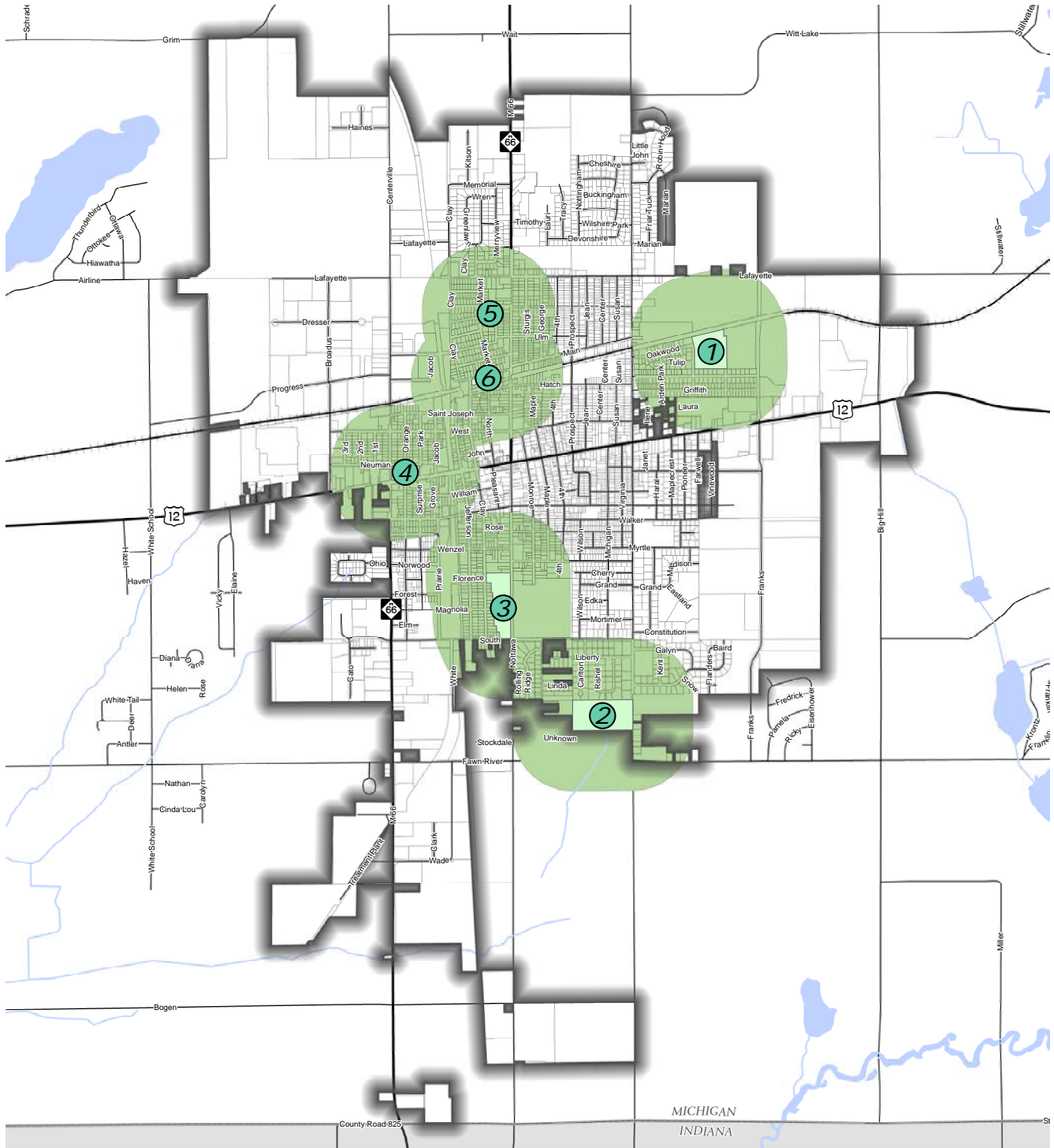
- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Parks / Facilities

- Existing Bike Lane
- Paved Trail
- 1 Doyle Community Center
- 2 Thurston Woods Park
- 3 Franks Park

- 4 Oaklawn Terrace Park
- 5 Spence Fields
- 6 Wall Fields
- 7 Memorial Park
- 8 Old Depot / Bark Park
- 9 Langrick Park
- 10 Rest Stop Park
- 11 Free Church Park
- 12 Pioneer Park
- 13 Shadowlawn Park

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## MAP 14. Playground Pedestrian Shed



CITY OF STURGIS

## Playground Pedestrian Shed

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Parks / Facilities
- 1/4 Mile Shed

- 1 Thurston Woods Park
- 2 Franks Park
- 3 Oaklawn Terrace Park
- 4 Memorial Park
- 5 Langrick Park
- 6 Old Depot / Bark Park
- 7

## PARKS

### Mini Parks

The City of Sturgis has four mini-parks. Typically less than one acre, mini-parks serve a smaller, specific population, for instance, families with young children. Free Church Park, located on the corner of East Chicago Road and South Monroe Street downtown, is a spot for residents and shoppers to take a respite from the bustle of downtown. On just 0.6 acres, facilities include a permanent stage for community events, benches, and picnic tables. The remaining mini-parks are 0.5 acres and serve a limited but important purpose. Rest Stop Park provides a much-needed grassy area for pedestrians walking between South Centerville Road and nearby residences. Pioneer Park is a historical marker where a stone and flower beds commemorate the City's founder, Judge John Sturgis. Shadowlawn Park, across the street from Congress Elementary School, is used for as a departure and reuniting point for parents and their children.

### Neighborhood Parks

There are three neighborhood parks in Sturgis. These parks fall into this category because the facilities provided offer informal active and passive activities ranging from sports fields and playground equipment to spaces for picnics and relaxing. The recommended size for neighborhood parks is 5 to 10 acres; the parks described below are smaller in size but compensate with their location, reach, and caliber of facilities.

[Langrick Park](#) is located in the northwestern part of the City. For just 1.8 acres, it offers 12 paved parking spaces, a basketball court, playground equipment, and two tennis courts. Its location in a residential neighborhood and diverse facilities make it a popular park. [Bark Park](#), located on the former Old Depot, is the City's first dog park. The park has areas for large and small dogs, watering stations, and benches. [Memorial Park](#) is the largest of the neighborhood parks in size and prominence due its central location at the intersection of Centerville and Chicago Roads. Originally built as a memorial for WWI veterans, the monument and flower beds show reverence to fallen soldiers. On the other side of the 3.7 acre park, there is a basketball area, rain garden, parking lot, accessible playground, and open space. Several of these updates have occurred since 2012.

### Community Parks

The City of Sturgis has five community parks. Larger in size and broader in purpose than neighborhood parks, community parks showcase an array of recreational facilities. Typically 30 to 50 acres, they offer a range of natural areas, sheltered picnic areas, multi-use trails as well as more

specialized facilities like swimming pools and ball diamonds. [Wall Fields](#) is located at Wall Elementary School and was re-developed in 2002 under a lease agreement with the City. Awarded Clean Michigan Initiative grant funds, the 15-acre site now features multi-purpose ball diamonds and restrooms. This 9.4 acre softball complex is used primarily for City sponsored recreation leagues. [Spence Softball Complex](#) is a newly developed state-of-the-art four-field baseball/softball facility which includes restrooms and a concession building. This 17.5 acre softball complex is used primarily for City sponsored recreation leagues and weekend tournaments. The complex can host night games because all four of the full-sized fields have lights.

While still smaller than MDNR's recommended acreage, the parks discussed in this section come closest to the recommended acreage. [Thurston Woods Park](#) is the largest and one of the most popular parks. Covering 27 acres and located behind Doyle Community Center, the facilities include Trojan Timbers, a wooden structure with play equipment, a paved loop trail, picnic areas, and parking, all within a mature oak and hickory forest. [Franks Park](#) sits on the City's south side bordered by residential neighborhoods to the north. This 19.5 acre sports complex provides seven soccer/football fields used for youth programs. This site also has a playground, restrooms, shelter, and a concession stand. [Oaklawn Terrace Park](#) is 26 acres and adjoins to Oaklawn Cemetery across the street. The park itself has two parts, divided by Magnolia Avenue, and includes picnic shelters, a sledding hill, an amphitheater and stage, and play equipment.

### City-Owned Indoor Facilities

Doyle Community Center and Sturges-Young Auditorium are recreational and cultural centers that serve as important gathering spaces for the community. [Doyle Community Center](#) is a 75,000 square foot facility on North Franks Avenue. It houses the Recreation Department and a range of recreational facilities. Facilities include three fitness rooms; four multi-purpose courts designed for tennis, three pickleball courts, basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer; two racquetball courts; the Iron Mill weight room; and a four-lane indoor walking/running track. Facility use is membership-based, although the amenities are also available to non-members for an additional cost. Most of the Recreation Department programming takes place at the Doyle Community Center. Additional outdoor facilities include two sand volleyball courts. The [Sturges-Young Auditorium](#) is a Civic Center & Auditorium located opposite the City Hall on North Nottawa Street. The Auditorium is managed by an Executive Director contracted by the City. The building features an auditorium with seating for 1,000 people, meeting rooms, and banquet facilities.

School Facilities

The 10 public schools in Sturgis supplement the facilities owned and managed by the City. The table below outlines the size and type of facilities found on each campus.

Accessibility

The American with Disabilities Act requires that site development is reasonably accessible for disabled persons. The MDNR ranking system assesses facilities on a scale of 1 to 5 where a 1 means that none of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines, and a 5 means the facility was developed using universal design principals. None of the facilities inventoried in the 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan received a score of five. Universal design is a design concept that strives to make products and environments usable for all people with an emphasis on building the appropriate design into the product as opposed to adapting existing products or creating a specialized product. Universal design benefits many populations, including the elderly, families with children, and the mobility-challenged. Consistent application of universal design can help ease the pressure on cities to accommodate changes to the populace's ability.

The highest score received is a three, meaning that most of the facilities assessed met the accessibility guidelines. The four parks with this score are Free Church Park, Thurston Woods Park, Franks Park, and Augspurgen Tennis Facility.

Most of the reductions in score were due to a lack of accessible paths throughout the park. For wheelchair access, connections to all facilities must be paved.

Private Facilities

The only privately operated recreational facility within the city limits is Sturgis Bowl. This bowling alley hosts league games, cosmic bowl nights, and an arcade.

Students Weigh In

As a part the community engagement process, students were asked what they like to do for fun in Sturgis. The purpose of this question was designed to assess the youth appeal of Sturgis' establishments and amenities. The bowling alley was by far the most popular response for recreation (17 mentions), just two votes shy of tying with the movie theatre. While bowling is the favorite activity, the arcade and laser tag were also mentioned. Outside of the Doyle Center and the tennis courts, no other public recreational spaces made the list. There was only one vague comment of "going to the park" for fun.

TABLE 11. Sturgis School Facilities

School Name	Size (acres)	Facilities
Sturgis High School	35	Ball fields, football, soccer, track, gymnasium, pool, skate park
Sturgis Middle School	81.2	Ball fields, soccer, tennis, cross-country trail, basketball courts
Congress Elementary School	2	Playground, gym, play equipment
Eastwood Elementary School	12	Ball fields, soccer field, gym, play equipment
Jerolene Elementary School	0.8	Playground
Wall Elementary School	17.8	Playgrounds, basketball court
Wenzel Elementary School	0.8	Play equipment, gymnasium
Augspurgen Tennis Courts	4.7	Tennis courts, basketball court, pavilion, restrooms

Source: City of Sturgis 2015-2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan



## Regional

The City of Sturgis is situated among various regional recreational assets. St. Joseph County has six major rivers and over 50 lakes that can be used for assorted recreational activities. Within close proximity to the City there are seven public or private golf courses, 11 parks, 17 municipal or state-owned boat ramps that provide access to water sports, the St. Joseph County Conservation and Sportsman Club, and five private campgrounds with modern and more natural campsites.

### Students Weigh In

Students were also asked where they like to go to have fun outside of Sturgis. In terms of recreational activities, teenagers prefer go-carts and skating rinks over any other selection. “Fishing” was the only reference to an activity in nature, otherwise teenagers are looking for activities that cause a bit of a thrill.

## Compliance with Recreational Standards

Based on the recreational inventory conducted in 2014, Sturgis suffers from a facility shortage when compared to the state’s recommended standards. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has issued recreational standards based on the community’s population to determine the potential demand for certain facilities. Based on a ratio that expresses the desirable number of people per facility, the calculations for the City of Sturgis combined with the public school facilities exhibit deficiency in three categories: for its population, the City of Sturgis is missing one track, one pool, and two gymnasiums.

One problem with the ratio approach is that it cannot consider accessibility. Residents cannot consistently rely on school facilities that have limited hours of operation or are programmed for organized sports, nor can disabled persons reach many of these facilities. Secondly, a ratio cannot measure satisfaction with the quality and location of parkland and open space. Community input is a legally required step in the planning process and explores the complexity of resident’s preferences. Residents wanted to see both: upgrades to existing facilities and more of them. For example, participants expressed a need for more walking trails, picnic facilities, and additional bike trails. Also, trails linking parks and recreational facilities, residential areas, and schools should be considered. Connectivity, while not a state

standard, is a noticeably missing feature that could make recreation-users’ experiences more enjoyable.

For active recreation facilities, baseball/softball fields were cited as needing the most improvement. The other concerns referred to improvements that would meet ADA and safety guidelines for older parking lots, paths, and play equipment. A new facility that showed a lot of support was a disc golf course. Currently, the nearest facility is at Meyer Broadway Park near Three Rivers. A splash pad was also supported by the community.

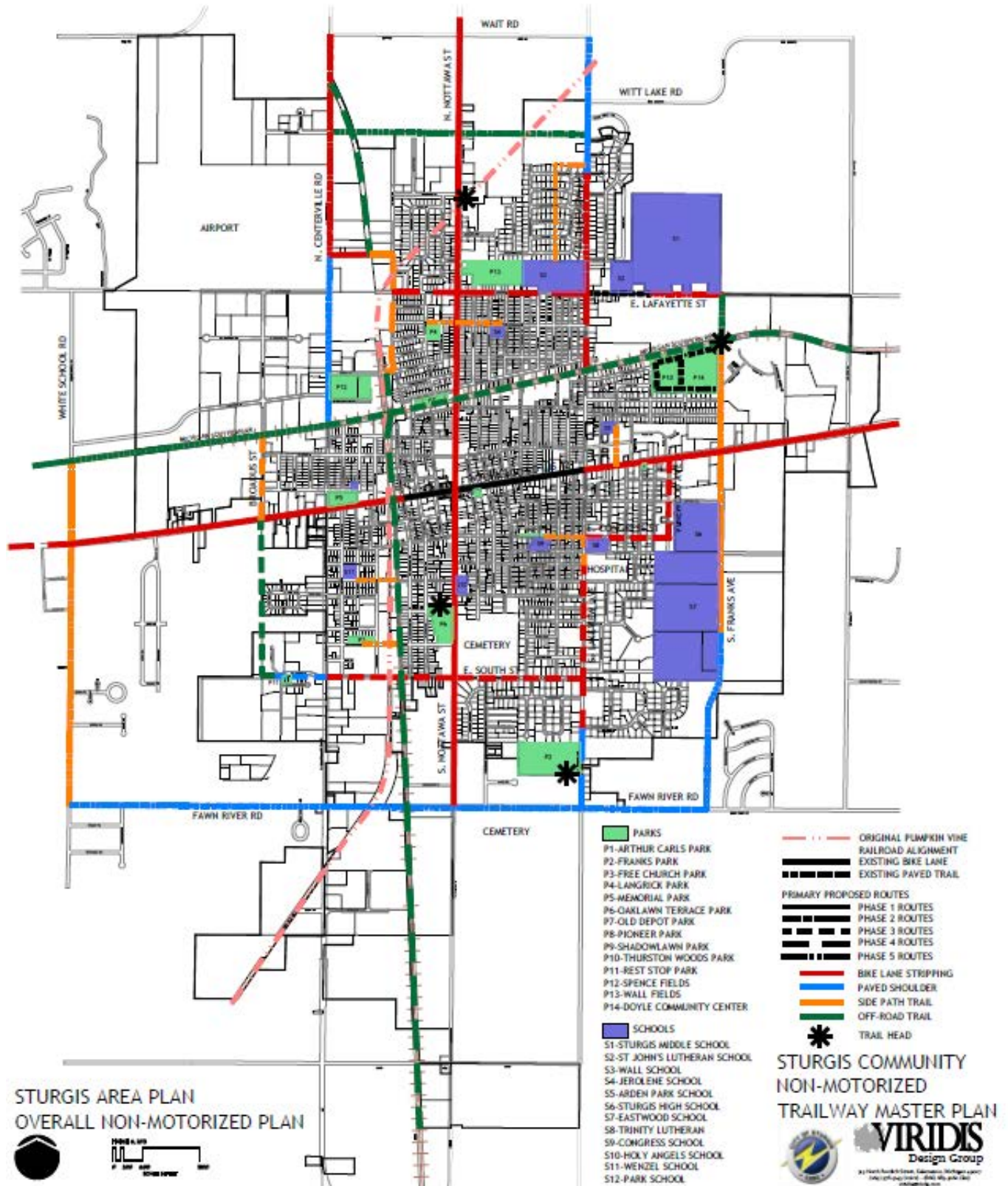
## EXISTING TRAILS

While the City of Sturgis recognizes that outdoor recreation is an important layer of quality of life, funds for building these types of community assets are limited. The implementation of long-term trail planning goals depends on collaboration with a variety of agencies to spread the cost equitably. Currently, there are no nature trails within the city limits, but there is one walking trail in Thurston Woods Park and bike lanes also exist on portions of West South and North Centerville Roads.

## PROPOSED TRAILS

In 2013, the City of Sturgis, Sturgis Hospital, Sturgis Area Community Foundation, and four surrounding townships completed a trail master plan. The trail master plan envisions an interconnected future of nonmotorized trails. The plan extends bike lane stripping along US-12 and M-66 as an extension of existing bicycle lanes downtown in phase one, and the adding bicycle lanes that connect important institutions like the hospital and schools in phase three. The long-term vision also takes advantage of existing corridors in the third phase of implementation. The map shows two conversions of railroad lines into trails. The dashed pink line traces the Pumpkin Vine trail along the former New York Central railroad. This trail originates in Elkhart County, Indiana and does not cross into Michigan yet, but plans call for them to pass through Sturgis.<sup>1</sup>

MAP 15. Sturgis Nonmotorized Master Plan Map



## SOURCES

- 1 *Friends of the Pumpkinvine. Trail* <http://pumpkinvine.org/>

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# Transportation

8

The transportation network that connects Sturgis to the region, the rest of the Michigan, and its neighboring states is a road network that is complicated only in that different levels of government are in charge of these roads. This puts cities in a difficult situation. Sturgis is well-positioned at the major crossroads of I-69 and US-12, close to the Indiana border. Its location makes it a popular route to pass through for semi-trucks on the way to larger cities. Heavy vehicles frequently move through Sturgis and degrade road quality at a faster rate than family-sized cars, but the roads they travel on may not be under the City's purview to maintain and repair. This section talks about the road network's existing conditions and how to redefine and reimagine how streets can be used.

## ROAD FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

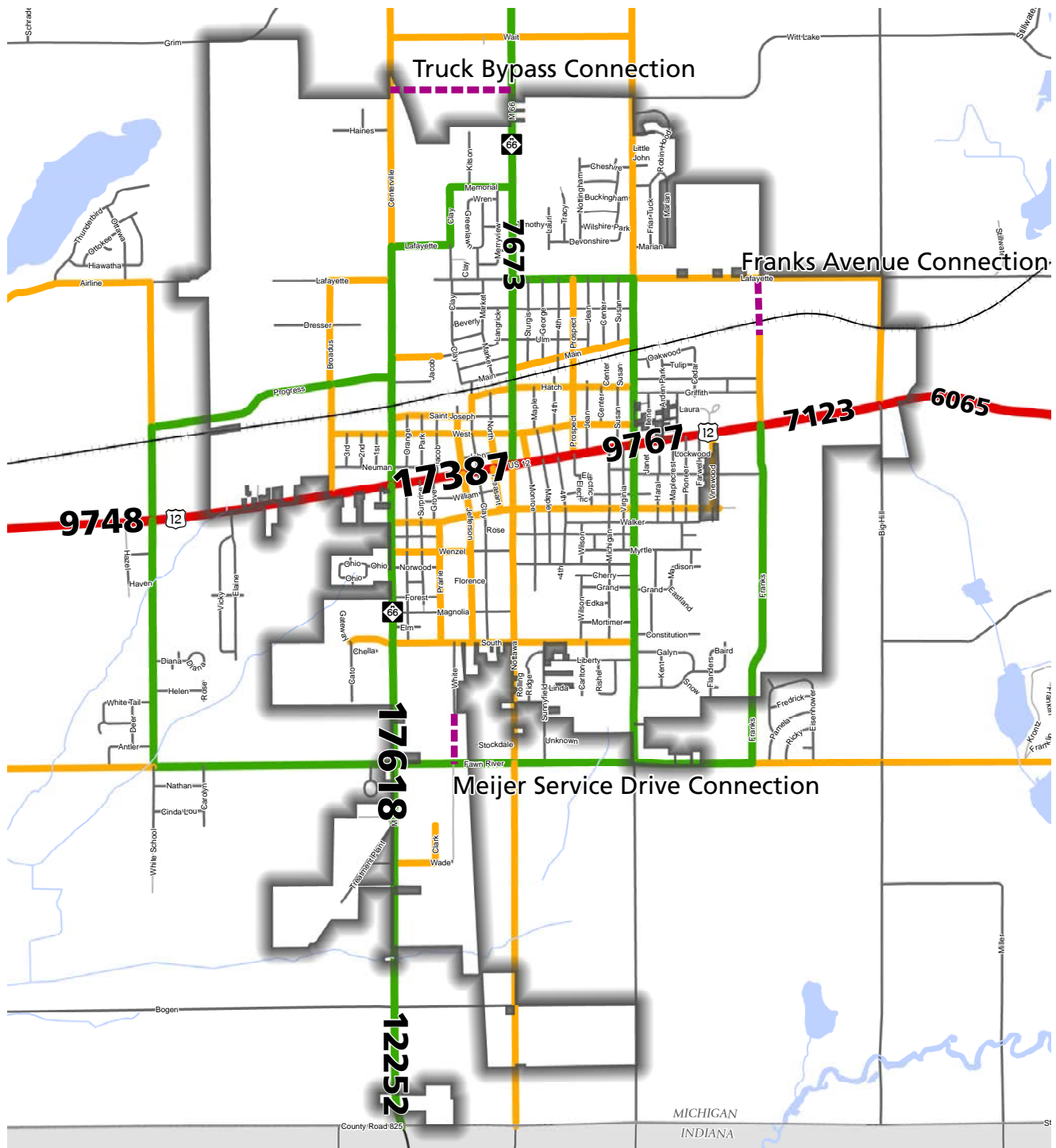
The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a classification system created by the United States Department of Transportation. The designation given during a rating cycle

determines if a road is eligible for federal funds. Roads that are labeled the following are eligible for federal aid<sup>1</sup>:

- » Principal arterials
- » Minor arterials
- » Collectors
- » Rural major collectors

In the "Road Classification & AADT Counts" map, roads that are red, orange, yellow, and green are eligible for federal funding, but are not necessarily under the City's purview. For example, M-66 is a state highway, and US-12 is federally maintained and operated. Some of the minor arterials (green) are county roads such as Fawn River Road, Lafayette Road (east of North Lakeview), and portions of North Centerville and Progress Roads.<sup>2</sup> Only the roads labeled "local," typically a part of neighborhoods within the city limits, are funded and maintained by the City of Sturgis.

MAP 16. Road Classification & AADT Counts



CITY OF STURGIS

## Road Classification & AADT Counts

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP, 2017 MDOT Traffic Volumes

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

### National Functional Classification:

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local
- Unclassified

- ####** Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
- Potential Street Connection



Beckett & Raeder

AADT is an acronym for annual average daily traffic, a number calculated by the state agency, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The most heavily travelled roads are M-66, near of Fawn River Road (17,618 vehicles), and US-12 as it approaches downtown Sturgis from the west (17,387 vehicles). As major thoroughfares, they support both out-of-town and local traffic. More than just demonstrating the extent of congestion along these roads, traffic count data give some insight into the potential economic impact of this many passers-by traveling through the heart of the City. If local businesses could entice even a fraction of drivers into their businesses, their profits could soar.

## PAVEMENT CONDITION

Poor road quality affects all of its users, but a pothole is more dangerous for a bicyclist than a vehicle. In a survey conducted at the summer event, Sturgis Fest, and in the community-wide survey, respondents most commonly selected “condition of city streets” as an area where Sturgis can improve. The state agency, Transportation Asset Management Council, provides online interactive maps that rates road conditions, Sturgis indeed has many road segments that are considered in poor condition, excluding local roads. As of 2016, only small segments were considered in good condition, most of Franks Avenue and a long stretch of South Lakeview Avenue (between Mechanic and Merribe Street), for example.<sup>3</sup> The City adopted a dedicated street millage to provide consistent rehabilitation of the roads.

## FUTURE STREET CONNECTIONS

### Franks Avenue

Franks Avenue has a missing link between the Doyle Community Center and Sturgis Middle School. Where it would cross East Lafayette Road, it turns to a dirt path and then grass as it approaches the rail line. If the streets were extended over the rail line it would help to connect pivotal community institutions and create a shorter and safer route between them.

### Truck Bypass

As noted previously, M-66 is a heavily travelled thoroughfare that runs through the City’s downtown. The recent reduction from four to three lanes along US-12 has slowed down vehicle speeds but has not address increased traffic volume. Some of this traffic is from large trucks shuttling goods to their final destination. Due to their noise, emissions, damage to the street, and threat to public safety, Sturgis has entertained the idea of truck bypass alternatives. There are many potential benefits to the bypass: relieving traffic volume, particularly for trucks, improving safety for other users, enhancing the aesthetics of downtown in terms

of cleaner air and a quainter ambiance, and encouraging industrial development by the bypass route.

While almost 63% of the 2018 community survey reported feeling safe as pedestrians crossing US-12 downtown, 44.3% still support exploring the option of a truck bypass (30% were indifferent). Over the years, the City has conducted studies that culminated in design options for diverting trucks from downtown and the estimated price tag. A designated truck route that connects Haines Boulevard to North Centerville Road is the less expensive option but does not give the City power to mandate that trucks take this route. It gives the City more control of the street design but may not reduce truck traffic downtown. The other option is to re-route M-66 up North Centerville and connect it to Haines Boulevard. Because this would have to follow MDOTs stipulations, the project would be more expensive and take away some of the City’s control on street design, but would force trucks onto the new route, guaranteeing that they do not cut through downtown. Currently, the City has found the truck bypass to be too expensive to move forward but is still an option for future development, if funds be become available.

## Service to Meijer

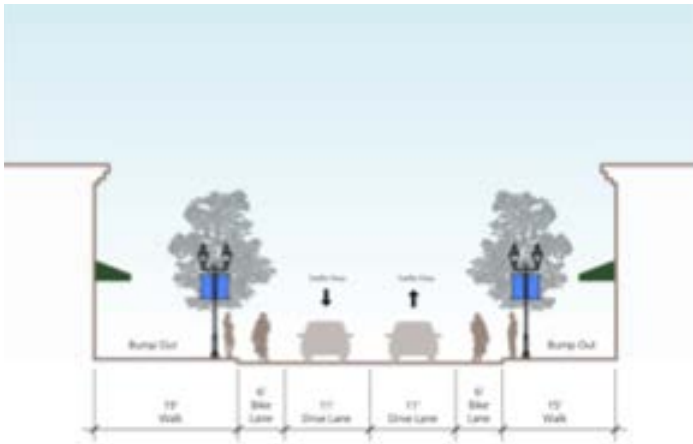
There has been a desire to extend White Street to Fawn River Road along the backside of Meijer and the Walmart Supercenter as a way to improve both truck and citizen traffic. Currently, White Street stops halfway between the two business whereas a connection could improve access and circulation by diverting large trucks off of roads used by smaller vehicles. The major challenge that prevents this street connection is that the City does not own the property required to complete the missing segment of the street. Until that connection is made, traffic will continue around these large lots on Fawn River Road, South Centerville Road, and West South Street.

## COMPLETE STREETS

Any street has the potential to become a complete street, but some are easier to implement than others. Street construction has historically been designed to maximize traffic flow. Traffic flow, measured by the number of vehicles passing a given point in a given unit of time, favors higher vehicular speeds over the network’s friendliness to nonmotorized users. The movement to change this paradigm is called Complete Streets and it promotes the notion that pedestrians, bicyclists, wheel-chairs, and all forms of motorized transit (car, bus, light rail) should each have equal claim to the street. Instead of measuring a street’s success by vehicular mobility, Complete Streets considers design, safety, and access for users of all ages, abilities, and mode preference. In 2010, Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal features with new street construction to reduce reliance on



**FIGURE 15. Complete Streets Diagram**



automobiles. Sturgis implemented many features that induce nonmotorized transit and create a safer and lively experience downtown. The downtown showcases an extended median that is a refuge for pedestrians crossing a busy street; there are landscaped corner bump outs that shortens pedestrians' time crossing the street, bicycle lanes, benches beneath trees, and patterned brick sidewalks.

Elements of Complete Streets: Wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes and racks, median islands, curb extensions, frequent crossings, bus shelters, lighting, awnings, benches, trees and landscaping

## STREET TYPES

The street classification used by the National Functional Classification is helpful for state and national street network planning, but more descriptive street types are needed at the local level. A system better suited for local planning considers all users and takes into account surrounding land uses. The following typology classifies a street based on:

- » Physical condition
- » Users
- » Surrounding land uses
- » Development intensity

Because some of these elements can change over time, they are not meant to be exact but rather explain the options available that align with certain needs. With these new categories, cities can develop a framework for how they want the streets to function for different users and how to target improvements if they want to change how a street is used.

## Main Street

This is the principal corridor in a community, which in Sturgis is Chicago Road at the heart of downtown. Typically, the most walkable area in the city, it should serve as many different types of users as possible and offer unique and diverse retail and entertainment experiences.

## Urban Center

Urban center streets make up the rest of downtown, generally surrounding Main Street. These streets serve several functions: support intense development, provide access to mixed-uses, accommodate all transit modes, and support parking and trucking needs.



Examples: Nottawa Street, Monroe Street

## Commercial

Commercial streets are designed for vehicular mobility between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. Oriented toward automobile traffic, they typically hold large footprint retail stores with parking lots and are not suitable for on-street parking. They can serve pedestrians and bicyclists, but favor vehicles.

Examples:





## Industrial

Industrial streets highly value mobility, so speed limits are higher than comparably sized streets. The parcels along the street are much larger than in residential and commercial areas. Ample off-street parking lots are necessary for employees and semi-trucks is typical.

Example: Wade Street, Broadus Street



## Neighborhood Connector

The primary function of this type of street is to provide access to neighborhood commercial properties and multi-family housing. These streets connect neighborhoods to arterials, offer street parking, and may also serve pedestrians and bicyclists. Mobility is second to neighborhood character and access.

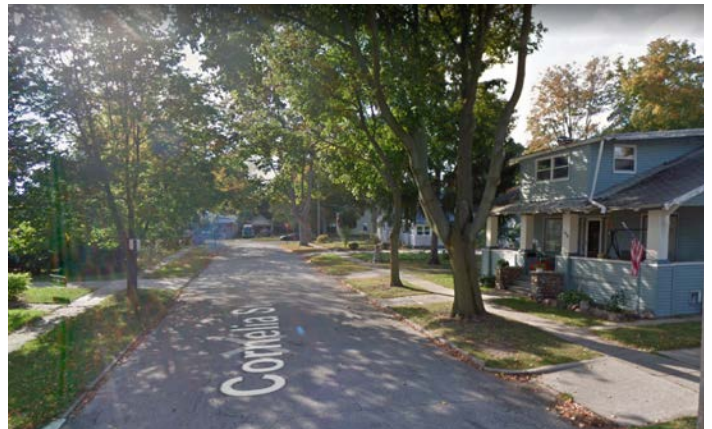
Example: Cato Lane, North Franks Avenue, W. South Street



## Residential

As the name suggests, residential streets provide access to individual residential properties. They carry traffic with a destination or origin within a local neighborhood. They may offer on-street parking, and accommodate vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Example: Cornelia Street



## STREET PATTERNS

The most efficient type of street network is a grid pattern with short block lengths. Short, straight distances are the quickest way to reach a destination by vehicle, foot, or bicycle. Cul-de-sacs, dead-ends, curvilinear streets, and long blocks break up the connectivity embedded in the grid network. Fortunately, the Sturgis street network suffers from few connectivity barriers. Like many cities that follow historic development patterns, the grid pattern surrounds the downtown, and new development along the periphery tends to follow the subdivision style of development that discourages the use of other modes of transit. This has occurred in Sturgis although to a limited degree.

## THE COST OF POOR TRANSIT OPTIONS

Building dense residential areas and multi-modal complete streets has a significant impact on household auto use. “Location-efficient” neighborhoods are dense, mixed-use, walkable, and have access to transit infrastructure, jobs, and retail and services. Households in these neighborhoods are less car-dependent, and therefore produce fewer emissions in comparison to less efficiently built neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup>

One unaccounted for cost of a poorly designed street system and limited public transit is the personal cost to the driver and the other is increased emissions. In the Sturgis region, if gas cost \$2.60 per gallon for a year, the average household would spend \$10,562 on auto ownership and gasoline. That is almost double the

recommended amount of 15% of the median household income. Driving is an expensive habit, but with no other reasonable mode of transit households have no choice but to spend disproportionately high amounts of their income on car-related expenses. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) model, Sturgis households in the City’s core spend the median or less on vehicular transportation costs compared to the city’s peripheral neighborhoods and surrounding Townships who may be spending over \$13,680 annually. Less money spent corresponds to fewer or shorter trips in the car, a boon for air quality and the household’s budget.

## NONMOTORIZED

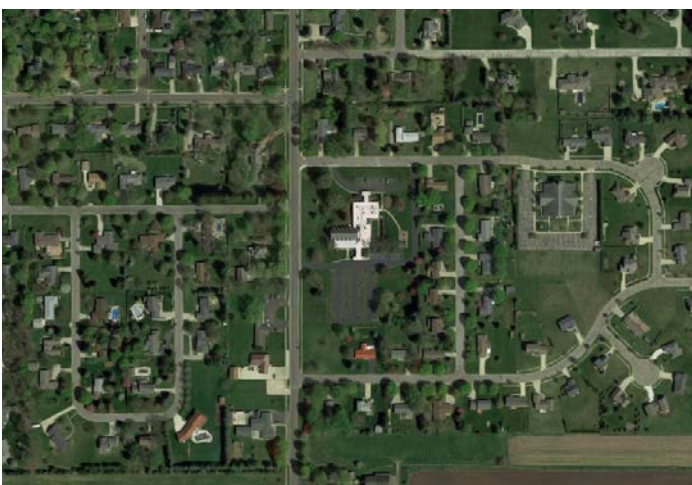
Nonmotorized pathways have historically been conceived of and designed for recreation, as opposed to a means of commuting. Sturgis residents have consistently stated a desire for trail development throughout the City. These requests were made through the lens of improving recreational opportunities, but an opportunity to think of trails as serving both purposes could influence where they are placed and how they connect. Also, filling in the sidewalk network when street construction projects are underway, would help to complete an already large-scale nonmotorized system that could be used for recreation or getting to and from destinations. Currently, some of the gaps in the infrastructure are due to ownership status; some sections of the sidewalk are owned by a township, while others are owned by the City, and coordination becomes more challenging.

## CIRCLE LINE EXPRESS

Managed by the St. Joseph County Transportation Authority (SJCTA), the Circle Line Express is a bus service that runs Monday through Saturday. There are nine stops in Sturgis where the bus will pick up or drop off. Between 8:30 am and 5:30pm, the bus visits each stop once per hour. It is \$1 per destination, and travel outside of the City is \$16 for a round trip, but seniors, disabled persons, and students receive a discount. The service will also take passengers to the VA Hospital in Battle Creek on Wednesday, and provides rides to transfer to Kalamazoo County. The other major destination on route is Three Rivers, but given the high cost and limited destinations, this is not a viable mode of transit for workers, especially those who work outside of these hours or cannot afford the daily round-trip price. Part of its financing is from the Area Agency on Aging, and this service focuses on the elderly who need to run errands or get to appointments without driving.<sup>5</sup>



*Grid pattern*



*Subdivision Style*

## RAIL

Rail service, the former artery of the City's transportation system, primarily serves industrial uses now. Despite having no passenger service today, the City raised money to move the historic New York Central train depot to a more visible location to memorialize the importance of Sturgis' railroad heritage. The Michigan Southern Railroad is the only line and it runs east to west through the City with a north and south spur on the City's southern limits. For passenger rail, Sturgis sits within an hour of the Amtrak stations in Kalamazoo and South Bend, Indiana.

## AIRPORT

Kirsch Municipal Airport is a publicly owned airport. No scheduled passenger service is provided, however charter service is available. Full airline services for commercial passenger travel can be found nearby at South Bend Regional Airport or the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport. Kirsch Municipal is used frequently by general aviation pilots as well as business air traffic serving local manufacturers. In addition, the airport is home to several aviation businesses including sales, maintenance, aircraft painting, and charter flights that contribute to traffic at the airport and the economy of the community.

An Airport Approach Plan was adopted by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC) for Kirsch Municipal Airport in 2002. This plan addresses height and land use protections using standards adopted by the MAC, and is required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to be included in this Master Plan. These documents can be found in the Appendix.

## SOURCES

- 1 Michigan Department of Transportation. *National Functional Classification*. [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDOT\\_-\\_MDOT\\_National\\_Functional\\_Classification\\_18759\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDOT_-_MDOT_National_Functional_Classification_18759_7.pdf)
- 2 St Joseph County Road Commission. *Class A Road Map*. [http://stjoeroads.com/wp-content/uploads/St-Joseph-County-Map\\_20150306\\_0001\\_Class-A-Roads.pdf](http://stjoeroads.com/wp-content/uploads/St-Joseph-County-Map_20150306_0001_Class-A-Roads.pdf)
- 3 Transportation Asset Management Council. *Interactive Maps: Roads and Bridges Ratings*. <https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/tamcMap/#/identify>
- 4 Center for Neighborhood Technology. *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. <https://htaindex.cnt.org/compare-greenhouse-gas/>
- 5 St. Joseph County Transportation Authority. Website "About" page. <http://www.sjcta.info/about/>

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# Economic Development

## INDUSTRY

### Regional Economy

To some degree, a city's local economy is dependent on the strength of its regional economy. Under former Governor Snyder, the state of Michigan was divided into 10 Prosperity Regions to encourage collaboration among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to achieve economic prosperity. Seven counties, including St. Joseph County, make up Prosperity Region 8 - Southwest Michigan. Through a competitive grant process, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission received a grant to form a representative committee and create a 5-Year Regional Prosperity Plan (2015) to assess the region's assets, priority project areas, and goals. When compared to other counties from Region 8, St. Joseph County's economic data illustrates where it sits among regional leaders for the selected indicators. This plan provides the regional and county-level economic context necessary to understand how Sturgis' trajectory aligns with a larger framework.

Throughout this section, results from a survey administered to local business owners are integrated into the text where

the results are relevant. Because economies are larger than the city's limits, data is rarely systematically collected at the municipal level. A survey is a good tool for asking questions that are otherwise not easily observed or tracked by a larger institution. The impetus behind the survey came from topics that emerged from the "work" stakeholder group who brought up several issues that could not be entirely verified without conducting an additional round of data collection.

### *Indicators from 5-Year Prosperity Plan: The Highlights*

A snapshot of the economic trends for the region reveal that educational attainment and an aging workforce are points of concern for economic growth. For instance, 52% of job postings which indicate a level of education as a requirement ask for a bachelor's degree when only 27% of the work force holds such a degree. Moreover, the workforce is aging and manufacturing jobs in particular may face a labor shortage as a result of a dearth of trained employees to take their place.<sup>1</sup>

As of 2014, St. Joseph County contributed one of the lowest proportions of residents within the 25-44 year age range to the regional economy. Younger age cohorts are an

TABLE 12. Young Potential Professionals

	Growth in % of Young Potential Professionals (2010-2015)	Young Potential Professionals as % of 2015 population
Sturgis	-2.35%	25.5%
St. Joseph County	-2.14%	23.3%

Source: 5-Year Prosperity Plan, Southwest Michigan

indicator of economic well-being because these workers, in their prime productive years, are major contributors to the economy. A comparison between St. Joseph and Sturgis demonstrates that both their total and younger populations are moving in the same downward direction. About one-quarter of the overall population in both places is in its prime working years, but between 2010 and 2015, this group has diminished at the about same rate in both geographies. A declining youth population is a common demographic trend in small, semi-rural cities with potentially serious consequences. If younger workers leave and do not return, or newcomers do not take their place, an age gap (and therefore a productivity gap) will form in the labor pipeline that stifles economic expansion.

## Workers

Sturgis' local workforce almost mirrors St. Joseph County in terms of the proportion and types of sectors workers work in. The figures discussed below refer to workers that live in Sturgis, but their precise work locations by sector are known in lesser detail. The surrounding area also appears to be job-rich as the greatest proportion of those who leave the City for work commute less than 10 miles to other small cities like Burr Oak. On the other extreme, close to one-quarter of workers travel greater than 50 miles to reach their jobs, traveling primarily to larger cities like Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Elkhart, and South Bend. Distance to employment opportunities is one critical indicator of accessibility and so is alternative modes of transportation to reach employment hubs. For residents with unreliable transportation, a job that is over a couple of miles away is out of reach.

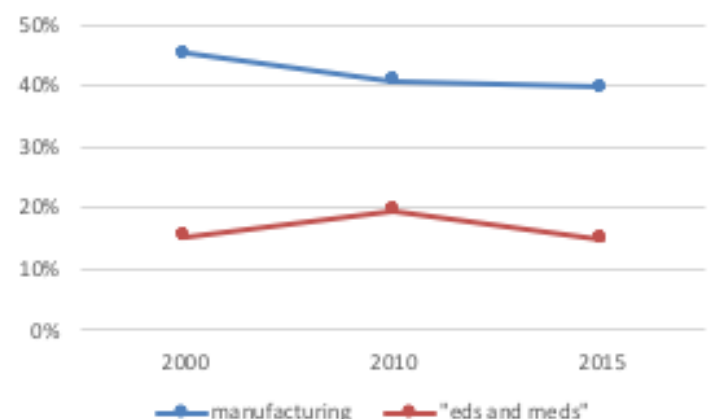
Two-thirds of Sturgis residents work in manufacturing (39.8%), educational services and health care and social assistance (14.9%), and retail (9.0%) and this break down has remained relatively stable since 2010. The concentration of manufacturing workers stands out in comparison to the state and nation, where only 17.8% and 10.4% of citizens work in this sector, respectively. Even with a sizeable portion of its workers dedicated to manufacturing, that proportion is also declining, slipping just over five percentage points between 2000 and 2015. During that time period, "eds and meds" rose and then fell to lower portion of the economy than 2000.

Economies which rely heavily on a large manufacturing

base have proven to be troublesome in the Midwest as many jobs have moved out of state or overseas over the last few decades, and more recently have been displaced by automation. While this sector built up and supported a strong middle class in Michigan over the 20th century, it is no longer providing a solvent future on its own. As such, a distinction between what is considered the "new economy" and the "old economy" has emerged to describe how the American economy has changed from labor-intensive industry that extracts, produces, and moves physical products to the production of knowledge through services and the use of technology. In the "new economy" employees can work remotely, and physical infrastructure and location become less important to productivity. This has been a large-scale transition that does not necessarily preclude some communities from maintaining a small manufacturing hub, as Sturgis has successfully done. While Sturgis lost no major manufacturing businesses during the 2008-2009 recession, suggesting some economic resiliency, Sturgis could be less resilient in the face of future economic downturns with the continued evolution of the "new economy."

Intrinsically, there is no better or worse type of economy, but contemporary economic development strategies promote "new economy" jobs for several reasons: demand for that sector is on the rise; the single-sector economy model is producing diminishing returns; and their relative location independence makes them more translatable than resource-dependent jobs. The goal is to achieve balance between old and new to create a diversified economy which

FIGURE 16. "Old" and "New" Economic Trajectories



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

can respond to changes and recover more readily from recession than economies that over-rely on the health of one sector. This diversity can be partially measured using ratios which compare the number of workers in each industry, with a ratio of one signifying a balance between two industries. When comparing the top three industries in Sturgis, the manufacturing to “eds/meds” ratio is 3.47, and the manufacturing to retail ratio is 6.74. This demonstrates a clear imbalance among the industries with a hefty pull towards manufacturing employment.

## JOB IN STURGIS

Sturgis is an important employment hub of St. Joseph County. As of 2015, 6,472 people were employed in Sturgis, and 79.5% of those employees were pulled in from outside of the City’s boundaries (see Figure 14 in Chapter 3). The largest sectors in terms of the number of businesses and the number of employees do not track exactly to the sectors that Sturgis residents work in, suggesting everyday there is a substantial transition of workers commuting into and out of the City. There is some overlap in the number of retail and manufacturing jobs and workers within Sturgis, but otherwise, many of the jobs in Sturgis fall into “services” at both the lower and higher end of the spectrum, ranging from lower-paying food services jobs to professional, scientific, and tech services at the higher end. Estimates from ESRI Business Analyst 2018 report estimates that there are 8,971 employees in Sturgis which represents a jump of almost 2,500 jobs. While the economy has grown over that three-year period, the number is likely to fall somewhere in that range.

Because of its strong manufacturing foundation, the City of Sturgis works to support industry by maintaining the infrastructure to accommodate manufacturing and through the promotion of industrial sites on the City’s website. Table 13 shows the four industrial parks in the City limits.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 13. Industrial Parks

Name	# Parcels	Acres
Stapleton Industrial Park	12 parcels	79.8
Bullard Industrial Park	18 parcels	22
Dresser Industrial Park	3 parcels	71.1

Source: City of Sturgis

## Largest Employers

Below is a list of the largest employers in Sturgis:

- » Morgan Olson
- » Abbott Nutrition
- » Burr Oak Tool
- » Sturgis Molded Products
- » Summit Polymers
- » Iceberg
- » Precision Speed
- » Americraft Carton
- » Sturgis Public Schools
- » Sturgis Hospital
- » Walmart
- » Meijer
- » GT Independence

## Agriculture

As of 2012, the most recent USDA Census, St. Joseph County produced \$190,933,000 in crop sales and \$47,120,000 million in animal products.<sup>3</sup> It is ranked 11th out of 83 counties in the state by total value of products

TABLE 14. Business Summary

Sector	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Retail	94	18.3%	1,393	15.5%
Other services (not public administration)	83	16.1%	1,093	12.2%
Manufacturing	42	8.2%	2,446	27.3%
Finance and insurance	34	6.6%	271	1.1%
Accommodation and food services	33	6.4%	466	5.2%
Professional, scientific, and tech services	31	6.0%	297	3.3%
Food services and drinking places	30	5.8%	455	5.1%
TOTAL	347	61.0%	6,421	69.7%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2018 Business Summary Report

sold. Even though the number of farms has decreased by 6% since 2007, the average farm size increased by 20 acres, and so has the market value of products sold. Total sales were up 75% between 2007 and 2012. Despite such vast quantities of money made in the agriculture, only 3.8% of employees in the county work in the industry, for a variety of reasons: technology has improved productivity so fewer employees are needed to generate the same yields; younger farmers are not entering the field at the same rate as retirees are leaving; and many agricultural workers also work other “jobs of record.” But the County remains hopeful; the 2007 County’s Future Land Use map aspires to keep 69% of land dedicated to either agricultural production or rural residential.<sup>4</sup>

Agricultural land is located outside the City of Sturgis almost by definition, but the City does continue to enjoy the traditional development pattern of a dense marketplace surrounded by the sites of production. As the largest city in the County, Sturgis has the potential to benefit from these agricultural fortunes.

Food systems are not a traditional feature of master plans, despite their importance to the community and land use planning. The state of Michigan has begun to examine ways to capitalize on the economic development possibilities that could arise from our diverse and productive agricultural base. In many cases, understanding the system itself in order to make connections between food producers, processors, distributors, and consumers reveals the gaps and opportunities. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), for example, has identified that a large proportion of agricultural products are shipped to other states for processing. Since this is the stage which generates the greatest return on investment, that can be quite a loss for the state. The agency has developed a series of “Value-Add and Regional Food Systems” grants which have been disbursed since 2014 to companies proposing agricultural processing ventures, developing regional food systems, or increasing access to healthy food.

This is an industry that is emerging and has the potential to work in or around Sturgis. The confluence of agricultural production and the community’s interest in urban agriculture could make for a good setting for this type of industry. A “farm and food systems” assessment would need to be

conducted by the county to understand just how these pieces are currently functioning and to build upon them.

### Cannabis Industry

At the time of this plan’s writing, dramatic changes in the regulation of cannabis, marihuana, and hemp are taking place. These changes have been spearheaded at the State level, where 33 states have permitted marihuana for medical or recreational purposes. Once the policy change has been made, it falls to the local units of government to craft the regulatory and land use ordinances to implement it. Michigan authorized a caregiver model of medical marihuana in 2009 (ballot-driven Michigan Medical Marihuana Program, or MMMP); commercial medical marihuana in 2016 (legislative Michigan Marihuana Facilities Licensing Act, or MMFLA); and adult use/recreational marihuana (ballot-driven Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act, or MRTMA) in 2018. Each of these programs has distinct features based on its source and method of approval, and the State of Michigan has implemented a Marijuana Regulatory Agency to serve as the primary oversight.

The MMFLA and MRTMA each define permitted commercial activities related to growing, processing, transporting, testing, distributing, and selling marihuana. Land use decisions related to the time, manner, and place of those activities are under local purview, and the Acts provide for municipalities to opt in or out of participation. The City of Sturgis has opted into the permitting of medical marihuana facilities and at the time of this plan is reviewing regulation of adult-use (recreational) marihuana facilities. There has been strong industry interest and activity in all communities which allow marihuana facilities, including the repurposing of vacant buildings, the addition of new jobs, and in some cases the provision of water and electrical infrastructure to support more intensive production facilities. Sturgis’ position as one of the few urbanized areas in the County makes it particularly attractive to industry representatives who are looking to serve the south Michigan geography.

As with all business prospects, the City has been working with the marihuana industry to facilitate development within the boundaries established by the City Commission and Planning Commission through the City Code of Ordinances

TABLE 15. Median Wage and Gender Wage Disparity by Industry

Industry	Median Wage	Gender Wage Disparity (female earnings as a % male earnings)
Manufacturing	\$32,594	85.2%
Eds and Meds	\$36,031	50.6%
Retail	\$22,250	48.5%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015



TABLE 16. Wage Range by Job Level

Skill Level	Wage Range (below livable wage for a parent)			Wage Range (above livable wage for a parent)		
	\$8.15	\$9-15	\$16-20	\$21-30	\$31-40	\$40 or more
Low skill	3.9%	88.2%	7.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mid skill	0.0%	26.9%	65.4%	5.8%	0.0%	1.9%
Skilled trades	2.3%	4.7%	18.6%	62.8%	11.6%	0.0%
White collar	0.0%	4.6%	6.8%	34.1%	31.8%	22.7%
Executive and management	0.0%	4.8%	2.4%	7.1%	21.4%	14.3%

Source: Businesses in Sturgis, survey results

and the Zoning Code. The confluence of established utilities and available land makes it attractive for large-scale growing and processing operations, which by law may be co-located with provisioning center facilities.

It is possible that significant land use, resident employment, and commuting pattern changes could result from Sturgis' allowance of marihuana commercial facilities. These changes should be tracked in future master planning efforts to ensure that policy developments are producing the desired built result.

## EARNING POTENTIAL

The median household income in Sturgis is \$36,293. The wage for manufacturing, the backbone of the local economy, is just below the median earnings for full-time, year-round workers at \$32,594 per year. Manufacturing also has one of the smallest wage gaps between men and women, with women earning 85.2% of men's earnings. Educational, healthcare and social services, on the hand, is projected to be the industry of the future as Baby Boomers age, and younger generations attend college in higher numbers. But it still has some drawbacks. While it pays 8% higher than the median earnings for full-time workers, it also employs far fewer people, and has one of the highest female-male pay differentials: women make half of men's earnings. Retail trade, the type of jobs needed to run the independent stores downtown, can also be hard to fill because of the low wages. In Sturgis, the overall median wage for a retail job is only 61% of the median household wage.

The Michigan League for Public Policy has mapped the livable wage needed for each county. The livable wage is the hourly wage necessary to cover basic expenses such as housing, food, utilities, clothing, child care, and transportation. In St. Joseph County, a single adult can survive on a full-time wage \$10.60 per hour, but becoming a parent means increasing that wage to \$20.10 per hour—higher than the current median household income.<sup>5</sup> That is to say that the current median household income is insufficient for a household with children. Yet, survey results show that most business owners believe that qualified low skilled workers should be making between \$9-\$15 per hour. To determine if a wage is livable

depends on numerous factors which are not easy to collect on a large scale. Number of children, debt to income ratios, location, withholdings from a paycheck, and level of familial support, are the primary factors needed on a household level to complete the analysis. Table 16 shows that most business owners believe that workers with low and mid skill levels should be making under the livable wage for a parent (\$20.10). Though these survey results do not necessarily reflect the actual wages people are earning, they signal that perhaps many parents working at these skill levels may not be able to meet their basic needs.

## QUALITY OF JOBS

### Employment Benefits

More important than the number of jobs and their growth potential is the quality of jobs offered in Sturgis. Workers who are planning for a comfortable future for their families are attracted to the safety net attached to jobs at least as much as to the wage offered. One way to define the quality of a job is through the benefits offered to its employees, which may come in a variety of non-standard forms such as health care, transportation assistance, meals on site, retirement matching, and child-care services. For example, the MichiganWorks agency in Prosperity Region 8 found that some employers in the region are offering up to \$1,000 for employees to purchase food because workers tight on money skip meals and arrive lethargic, ineffective, and more susceptible to work-related accidents. Top talent will not likely work somewhere without a competitive package of benefits, and according to the results from the businesses that were surveyed, one-third of them do not offer ANY benefits.

Health insurance coverage is perhaps the benefit of highest value: on a personal scale, it can save your wallet and your life; a high number of uninsured persons in a city can also be detrimental to a local economy. Because health care coverage is most commonly tied to employment, it is not surprising that 36.8% of the unemployed are without health insurance. What is astounding is that 14.4% of employed persons do not have health insurance! Many self-employed people struggle to afford health insurance, but in Sturgis this

TABLE 17. Technical and Soft Job Skills by Level of Experience

Level of experience	Skills	
	Technical	Soft
Entry level	Basic math, Microsoft suite, writing skills	Reliability, work ethic, punctual, respectful, team player, people skills
Mid-skilled	Spoken communication skills,	Organization, people skills, multi-tasking
Skilled trades	Lab techs, welding, machining, HVAC, mechanics,	Problem solving, collaboration
White collar	Engineering, sales and marketing, physicians, financial literacy	Time management, leadership, interpersonal communication,
Executive and management	Management skills	Mentoring, strategic thinking

Source: Businesses in Sturgis, survey results

group only accounts for 3.5% of the population. A scenario exists where a person could be working full-time with a decent wage and have a hampered disposable income from medical debt. From an economic standpoint that means fewer people can afford to purchase goods and services and/or save capital to start a company.

According to ESRI Business Analyst Financial Expenditure Report, the household value of the retirement plans in Sturgis is \$16,314, or 67% of the national average. With low retirement plan values, it is likely that companies are not providing a matching contribution or that employees do not feel financially secure enough to save higher amounts for retirement. Sturgis has a lower median age compared to the country as a whole, so employees still have time to save adequately, but saving for a 20-year retirement still means that a household earning the median income will have to put away at least \$725,860 over his/her working life. It already appears that the current generation in Sturgis struggled to save enough with 11.6% of people aged 65 or older live in poverty. Younger generations may have it even harder. Millennials who are entering the workforce are saddled with substantial school debt (although in Sturgis they are spending only 79% of the nationwide average) and may contribute even less to a retirement plan in order to meet more immediate needs. In comparison to the other municipalities within St. Joseph County, the state of Michigan, and the U.S., Sturgis ranks third to last for households with retirement income (16.4%).<sup>6</sup> This is a problem for today and for tomorrow, and it starts with companies competing to attract talent with more benefits, not fewer. In fact, this was one suggestion from the “work” stakeholder group who recommended that companies demonstrate an investment in their workers to keep them here through improved benefits and training.

## BARRIERS

### Labor Pipeline

When asked the barriers to starting or expanding a business in Sturgis, more than half (55.1%) of participants claim a “lack of qualified workers” and second to that is a “lack of interested workers” (37.1%). Above infrastructure, market size, zoning, and lack of capital, business owners have called out talent and appropriately skilled workers are limiting factors to economic growth. This response was amplified in sectors that require higher skills such as manufacturing and educational and healthcare services, whereas the permitting process and restrictive zoning were a more prominent issue for the retail sector.

The education-to-career pipeline is best built with strong partnerships. For example, the Trojan Manufacturing Solution Center partners with the Sturgis Public Schools to provide vocational education to high school students so they can obtain a manufacturing job or enter trade school after graduation. Half of the manufacturing businesses that responded do not participate in this program, and another one-third do not know what the program entails, exposing an opportunity to promote the program proactively to the manufacturing sector. On a larger scale, all survey-takers were asked if they have worked with the local school system to develop a program that trains high school students for positions at their respective companies. Over three-quarters (77.3%) of businesses answered “no.” Some reported that they require post-secondary education and therefore working with high schools is not a good fit. But several others noted that they have tried to build connections with local schools and nothing has gotten off the ground and many others have said that the school has never approached

them. The findings suggest that there is a greater appetite to develop a training program for high school students, but it is a matter of who will take the first step in structuring and managing it. When asked if a program already existed that helps train high school students for jobs in your company, 76.2% of businesses responded affirmatively.

## Drugs

During community engagement sessions with students, drugs were mentioned as a large-scale issue that concerns them, and this sentiment was further articulated by the “work” stakeholder group as a barrier to finding employees who can pass a drug test. Meth was mentioned as the primary culprit, but it may also be the case that meth’s effects make users more visible, as explained by the St. Joseph Substance Abuse Task Force. Methamphetamines induce feelings of invincibility that compel users to engage in risky behavior that is obvious to sober persons. The Sturgis Police Department has records on the presence of drugs in Sturgis. While there are limitations to the data in that the records only reflect who was caught with drugs, and not everyone that possesses or sells them, the data shows that arrests for meth have doubled between 2013 to 2017 from 15 to 33 arrests.

TABLE 18. High Schooler Drug Use

Drug Use in the last 30 days	Percentage of 9th and 11th graders
Marijuana	27.0%
Synthetic marijuana	14.1%
Pain killers without a prescription	13.8%
Took a prescription drug without a prescription (Xanax, Adderall, etc.)	12.4%
Sniffed glue, breathed contents of a spray can, or inhaled paints or sprays	6.3%
Barbiturates without a prescription	5.2%
Steroids	4.5%
Cocaine	4.2%
Methamphetamines	3.7%
Used a needle to inject an illegal drug	3.7%
Heroin	3.3%

Source: Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth, MiPHY

The Michigan Department of Education and Health and Human Services has created the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY), an online survey that assess youth’s health issues. The survey asks 7th, 9th, and 11th graders questions that gauge their attitudes and habits on issues considered “health risk behaviors.” Some of those questions are geared specifically to substance abuse. When the two high school grades are combined, 26.2% have taken a prescription drug without the advice of a medical professional. The percentage of students using pain killers without a prescription is alarming as new research demonstrates the opioid epidemic is correlated with the increase of opioid-based prescriptions. Fentanyl, the ingredient in pain killers, is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine and is highly addictive. When prescriptions run out, people turn to heroin to stave off withdrawal.<sup>7,8</sup> According to the Sturgis Hospital CHNA, St. Joseph County reports that 75% of prescription drugs are opioids.

Interestingly, the data starts to show that drug use problems are not unfounded, but the survey results indicate that the extensiveness of the problem is overexaggerated. The highest proportion of survey-takers did not know to what extent applicants were failing drug tests (39.6%) and similar proportions claimed that their company did not test for drugs. These findings suggest that drug screening is not a fixed part of the hiring process and that if a test is conducted, it is at most done “sometimes” but more likely to be “never” than “most of the time.” For the businesses that did drug test and did know the results of those tests, the highest proportion of respondents reported 1-5% of candidates failed.

## HIRING

Businesses were asked two sets of questions to determine if potential employees refuse jobs for place-specific or job-specific reasons. The set of questions tried to determine whether it was the job or the city that deterred potential candidates outside of the region from coming here. The results are mixed, and likely show a combination of some inadequacy in both.

When businesses find a qualified candidate from outside of the region, just over 55% report that it is either “moderately” or “very” difficult to convince him or her to move to Sturgis. Some of the reasons potential candidates have listed as not wanting to take a job are Sturgis is too small and lacks access to shopping, dining, and entertainment that metropolitan areas offer. To the candidate, moving to a smaller city feels like sacrificing convenience of a city life for a perceived lower quality of life. On top of that, almost 21% of respondents recorded that potential employees could not find the appropriate housing type to relocate into the city for work, and 22.4% could not consistently find a way to work.

TABLE 19-20. Industry Leakage and Surplus

NAICS Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$21,900,289	\$28,225,859	-\$6,325,570	-12.6	14
Automobile Dealers	\$17,752,471	\$18,042,851	-\$290,380	-0.8	6
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$1,946,059	\$3,384,333	-\$1,438,274	-27.0	2
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$2,201,759	\$6,798,675	-\$4,596,916	-51.1	6
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$3,194,451	\$5,379,755	-\$2,185,304	-25.5	6
Furniture Stores	\$1,983,496	\$3,849,793	-\$1,866,297	-32.0	4
Home Furnishings Stores	\$1,210,955	\$1,529,962	-\$319,007	-11.6	2
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$3,113,232	\$712,035	\$2,401,197	62.8	1
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$6,986,873	\$4,362,303	\$2,624,570	23.1	7
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$6,335,868	\$4,362,303	\$1,973,565	18.4	7
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$651,005	\$0	\$651,005	100.0	0
Food & Beverage Stores	\$18,185,409	\$66,669,048	-\$48,483,639	-57.1	11
Grocery Stores	\$15,989,065	\$64,897,130	-\$48,908,065	-60.5	7
Specialty Food Stores	\$896,497	\$1,192,383	-\$295,886	-14.2	3
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$1,299,847	\$579,535	\$720,312	38.3	1
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$7,365,756	\$11,513,249	-\$4,147,493	-22.0	8
Gasoline Stations	\$12,032,013	\$21,826,942	-\$9,794,929	-28.9	5
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$4,928,151	\$4,430,212	\$497,939	5.3	7
Clothing Stores	\$3,343,790	\$2,166,452	\$1,177,338	21.4	3
Shoe Stores	\$720,494	\$1,087,915	-\$367,421	-20.3	2
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$863,867	\$1,175,845	-\$311,978	-15.3	2
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$2,634,558	\$4,335,081	-\$1,700,523	-24.4	6
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$2,205,057	\$4,335,081	-\$2,130,024	-32.6	6
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$429,501	\$0	\$429,501	100.0	0
General Merchandise Stores	\$15,491,083	\$47,894,775	-\$32,403,692	-51.1	6
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$10,504,931	\$44,747,349	-\$34,242,418	-62.0	2
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$4,986,152	\$3,147,426	\$1,838,726	22.6	4
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$3,757,283	\$1,981,149	\$1,776,134	31.0	10
Florists	\$169,241	\$355,349	-\$186,108	-35.5	2
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$722,582	\$667,242	\$55,340	4.0	2
Used Merchandise Stores	\$610,456	\$222,108	\$388,348	46.6	2
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$2,255,004	\$736,450	\$1,518,554	50.8	4
Nonstore Retailers	\$1,872,407	\$1,720,977	\$151,430	4.2	1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$1,455,575	\$0	\$1,455,575	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	\$106,492	\$0	\$106,492	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	\$310,340	\$1,720,977	-\$1,410,637	-69.4	1
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$10,105,803	\$16,483,838	-\$6,378,035	-24.0	29
Special Food Services	\$303,067	\$25,700	\$277,367	84.4	1
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$550,391	\$0	\$550,391	100.0	0
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	\$9,252,345	\$16,458,138	-\$7,205,793	-28.0	28

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Retail Market Place Profile



Regarding job-specific reasons for refusal, the most commonly selected responses was insufficient pay (43.1%). Wage outranked benefits, room for advancement, and flexible hours. Job quality is also an issue in Sturgis. Of the 54 responses collected, one-third of survey participants do not offer any benefits. Only slightly more than half (53.7%) offer medical insurance for the employee and fewer offer medical insurance for employee family members (44.4%). Imagine a family where the head householder cannot cover his or her children on a health insurance plan.

## MARKET ANALYSIS

### Leakage Report

The Retail Market Place Profile created by ESRI Business Analyst compiles which industries generate a surplus and which are “leaky.” The intent of this analysis is to determine which industries experience gaps between supply and demand, and the monetary size of those gaps. A leaking industry means that residents are leaving the city limits in order to find a good or service, therefore that industry is said to be “leaking” money from the local economy. A surplus means that an industry attracts visitors from outside of Sturgis and draws in more money into the local economy.

Sturgis’ biggest monetary losses come from “electronic and appliance stores,” “miscellaneous stores,” and “building material, garden equipment and supply stores” totaling approximately \$6,801,901 in lost revenue. When the question was taken to the residents in the community-wide survey, the top responses for what businesses they want to see come downtown were “food and beverage” (68.9%) and “clothing and accessories” (52.9%). “Food and beverage” stores are already performing highly in the City, so a desire for more speaks to a desire for more variety than need. The feedback for more “clothing and accessories” stores is also reflected in the high level of leakiness found in this industry. Sturgis has many high-performing industries in Sturgis, mainly industries that represent daily goods and needs. In fact, when comparing the best performing industries against the industries shedding the most money, Sturgis is still drawing in an estimated \$102,665,983 more than it is losing.

## ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO THE STURGIS ECONOMY

Sturgis is considered a core community by the state agency Michigan Economic Development Corporation. As such, it receives additional incentives designed to spur private development through the programs<sup>9</sup>:

### Core Community Incentives

Brownfield Redevelopment Incentives	Tax increment financing can help with demolition, site preparation, and public infrastructure on contaminated or obsolete properties.
Neighborhood Enterprise Zones	Tax incentives for new housing construction and to rehabilitate older homes for up to 15 years
Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption	Freeze local property taxes during predevelopment to encourage the redevelopment of functionally obsolete buildings

The City of Sturgis has several organizations dedicated to boosting the local economy. Below is a list of each organization’s role:

#### *Sturgis Economic Development Corporation (EDC)*

The EDC provides resources to businesses and entrepreneurs and is managed by a nine member board. Together, they are responsible for promoting development in the Sturgis area.

#### *Business Development Team*

For those new to development, the process may seem daunting. To help smaller or less experienced applicants realize their project’s goals, the City has constructed a Business Development Team comprised of the Zoning/ Building Administrator, DDA Director (if necessary), City Engineer, Economic Development Director, and the Chamber of Commerce Executive Director to help navigate the process. With their institutional knowledge, the Business Development Team can give specific advice and explain which grants or tax incentives programs may apply to the project.

#### *Sturgis Downtown Development Authority (DDA)*

The Sturgis DDA provides many services to the downtown businesses and residents through a tax increment financing. As an organization, it helps to promote the downtown areas and improve it so that it remains a place for economic, social, and cultural interaction.

Sturgis Improvement Association (SIA)

The SIA is a nonprofit that focuses on both business and community development. To do this, SIA helps to build connections between business, educational institutions, foundations, and the government. Additionally, they actively participate in developing human, technical, and capital resources.

Generate Sturgis

Generate Sturgis was established in 2011 as a collaboration among local government, businesses, and state agencies to create a culture that supports entrepreneurs. Their mission is to help entrepreneurs turn ideas into businesses that create “jobs, services, wealth and stability for the extended community.” To achieve this mission, Generate Sturgis connects entrepreneurs to organizations that provide training, education, and networking opportunities.

Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce

A Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization that provide networking and access to resources for businesses that join.

REDEVELOPMENT READY

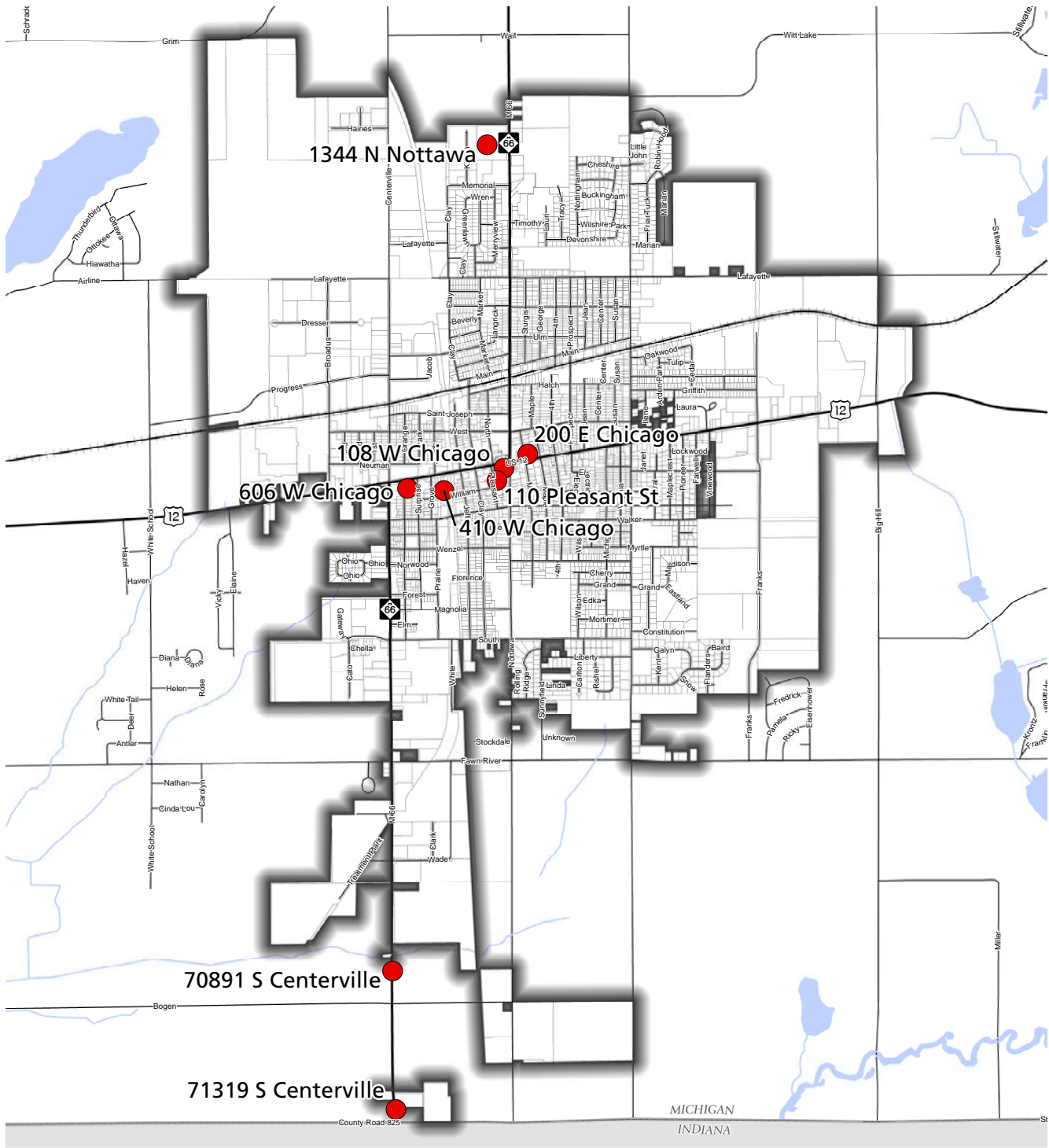
Planning is a spatial discipline, which means its strategies are tied to land-based solutions. Market analysis is helpful for determining, ultimately, how to fill properties that are a drag on the landscape and the tax roll. Redevelopment Ready Communities is a program managed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation as a voluntary, no-cost certification designed to help cities attract investment and residents. To participate, the state agency requires that cities follow the RRC best practices to achieve certification. The steps toward certification are based on improving planning, zoning, development processes to signal to developers and potential investors that a municipality is ready for redevelopment. One of the important tasks on the list of best practices is to identify and prioritize sites that are vacant, obsolete, or underutilized in areas that have a large impact, like downtowns or neighborhoods. The difference in this approach is that the process is community-driven, as opposed to waiting for the private market to come to the City with a satisfactory idea.

Then the community assembles important information on the site, convenes to create a vision for the site, identifies potential resources and incentives that could help complete their vision, and proactively markets to developers who

TABLE 21. Redevelopment Ready Sites

Site	Ownership	Notes
200 E. Chicago	City owned	Existing brownfield on site; adjacent building up for sale
410 W. Chicago	Privately owned	Vacant commercial space
108 W. Chicago	City owned	Needs significant work, old restaurant and retail space
606 W. Chicago	City owned	Oddly-shaped site
110 Pleasant St.	Privately owned	Historic property, needs significant investment
1344 N Nottawa	Owned by non profit	Vacant land
70891 / 71319 S Centerville Road	Privately owned	200’ setback from M-66 available for commercial development
S. Centerville Road multiparcel (KJS Hibbard, farmland with access from M066; east of Elaine)	Privately owned	Potential for big box development if consolidated

## MAP 17. Redevelopment Sites



CITY OF STURGIS

## Redevelopment Sites

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Redevelopment Site

Beckett & Raeder

would appropriately develop the space. This approach is designed to accomplish more desirable outcomes because it is community supported, well researched, and proactively targeting developers with the expertise to complete such a vision.

## Where to Start?

The sites for RRC should be selected by consensus but some guidelines point out how to start compiling promising candidates. Redevelopment possibilities can be a range of mis- or poorly-used parcels:

- » Vacant land
- » Surface parking lots
- » Former industrial sites
- » Brownfields

- » Historic rehab or adaptive reuse
- » Vacant storefront
- » Vacant upper stories

Starting with these sites that have these characteristics can bring them back on the tax roll and fulfill community needs that are going unmet. The challenge is that these properties have probably not been updated because they are plagued with development obstacles: lacking infrastructure, environmental degradation, absentee landowner, conflict with city officials, among others. An inventory and documentation of a site's current land conditions, ownership status, challenges are the first action to take, then broadening the questions to: what does the City want to achieve? What type of development is feasible? What resources are available to induce investment?

## SOURCES

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# Integration & Implementation

10

The culmination of the master planning process is translating all of the findings from analysis and community engagement into goals and then actions. For land use specifically, there are a few tools used to determine how a city will grow and how it can change to achieve its vision through the future land use map and the zoning plan. More broadly, the action plan outlines steps that the City can take to reach its goals that are not necessarily land-based.

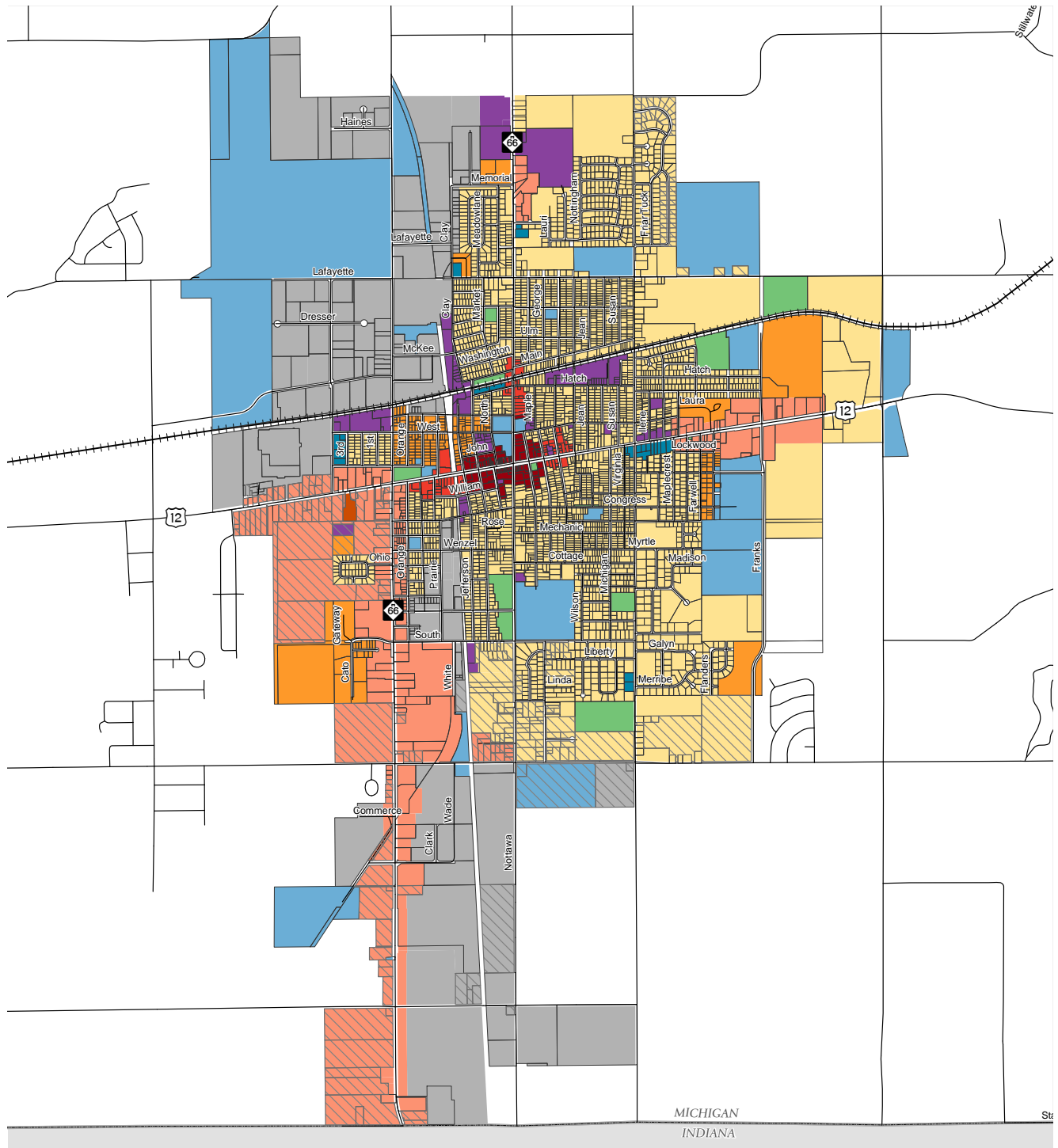
The vision of the Sturgis community is one that supports jobs, retail, and infrastructure. Increasing employment opportunities, increasing retail and restaurants in the downtown, and improving City streets. Continuing to maintain the quality of schools, low crime rate, and affordable housing will keep residents, families, and seniors within the City. The demographic shifts in Sturgis align with needs that were heard during community engagement: a greater variety of housing types and affordable options will allow people of all ages and income levels the opportunity to live and succeed in Sturgis. With an aging population and a gradual influx of Spanish-speaking families, housing types and affordability will be intimately connected with the ability

of these groups to reside in the City, as noted in community feedback. The regulatory tools for implementation are driven by this understanding of community needs vocalized by citizens, stakeholders, and elected leaders.

## FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies generalized preferred future land uses in the City. It is a general framework intended to guide land use and policy decisions within the City over the next 15-20 years, driving changes to the Zoning Ordinance and informing development review decisions. The preferred locations for future development types are shown, allowing the community to identify where certain land uses should expand or contract without committing it to law. The FLUM should be referenced in decision-making processes about development coming to Sturgis, and if a City finds that it is not consulting the FLUM in that way, then the map should be re-evaluated and updated to reflect the development desires of the community.

## MAP 18. Future Land Use



### CITY OF STURGIS Future Land Use

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

- |                  |                           |                                   |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| City Parcels     | Business Highway          | Mixed Residential                 |
| State Roads      | Business Neighborhood     | Single and Two-Family Residential |
| All Roads        | Central Business District | Mobile Home                       |
| Railroads        | Business Office Service   | Public                            |
| Rivers / Streams | Industrial                | Open Space                        |
| Lakes / Ponds    | Mixed Use                 | Township Ownership                |

Note: Boundary reflects 425 agreements executed during the writing of this plan.



The FLUM proposes the addition of a “mixed residential” land use category that would integrate housing types, contrary to typical zoning practices that segregate single-family housing from everything else. Development of this kind would increase density with a mix of multi-family units such as apartments, duplexes, senior housing, condominiums, and single-family houses. It is a more respectful way of integrating these denser development types into the community than segregating them into “transition” zones between single-family housing and other uses. The proposed mixed residential land use areas are strategically located near the downtown and commercial corridors to build accessibility to services into future residential planning.

The Sturgis FLUM also implements a true “mixed use” category as a redevelopment tool. Assigned to parcels and areas of the City which are in transition, this category would permit residential, commercial, or industrial uses that are appropriately combined and suitable for their

context, as determined by the Planning Commission. In near-downtown neighborhoods, for example, this category would allow for a traditional development format that many cities have eliminated over time: residential units above local businesses, expanding housing variety and increasing foot traffic for ground floor business. On larger parcels toward the periphery of the City, it may be used to implement an innovative large-format commercial/industrial hybrid.

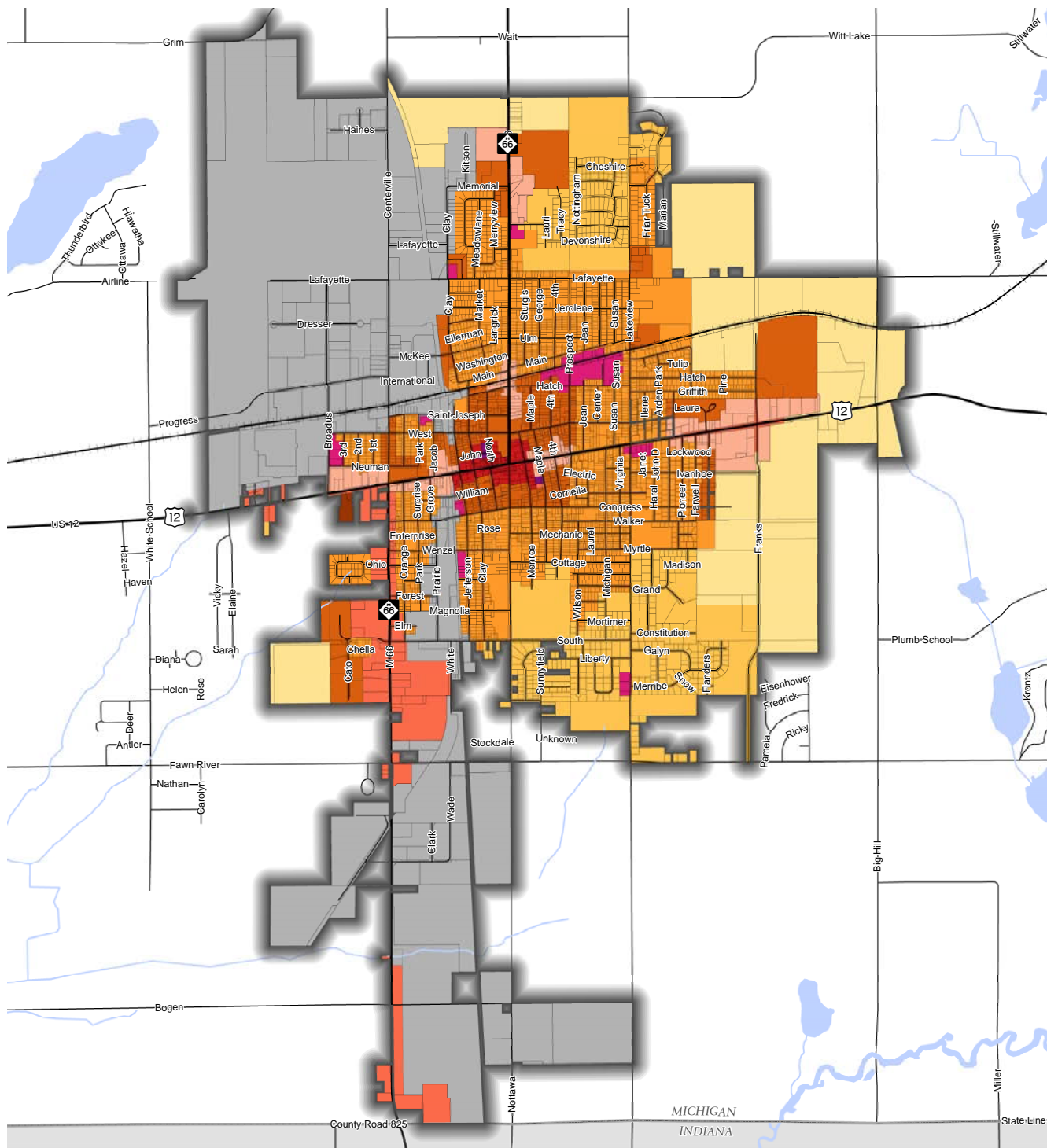
The new future land use category, Business Neighborhood, envisions small and low-intensity commercial uses, including offices, to be integrated with existing residential. The “agriculture vacant” existing land use category, never meant to be permanent within any City’s limits, is replaced with mostly with single-family residential on the periphery of the City. Furthermore, properties covered with hatching on the map represent properties under “425 agreements,” meaning that they are not yet part of the City but are anticipated to be in the future. The map shows the planned land use

TABLE 22. Future Land Use Categories

District	Intent	Example of Uses*	Corresponding Zoning Districts
Single-family and two-family residential	To provide primarily for single-family, detached homes in residential neighborhoods	Single- and two-family housing units and complementary uses	R-1, R-2, R-3**
Mobile home	To provide an area for mobile home parks	Mobile homes	R-5
Mixed residential	To provide a wide variety of housing options of greater density than the single-family residential district	Single-family and multi-family units and complementary uses	R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4
Central Business District	To function as the major walkable and bikeable commercial destination for residents and the area	A mix of residential (upper story) and commercial uses	B-C
Business Highway	To primarily serve convenience-style shopping accessed by automobile in high-travel areas; to provide a transition between the intensity or incompatibility between uses such as mixed residential and industrial; to provide light industrial space in areas that generate less car traffic	Gas stations, drive-thru, car-wash, strip malls, warehousing, storage, lumber yards, vehicle sales	B-H 1, B-H 2
Business Neighborhood	To serve as a transition area for commercial business moving away from the density and walkability of the Central Business District but not as auto-intensive as Business Highway.	Mix of commercial uses including restaurants, retail, office, and service businesses with some residential	No zone
Business & Office	To provide low-intensity office space and other business uses in transition areas to residential districts.	Offices, banks, medical or dental offices, personal services.	B-OS
Open Space	To preserve land for passive and active recreation	Parks, open space, greenways	Several zoning categories
Public	To maintain spaces that are owned and operated by a public entity	Civic center, city departments, library	Several zoning categories
Mixed Use	To preserve maximum flexibility in identifying redevelopment uses and projects	Multi-family units, neighborhood services, large mixed use projects	Several zoning categories
Industrial	To provide space for heavier industrial uses	Manufacturing, assembly, processing	M







*\*not exhaustive list of uses    \*\*R-1, R-2, R-3 do not currently permit two family residential*

## MAP 19. Zoning Map








# CITY OF STURGIS Zoning

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, City of Sturgis GIS, Indiana MAP

-  City Boundary  
 State Roads  
 All Roads  
 Railroads  
 Rivers / Streams  
 Lakes / Ponds

-  BC: Central Business  
 BH-1: Highway Business  
 BH-2: Highway Business  
 BOS: Business Office Service  
 M: Manufacturing  
 PD: Planned Development

-  R1: Rural Residential  
 R2: Subdivision Residential  
 R3: Residential  
 R4: Apartments  
 R5: Residential

Note: Boundary reflects 425 agreements executed during the writing of this plan.

categories for these properties once they are incorporated into the City. As some of these agreements were executed during the writing of this plan, the Future Land Use and Zoning Maps shown here have a slightly different boundary than the remainder of the maps within the plan.

**Zoning Plan**

The purpose of a zoning plan is to take note of areas where the zoning ordinance no longer matches the future land use map so that appropriate changes can be made to align the two. Sturgis is currently regulated by a traditional use-based zoning ordinance, but as can be seen on the FLUM, there is an interest to permit more than one land use per zone. The table “Future Land Use Categories” explains the intent of each future land use category and ties it to its current corresponding zoning district. The purpose of showing both in one table is to convey the type of change needed to move towards future land use patterns.

**Zoning Changes**

Most of the zoning changes needed to implement the “live” recommendations of this master plan entail expanding the types of housing offered. This can be done in a couple ways. For example, “mixed residential,” could be formed that permits a mix of housing types, and/or the established residential zones could expand what is permitted. Another example of expanding residents’ housing options is to consider an “age-in-place zone” where development caters to Baby Boomers and future generations who wish to change homes as they age without leaving their community. This would require a re-thinking of residential zoning, as many of these developments call for a mix of housing units, medical offices, and community facilities. Another way to do this is to permit second story housing downtown and in mixed-use zones, and programming vacant and redevelopment sites for alternative residential uses can solve the “missing-middle” housing shortage.

Other changes surrounding “play” or recreational endeavors include adjustment to the extent that the City requires development to install nonmotorized infrastructure and facilities for pedestrians when appropriate. The tendency may be to reduce requirements of developers but in certain instances, facilities that serve nonmotorized users benefits businesses and the City. The City could start this conversation by adopting into their ordinance a Complete Street policy and use it as a tool to work with the development community. Incorporating bicycle-friendly infrastructure and parking (bike racks) in the downtown can help meet nonmotorized goals and spur downtown activity. In addition, the City could add to the recreation options by permitting community gardens on vacant parcels, where it makes sense. While housing remains a priority, some garden lots may serve a neighborhood by becoming a focal point where residents can share in recreational activity.

Sturgis has ambitious environmental aspirations. The market has finally shifted so that renewable energy is an economically worthwhile pursuit, and the City has plans to harness its potential to become more resilient. The City will need to create regulations for residential, commercial, and industrial solar panels, and consider adequate locations for possible wind generators. In that same vein, regulations to protect the City from flooding events call for improved zoning requirements for landscaping that increase vegetation and decrease impervious surfaces in the site plan review process.











**ACTION PLAN**

The action plan is mainly organized around the major live, work, and play themes that were explored in the community engagement portion of the master planning process, but two extra categories that were deemed valuable were added: environment and communication. In the left column, the goal is the broadest statement, followed by more concrete and clarifying objectives. The actions are specific strategies that Sturgis can take to accomplish the larger goal. What makes an action plan useful is that each action is attached to responsible party, who it can partner with for additional support, and its level of priority. With those in place, a city knows where to start and who to assemble a team with to tackle the issue at hand.

While the actions are folded into a larger framework, each action can achieve more than just the category they are assigned to. Most of the goals under “live” are working towards providing high-quality housing for all residents, but other benefits are accrued in the process. For example, strategies to build housing for all helps to retain families and a workforce, fill out neighborhoods, and achieve greater equity for certain demographics such as low-income, young professionals, and senior citizens. The “other benefits” column uses icons to indicate where positive spillover effects of a strategy would likely occur:

























## “LIVE”

Goals & Objectives: RESIDENTIAL	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
<p>To provide high-quality housing stock that is suitable to all ages, abilities, and income levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Provide housing at different sizes, locations, and price points to accommodate currently underserved populations</li> <li>» Ensure that renter- and owner-occupied housing stock is in excellent condition</li> <li>» Encourage upper story living in the downtown</li> </ul>	Diverse housing stock: Determine how to permit accessory dwelling units, potentially including “tiny houses,” in the City	Planning Commission	City Commission	2	
	Update zoning ordinance to permit age-in-place facilities, which may mix uses such as residential, neighborhood commercial, medical, and institutional	Planning Commission	City Commission; Thurston-Woods Village; Area Agency on Aging Region IIIc; St. Joseph County Commission on Aging	3	
	Use vacancy and blight data to determine preferred areas for redevelopment and add a density bonus to new construction, such as permitting duplex and triplex units by right	Planning Commission	City Commission	2	
	Work with partners to develop permanent supportive housing located near essential services and encourage readily available barrier removal to comply with ADA Civil Rights Law	Community Development Department	St. Joseph County Housing Task Force; Thurston Village; MSHDA-qualified housing developer; Habitat for Humanity	2	
	Connect housing developers with data from the 2016 Target Market Analysis for St. Joseph County showing potential demand for at least 108 duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, 369 townhouses, and 140 multiplexes over the next 7 years	Community Development Department	Development community	1	
	Investigate programs or policies which will attract a developer to construct 3- and 4-bedroom apartments	Community Development Department	Development community	1	
	Consider a program to identify seniors who are ready to downsize and facilitate development of a duplex in which to age in place for people of all abilities	Planning Commission task force	Community Development Department	2	
	Quality: Create an easy-to-use, low-interest revolving home loan fund to offer homeowners up to \$5,000 for maintenance and repair, with delinquent repayment assessed to the tax rolls	Community Development Department	City administration; City Commission; local bank	1	
	Offer homes which are scheduled for demolition as redevelopment opportunities, prioritizing homes in denser residential neighborhoods	Community Development Department	City Commission	1	
	Add new zoning ordinance provision that requires all new residential development in the downtown to comply with ICC / ANSI 117.1 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities, Type B dwelling units, which meet Fair Housing Act standards	Planning Commission	Community Development Department; City Commission; Disability Network of SW Michigan	1	
















## “PLAY”



Goals & Objectives: CIRCULATION	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
To maintain a safe and modern vehicular network  » Improve the quality of road conditions  » Incorporate cutting-edge infrastructure into road design	Quality: Reconsider a semi-truck bypass on US-12 that circumvents downtown; develop educational materials to describe the merits to the public, possibly in a direct mailing	City Engineer	MDOT	3	
	Expand the budget for road repair on city-owned streets; renew millage	City Administration	Voters	2	
To build a nonmotorized network that is safe, accessible, and beautiful to be used for commuting, recreation, and errands  » Provide a network that connects people to the places they need and want to access  » Provide a safe network that is separated from vehicles where a parent would feel comfortable with their child using it alone  » Provide a network that is not just convenient, but also enjoyable	Formally adopt a Complete Streets policy directing all City-funded transportation projects to consider all users and ability levels during road design development	City Commission and Planning Commission		1	
	Landscape nonmotorized trails so that they are buffered from vehicles and visually pleasing	Trees and Forestry; Parks and Recreation		3	
	Continue to implement the proposed pathways from the Non-Motorized Trailway Master Plan  » Prioritize nonmotorized connections that link parks, open space, and schools  » Update the Non-Motorized Trailway map to show where progress has been made	City Administration		2	
	Require new development to address nonmotorized transportation and provide facilities and infrastructure, such as bike racks, where appropriate	Planning Commission		1	
	Develop a strategy to prioritize filling sidewalk gaps and addressing connectivity	City Administration; City Engineer		1	

Goals & Objectives: COMMUNITY BUILDING	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
<p>Improve residents' quality of life by expanding meaningful, inclusive, and fun recreation opportunities</p> <p>» Provide space where the community can congregate and socialize</p> <p>» Expand recreational offerings to children</p>	Permit community gardens on small vacant lots	Planning Commission	City Commission	2	 
	Leverage partnerships to hold more annual, family-friendly community events	DDA Director; Chamber of Commerce	Local businesses, block clubs, neighborhood associations, and "play stakeholders"	1	 
	Retain a professional marketing firm to increase engagement with the recreation and entertainment offerings throughout the City, and specifically to increase digital reach and social media engagement	City Administration	Professional marketing firm	1	  
	Assist "play stakeholders" in marketing already established events	DDA Director; Chamber of Commerce	Professional marketing firm	2	 
	Require all public facilities, upgrades and new construction to incorporate universal design for people of all abilities to enjoy	Community Development Department	Park and Recreation Commission; Park and Recreation Staff	2	  
	Add a provision to the zoning ordinance to require all new commercial development to consider universal design	Planning Commission		3	 
	Expand educational and recreational programming at City-run institutions for children				

## “WORK”

Goals & Objectives: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
<p>The local economy is industry-diverse and offers jobs at varying skill and income levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» To maintain a strong industrial sector</li> <li>» To encourage “new economy” jobs to locate and prosper within the City</li> <li>» To help ensure that workers are receiving a decent wage</li> </ul>	Support incubators, co-working, and commercial kitchens to encourage the development of new or expanding businesses	DDA; Economic Development	Sturgis Business Development Team; Senior Center (commercial kitchen); MEDC	2	
	Collaborate with the business community to teach youth “soft skills” and “interview skills” so they are ready to enter the workforce	Sturgis Public Schools Business Partnership Program; Sturgis Public Schools Adult Education		1	
	Connect companies which are locating or expanding in Sturgis with the local workforce	Economic Development; DDA	TIA / workforce development; educational institutions	1	
	Create a Business Neighborhood zoning district to serve businesses and establishments which thrive in an environment between “walkable” and “auto-centric”	Planning Commission		1	
<p>The downtown will be a local and regional destination for retail and entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A fun, attractive, and convenient place to visit</li> <li>» Offers retail and entertainment that attracts all age groups</li> </ul>	Install infrastructure to develop a wi-fi network downtown	Economic Development; Electric Department	City Commission; DDA	2	
	Recruit businesses that are geared towards young adults	DDA; Sturgis Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development	3	
	Promote and encourage 2nd story residential use along Chicago Road	Community Development Department	Local realtors	1	

Goals & Objectives: ENVIRONMENTAL	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
Embrace “old” and “new” green policies that make Sturgis more environmentally resilient  » Enact ordinances that improve the City’s the air and water quality  » Increase the presence of infrastructure that mitigates the effects of intense weather events	New practices: Permit the use of solar panels on residential, commercial, industrial properties	Planning Commission	City Commission	1	
	Renewable energy: Continue to partner to implement a solar farm	Community Development Department	Private sector	1	
	Consider specific regulations for small-scale wind farms or generators as accessory structures to ensure they are adequately permissive	Planning Commission	City Commission	1	
	Support net metering	Electric Department		2	
	Old practices: Increase native tree canopy cover prioritizing areas adjacent to industry, nonmotorized pathways, right-of-ways and parking lots	Trees and Forestry		3	
	Update landscaping requirements to reduce impervious surfaces and increase vegetative cover, especially in areas that are prone to flooding	Planning Commission	City Commission	2	

Goals & Objectives: COMMUNICATION	Actions	Responsible Party	Partners	Priority	Other benefits
Embrace efficient forms of communication that enhance two-way exchange with the public  » Use technology to consistently reach a wider citizen base  » Proactively engage residents face-to-face	Continue to hold regular visioning sessions with high school students	Planning Commission		1	
	Expand use of social media platforms to communicate with residents	City Administration		2	



## PLAN EVALUATION & MONITORING

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, a community is required by law to review their adopted Master Plan every five years to determine if any revisions, edits, or updates must be amended to the Plan. This serves as an excellent opportunity to revisit the document if any drastic changes have occurred that would greatly impact the City, whether they be a major shift in demographics, a large-scale new development project, the construction of a regional trail with significant implications for travel, or any other noteworthy trends or projects that may occur and affect the City's outcome or future. Conditions change and planning is dynamic, so it is critical to ensure this overarching document is always aligned with what is best (and current) for the City.

Additionally, the Master Plan is reflected in another City planning document. The annual written report, which is compiled and written by the Planning Commission, is required to be drafted each year and sent to the City Commission for review. The goal of this document is to summarize the status of planning activities and development, including recommendations from the Planning Commission that would lead to actionable items from the City Commission. The annual report is also required by Act 33 of 2008 and offers great value to the community by ensuring the Planning Commission and City Commission are both understanding and reflective of the City's planning needs.

The City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) provides a framework for the realization of community goals and objectives as envisioned in this Master Plan. The action items included in this plan can be carried toward implementation through the CIP, representing the collaboration between community engagement and elected leaders to define the future of Sturgis. All CIP projects, which are updated and derived from the items in this Master Plan, are listed on a priority basis and reflected by the fiscal year within the CIP. The CIP also includes an indication for providing the financial means for implementing the projects, ensuring that plan alignment and identified funding can achieve the overall vision of Sturgis.

# Appendix

## Airport Approach Plan



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
LANSING

KIRK T. STEUDLE  
DIRECTOR

November 14, 2007

Mr. Michael Hughes  
Airport Manager  
Kirsch Municipal Airport - Sturgis  
130 N. Nottawa  
Sturgis, Michigan 49091

Dear Mr. Hughes

Subject: Airport Approach Plan  
Kirsch Municipal Airport - Sturgis

At its November 20, 2002 meeting, the Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC) officially approved an Airport Approach Plan for your airport. An amendment to zone 3 of the Land Use Guidelines portion of the plan was recently approved by the MAC at its November 15, 2006 meeting.

The Airport Approach Plan consists of height protection for the FAA Part 77 surfaces surrounding the airport and land use protection using standards adopted by the MAC. The Aeronautic Code of the State of Michigan requires these plans, as well as a copy of your Airport Layout Plan (ALP), be filed with the local planning agencies and/or political subdivisions underlying the areas depicted on the plans. Once filed with the local planning agency, section 125.3203 of the Zoning Enabling Act, Act 110 of 2006 requires these plans be included in the community's Master Plan which should provide an additional level of protection for the airport.

Enclosed is a copy of the most current land use zoning guidelines approved by the MAC to be included as part of the Kirsch Municipal Airport Approach Plan. Please file a copy of this document, along with your current ALP, with the appropriate agencies and/or municipalities.

Please notify our office with the enclosed form once you have filed your Airport Approach Plan with the appropriate agencies and/or municipalities. You may also send it to me electronically to the e-mail address listed below.

If you have and questions regarding this matter, please contact me at telephone number 517-335-9949 or by e-mail at [smithlinn@michigan.gov](mailto:smithlinn@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Linn P. Smith  
Airspace & Airport Zoning Specialist  
Airports Division  
Bureau of Aeronautic and Freight Services

Enclosure

Cadd\zoning\78-01\78-01zon\_1et.doc

AERONAUTICS BUILDING • 2700 E. AIRPORT SERVICE DR. • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48906  
[www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) • (517) 335-9283

LH-LAN-0 (01/03)

## ACCIDENT SAFETY ZONES, LAND USE GUIDELINES AND PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Accident Safety Zone	Land Use Characteristics	Land Use Guidelines	Land Use Planning Strategies  *All aviation uses are acceptable
<b>Zone 1</b> (See Special Note)	<b>Population Density</b>	Avoid land uses which concentrate people indoors or outdoors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 0-5 people/acre.</li> <li>2. Airport sponsor should purchase property if possible.</li> <li>3. Zone land uses, which by their nature, will be relatively unoccupied by people (i.e. mini-storage, small parking lots).</li> </ol>
	<b>Residential vs. Non-Residential Land Use</b>	Prohibit all residential land uses. All non-residential land uses permitted outright subject to the Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a height hazard overlay ordinance around the airport.</li> <li>2. Airport sponsor should purchase property if possible.</li> <li>3. Airport sponsor should obtain aviation and obstruction easements.</li> <li>4. During the site development process, shift all structures away from the runway centerlines if possible.</li> <li>5. Landscaping requirements shall establish only low growing vegetation.</li> <li>6. Prohibit high overhead outdoor lighting.</li> <li>7. Require downward shading of lighting to reduce glare.</li> <li>8. Evaluate all possible permitted conditional uses to assure compatible land use.</li> </ol>
	<b>Special Function Land Use</b>	Prohibit all Special Function Land Uses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prohibit overhead utilities and all noise sensitive land uses.</li> <li>2. Zone land for uses other than for schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, daycare facilities and churches.</li> <li>3. Limit storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable material.</li> <li>4. Ensure permitted uses will not create large areas of standing water, or generate smoke/steam, etc.</li> </ol>

**Special Note:** Since the dimensions of Zone 1 correspond to the dimensions of the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), those airports receiving federal grant dollars from the FAA's Airport Improvement Program, should strongly consider purchasing the RPZ or otherwise acquire rights to the property for the RPZ..



## COMPATIBLE LAND USE MATRIX

Accident Safety Zone	Land Use Characteristics	Land Use Guidelines	Land Use Planning Strategies  *All aviation uses are acceptable
Zone 2	<b>Population Density</b>	Avoid land uses which concentrate people indoors or outdoors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 0-5 people/acre.</li> <li>2. Zone land uses, which by their nature, will be relatively unoccupied by people (i.e. mini-storage, small parking lots).</li> </ol>
	<b>Residential vs. Non-Residential Land Use</b>	Prohibit all residential land uses. All non-residential land uses permitted outright subject to the Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a height hazard overlay ordinance around the airport.</li> <li>2. Obtain aviation and obstruction easements.</li> <li>3. During site development process, shift all structures away from the runway centerlines if possible.</li> <li>4. Prohibit mobile home parks.</li> <li>5. Landscaping requirements shall establish only low growing vegetation.</li> <li>6. Prohibit high overhead outdoor lighting.</li> <li>7. Require downward shading of lighting to reduce glare.</li> <li>8. Evaluate all possible permitted conditional uses to assure compatible land use.</li> </ol>
	<b>Special Function Land Use</b>	Prohibit all Special Function Land Uses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prohibit overhead utilities and all noise sensitive land uses.</li> <li>2. Zone land for uses other than for schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, daycare facilities and churches.</li> <li>3. Limit storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable material.</li> <li>4. Ensure permitted uses will not create large areas of standing water, or generate smoke/steam, etc.</li> </ol>

## COMPATIBLE LAND USE MATRIX

Accident Safety Zone	Land Use Characteristics	Land Use Guidelines	Land Use Planning Strategies  *All aviation uses are acceptable
Zone 3	Population Density	Avoid land uses which concentrate people indoors or outdoors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. &lt; 25 people/acre.</li> <li>2. Zone land uses, which by their nature, will be relatively unoccupied by people (i.e. mini-storage, small parking lots).</li> </ol>
	Residential vs. Non-Residential Land Use	Limit residential development to Low Density housing standards. All non-residential land uses permitted outright subject to the Special Function Land Use guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a height hazard overlay ordinance around the airport.</li> <li>2. Obtain avigation and obstruction easements.</li> <li>3. During site development process, shift all structures away from the runway centerlines if possible.</li> <li>4. Prohibit mobile home parks.</li> <li>5. Landscaping requirements shall establish only low growing vegetation.</li> <li>6. Prohibit high overhead outdoor lighting.</li> <li>7. Require downward shading of lighting to reduce glare.</li> <li>8. Evaluate all possible permitted conditional uses to assure compatible land use.</li> </ol>
	Special Function Land Use	Prohibit all Special Function Land Uses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prohibit overhead utilities and all noise sensitive land uses.</li> <li>2. Zone land for uses other than for schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, daycare facilities and churches.</li> <li>3. Limit storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable material.</li> <li>4. Ensure permitted uses will not create large areas of standing water, or generate smoke/steam, etc.</li> </ol>

## COMPATIBLE LAND USE MATRIX

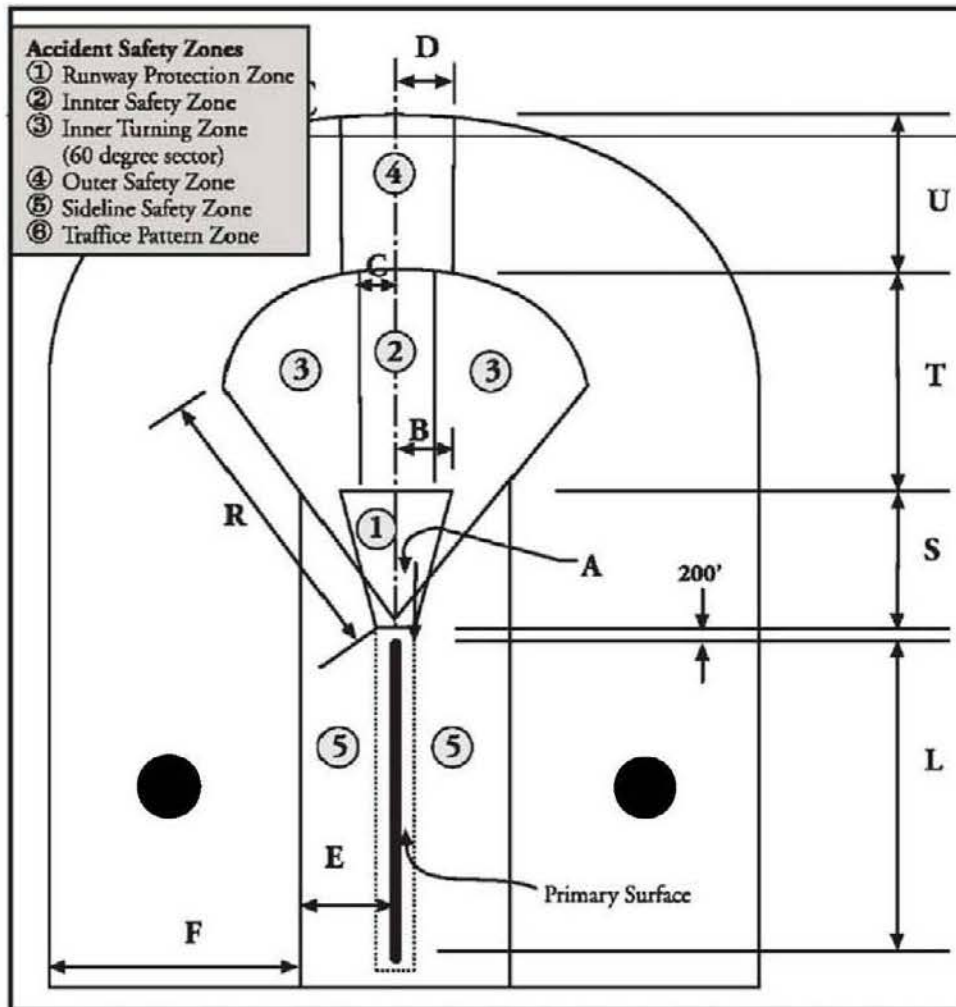
Accident Safety Zone	Land Use Characteristics	Land Use Guidelines	Land Use Planning Strategies  *All aviation uses are acceptable
Zone 4	Population Density	Limit population concentrations.	1. < 40 people/acre in buildings, < 75 persons/acre outside buildings.
	Residential vs. Non-Residential Land Use	Limit residential development to Low Density housing standards. All non-residential land uses permitted outright subject to the Special Function Land Use guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a height hazard overlay ordinance around the airport.</li> <li>2. Obtain aviation easements.</li> <li>3. Clustered development to maintain density as long as open space remains unbuilt. Place clustered development away from extended runway centerline.</li> <li>4. Prohibit mobile home parks.</li> <li>5. Require downward shading of lighting to reduce glare.</li> <li>6. Evaluate all possible permitted conditional uses to assure compatible land use.</li> </ol>
	Special Function Land Use	Prohibit all Special Function Land Uses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate noise sensitive land uses in light of aircraft noise contour lines (if available) when establishing new zoning.</li> <li>2. Prohibit high overhead utilities and all noise sensitive land uses.</li> <li>3. Zone land for uses other than for schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, daycare facilities and churches.</li> <li>4. Limit storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable material.</li> <li>5. Ensure permitted uses will not create large areas of standing water, or generate smoke/steam, etc.</li> </ol>

## COMPATIBLE LAND USE MATRIX

Accident Safety Zone	Land Use Characteristics	Land Use Guidelines	Land Use Planning Strategies  *All aviation uses are acceptable
Zone 5	Population Density	Avoid land uses which concentrate people indoors or outdoors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0-5 people/acre.</li> <li>Zone land uses, which by their nature, will be relatively unoccupied by people (i.e. mini-storage, small parking lots).</li> </ol>
	Residential vs. Non-Residential Land Use	Prohibit all residential land uses. All non-residential land uses permitted outright subject to the Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airport sponsor should purchase property if possible.</li> <li>Create a height hazard overlay ordinance around the airport.</li> <li>Obtain aviation and obstruction easements.</li> <li>During site development process, shift all structures away from the runway centerlines if possible.</li> <li>Landscaping requirements shall establish only low growing vegetation.</li> <li>Prohibit high overhead outdoor lighting.</li> <li>Require downward shading of lighting to reduce glare.</li> <li>Evaluate all possible permitted conditional uses to assure compatible land use.</li> </ol>
	Special Function Land Use	Prohibit all Special Function Land Uses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibit overhead utilities and all noise sensitive land uses.</li> <li>Zone land for uses other than for schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, daycare facilities and churches.</li> <li>Limit storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable material.</li> <li>Ensure permitted uses will not create large areas of standing water, or generate smoke/steam, etc.</li> </ol>



## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT SAFETY ZONE DIAGRAM



### SAFETY ZONE DIMENSION (IN FEET)

Note:  
Data Source: NTSB  
accident investigations  
1984-1991. Illustration  
Source: Hodges and  
Shutt, Institute of  
Transportation Studies,  
University of California,  
Berkeley, 1993.

Dimension	Runway Length Category (L)		
	Runway less than 4,000	Runway 4,000 to 5,999	Runway 6,000 or more
A	125	250	500
B	225	505	875
C	225	500	500
D	225	500	500
E	500	1,000	1,000
F	4,000	5,000	5,000
R (60°Sector)	2,500	4,500	5,000
S	1,000	1,700	2,500
T	1,500	2,800	2,500
U	2,500	3,000	5,000

