



Midland  
City  
MODERN

The image features a vibrant, mid-century modern aesthetic. The background is composed of diagonal rays in shades of yellow, orange, and light blue. Two stylized butterflies, one blue and one green, are positioned in the upper right. The bottom of the image is filled with a variety of colorful flowers in shades of red, blue, purple, orange, and yellow, all with black outlines. The text 'Midland City MODERN' is rendered in a bold, white, stylized font with thick black outlines, set against a black background that forms a central shape.

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Photos taken by:  
 Janet Acheson (top)  
 Tracy Earle (bottom left)  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan has been prepared consistent with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008).

*Adopted by the City of Midland Planning Commission.*

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**The creation of this plan was made possible by the thousands of individual contributions from members of the Midland community. Whether you attended a pop-up studio, hosted a Pizza and Planning event, completed a survey, served in a role that worked on the plan, or provided feedback in any other way, you helped to make Midland City Modern a reality. Thank you!**



The cover art for Midland City Modern was created by **Selena Bender** of Selena Ashley Designs and was inspired by the mural "Together. Forward. Bold" created by Selena, Jazzmyn Benitez, and Dacia Parker. You can find that mural on the side of the building at 123 McDonald Street in Downtown Midland.

# INTRO DUC



Photos taken by:  
Jonathan VanDerhoof (left)  
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# VISION



**Midland City Modern represents a comprehensive, collaborative vision for the future of the City of Midland and the greater Midland community for the year 2050.** Think of it like an instruction manual for “How to build a modern, prosperous Midland for the next 30+ years”! Throughout this document, we’ll talk about the Midland of yesterday, the Midland we know now, and the Midland we hope to be in the future.

Midlanders of all backgrounds have played a pivotal role in shaping Midland City Modern. Input from the community through pop-up studios, open houses, surveys, mobile workshops, and other participation events has helped craft the goals, objectives, and strategies you’ll find as you read this plan. More importantly, Midlanders like you will play an ongoing role in taking Midland City Modern from a plan on paper to reality between now and 2050.

Optimism and ingenuity have powered the success of Midland for the better part of the last century. As a new mid-century approaches, Midland City Modern establishes a positive and inspired vision for Midland to create a prosperous, resilient future for our community. While we can’t know for certain what the future holds, thoughtful consideration of the strengths and weaknesses we currently face and the opportunities and threats that we may encounter over the next three decades are essential to ensuring our future success. This plan considers each of the elements needed to reach that goal, including the use of our land, the needs for our infrastructure, and the service and cultural components that are collectively essential to creating an outstanding quality of life.

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**Overall, Midland City Modern aims to ensure that Midland remains a community of choice, not only in the Great Lakes Bay region, but in Michigan and the entire country as well.**

# MIDLAND: THEN

When the first white settlers arrived in the 1830s at a place called "The Forks," they saw the flowing Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers surrounded by conifer swamps and a beautiful wilderness of unlimited hardwood and pine forests. Attracted by reports of the area's rich resources, settlers arrived in waves. In 1887, the City of Midland was incorporated.

The early years of Midland were marked by constant change. At first, farming and lumber sustained the local economy; however, by the 1890s, the lumber barons had

moved elsewhere and the agrarian economy shifted to manufacturing. A budding chemical industry was born and grew; its success remaining hand-in-hand with the City's prosperity for well over a century and even still today.

Water played a critical role in the development of the chemical industry in Midland. Ironically, though, water has also created significant challenges for the community. The pursuit of a high-quality drinking water source was solved in the mid-20th century through the creation of the

Saginaw-Midland Municipal Water Supply Corporation, which brought water from Lake Huron over 65 miles to serve the region. Flooding, another challenge that's been faced for the entirety of Midland's history, remains a consistent development consideration due to Midland's location and natural environment. This challenge took on renewed urgency in the aftermath of historic flooding in 2017 and upstream dam failures in 2020.

Photos courtesy of the Midland County Historical Society





**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

**At 36.3 square miles, Midland today is  
Michigan's fifth-largest city by land area.**

## Planning History

This plan builds upon the efforts of multiple generations of Midlanders whose past work have enabled our present successes. Midland City Modern is Midland's seventh new comprehensive master plan for the future over the last 100 years.

Led by the Kiwanis Club of Midland, the city's first comprehensive plan was the 1928 City Plan. This plan's development brought together civic leaders to collaborate on a vision for the community collectively for the first time. Issues of the day – similar to many of the same issues faced by Midlanders today – included flooding, traffic, infrastructure, and a desire to promote thoughtful, coordinated development. Subdivision regulations created

from this process helped guide the development of Midland through the mid-20th century, a period of tremendous growth for the community. The author of the 1928 plan noted that "Midland is very fortunately situated from the standpoint of natural resources and in the civic spirit and cooperation of its citizens." Midland continues to enjoy these advantages today.

The Comprehensive City Plan of 1948 provided a post-World War II vision for Midland. Among the community's future desires were a new community center, relocated from Downtown to Central Park, and a new bridge connection from Downtown over the Tittabawassee River. Both of these major plan objectives were realized in 1955 with the creation of the Greater Midland Community Center in its present

location and the development of the Karl B. Robertson (M-20) Bridge.

Following Midland's mid-century boom, master plans from 1972 forward recognized the challenges of a city with an extensive footprint and a growing reliance on automobiles. These plans focused on ensuring Midland continued to provide necessary amenities to neighborhoods as the city expanded outward, including walkable schools, parks, and commercial opportunities. These plans also identified needed street connections, provided detailed attention to the vitality of the City's commercial areas, and emphasized economic development more broadly. In the 2007 plan, the Downtown and Center City business districts became vital focus areas. Significant progress has been achieved on these goals and efforts continue today.



Photos taken by:  
Katherine Soave (top left)  
Stephanie Novak (top right)  
Eve Tuft (middle right)  
Caitlyn Frost (bottom left)  
Mid Michigan Events (bottom right)



# MIDLAND: NOW

Contemporary Midland is a community renowned for providing an outstanding quality of life. Midland continues to be shaped by the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and progress that has existed since its founding. Attractive neighborhoods, outstanding schools, high-quality cultural amenities, a strong local economy, and beautiful natural surroundings have made Midland a community of choice for generations.

Since the last City Master Plan process was completed in 2007, many major changes have occurred both at local and global levels. These changes have impacted the future needs of the community and shaped the context in which this plan was prepared. Let's take a more focused look at these major events and how they have influenced the development of Midland City Modern.

## Major changes to significant local institutions

Declining student enrollment in Midland Public Schools resulted in the closure of several elementary schools and one middle school between 2010 and 2018. This provided a new opportunity to repurpose existing land and merge existing student populations while serving the future needs of the community. As a result, state-of-the-art Central Park Elementary opened as a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) focused school in 2017. Over the last decade, significant investments have been made to modernize other facilities throughout the district.

In 2015, the merger of the Dow Chemical Company and DuPont was announced. The merger was completed in 2017; two years later, three new companies were born: Dow, DuPont, and Corteva Agriscience. Dow remains headquartered in Midland, as it has since its founding in 1897, while both DuPont and Corteva maintain a major employment presence within the community.

Chemical Bank, founded in Midland in 1917, merged in 2019 with Minnesota-based TCF Bank, which then merged with Ohio-based Huntington Bank in 2021. Changes to its organizational structure over the years have included branch closures and layoffs that impacted the Midland community.

MyMichigan Health has continued to expand in response to patient care needs both within Midland and throughout central and northeast Michigan. A \$115 million expansion and renovation took place on the Midland campus in 2011 and a formal affiliation with the University of Michigan Health System was finalized in 2013. Investments in the Midland campus continue today, including the development of the new 115,000-square-foot James T. and Elsa U. Pardee Cancer Wellness Center expected to open in 2024. The increasing geographic expanse of the health system was reflected in 2021 as the health system changed its name from MidMichigan Health to MyMichigan Health.

Originally opened in 1919 and located at Larkin and Townsend Streets in Downtown Midland, the Midland Community Center moved to its current location on Jefferson Avenue in Central Park in 1955. Greater Midland assumed guidance of the facility in 2005 and, in 2023, began construction of a new community center next to its existing campus. The new Greater Midland Community Center is expected to open in early 2024.



**MyMichigan Health** is currently Midland's largest employer with a headcount of **over 4,800 employees** (as of 2021).

## COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, had widespread global and local ramifications that were felt throughout the period that Midland City Modern was developed. First observed in the United States in early 2020, the pandemic ultimately led to emergency regulations limiting indoor gatherings and in-person work and educational instruction, fundamentally changing the way in which the community functioned through the end of the declared emergency in 2023 and beyond. Ultimately, State of Michigan data indicated that there were 21,672 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Midland County and 234 confirmed deaths as of June 2023.

Beyond the economic challenges presented to households and businesses by the pandemic, this

Photos taken by Downtown Midland (below) and Jonathan Borba (right)



period has also created lasting changes in the way the community functions. Temporary shifts to remote work at employers of all sizes have transitioned into lasting full-time, part-time, and flexible remote work schedules. These changes to how (and from where) people work present opportunities for communities like Midland that offer a tremendous quality of life to attract remote workers. The upward trend in remote work has made significant impacts on commuting patterns, the real estate market for residential and commercial properties, and the economy for businesses dependent on in-person “office worker” traffic.

The pandemic also increased the demand for and utilization of outdoor spaces in the community, including parks and recreation facilities and outdoor dining. A notable local outcome of that change can be seen in Downtown Midland each summer as **The Commons Pedestrian Plaza**, a vehicle-free community gathering space on Main Street between Ashman and Rodd Streets, has become a critical public space for events, activities, and human connection.

## Floods of 2017 and 2020

The City of Midland has faced and aggressively sought to mitigate the threat of flooding throughout its history. Recent events, however, have prompted unprecedented action to minimize the risk Midlanders face from water-related disasters in the future.

During the flooding event on June 22-23, 2017 – which saw the second-highest recorded crest of the Tittabawassee River – thousands of residents were impacted by surface flooding, flash flooding, and basement sewer back-ups. Although the City's sanitary and storm sewer systems performed as designed during this event, both systems were inundated with water. To best address these impacts in the future, the City commissioned a study the following year that presented a number of infrastructure concepts to strengthen the resiliency of the City's drainage system by reducing clean water infiltration into the sewer system and basement backups into residents' homes.

Unfortunately, before any recommendations from that study

could be implemented, record rainfall from May 17-19, 2020 resulted in historic flooding along the Tittabawassee River watershed and, in turn, the catastrophic failures of the Edenville and Sanford dams northwest of Midland. These dam failures caused substantial damage throughout the region, impacting more than 2,500 structures at an estimated cost of \$200 million dollars.

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Since the 2020 dam failure event, the City has taken decisive action to further address flooding challenges. In 2021, City Council approved one of the recommendations from the sewer study: The Concept 5 Sewer Improvement Plan, a \$48 million project designed to address sewer and lift station capacities during wet weather events in the city. Concept 5 will improve the performance

of the City's storm and sanitary sewer systems through a variety of projects, including upsizing pipes in high-priority areas, adding off-line sanitary sewage storage, repairing structurally defective sewer pipes, and disconnecting residential footing drains from the sanitary sewer system in the Moorland and Whitewood neighborhoods. Construction on these improvements began in 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2028.

The City of Midland continues to work regionally with partners to address larger projects within the watershed. These include restoration of the Secord, Smallwood, Edenville, and Sanford dams northwest of Midland as well as continuing to identify flood mitigation projects within the city limits. The City also continues to maintain its participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, ensuring that new construction occurs in a manner that minimizes flood risk and that property owners throughout the community have access to comprehensive, affordable flood insurance.

Current conditions in contemporary Midland are discussed in more detail throughout this plan.



# IMPLEMENTATION

**Our community helped us dream it: Now, it's time to talk about how we do it. Let's talk about implementation!**

Throughout this plan, you'll read background information on the City of Midland and analyses of key issues and current trends facing our community during the time Midland City Modern was developed (generally, the years 2021-2023). It's like a time capsule for life in Midland during this time period! Together

with the Future Land Use and Future Transportation goals and maps, the goals and objectives in this section provide a foundation for us to resolve issues and establish decision-making policies as the community develops over the next thirty years.

While this plan is a snapshot of our community's current landscape, planning doesn't happen in a vacuum. This Master Plan is intended to be flexible and adaptable to new issues,

opportunities, and alternatives that will inevitably arise while the plan is implemented over the next 30 years. It is strongly recommended that this plan be utilized regularly, reviewed annually, and updated no less than every five years to ensure it stays relevant as a policymaking tool and most accurately reflects the needs of the community.

Keep reading for Midland City Modern's goals and objectives, grouped by topic.

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# PLANTATION



# INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES



**Provide a high-quality network for non-motorized travel within the city.**

- Work with local partners to ensure safe walking and bicycling routes within the city that connect neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks, schools, and other institutions.
- Re-establish the Bike/Walk Midland task force to develop network recommendations, produce an update to the 2014 Non-motorized Transportation Plan, and assist with the implementation and ongoing update of that plan.
- Continue to utilize the Complete Streets Policy to guide design decisions for local streets.
- Consider pursuing strategies to increase the prompt removal of snow from sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes to provide for year-round use. Potential strategies may include education and encouragement, enforcement/regulatory solutions, or clearing of critical facilities by City staff.
- Develop maps of hard and soft surface trails in the city, including midblock pedestrian connections and street-to-park connectors.
- Increase non-motorized connections between areas of the city separated by US-10.
- Develop a program to address maintenance and replacement of existing sidewalks with a goal of performing ten (10) miles of sidewalk maintenance and three (3) miles of sidewalk replacement per year.

**Improve the condition of the City's roads, culverts, and bridges.**

- Continue to evaluate the condition of local streets, bridges, and culverts on an annual basis.
- Focus on lower-cost maintenance treatments to extend serviceable life of infrastructure and reduce the frequency of more expensive and disruptive reconstruction projects.
- Utilize the Asset Management Plan to direct decisions on maintenance and reconstruction.
- Increase the average PASER rating of local streets from 5.71 in 2023 to 6.0 by 2030.

**Manage the City's street network with an emphasis on safety, context sensitivity, and efficiency.**

- Apply technology to optimize the timing and operations of traffic signals.
- Partner with the Midland Area Transportation Study to leverage federal and state funds to improve the transportation system.
- Design neighborhood streets to promote slow-moving traffic.
- Support the creation of street connections and new streets to provide multiple options for travel, particularly to areas with high levels of existing or projected vehicular traffic.
- Continue to implement strong provisions for access management on major corridors.
- Consider implementing a neighborhood traffic calming program.

**Increase the resiliency of the community to the risks associated with flooding.**

- Continue to partner with the Midland Business Alliance Advisory Committee on Infrastructure to identify and advance practical solutions to flooding.
- Complete the implementation of the Concept 5 Sewer Improvement Plan infrastructure projects.
- Complete the implementation of projects funded with Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funds.
- Review and update construction standards for development in floodplains.
- Increase the ability to collect data on the City's rivers, creeks, drains, and sewers to inform decision-making on infrastructure investments.

**Work with utility companies to increase the availability, reliability, and/or speed of their networks within the city.**

- Encourage cellular and internet providers to increase the speed and reliability of their networks.
- Work with the Midland County Internet Connectivity Committee to implement recommendations for providing high-speed internet access.
- Work with Consumers Energy to increase system reliability and reduce repair time, including the repair of street lights.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The neighborhoods surrounding Woodcrest Elementary School were heavily impacted by the May 2020 dam failure event. In May 2021, students and staff from Woodcrest commemorated the event by creating a 'flood of love' throughout these neighborhoods with handmade signs and chalk art on the sidewalks. The messages spread positivity, kindness, and hope.

**Ensure that new development within the city is supported by sufficient infrastructure capacity.**

- Continue to review existing infrastructure capacity when considering new development proposals. Include response time by police, fire, and other emergency personnel.
- Explore opportunities to improve the Midland Fire Department service coverage as recommended by the 2023 Fire Study.
- Work with developers to address infrastructure deficiencies to ensure adequate capacity exists concurrent with new development.

**Continue to provide the region with safe and modern general aviation services through Jack Barstow Municipal Airport.**

- Address infrastructure deficiencies at the Airport, such as limited water services to provide adequate fire flow and electrical capacity for runway lighting and electric plane charging.
- Complete implementation of the obstruction mitigation program to ensure appropriate air clearance around the Airport.
- Enforce the Airport Overlay Zone and provide regular communication and training to permitting agencies and local contractors to increase compliance.
- Continue to creatively leverage the Airport as a venue for special events and community education, including partnerships with the Experimental Aircraft Association.
- Improve multimodal connectivity to the Airport, including facilities along Airport Road and connectors to nearby amenities such as City Forest.

**Provide robust, contemporary on-demand transit services to ensure that all residents have options for mobility.**

- Complete the County Connection/Dial-A-Ride Transit Coordination Study.
- Identify opportunities from the study to increase the level of service and efficiency of regional transit services.
- Evaluate the deployment of electric buses and apply those lessons to future fleet decisions.
- Upgrade dispatch technology and include options for riders to utilize apps and text messaging to manage rides.
- Explore the development of a new transit center to house Dial-A-Ride or a combined regional transit system.
- Consider rebranding Dial-A-Ride in coordination with other system changes.
- Consider additions to transit service, including holiday hours, connections to MBS and other airports, and connections to other cities in Michigan.





Use the Future Transportation Map as a guide for planning and prioritizing improvements to the City's transportation network.

- Integrate the recommendations of the Future Transportation Map into other long-range planning documents, such as the Capital Improvement Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Midland Area Transportation Study – Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Continue to partner with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Midland County Road Commission to ensure integration of the region's transportation network and advancement of the City's transportation goals.

## THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Support existing, neighborhood-centered commercial areas and encourage the creation of new neighborhood-centered commercial in existing and new development areas of the city.

- Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that newly-developed residential areas may and are encouraged to provide commercial opportunities of a scale appropriate to service the immediate area.
- Encourage a limited amount of appropriate neighborhood commercial uses at the intersection of major collector or arterial streets (at one or more corners), including convenience stores and services for residential neighborhoods.



Expand the availability of childcare within the city.

- Review the Zoning Ordinance and make appropriate amendments to expand opportunities for new in-home or center-based childcare facilities.
- Ensure that local regulations for childcare centers align with current state regulations.

**Update and expand the City's existing wayfinding system to increase the ease of navigating the community.**

- Identify necessary updates to existing wayfinding signage and implement updates as soon as practical.
- Identify an ongoing funding source to provide for regular updates and maintenance to wayfinding signage.
- Consider opportunities to expand the wayfinding system as necessary.
- Explore opportunities to reduce the complexity of navigating through the community, such as simplifying corridors containing multiple names or providing clearer signage to indicate where such street names transition.

**Support the continued revitalization of Downtown.**

- Complete the implementation of the Downtown Streetscape Plan.
- Continue to encourage the construction of new housing in and near Downtown.
- Continue to encourage the addition of new retail and dining options, especially services (such as a grocery store) that will increase the ability of Downtown to serve employees, residents, and visitors on foot.
- Encourage businesses to offer expanded hours of operation to create activity in Downtown during evenings and weekends.
- Support opportunities to expand Downtown to the north and east.
- Continue to provide activities and events to bring people and energy into the district.
- Improve non-motorized connectivity between Downtown, Midtown, Center City, and Discovery Square.
- Implement the Reimagine the Riverfront Master Plan.



**Support the continued revitalization of Center City.**

- Complete the implementation of the Saginaw Road Streetscape Plan.
- Reimagine Ashman Circle as a dynamic and unique community destination.
- Continue to encourage the construction of new housing in and near Center City.
- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Center City Redevelopment Plan.
- Support efforts to maintain the presence of a supermarket in Center City.
- Address maintenance needs for public and private parking lots throughout the district, particularly those in the Ashman Circle area.
- Improve non-motorized connectivity between Downtown, Midtown, Center City, and Discovery Square.

**Support the revitalization of the Midland Mall and north Eastman commercial area.**

- Update the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility for the development and redevelopment of properties in the north Eastman area, including permitting multifamily residential and mixed-use developments by right.
- Work with private landowners to implement connected streets and parking lots with an emphasis on safety, efficient traffic flow, and improved wayfinding through the district.

**Support continued investment in other commercial areas, including the Bay City Road corridor and the N. Saginaw Road corridor.**

- Update the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility for the development and redevelopment of properties in these areas, including permitting multifamily residential and mixed use developments by right.
- Work with private landowners to implement connected streets and parking lots with an emphasis on safety, efficient traffic flow, and wayfinding.
- Ensure appropriate land use transitions from higher-intensity to lower-intensity uses.

**Increase and diversify the supply of housing in the city.**

- Collaborate with Housing Forward to identify initiatives to create a strong local housing market.
- Support infill development, including high-density housing, where appropriate infrastructure exists consistent with the recommendations of the Urban3 Land Productivity Analysis.
- Create pre-approved design plans to promote quality infill development.
- Expand opportunities to build multifamily housing by right in legacy commercial areas.
- Explore opportunities to expand the ability to construct accessory dwelling units in more areas of the city.
- Update the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility for the creation of new housing.

**Create great places for Midlanders and visitors to engage and interact.**

- Continue to develop new spaces for events throughout the community. Consider establishing regular community events in Center City, Midtown, and beyond.
- Support efforts to build a new facility for the Midland Area Farmers Market.
- Update regulations to provide more opportunity for entrepreneurial business development, such as shared work spaces, Live-Work-Play developments, food trucks, and other mobile service businesses.



**Complete a comprehensive update of the City's Zoning Ordinance.**

- Provide more opportunities for mixed-use and multifamily residential development in commercial areas.
- Increase regulatory flexibility to promote reuse of and reinvestment in existing buildings.
- Establish updated clustered residential standards for conservation residential areas.
- Update regulations for planned unit developments.
- Update parking regulations to create more parking flexibility and align standards to future needs.
- Reformat the Zoning Ordinance to increase ease of use.

**Provide an efficient and predictable development review process.**

- Obtain Redevelopment Ready Community certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

**Continue to utilize the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA) policy to promote orderly city growth and facilitate cooperation with surrounding townships.**

- Ensure that Urban Cooperation Act agreements remain current, reflect contemporary needs, and are administered consistently.
- Consider initiating conversations with townships for which an Urban Cooperation Act agreement does not exist (Beaver, Tittabawassee, Williams) to determine if one would be appropriate.
- Periodically reevaluate the MUGA line to determine if adjustments are warranted and negotiate with applicable township(s) as needed.



**Update the City's subdivision regulations.**

- Establish appropriate block size standards to allow for efficient access by all transportation modes and service providers.
- Establish appropriate access standards to ensure that a minimum number of neighborhood access points is provided proportional to the number of dwelling units and length of such streets.
- Require dedicated pedestrian access from streets to common areas to ensure all residents have appropriate access to open spaces for leisure and recreation.

**Utilize the Future Land Use Map as a guide for planning and for making land use and development decisions.**

- Consider opportunities to proactively implement zoning map amendments that align with the Future Land Use Map.
- Use the Future Land Use Map to promote quality development and redevelopment and to make decisions on the placement, size, and timing of new or reconstructed infrastructure such as City facilities, parks, roads, sewers, and water lines.
- Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the goals of the Future Land Use map.
- Work with surrounding jurisdictions to ensure alignment of their Future Land Use and Zoning maps with the City's maps.

Photos taken by Lisa Thrush (left) and Beaudoin Photography BDMC Art, LLC (right)

# HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**Implement innovative solutions to address substance abuse and mental health in the city.**

- Expand outreach to youth in local schools to encourage healthy decisions and drug avoidance, including implementation of middle school and high school programs in partnership with Midland Public Schools.
- Encourage local partners to increase the availability of mental health services.
- Support the efforts of the local Recovery Court and others to reintegrate City residents recovering from drug addiction into the community.

**Consider the needs of all ages and abilities in City planning and programming.**

- Incorporate universal design principles into public projects and encourage universal design for private projects.
- Utilize Disability Network of Mid-Michigan as a resource to provide input and expertise on new projects.
- Work with Midland Public Schools to increase the engagement of school-aged children in local government and in City-run programming.
- Identify strategies to encourage more participation by middle and high school-aged children in city-run programming.



## Cultivate a culture of collaboration, connection, cooperation, and civility in the city.

- Continue to provide an annual Citizens Academy to engage the community in local government.
- Encourage public participation in local government, including voting, service on boards and commissions, and volunteerism.
- Continue to be a leader in innovative public engagement and communication.
- Support community initiatives that recognize and celebrate Midland's diversity and advance equity and inclusion.

## Promote and protect the beauty of Midland.

- Consider implementing material design standards for new development along key corridors or within key districts.
- Continue to support a robust horticulture program and efforts such as Midland Blooms.
- Encourage the continued implementation of public arts throughout Midland (sculptures, murals, etc.) to beautify the community.
- Support the establishment of an architectural endowment to promote high-quality design for new buildings within the community consistent with Midland's rich architectural heritage.
- Explore opportunities to leverage Midland's architectural and industrial heritage and public arts as part of a comprehensive cultural tourism strategy.



## Inspire lifelong learning by connecting people and resources through the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library.

- Implement green and/or energy-saving initiatives, including but not limited to: An electric vehicle charging station, high-efficiency cooling, recycling, solar panels, water conservation, and a wind generator to become a zero net energy building.
- Create an outdoor programming/meeting space at the Library for events, classes, programs, and community socializing.
- Upgrade technology and network infrastructure in the building to provide better access to technology for the community.
- Act as an emergency shelter facility by installing an all-building generator.
- Create an outreach mechanism to serve community members via bookmobile, book trailer, or book vending machine.
- Update wayfinding signage to better direct residents to the Library.



**Ensure clean, safe, healthy, and well-maintained neighborhoods for all Midlanders.**

- Continue to strictly enforce property maintenance ordinances citywide.
- Utilize the rental licensing program to ensure all rental housing is safe and sanitary.
- Develop specific regulations to address short-term rentals.
- Support efforts to build community pride and neighborhood cohesion, such as block parties and neighborhood watches.
- Consider providing tax incentives, such as Neighborhood Enterprise Zones, in targeted areas to address deterioration and support homeownership.
- Continue to partner with community agencies and private developers to create affordable, accessible housing opportunities throughout the community.

**Utilize the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a guide for planning and making parks and recreation decisions.**

- Implement the goals and objectives identified within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Pursue grant funding to support identified parks projects.
- Continue to update the plan on a five-year cycle.

**Photos taken by:**  
**Beaudoin Photography BDMC Art, LLC (left)**  
**Jonathan VanDerhoof (middle) and Kevin Nigl (right)**



# ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Integrate sustainable practices into City operations and leverage technology to increase efficiency.

- Pursue opportunities to expand the frequency of curbside recycling and the materials accepted for recycling when cost-feasible.
- Provide recycling opportunities within City facilities, including parks and other public spaces.
- Consistent with new state regulations, create and adopt a Materials Management Plan for the Landfill.
- Encourage residents to explore reuse or upcycling of materials before placing curbside for collection.
- Continue working with Midland Recyclers and other partners to expand the reach of recycling services to the community.
- Pursue opportunities to convert the City's fleet and equipment from gas to electric power when cost-feasible.
- Continue to implement cost-effective retrofits to existing City facilities to conserve resources.
- Explore alternative energy sources to power City facilities.

Encourage efforts to maintain and expand the City's tree canopy.

- Create a comprehensive plan for the City's tree canopy that identifies a strategy to replace dead or diseased trees, manage the spread of tree diseases, and maintain or increase the City's overall tree canopy.
- Identify a consistent funding source for tree planting.
- Continue to require tree planting as part of new development projects.
- Continue to participate in the Tree City USA program.





**Ensure that the City’s rivers, creeks, and other water bodies are clean and well-maintained.**

- Remove invasive species from public lands and encourage efforts to control and remove invasive species on private lands.
- Establish a maintenance plan to maintain open viewsheds from public lands to the Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers.
- Utilize native plantings in public projects near water bodies whenever possible.
- Create a plan for the ongoing maintenance of vegetation within and along rivers, creeks, and other water bodies.
- Collaborate with local partners to improve the clarity and quality of water in local rivers.
- Support efforts to explore the impacts to water quality and aquatic life through the removal of the Dow dam.

**Protect the health of the Great Lakes as the City’s water source.**

- Work with state and federal legislators to promote legislation that ensures the long-term health of the Great Lakes.

**Promote sustainable development and the preservation of natural systems.**

- Work with the Midland Business Alliance and other partners to identify potential areas for wetland banking, new wetland creation, and district stormwater facilities.
- Include sustainable design principles in the Zoning Ordinance update.

**Effectively manage stormwater runoff in the city.**

- Review the current stormwater ordinance, develop recommendations that reflect stormwater management best practices and local conditions, and adopt and implement updated regulations.
- Explore opportunities to leverage public lands for stormwater retention, detention, and/or water quality treatment. Use such features as an amenity within public spaces when possible.



Photo taken by Megan Young

Participate in programs to mitigate flood risks to properties within the city.

- Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Community Rating System (CRS).
- Seek opportunities to improve the City's CRS rating in order to lower flood insurance premiums.
- Utilize funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other sources to acquire and remove structures from flood hazard areas.

Take steps to prepare for the transition from internal combustion to electric vehicles.

- Coordinate planning processes for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure with other agencies, including Consumers Energy, MDOT, and the Michigan Infrastructure Office.
- Leverage federal, state, and local foundation grants to support the creation of public EV infrastructure.
- Remove zoning barriers to charging infrastructure installation.
- Engage the community to develop a comprehensive plan to support the installation of an EV charging network in the city.
- Continue to develop objectives and targets for the electrification of public transportation and municipal equipment.
- Include EV infrastructure in City projects where appropriate.

Adopt regulations that support the implementation of renewable energy sources (such as solar energy).

- Update the Zoning Ordinance to reflect current best practices for renewable energy installation.

Photo taken  
by John McCoy



# RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

While the Planning Commission and City staff have primary responsibility for the implementation of the vision contained within this plan, a number of groups were involved in its creation and play an important role in its execution. These groups are listed below with a brief explanation of how they will be involved.

## City Officials - Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, City Council

The Planning Commission, ZBA, and City Council must work together to promote frequent use of the Master Plan and routinely evaluate the need for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and other regulations.

## City Staff - Planning and Community Development

City Planning and Community Development Department staff must maintain and update print and digital information related to the Master Plan, including public relations materials to keep the community informed, excited, and engaged in the process.

## City Staff - Engineering, Water, and Water Reclamation

These departments are involved primarily in the infrastructure required to support the city, including new development and redevelopment. This staff should incorporate the Master Plan into studies, plans, and capital expenditures for transportation, utilities, and other facilities.

## Parks & Recreation Commission & City Staff - Parks & Recreation

A separate Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted in 2021 to guide specific policy and improvements related to parks, open space, recreational facilities, and recreational programming in the city. The objectives of the Parks Master Plan should be considered by the Planning Commission in land use decisions and, conversely, the objectives

of the Master Plan should be included in Parks and Recreation decisions.

## Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

As a department of City government, the DDA and its board are essential partners in any efforts to increase the vitality of Downtown Midland.

## Center City Authority (CCA)

Like the DDA, the Center City Authority is a department within City government. The CCA should work with the Planning Commission to ensure the appropriate zoning regulations are in place to promote high-quality, creative developments in its district, which runs along Saginaw Road from Manor Drive to Patrick Road.

## Midland Public Schools (MPS)

The location, size, and type of Midland's educational facilities are a critical component in maintaining a high quality of life and are important to consider in future city expansion. As one of the community's largest employers, MPS and the needs of its staff and students are critical to the overall wellbeing of the community.

## Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS)

MDOT has jurisdiction over several of Midland's major roads, including US-10 and M-20, while MATS is involved in transportation planning and forecasting for the Midland region. Any major transportation improvements will be coordinated through these agencies.

*Responsible Parties (continued)***Public Service Providers**

The Midland Fire Department, Midland Police Department, public and private emergency medical services, and all service departments in our local government play an important role in the safety and overall quality of life for Midlanders. Relevant agencies must be included anytime their inputs might guide and improve City decisions. This includes but is not limited to site plan review, traffic control, and road extension or closure.

**Utility Providers**

Expansion of the Midland city limits will require additional utilities and infrastructure, which must be anticipated and accommodated in coordination with Midland's utility providers. In addition, the community must work with utility providers to ensure that high-quality, reliable services are available throughout the community.

**Midland, Saginaw, and Bay Counties and Surrounding Townships**

Decisions made by the City, adjacent townships, and counties all affect one another. Ongoing coordination between all regional government units is important to achieving the long-term goals of this plan.

**Other Groups**

Other groups, including philanthropic foundations, nonprofit agencies, advisory groups, and entities such as the Midland Business Alliance should be informed and included in discussion of projects and programs that may assist in plan implementation.

**Private Property Owners and Developers**

Many recommendations of this plan may require assistance from private property owners and developers to be implemented. Right-of-way donation, construction or donation of lands for public or private parks, and assistance with infrastructure upgrades for larger developments are examples of ways this group could play a role in the plan's implementation.

# Implementation Tools

We've got ideas... but how do we bring them into reality? Generally speaking, the City of Midland will utilize several tools it has available to implement the goals and objectives we've discussed in this section:

- **Code of Ordinances, including the Zoning Ordinance**
- **Capital improvement programs derived from budgetary processes**
- **Programs or additional studies derived from the City Charter as approved by the City Council or administration**

Each tool has a different role toward plan implementation: Some suggest specific, short-term priorities; some create long-term policies; and others involve ongoing activities. Keep reading to learn more about these tools, what they do, and how we'll use them.

## Land Use Regulations

Let's talk about the tools we use to regulate land use.



### Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map

Zoning regulations control the quantity and arrangement of development through standards on lot size or density, property line setbacks, building dimensions, and other minimum requirements. Various site design elements discussed in this plan are also regulated through site plan review, which addresses landscaping, lighting, driveways, parking and circulation, access management, pedestrian systems, and signs. Zoning can also be used to help ensure protection of environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, state regulated wetlands, and woodlands.

Changes to the zoning map over time will gradually result in better implementation of the objectives encouraged in the Future Land Use Map. In some cases, the City may decide to initiate certain zoning

changes as part of an overall zoning map amendment; meanwhile, other changes to the zoning map can be made in response to requests by landowners or developers. In the case of a request, City officials will need to determine if a change is warranted at that time. A key point to remember is that the Future Land Use plan is a long-range blueprint: Implementation is expected, but it should be done gradually while considering community needs, current conditions, and availability of infrastructure.



### Subdivision, Land Division, and Condominium Regulations

Subdivision, land division, and condominium regulations control the manner by which property is subdivided in the city and the public improvements required to support each development. These distinctions are not always apparent once a project is built, but the approval procedures are different due to separate state statutes that govern each type of land development or division in Michigan.



### Development Review and Approval Process

Most land development regulations are applied when new construction is proposed. The City of Midland has a comprehensive development review process that spans from development conceptualization to building occupancy. Once proper zoning is in place, a site plan must be approved first; then, approval of building and site engineering construction plans; and, finally, permits for construction. Buildings and sites are inspected following construction, at which time occupancy permits are issued. Regulations are enforced through a combination of proactive monitoring by City staff and in response to complaints received from the community.

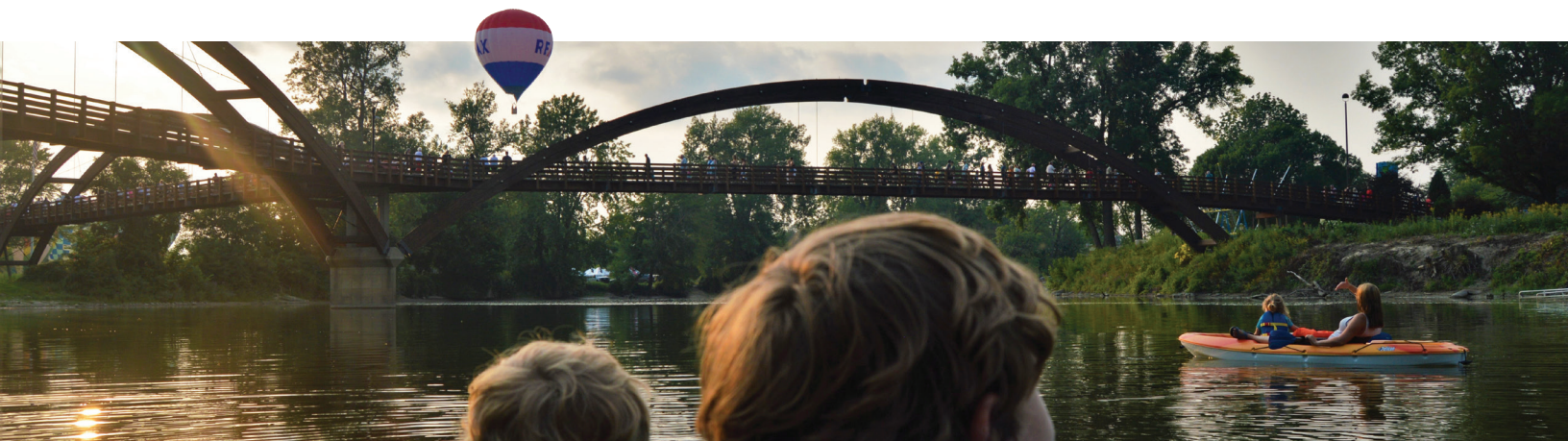
## Capital Improvement Plan & Capital Projects

A Capital Improvement Plan is a multi-year program that lists recommended improvements, timing, estimated costs, and funding sources for infrastructure (streets, pathways, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, water lines, storm sewers, and drainage) and community facilities (public buildings and parks). Capital projects should be identified and constructed in a manner that both helps support and promote desired development and meets the needs of residents and businesses that already exist.

The number of capital projects and their timing are influenced by several factors: Cost, the need for environmental clearance or approval by other agencies, and funds available are the primary considerations. For example, the amount of funding available from outside sources varies as new programs become available. Funding is also influenced by the timing of development (i.e. tax revenue), tax abatements, and other changes to the anticipated tax base.

## Additional Studies & Programs

A variety of housing, economic development, educational, and other programs are used by the City to assist with the implementation of recommendations in this plan. Programs targeted toward various neighborhoods could also be created to respond to specific situations, such as traffic calming in an area where traffic speeds or volumes are problematic.



# FUTURE L

Institution  
& Civic

Neighborhood  
Residential

## Regional Mixed Use

# LAND USE

Heavy  
Industrial

Neighborhood  
Mixed Use



Together, the Future Land Use Map and Plan provide broad guidance for making land use decisions and developing the zoning regulations and capital investment decisions that will help us meet our goals. This plan will guide future decisions about acceptable locations of the City's zoning districts.

In this section, we'll discuss the influential factors related to future land use, provide insight into our general goals, and outline in detail the land use categories you'll see on the Future Land Use Map.

Before studying the map, it may be helpful to learn more about the priority areas identified in different areas of the city. Those project priorities are explained in more detail later.

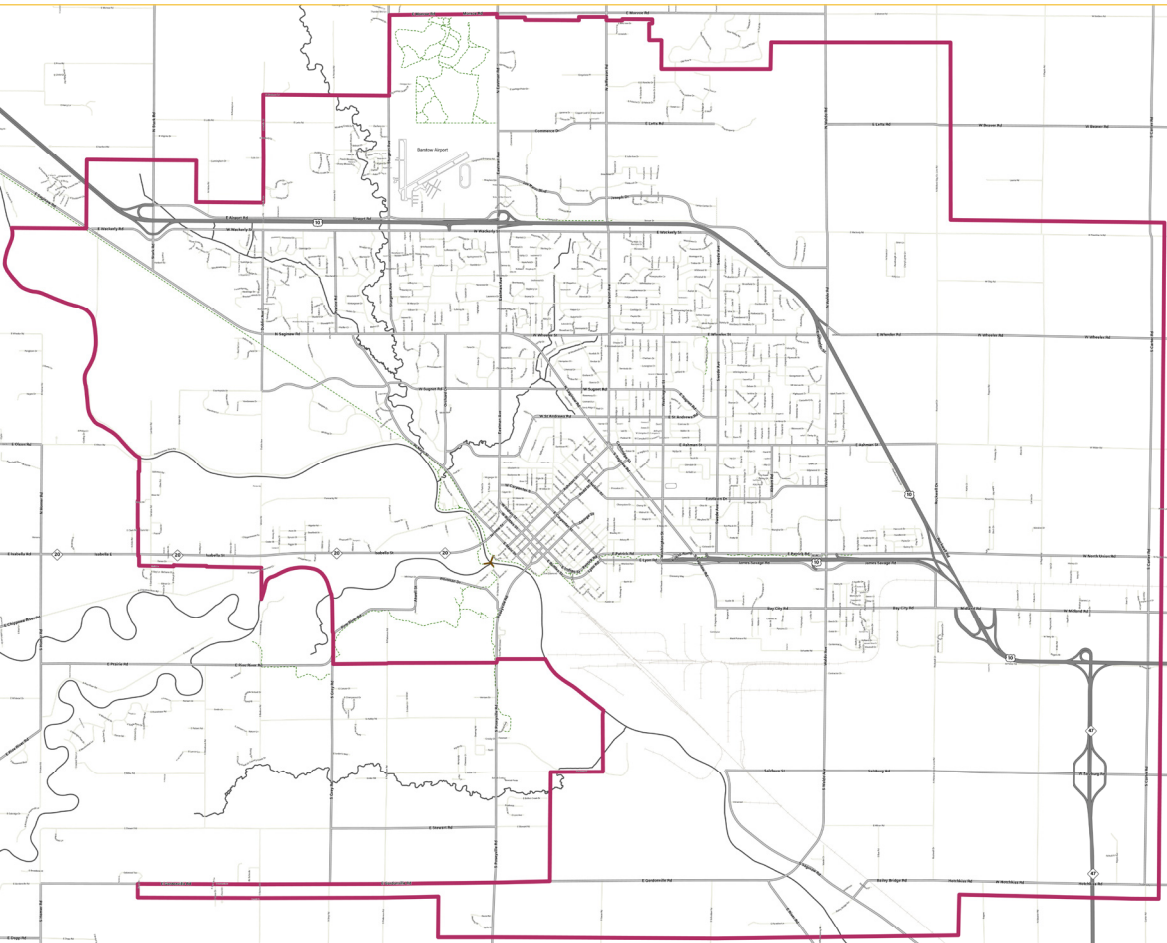
# Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA)

An area of land surrounding the City of Midland, including portions of seven townships located in three different counties, make up what we call the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA – pronounced MOO-gah). While each of these townships has its own future land use and zoning plans in place, Michigan law allows the City to plan beyond its borders to help ensure coordinated and compatible development in the future, especially in areas where land is intended to be added to the city limits at a later date.

Our Master Plan does not change the designation of any land outside the city limits, but the Future Land Use Map includes all areas in the Midland city limits and the MUGA.

## MUGA map

— MUGA Boundary

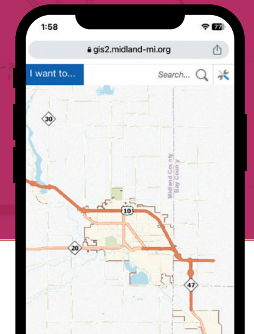


### FUN FACT

Did you know that you can find all this information and more – all in real time and from your own device?

Click on the Maps icon on the City's website homepage, then visit **Map My Midland**. You can view curbside collection schedules, look up zoning info, find parks, access tax and utilities data for your property, and much more!

[CityofMidlandMI.gov/maps](http://CityofMidlandMI.gov/maps)





# Influential Factors

The Future Land Use Plan reflects input from residents of Midland and its surrounding areas as well as discussions with local decision makers and agencies. The plan considers existing land use patterns, zoning, the MUGA, other factors, and generally accepted planning principles, which are described below.

## Existing Land Use

Many areas within the city limits already have an established, developed urban land use pattern. This plan does not seek to redevelop or change those areas. The most significant changes you'll find in this plan are proposed changes in areas where the existing land use pattern provides opportunity for new development infill or in areas outside the city limits where water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure are not currently available. It's important to consider that the way land is currently being used does not automatically preserve that same land use designation for the future.

## Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA)

Remember when we mentioned the MUGA earlier in this section? Here's more information about it and how it influences land use policy:

The MUGA was initially established in 1969 as an area around the city that could eventually be provided with City water and sewer service as the city limits expand over time via annexation. Over the last four decades, city boundaries have been modified to expand incrementally into the MUGA. Today, the MUGA is a band of land around the city that serves as the potential, long-range plan for the future city limits. The policies that regulate the MUGA require that properties be contiguous with the current city limits and, eventually, be annexed into the city if landowners want City water and sanitary sewer services for their properties. The Future Land Use Map and Plan illustrate recommended long-term land uses within the MUGA in the event that those areas are annexed into the City.

Because development in the outlying MUGA areas may not occur for many years to come, the proposed

Future Land Use Map boundaries are more general than the precise plan boundaries within the highly developed city limits. To improve the compatibility of land uses between the City and adjacent townships, the existing and planned land use patterns and current zoning designations of neighboring townships were considered when determining Midland's future land use designations you'll see here.

## Existing Zoning

Existing zoning designation has been considered when determining future use categories and locations; however, there is no vested interest that guarantees existing zoning will remain unchanged. Throughout the Master Plan process, existing zoning regulations and district boundaries were considered to prevent as many conflicts as possible.

## Relationship of Incompatible and Non-Conforming Uses

One of the objectives of the Future Land Use Plan is to prevent, reduce, or eliminate incompatible land use relationships throughout the MUGA. Providing a sufficient transition or adequate buffering between land uses, especially those with certain conflicting characteristics (such as residential and industrial land uses), is essential. Although some areas in the City and the MUGA may currently be developed and/or zoned for a use that is incompatible with the proposed future land use designation, redevelopment or reuse of these sites in the future provide an opportunity to improve or resolve conflicts.

## Infrastructure and Public Facilities/Services

In addition to planned land use and current zoning, the types of uses that can be developed may be limited based on the availability and capacity of existing infrastructure. This includes utilities, streets, parks, schools, and municipal services and facilities. Thoughtful design of new development – by, for example, providing daily needs within walking or biking distance, integrating stormwater facilities into public spaces, and leveraging surplus capacities in existing infrastructure – can enable the city to grow with positive impacts on our tax base and vitality and without negative impacts to our public facilities.

The City’s planned transportation improvements and those recommended in the Transportation and Mobility section of this plan were considered when determining the land use boundaries and development levels on the Future Land Use Map.

### General Market Conditions

While this plan establishes the future land use designation for properties in both the city limits and the MUGA, it also considers the total land planned for each future land use category. The current and future demand for any one type of land use must be compared to the planned land use area in the MUGA to promote sustainable, high-quality development throughout the city. The Master Plan process included consideration of current market conditions and opportunities currently being studied in the city limits; however, future plan updates should include a reevaluation of market opportunities to ensure that the City’s short-term economic development goals are building on previous successes and considering new external influences.

### Natural Features

Wetlands, woodlands, rivers, floodplain areas, poor soils, steep slopes, and other natural features

all impact the types of land use that are most appropriate throughout the city and the MUGA. Federal or state laws regulate many of these areas and will impact the level and type of development on a given site. While natural features were considered when choosing the type of land use for areas in the city or the MUGA, the level and density of use will ultimately be naturally limited by the development site features.

### Previous City Master Plan

The previous City Master Plan, adopted in 2007 and subsequently amended several times through 2018, was used as a base for the Future Land Use Map and categories included in this section. Any significant changes made from the previous plan were evaluated for necessity based on the various factors discussed in this chapter.

### Desires of the City

The land use categories and configuration desired by city residents and officials have been expressed through a variety of public input events, meetings, surveys, and other engagement activities.

### Future Land Use Categories

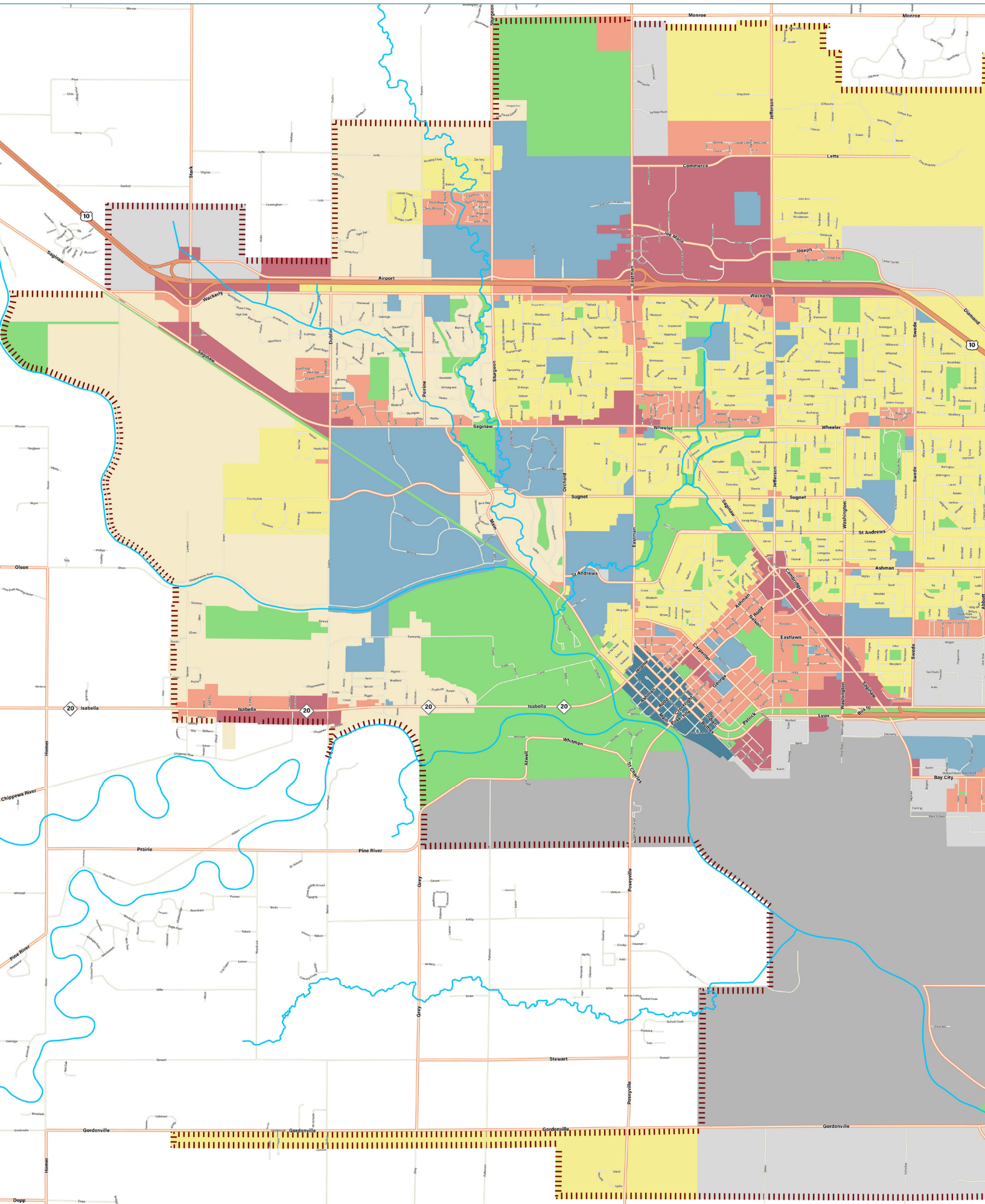
Land Use Category	Planned Acreages	Percent of Total Planned
Conservation Residential	3,819	9.6%
Neighborhood Residential	13,661	34.4%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	2,535	6.4%
Recreation and Open Space	3,215	8.1%
Institutional and Civic	2,432	6.1%
Downtown	163	0.4%
Regional Mixed Use	1,770	4.5%
Light Industrial	6,255	15.7%
Heavy Industrial	5,894	14.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,744</b>	<b>100%</b>

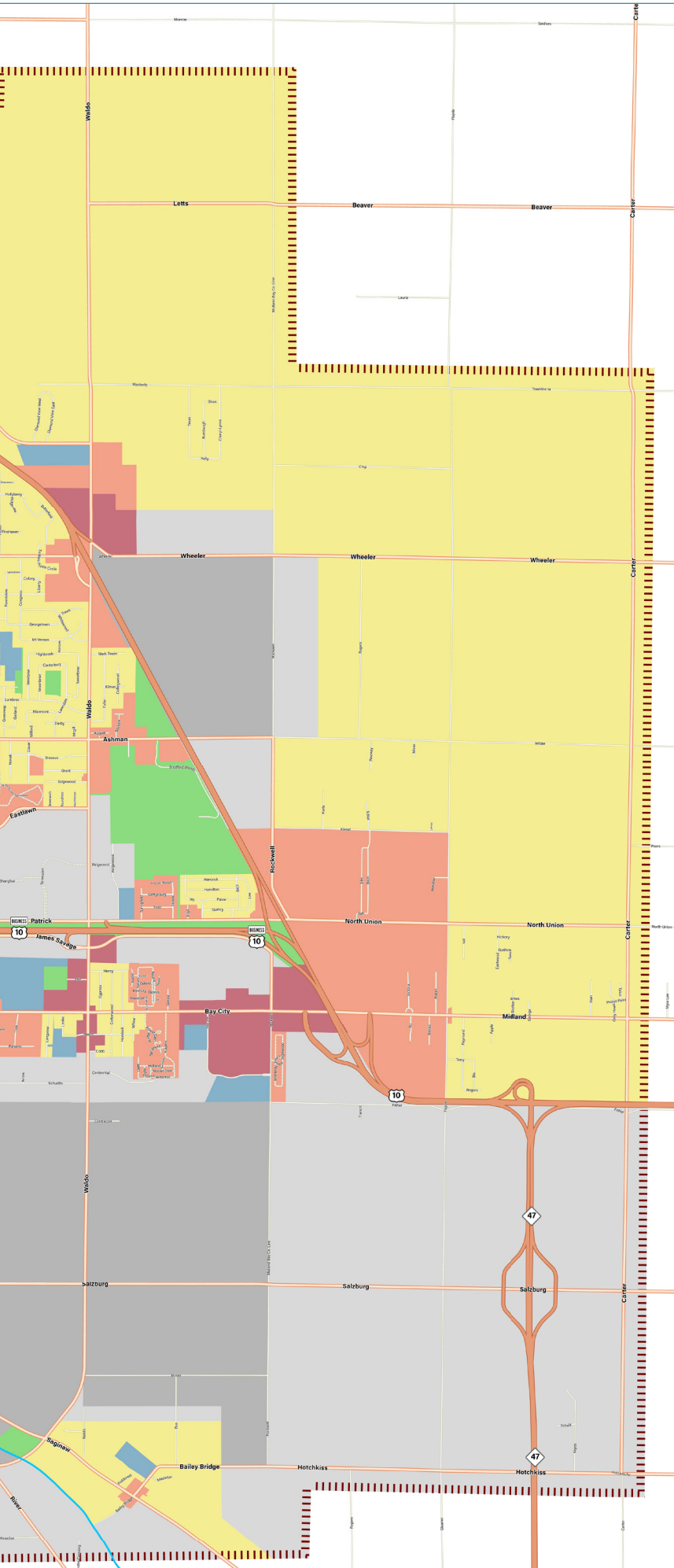
# Goals

Based on the influential factors identified above, the following land use goals have been identified for the City of Midland and the MUGA. These goals, in addition to the general goals outlined in this plan, should be considered in future decision-making.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Integrate and mix appropriate uses to create great places; promote a healthy, walkable community; and reduce vehicle trips.</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Provide walkable, neighborhood-oriented commercial opportunities throughout the city.</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Create opportunities for dense Live-Work-Play housing, co-working, and shared working spaces.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Promote flood resiliency by removing or retrofitting structures that are located in the floodplain and using flood resilient design practices for new development in and around critical waterways.</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Integrate usable open spaces within walking distance of all new development.</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Continue to encourage the transformation of the city’s major commercial areas into walkable, mixed use regional centers that provide a variety of retail, restaurant, service, and residential options.</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Leverage past public infrastructure investments by facilitating quality redevelopment and in fill development within the existing footprint of the city.</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Provide a diversity of housing types and costs to meet the needs of all age and income groups.</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Promote efficient and coordinated capital improvements.</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Support the long-term vitality of existing neighborhoods.</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Strengthen and diversify the major employment opportunities in the city.</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Encourage the adaptation of existing buildings into new uses.</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Expand industrial areas to continue to create opportunities for business growth and to attract industries relocating due to climate change.</b>

With these goals in mind, the Future Land Use Map and Plan have plotted the city’s total land area into land uses as outlined by size in the chart to the left. On the following pages, you can view the Future Land Use Map.





# Future Land Use map

- Conservation Residential
- Neighborhood Residential
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Recreation & Open Space
- Institution & Civic
- Downtown
- Regional Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- MUGA Boundary
- Rivers or Creeks

# LAND USES

Let's talk about what each of these land uses means.



## Conservation Residential

Photo taken by Eve Tuft



### Specific Objectives

Conservation Residential development in Midland is intended for areas of the city that have or are near naturally constrained lands (e.g. woodlands, wetlands, or floodplain). Developments utilizing open space design principles to preserve the area's natural resources and create high-quality residential developments are strongly encouraged in this land use.



### General Location

Conservation Residential is envisioned primarily in the far northwest and west areas of the city. These areas are in close proximity to the Tittabawassee River, Chippewa River, Sturgeon

Creek, State Drain, and other critical waterways for the city and region. Portions of this area fall within the 1% chance or 0.2% chance floodplain.



### Intended Land Uses

The Conservation Residential land use designation is intended to promote very low-density residential development with an emphasis on preserving and protecting critical waterways. Residential density in these areas shall not exceed two dwelling units per acre. Clustered development with permanently dedicated open space is strongly encouraged to preserve Midland's natural resources. Accessory and support uses such as churches, parks, schools, home occupations, and care facilities may also be allowed.



### General Character Description

Development in Conservation Residential areas should be designed in a manner that minimizes impact to Midland's natural systems and incorporates flood resilient design practices. Conservation Residential areas must be compatible with the surrounding environment, including the scale and character of existing neighborhoods. Street design in new Conservation Residential developments should include interconnected street and sidewalk systems, street trees, and adequate lighting. Design flexibility may be permitted when such flexibility is necessary to protect natural features or promote flood resilience.



# Neighborhood Residential

Photo below taken by Kathleen Friend

## Specific Objectives

Neighborhood Residential development in Midland should support the vitality of existing residential neighborhoods. In addition, Neighborhood Residential areas that are located on naturally constrained lands (e.g. woodlands, wetlands, or floodplain) should promote use of an open space clustered design to allow a reasonable number of homes to be built while preserving the area's natural resources and creating high-quality residential developments.

## General Location

Neighborhood Residential is the predominant existing land use in the city, mostly concentrated within the loop formed by US-10, M-20, and Saginaw Road. The Future Land Use Map envisions additional Neighborhood Residential development to the west, north, and

east of the city limits. Neighborhood Residential areas should incorporate parks and other civic uses within walking distance, should include appropriate buffering when adjacent to more intensive land uses, and should generally be geographically isolated from Heavy Industrial land uses.

## Intended Land Uses

The Neighborhood Residential land use designation is intended to accommodate traditional residential development. In cases where natural features constrain a development's buildable area, clustered development with permanently dedicated open space should be encouraged to preserve Midland's natural resources. Accessory and support uses such as churches, parks, schools, neighborhood commercial, home occupations, and care facilities may also be allowed. Residential density

in these areas shall generally not exceed six dwelling units per acre.

## General Character Description

To protect the vitality of the existing Neighborhood Residential areas in the city, development should continue to follow the traditional neighborhood design principles that currently prevail in these areas. Infill and redevelopment in existing Neighborhood Residential areas must be compatible with the surrounding environment, including the scale and character of the existing neighborhood. Street design in new Neighborhood Residential developments should include interconnected street and sidewalk systems, street trees, and adequate lighting. Homes will generally maintain traditional design elements such as prominent front entryways and recessed attached or rear-yard detached garages.





## Neighborhood Mixed Use



### Specific Objectives

Neighborhood Mixed Use development in Midland addresses multiple needs of the community in an attractive, walkable format. Neighborhood Mixed Use areas permit a wide variety of housing types and price ranges to accommodate residents in all lifestyle stages, especially young professionals and older adults. Housing formats range from detached homes to attached homes in townhouse, low-rise, and mid-rise apartment formats to housing in mixed-use buildings. Neighborhood Mixed Use areas also provide office service and neighborhood-oriented commercial activity with convenient access to daily needs for adjacent, primarily residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood Mixed Use developments should be designed to permit safe and convenient pedestrian circulation within the development and to nearby areas. Neighborhood Mixed Use areas will sometimes serve as a transitional buffer between Neighborhood Residential areas and higher intensity areas. Uses within the Neighborhood Mixed Use areas must be carefully planned to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.



### General Location

Neighborhood Mixed Use areas are planned throughout the city and the MUGA area. Specific locations of note include:

- North and east of Downtown;
- Areas adjacent to Center City, including areas south of Ashman Circle and west of S. Saginaw Road;
- Existing neighborhood commercial nodes at Jefferson and Sugnet, Swede and Wheeler, and along N. Saginaw Road; and
- Conceptual areas of walkable activity adjacent to planned Neighborhood Residential areas in the undeveloped edges of the city, including within the MUGA area.



### Intended Land Uses

The intended land uses within Neighborhood Mixed Use areas include single-, two-, and multiple-family housing in a variety of formats; office and service uses serving the local market area

such as professional offices, personal service establishments, and financial institutions; and commercial uses that meet the day-to-day shopping and service needs of residents in surrounding neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Mixed Use developments should include high-quality, innovative design that emphasizes pedestrian connections with nearby developments. Other accessory and support uses such as churches, parks, schools, and home occupations may also be allowed.

### General Character Description

Neighborhood Mixed Use developments should utilize design and building materials, appropriate lighting, and significant landscaping to promote high-quality commercial development and mitigate impacts on surrounding uses. For larger developments, emphasis should be placed on high-quality design and materials, including consideration of the design and activity taking place along rear property lines where residential developments may be abutting.





# Recreation & Open Space

Photo below taken by Cherie Novak

## Specific Objectives

Recreation and Open Space lands in the city are intended to provide residents and visitors with a full spectrum of both private and public facilities for fitness, leisure, competition, and enjoying nature.

The City currently has a Parks & Recreation Master Plan that goes into more detail about existing and planned facilities and outlines goals and objectives to address the fulfillment of these needs for the community. If this interests you, we recommend reading it!

## General Location

Recreation and Open Space areas are located throughout the city. As residential developments occur, park space should be provided

within each development. The ratio of Recreation and Open Space area should be monitored as the city expands to ensure current land use levels are maintained or increased and that Recreation and Open Space opportunities are available within walking distance to all residents.

## Intended Land Uses

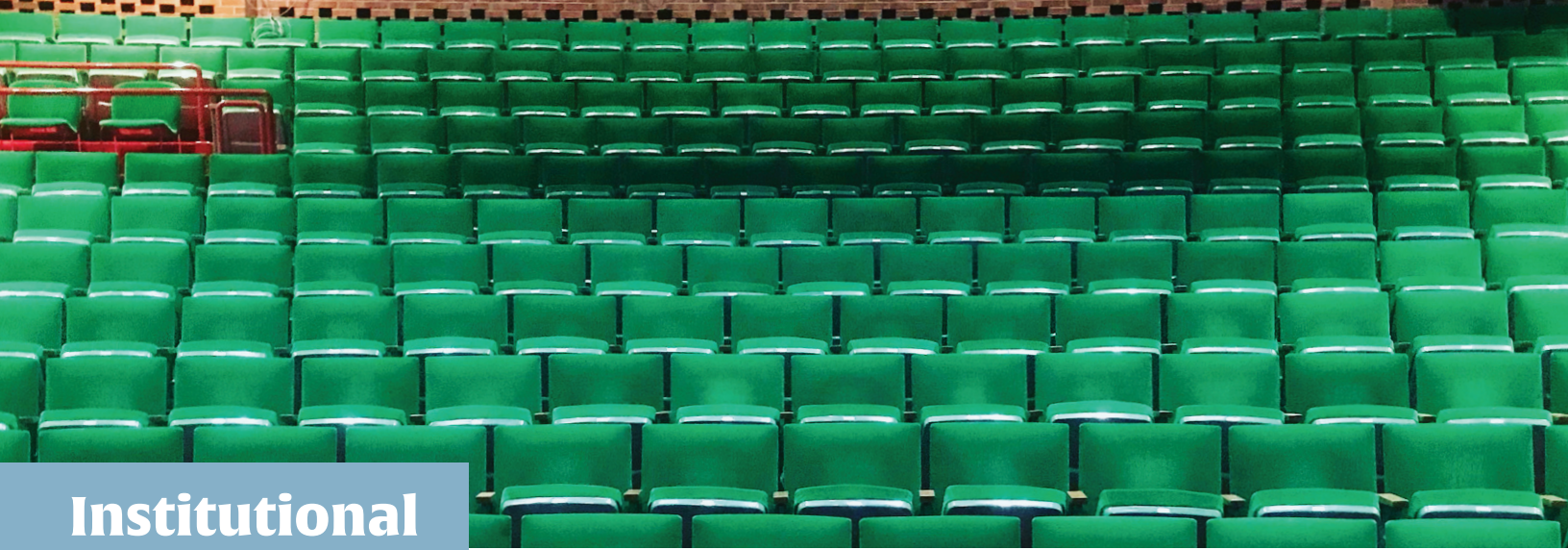
Land uses that are included in the Recreation and Open Space category are public and private recreation facilities such as playgrounds, pathways and nature trails, picnic areas, soccer fields, public softball and baseball fields, indoor sports facilities, and open space areas. Generally, these areas

include uses that provide active and passive recreation sites. In addition, new private commercial recreational facilities may be located in certain commercial and industrial areas.

## General Character Description

High-quality and diverse park offerings promote a higher quality of life for families and visitors alike. Recreation and Open Space facilities should continue to be integrated into the city's new and existing neighborhoods to create a comprehensive system. Recreation and Open Spaces should offer opportunities for a variety of activities. The City should also strive to connect these areas to each other and to their service areas via convenient, safe, and well-maintained non-motorized facilities.





## Institutional & Civic

Photo above taken by Courtney Soule  
Photo below taken by Eve Tuft



### Specific Objectives

The main objective of Institutional and Civic uses is to continue to provide high quality services, meet future needs of residents and employers, and locate new facilities at accessible sites compatible with other planned land uses.



### General Location

Institutional and Civic uses are scattered throughout the city, creating a network of resources that make up the "City of Modern Explorers." These designations include government facilities, hospital facilities, utility-related

buildings, schools, and churches, along with regional cultural amenities such as the Midland Center for the Arts, Herbert H. Dow Historical Museum, Dow Gardens, and the Herbert D. Doan Midland County History Center.



### Intended Land Uses

Institutional and Civic uses include existing places of worship, community buildings, and public and private schools. These sites also provide future opportunity for adaptive reuse or redevelopment to provide walkable infill housing and neighborhood-scale commercial uses in the event an institutional or civic use ceases in the future.



### General Character Description

Institutional and Civic uses are encouraged to have buildings located and designed to promote integration with the surrounding area. Institution and Civic facilities may have unique and distinctive architecture consistent with their public purposes and should be located in prominent locations where they add to the character and image of the community. Institutional and Civic uses shall be connected to the pedestrian network and feature site designs that compliment surrounding development.





## Downtown

Photo taken by Sydnie Gouge

### Specific Objectives

Downtown Midland is the heart of the community, providing critical governmental and administrative facilities, dining, entertaining, housing, retail, and other services. Downtown also provides a vital venue for community events, leveraging its connections to the riverfront and the Tridge. Streetscape redevelopment along Main Street and the creation of The Commons Pedestrian Plaza and Refreshment Area have significantly increased activity in the district and complement development of new housing in the Downtown area.

The area designated as Downtown on the Future Land Use Map supports the goals of expanding and enhancing the vibrancy of Downtown Midland by adding density and mixed-use development and building strong connections between Downtown and other vital districts, including

Center City, Discovery Square, and Midtown.

### General Location

Downtown generally includes the portion of the city from Ripley Street on the northwest to Haley Street on the southeast and from the Tittabawassee River on the southwest to approximately Grove Street on the northeast. It includes several notable community facilities, including Midland City Hall, the Midland County Courthouse, the Midland County Administrative Building, and Dow Diamond.

### Intended Land Uses

Downtown is intended to include a variety of uses important to a vibrant, walkable, regional-service district: Dining establishments, entertainment, residential, retail, offices, civic uses, and lodging are all acceptable within this

area. These uses often exist in combination within a single building or development. Parking, where provided, will generally be public in nature and offered on-street or in managed off-street facilities such as parking lots or structures.

### General Character Description

Downtown development should include high-quality, higher-density design and materials with building façades that are close to the front lot line and on-site parking, if provided, away from and screened from the street. Outdoor eating areas and other design features that promote interaction between the activity inside the building and on the street are encouraged. Mixed-use development is highly desired as a means of increasing district vibrancy and supporting walkability. These elements will increase in importance as the historic core of Downtown continues to expand north and east.



## Regional Mixed Use



### Specific Objectives

Regional Mixed Use areas provide significant venues for commerce, employment, and service for the Midland community and the Great Lakes Bay Region. Today, these areas are generally auto-oriented and composed of only commercial land uses. Many of these areas are showing signs of distress, including vacancy and disinvestment.

Reasons for these issues include macroeconomic factors impacting retail nationally, such as increased online commerce, and local issues such as competition between older and emerging commercial areas.

The future success of Regional Mixed Use areas will require Midland to be creative and flexible. These areas will continue to include auto-oriented, single-use commercial development, but should be expanded to include a larger variety of land uses. This includes medium-to-high density housing in most areas and research, technology, and other light industrial

activities southeast of Downtown and in areas along Bay City Road. Regulations should be as flexible as possible to encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures and promote innovative and attractive places that are conveniently and safely accessible by all modes of transportation, including walking and transit. Particular attention should be paid to the following planning considerations:

- Regional Mixed Use centers should be sized and located to best interact with surrounding uses while also providing convenience and limiting unnecessary congestion.
- Impacts on the sustainability of existing regional centers of Midland, including Downtown, Center City, and the Midland Mall area, must be considered when planning for additional regional centers in the city.
- High intensity Regional Mixed Use centers, particularly

those with significant traffic generation, should be buffered from Neighborhood Residential areas with Neighborhood Mixed Use areas where practical.

- Development regulations should align with adopted redevelopment plans of the City where applicable.



### General Location

Regional Mixed Use areas are generally concentrated in the following locations in Midland:

- Center City;
- Midland Mall and the adjacent retail centers along Eastman Avenue and Joe Mann Boulevard;
- N. Saginaw Road at Eastman Avenue, Dublin Avenue, and Stark Road;
- Bay City Road at Waldo Avenue, Fast Ice Drive, Rockwell Drive, and US-10;

- Waldo Avenue and Wheeler Street north of US-10; and
- M-20 west of Downtown



### Intended Land Uses

Regional Mixed Use areas are intended to have a variety of uses supporting both the local and regional marketplace. These areas may include hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, drive-through restaurants, large retailers, medium-to-high density residential, office, and service uses. These uses will often exist in combination within a single building or development. In areas southeast of Downtown, a mixture of high-tech industrial, commercial, and office uses that provide a transition between residential uses to the north and the higher-intensity industrial uses to the south and southeast are also expected, while housing is not an appropriate land use in this area.



### General Character Description

Regional Mixed Use areas should focus on encouraging redevelopment and requiring consistent site upgrades as development occurs, including improved site design, access management, building façades, and landscaping. Pedestrian circulation should be carefully planned to reduce unnecessary trips and increase the vitality and sense of place within each development and should complement the broader community. Generally, parking areas should be in the rear or side rather than in the front of the building and screened from the street.



# Light Industrial

## Specific Objectives

Light Industrial developments are an important source of employment and tax base and have a significantly smaller impact on surrounding uses than Heavy Industrial. This designation is intended to provide concentrated areas throughout the city and the MUGA that accommodate coordinated industrial parks with high-tech, low-intensity industrial uses. Existing Light Industrial uses located outside of these districts, especially those that are isolated or obsolete facilities, should be encouraged to relocate to planned Light Industrial areas when the opportunity arises.

## General Location

Planned Light Industrial areas are generally located in the following areas:

- North of the Stark Road interchange with US-10;

- North of the BR-10/Waldo Avenue interchange, including the existing Eagle Ridge Industrial Park;
- Along Schuette and Centennial Roads;
- Southeast of the Bay City Road/US-10 interchange;
- South side of Gordonville Road, west of Mapleton; and
- South of US-10 along the M-47 corridor in Bay County, southeast of the city.

## Intended Land Uses

Appropriate intended uses for the Light Industrial district include high-tech industries, research laboratories, light assembly operations, and corporate offices. Commercial uses that support industrial activities are also appropriate in these areas. Heavy, smokestack industries and large warehouse operations

dependent on heavy trucking or rail transportation are not intended for this district. External nuisances such as noise and odors should be minimized through design and activity restrictions. These areas are intended to play an integral role in the community's desire to cluster complimentary industries together in the same general area. (Remember our bit about industry clusters? If not, check out the Local Economy section!) These areas also support the public's desire for expanded employment opportunities in the city.

## General Character Description

Redevelopment of existing Light Industrial areas designated to remain that way on the Future Land Use Map should include improved site design, access management tools, attractive building façades and appropriate buffers to adjacent, non-industrial land uses.



# Heavy Industrial

## Specific Objectives

Areas designated as Heavy Industrial on the Future Land Use Map include high-intensity industrial uses that require special buffering from and consideration for surrounding areas. These areas are not intended to expand beyond their current boundaries.

## General Location

The only two areas of Heavy Industrial are located in the southeast quadrant of the city and on the City Landfill property east of US-10.

## General Character Description

Areas with Heavy Industrial designations require special planning and site design. The operation of these uses may involve heavy truck traffic, outdoor storage, rail access, odors, and noise. Development and redevelopment of these areas should minimize the impacts of these activities by requiring large setbacks, full screening of loading and outdoor storage areas, and locating near routes designed to handle expected truck and rail traffic volumes.

## Intended Land Uses

Areas with facilities involved in chemical production, heavy assembly, large warehousing, trucking, and waste management are intended for this designation.



# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Together, the Future Transportation Map and Plan provide broad guidance for making transportation decisions and developing the zoning regulations and capital investment decisions that will help us meet our goals. In this section, we'll discuss the current landscape and provide insight into the future needs of the community for both motorized and non-motorized transportation.

While all an important part of transportation projects, specific details on project cost, funding source, timing, and design are not generally determined as part of the master planning process. You won't find that information here. What you will find in this plan is a map of current non-motorized facilities, planned future transportation initiatives, and focus areas for the plan period.



# TRANSPORTATION BILITY





The City, along with other transportation infrastructure agencies such as the Midland County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), will be responsible for designing, constructing, and maintaining a holistic transportation network that supports mobility and economic development.

In this section, we'll discuss the influential factors related to future transportation, provide insight into our general transportation goals, and outline in detail the transportation categories you'll see on the Future Transportation Map.

## Influential Factors

The Future Transportation Plan reflects input from residents of Midland and its surrounding areas as well as discussions with local decision makers and agencies. The plan considers existing transportation facilities, current and future land uses, the MUGA, other factors, and generally accepted planning principles that are described next.

### Existing Transportation Network

Most areas within the city limits already have established transportation networks, including existing streets, sidewalks, and trails. This plan generally seeks to improve safety and connectivity within the existing system and to expand options for mobility, primarily through new streets and new non-motorized transportation infrastructure.

### Existing Land Use, Future Land Use, and the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA)

This plan considers existing and future land uses to align transportation recommendations to the current and future context. It also considers transportation needs beyond the current city limits but within the MUGA that are anticipated to eventually become part of the city.

### Traffic Trends

Traffic volumes around the city were considered, with a focus given to areas experiencing increasing traffic volumes or with anticipated future growth in traffic volumes due to new development.

## Plans of Other Transportation Agencies

The proposed transportation network changes found in this plan have been crafted to align with the plans, studies, and improvement programs being conducted by other transportation-related agencies, including the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Midland Area Transportation Study, and the Midland County Road Commission.

## Previous City Master Plan

The previous City Master Plan, adopted in 2007 and subsequently amended several times through 2018, was used as the base for the Future Transportation Map and the categories included in this section. Any significant changes from the previous plan were evaluated for necessity based on the various factors discussed in this chapter.

## Desires of the City

Midland residents' and officials' input for traffic improvements they'd like to see are also included in this plan. These inputs were collected through a variety of public input events, meetings, surveys, and other engagement activities. (Check out the Process section!)

Transportation-related goals contained within this plan include:

- 1 **Provide a high-quality network for non-motorized travel within the city.**
- 2 **Improve the condition of the City's roads, culverts, and bridges.**
- 3 **Manage the City's street network with an emphasis on safety, context sensitivity, and efficiency.**
- 4 **Continue to provide the region with safe and modern general aviation services through the Jack Barstow Municipal Airport.**
- 5 **Provide robust, contemporary on-demand transit services to ensure that all residents have options for mobility.**
- 6 **Update and expand the City's existing wayfinding system to increase the ease of navigating the community.**
- 7 **Update the City's subdivision regulations.**
- 8 **Take steps to prepare for the transition from internal combustion to electric vehicles.**

Photos taken by John McCoy (left) and Lucille Pagan (below)






# Traffic Counts

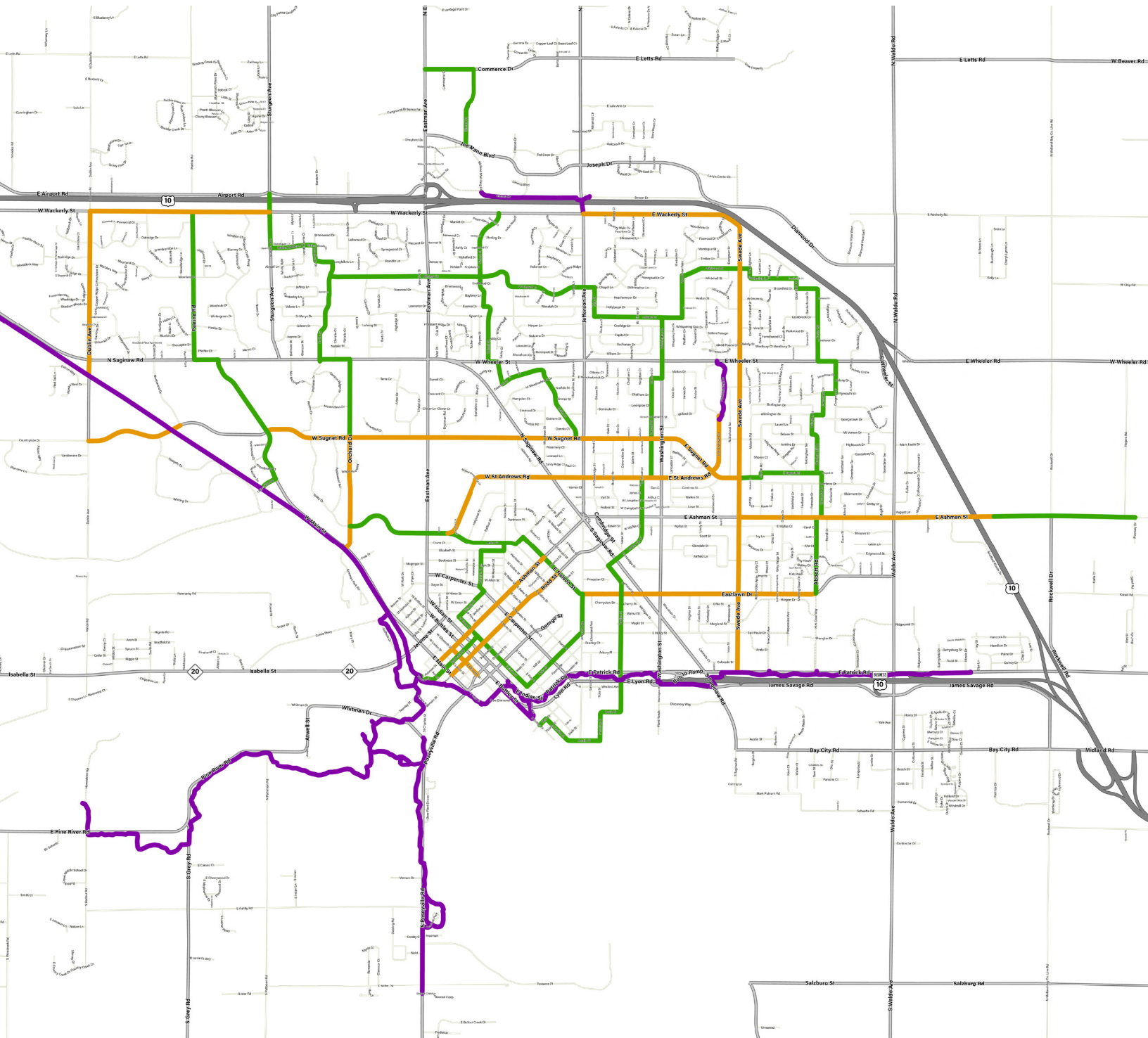
Evaluating the existing transportation system provides the foundation for recommendations in this Transportation Plan. The evaluation includes a review of current traffic volumes on major streets and a discussion of recent trends. Traffic volumes in the City of Midland are generally highest on MDOT roadways, including Business Route 10, as well as Saginaw Road. In general, traffic volumes have continued to trend downward across the entire city; however, exceptions to this trend are generally found in the northern portions of the city near the Midland Mall. These trends will continue to be monitored to determine necessary infrastructure adjustments related to changing traffic flows.

Street	Location	% change, 2017-2022	% change, 2012-2022	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Ashman	NE of Pine	-7.92%	-5.3%	5,279	4,630	1,602	5,632	5,733	5,562	5,602	4,784	5,423	5,738	5,572
E. Ashman	W of Swede	-16.37%	-2.7%	7,117	5,985	5,637	8,058	8,510	7,001	7,570	7,667	7,249	7,764	7,318
Buttles	SE of State	-11.99%	-9.3%	11,899	9,909		11,342	13,520		11,892	11,247	12,624	12,541	13,123
Eastman	N of Airport	5.85%	6.3%	29,724	26,398	-	29,838	28,081	13,155	26,266	26,287	30,343	25,916	27,952
Eastman	N of Meijer	-0.49%	15.6%	10,566	9,804	-	12,267	10,618	9,536	9,908	9,457	10,231	9,310	9,138
Eastman	S of Wackerly	-6.78%	6.8%	24,437	23,091	20,240	27,034	26,214	24,924	21,897	24,594	25,579	24,919	22,875
Eastman	S of Saginaw	6.88%	-3.5%	18,433	15,216	-	18,286	17,247	16,833	15,878	15,760	18,651	19,456	19,109
Indian	SE of State	-9.50%	-9.2%	12,057	9,982		12,520	13,323	13,286	12,403	11,290	13,138	12,844	13,284
Isabella	SW of Main	-	-5.9%	9,243	8,635					11,565	9,412	10,129	10,338	9,822
Jefferson	N of Wackerly	-12.91%	-7.9%	14,651	11,539	9,172	17,426	16,823	15,556	16,474	14,277	15,763	15,219	15,908
Jefferson	S of Wheeler	-15.28%	-8.1%	11,062	8,250		12,790	13,057		12,328	11,834	12,721	12,005	12,031
Joe Mann	E of Eastman	-10.35%	8.1%	12,653	7,955	9,899	14,330	14,114		11,864	11,193	12,252	11,799	11,707
Lyon	W of Washington	-9.18%	14.7%	12,632	10,483		13,332	13,909	11,202	12,693	12,896	12,154	13,470	11,017
W. Main	S of Saginaw	-7.66%	-11.3%	4,943	3,881	2,353	4,665	5,353	5,525	5,632	4,506	5,729	5,444	5,571
E. Patrick	W of Washington	-4.12%	-3.6%	12,764	10,648		14,888	13,313	13,637	12,767	12,675	12,728	13,255	13,241
Rodd	NE of Pine	-16.72%	-6.4%	4,058	3,754	2,558	4,412	4,873	4,799	4,553	3,962	4,459	4,583	4,334
N. Saginaw	W of Sturgeon	-5.68%	-2.2%	8,806	5,876		9,183	9,336	9,636	9,580	9,596	10,425	10,229	9,001
N. Saginaw	W of Sturgeon	8.16%	-5.5%	8,482	6,078		7,790	7,842	9,265	9,252	9,074	10,208	10,092	8,974
N. Saginaw	SE of Sugnet	-3.97%	-2.4%	16,866	15,032	-	17,121	17,564	16,506	16,950	16,880	18,133	18,461	17,289
S. Saginaw	N of Patrick	-27.45%	-21.0%		14,869	-	24,942	20,496	8,869	18,380	20,042	19,417	17,399	18,833
Sturgeon	N of Airport	11.69%	32.2%	5,502	4,858	3,681	5,051	4,926	4,975	5,035	5,235	5,157	4,119	4,161
Sugnet	E of Orchard	-10.29%	-3.8%	4,087	3,919	3,597	4,861	4,556	4,720	4,385	4,111	4,089	4,356	4,247
Swede	S of Wheeler	-60.78%	-51.0%	3,969	6,144		8,802	10,120		8,466	8,310	8,345	9,034	8,101
W. Wackerly	W of Eastman	-9.44%	0.9%	12,283	13,024	9,678	14,576	13,564	7,392	13,042	12,749	13,627	13,365	12,171
W. Wackerly	E of Eastman	-15.18%	-13.6%	9,283	9,598	7,962	11,852	10,944	-	10,905	10,591	11,247	11,467	10,748
Waldo	N of Ashman	4.05%	2.0%	11,732	10,354		9,890	11,275	12,438	11,651	11,205	11,655	11,544	11,498
Waldo	N of Patrick	13.76%	-21.1%	9,654	12,108		12,546	8,486	9,438	12,220	11,358	12,445	12,536	12,242
Washington	N of Sugnet	-17.46%	-22.4%	4,055	3,665	2,093	4,500	4,913	4,832	4,424	4,560	4,439	4,876	5,228
E. Wheeler	E of Jefferson	42.23%	39.4%	10,255	5,488		8,094	7,210	7,131	7,710	7,196	7,863	5,319	7,355
E. Wheeler	E of Swede	14.65%	-4.6%	5,243	4,871		5,980	4,573	5,726	5,530	6,494	5,620	6,052	5,497

Note: S. Saginaw comparisons are to 2021 data; 2022 data is unavailable due to construction.

# EXISTING NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES MAP

-  Marked Bike Lane
-  Paved Path Existing
-  Designated Bike Route



# FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAP

## Access Management Focus Area

Access management is a set of techniques used to maintain efficient traffic flow, preserve the street's capacity, and reduce the frequency and severity of crashes while maintaining reasonable access to surrounding areas. Careful access placement reduces conflicts with other traffic traveling to other nearby destinations or flowing through intersections. While access management principles are generally applied citywide, Access Management Focus Areas have current or expected future conditions that warrant extra attention, such as existing safety or capacity limitations or significant future traffic growth due to development or redevelopment.

## Corridor Focus Area

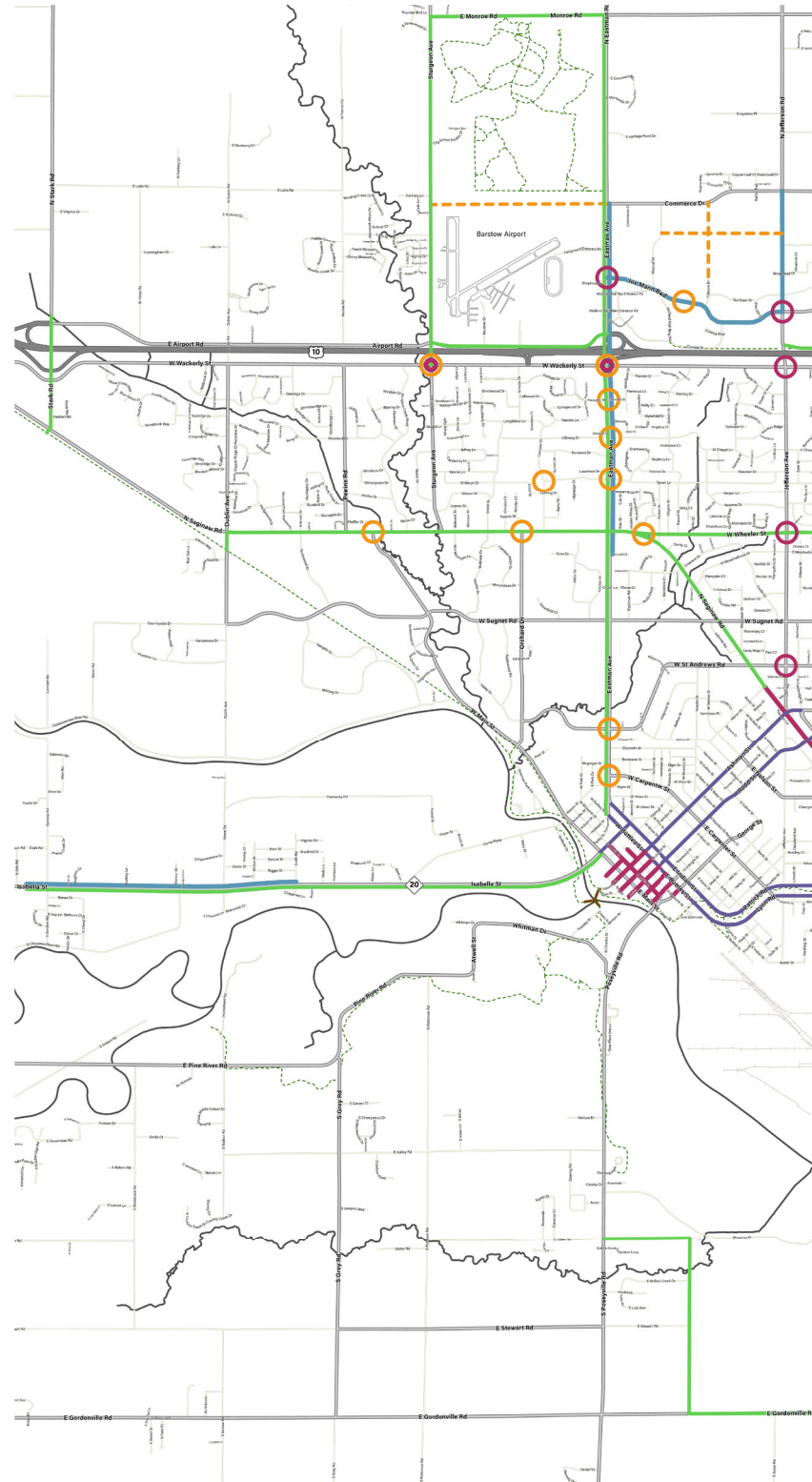
Corridor Focus Areas identify significant and complex major street reconstruction or redesign opportunities that would include a wide variety of design features, such as on- or off-street non-motorized facilities, streetscaping, intersection safety projects, access management, and pedestrian safety projects. Corridor Focus Areas are generally at least one mile in length.

## Streetscape Project

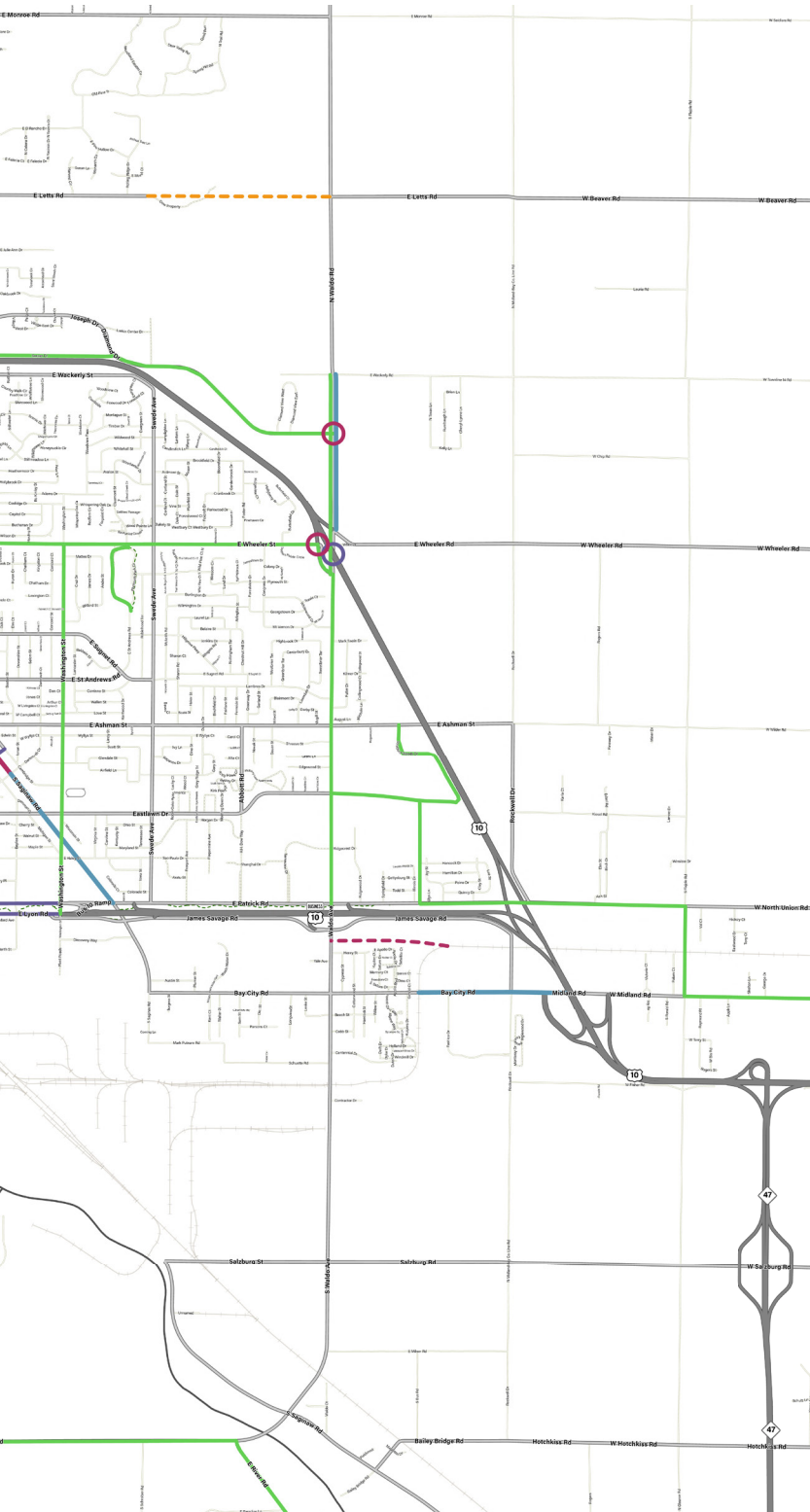
Streetscape Projects represent areas where there are opportunities to add or improve amenities behind the curb line of the street. These amenities might include new or expanded sidewalks, decorative street lighting, benches, street trees and other plantings, outdoor dining patios, and other elements. These projects are typically pursued to improve aesthetics, enhance the pedestrian experience, and stimulate additional private investment.

## Railroad Extension

Railroad Extensions are potential opportunities to add railroad service where none currently exists.



 Rivers or Creeks     
  Railroad     
  Trail



### Multimodal Facility

Multimodal Facilities represent opportunities to add, expand, or improve off-street non-motorized facilities including sidewalks and trails. These projects are generally constructed within the public right-of-way and are intended to provide the opportunity for safe non-motorized travel within the community. Multimodal Facility needs are most common in areas where existing motorized traffic volumes and speeds make on-street facilities difficult or unsafe to develop and use. Multimodal Facility projects may be used to connect neighborhoods to commercial, cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities.

### New Interchange

New Interchanges are connections between the City’s surface street network and the limited access US-10 highway system.

### Intersection Safety Focus Area

Intersection Safety Projects focus on addressing safety and capacity issues for vehicular traffic at existing intersections.

### Pedestrian Safety Focus Area

Pedestrian Safety Focus Areas focus on addressing safety and capacity issues for pedestrians in places where they encounter streets or non-motorized facilities.

### New Street

New Streets are identified opportunities to improve regional connectivity through the extension of existing roadways or the addition of new roadways. New streets can improve public safety response times, redistribute traffic from existing roadways, and facilitate growth and development.

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A scenic view of a river with a wooden bridge, a boat with two people, and reeds in the foreground. The text "NATURAL ENVIRONMENT" is overlaid in large white letters.





# MENT

**Nestled between well-tended farmland and lush woodlands, the City of Midland has developed into a mature 'green' city through thoughtful planning.** With more than 72 municipal parks, over 2,500 acres of City-owned parkland, and several miles of natural waterway flowing through the center of the community, access to nature is available in nearly every area of the city. As a result, outdoor recreation is a popular pastime for Midlanders in every season. The presence of existing woodlands and wetlands in Midland has been shaped over the course of time by the development of new streets, residential subdivisions, new businesses, and industries that together provide an urban feel in a natural setting.

Many prominent natural features are found throughout Midland, such as the Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers, Sturgeon Creek, and various wetlands, wooded areas, and open green spaces. These natural features are an important component of the City's identity – there's a tree in our logo, after all! With that in mind, any development done on remaining vacant areas throughout the city should be considerate of existing natural features.

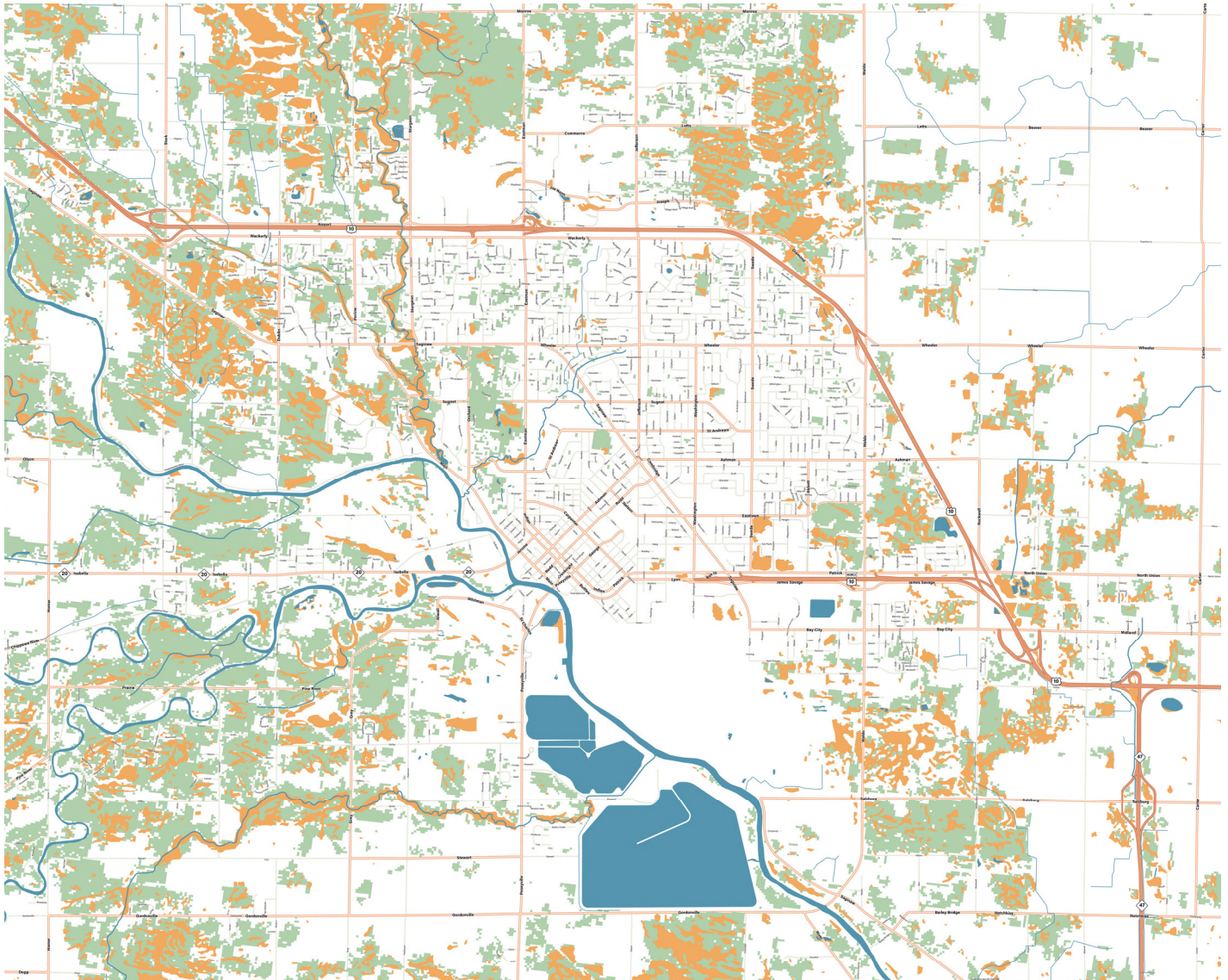
An inventory of existing natural features was conducted to identify potential opportunities for conservation and open space developments as well as consider areas where natural features can be improved. The Natural Features map on the next page illustrates the approximate locations of wetlands, woodlands, and water in the city limits and the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA) as well as floodplain boundaries in the city.

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**Site design should take advantage of the benefits that natural features provide and minimize any disruptions or loss. Midland's natural features are an important part of our community's identity.**

# Natural Features map

Waterbodies Wetlands Woodlands



Disclaimer: Locations are for illustrative purposes only

## Regional Scope

Midland is located within the Saginaw Bay Watershed, which encompasses over 8,500 square miles of land and is America's largest contiguous freshwater coastal wetland system. Preserving natural water features and the land that surrounds them is one of the most practical ways to protect water resources and manage stormwater.

Promoting low-impact development and preventing excess stormwater runoff are main priorities both for Midland's immediate land area and the watershed as

a whole. By providing standards for natural feature improvements, Midland can improve the natural aesthetic of the community, especially in rapidly-growing areas, while providing low-cost natural infrastructure that can enhance local water quality, control flooding, and improve the overall health of the watershed. While Midland is not located on Lake Huron, the lake serves as the City's fresh water source and provides drinking water to thousands of residents in Midland and the surrounding areas.

## Soils

The physiographic conditions within our region mimic those of many eastern mid-Michigan communities: Lake plains, low and level terrain created by glacier activities 15,000 years ago. Elevations within the area range from 600 to 675 feet above sea level.

What the glaciers left behind lies beneath the surface in our soils, which can be identified via soil survey. A soil survey reveals a significant amount of information about an area that is not visible from the landscape and can assist in determining whether land is suitable or unsuitable for development. Information about soil types can be used to effectively manage growth and development and influence future development in previously undeveloped areas. Soil deposits found in our region are a combination of loamy and sandy soils, which are suitable for most development uses.

Areas of poor soil suitability are often found in low and level terrain near areas of water where there is little natural drainage. Midland has a number of areas where frequent overland flooding and standing water occur along the waterways due to poorly drained

soils. Mindful development practices that reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and preserve native vegetation in these areas can assist the natural environment in effectively managing stormwater and preventing excess runoff.

The predominant soil types in the city limits are classified as very limited for development. Due to these soil types and area slopes of 0% to 6%, our natural environment limits the ability to develop properties without a substantial amount of engineering and related infrastructure.

Midland's urbanization has engineered the landscape to accommodate development through the use of storm sewers, gutters, and surface ditches to drain area lands. As a result, dependence on soil types to limit or design future development will have little influence in the urban areas of town; however, attention to development restrictions in undeveloped areas should be carefully evaluated to protect the ability to naturally manage rain water and prevent excess stormwater runoff. For example: Construction activities can be staged to minimize the amount of soil exposed during construction, reducing the amount of erosion and runoff potential that may occur.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common body of water. Midland is located in Michigan's largest watershed, the Saginaw Bay Watershed, which drains approximately 15% of Michigan's land area!**

Photo provided by Regional Conservation Partnership Program

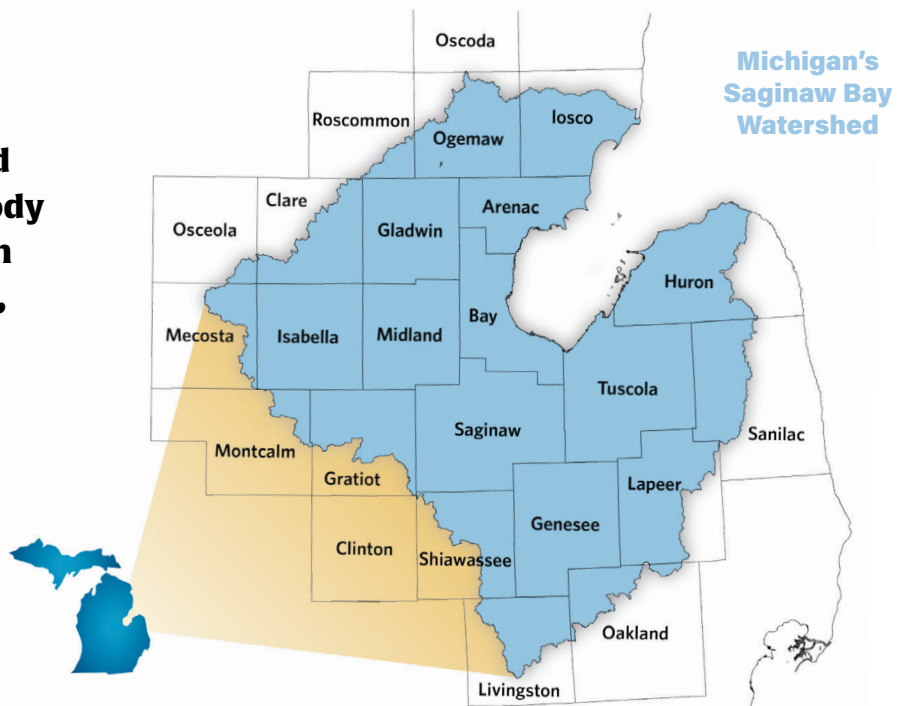




Photo taken by Brian Broemer

## Wetlands

Wetlands may include areas that are seasonably wet due to a surface or groundwater influence or areas that are more permanently saturated throughout the year. Wetlands are vital to the environmental quality of Midland and serve a variety of important functions that benefit the community, such as:

- Mitigating flooding by detaining surface runoff;
- Controlling soil erosion and sediment loading in rivers and lakes;
- Creating links to groundwater that improve water quality, and;
- Providing habitats for wildlife, flora, and fauna.

Wetlands are scattered throughout the city: The majority of wetlands in Midland are found along the

edge of waterways, while some isolated wetlands exist in the northeast corner of the city and within the designated floodplain area. Currently, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) regulates all wetlands that are contiguous with (within 500 feet of) a waterway or any wetland that is greater than five acres in size through Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). Any dredging, excavating, construction on or making use of a wetland – such as for stormwater management – requires a permit from EGLE. Permits are generally not granted unless the issuance is in the public interest and necessary to realize the benefits derived from the activity. If a wetland fill permit is granted, mitigation – such as creating new wetlands within the same drainage way or enhancement of existing wetlands – is required. Refer to **Map 3.1: Natural Features** for an illustration of the location and type of wetlands located in the Midland area.

## Vegetation

The Midland area was originally covered with hemlock and white pine forests. Marshes and swamps were present in many of the city's low-lying areas and served as excellent habitat for Michigan's native wildlife. Once settled, much of the surrounding landscape was cleared for timber products and utilized for agricultural activities; since that time, second-growth forests have emerged as a mixture of hardwoods and pine that surround the perimeter of the city.

Most vegetation within the city limits is a manicured, urban landscape of grass, lawns, and landscaping plants. Woodlands within the community can be found in street trees, parks, and on privately owned properties and are typically home to a variety of tree species. Midland's commitment to maintaining and growing an extensive urban forest is demonstrated through its being recognized as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for nearly three straight decades.

Woodlands influence the area around them by moderating ground-level temperatures; reducing air pollution and soil erosion; providing effective noise and wind screens; and providing important wildlife, flora, and fauna habitats. A significant wooded feature within the community is Midland City Forest, a 520-acre city park bisected by Newell Creek in the northern portion of the city. It is a mixture of wetland and low land covered with mature pines and mixed hardwood, providing a source of natural cover for local wildlife as well as low-impact public recreation opportunities such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback trail riding, and cross-country skiing.

City Forest is located in close proximity to portions of the Au Sable State Forest, creating opportunities for the City to provide links to other wildlife corridors. A wildlife corridor is a traveling avenue for wildlife species between two similar yet fragmented habitat areas that can be composed of natural or semi-natural elements. These corridors maintain wildlife movement through an urban setting. Wildlife corridors also provide additional privacy for area residents and create green space in residential neighborhoods by linking habitats and woodlands, either inland or along a waterway.



Vegetated systems along the waterfront provide habitat for aquatic wildlife and allow room for floodwater to be absorbed without damaging residential structures. Known in many urban areas as green infrastructure, these areas are defined as an interconnected network of green space and other environmental assets that conserve the function of the natural ecosystem and provide associated benefits to people. Riverside and creekside vegetation cover also vary throughout the city: Sections of Jacobs Drain run through large areas of commercial development that have a large amount of impervious surface, while portions of Sturgeon and Snake creeks pass through residential neighborhoods.

Areas of the city that are still undeveloped provide opportunities to properly integrate natural features within a new development, such as open space developments. By preserving large portions of natural vegetation within an open space, unique habitats can be preserved while also protecting air, land, and water resource quality as well. Residential development can be accommodated without disrupting woodland stands, which in turn can enhance the aesthetics of both the surrounding neighborhood and the entire community.

A significant resource located just outside of the city limits is the Chippewa Nature Center. Over 1,200 acres of land in this area has been preserved for the general public to experience a varied array of ecosystems, including wetlands, woodlands and an interpretive farm. Located on the south side

of the Chippewa River, the center provides low-impact recreation and learning opportunities for area residents while simultaneously preserving open land that buffers the waterway.

Preserving open spaces in a manner that promotes linking systems through naturally occurring corridors can improve a community's natural features and provide significant benefits to residents and the environment. Urban green space provides significant benefits, including improving overall quality and attractiveness of neighborhoods; improving human health; increasing property values; reducing properties' heating and cooling costs; and helping to stabilize local weather patterns. Ensuring that green space, parks, and pathway access are readily available are critical to achieving these goals.

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**Effective management and long-term stewardship of preserved natural areas and corridors will require maintaining partnerships with area land conservancies that have inventoried these systems.**



## Water

Rivers and streams are integral elements of a community, as they provide an aesthetic residential and recreation element and also serve the needs of area wildlife. Three rivers flow through Midland County: the Pine, Chippewa and Tittabawassee rivers. The most notable natural resource in the City of Midland is the confluence of the Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers in Downtown Midland. The headwaters of these rivers stretch inland and are a part of the greater Saginaw Bay Watershed system with coverage in 22 counties of Michigan. These rivers' connection to area wetlands and floodplains makes them an important part of the water storage and filtration process and also present a natural environment for recreation, events, commerce, and tourism.

The presence of these waterways has created a large area of riparian ecosystem that is important for wildlife habitat, riverside vegetation, and public recreation. Riparian areas where land and water interface tend to be fragile environments and, as a result, Midland has many city parks that have protected riparian areas.

Riparian buffer strips are areas of vegetation located adjacent to streams or rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands that provide protection from erosion and sedimentation and remove pollutants associated with manicured park lands from area stormwater runoff. These buffer strips can be a low-maintenance alternative to flood control if plantings are done using native vegetation that is acclimated

to area weather conditions and can stabilize themselves in area soils. To create a consistent natural environment across both public and private land areas, riparian buffers along waterways can be measured and cataloged to identify the appropriate size to protect the waterways from developments and other land uses.

## Floodplains

The floodplains associated with the Tittabawassee and Chippewa rivers occupy a significant area within the city. The nearly level alluvial plain that borders these waterways has created a substantial floodplain in the community that encompasses nearly 3,900 acres of land. A large percentage of the City's wooded lands and wetlands are present in the regulated floodplain, as well as approximately 1,000 parcels in Downtown Midland.

Floodplain land receives some measure of protection under state and federal regulations. Areas designated as a special flood hazard area include land that is subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year. Despite these existing regulations, Midland still has a key role to play in maintaining the integrity of the floodplain. Loss of floodplain land or a change in its use can cause diminished water quality and increased flooding downstream. Areas located within the special flood hazard area are approximate and should be used for general planning purposes only: The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is the official source.



The City of Midland is an active participant in both the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CRS). NFIP communities adopt certain minimum standards for floodplain management that enable property owners within the community to obtain NFIP flood insurance. CRS was created by NFIP to encourage communities to establish floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum federal standards required for NFIP participation. Communities are rated on a 10-point scale, with better-rated communities securing lower insurance rates for property owners and renters.

## Land Quality

Midland has a long history of industrial development, including areas along its riverfront. As a result, a number of sites in this area have become contaminated from operations occurring years ago when environmental protection standards were less rigorous. Many funding opportunities exist to stimulate reuse and redevelopment of these sites, including funding to remediate contaminated soils.

A “brownfield site” is a property whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. A single property or a city can, under state regulations, be designated as a brownfield. The City of Midland has received this designation, which provides certain advantages in responding to contaminated

properties and their cleanup. The Michigan Brownfield Program provides opportunities for remediation of environmental problems on-site to make them competitive with non-contaminated and/or “greenfield” sites. Funds are targeted to projects that promote economic development and reuse of brownfield properties and may serve to reinvigorate existing urban areas that have been neglected.

EGLE maintains a listing of contaminated sites through its Environmental Response Division. Michigan’s Public Act 451 of 1994 – the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, also known as NREPA – provides for the identification, risk assessment, funding, remediation, and priority evaluation of environmental contamination sites in the state. Part 201 of this act, Environmental Remediation, discusses the details of remediation for contaminated sites. Part 213 of NREPA addresses Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, known as LUST sites, which are locations where a release has occurred from an underground storage tank system and where corrective actions have not been completed to meet the appropriate land use criteria. LUST sites are also classified as brownfields for purposes of economic development and can be remediated through new development opportunities and available grant funding.

Because water resources are interconnected, many uses on the land and within the soils have a long-term effect on the area’s watershed and water quality. Remediation of all known problem sites can make dramatic improvements to area water quality and residents’ quality of life.

# 48

**Documented  
Part 201 sites  
in Midland**

# 42




**Designated  
open LUST sites  
in Midland**

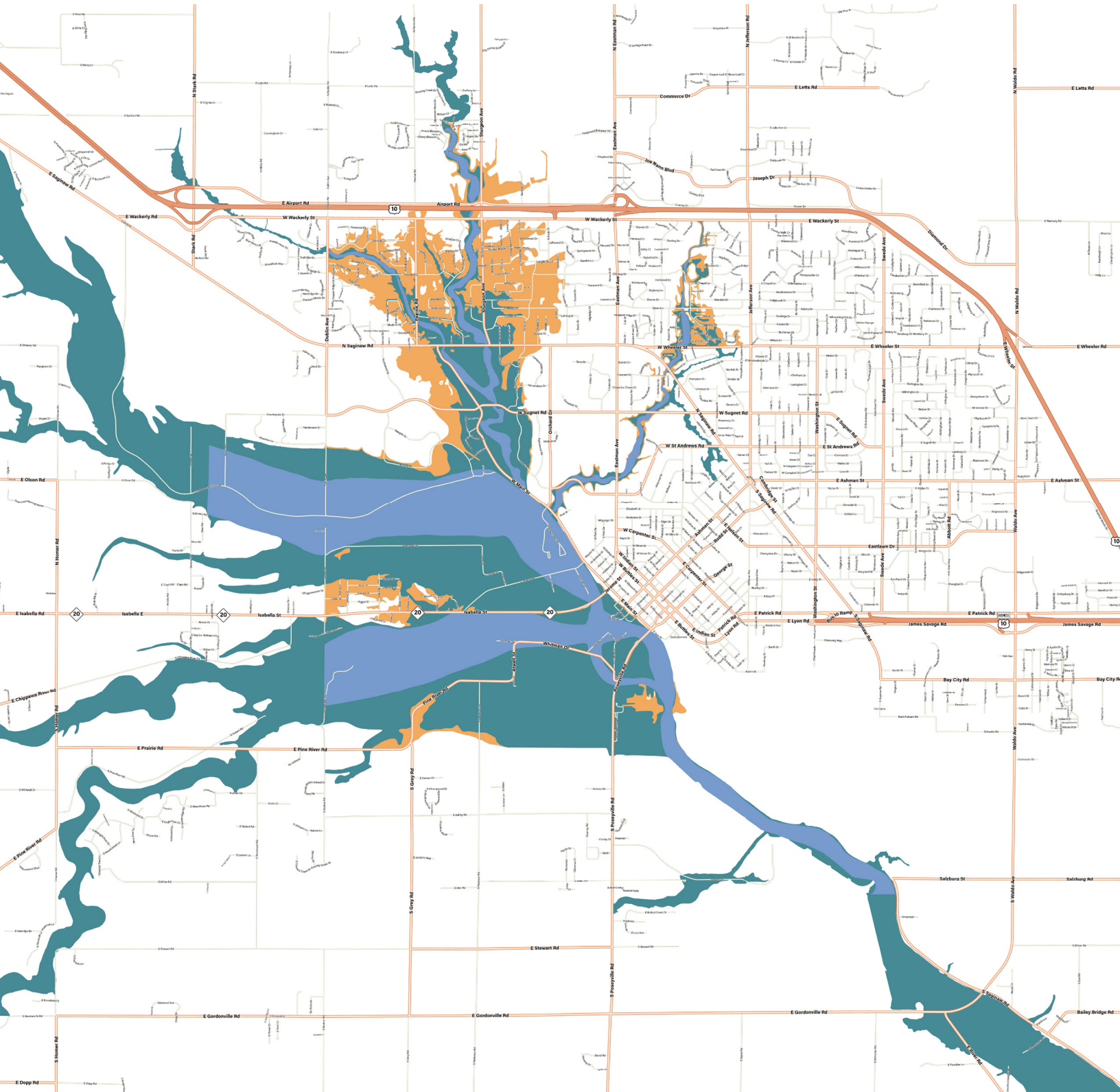
## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

**Remediation and redevelopment of these sites can provide increased economic opportunity and improve the natural environment.**



# Floodplain

 Regulatory Floodway  1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard  0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard



Disclaimer: Locations are for illustrative purposes only

# DEMOGRAPH

Kindness  
MATTERS.





# PHICS

**Midland: An inclusive community. Together. Forward. Bold. An exceptional place where everyone thrives.** This mission statement is the basis for many of the decisions we make as a community, but it has not and will never become reality without thoughtful planning and intentional action.

A critical step in establishing goals for the future of Midland – and measuring the successes and failures of those goals along the way – is to take a deep dive into the characteristics of the most important component of our community: Our people. Who are they? How do they live, work, and play? Is living here getting easier, harder, or staying the same for them?

In this section, you'll find lots of data. If you like numbers, charts, graphs, and analysis, this is your chapter! We'll explore what Midland has looked like in the past, who we are now, how we're changing, and where we (may) be heading in the future. After that, we'll discuss the challenges ahead that this data may be predicting, why it's important to us now, and how we've used it in the creation of Midland City Modern.

Photos taken by: Doreen Keptner (top left), Lucrecia Di Bussolo (top right), Dale Erdman (bottom right), and Grant Murschel (bottom left)

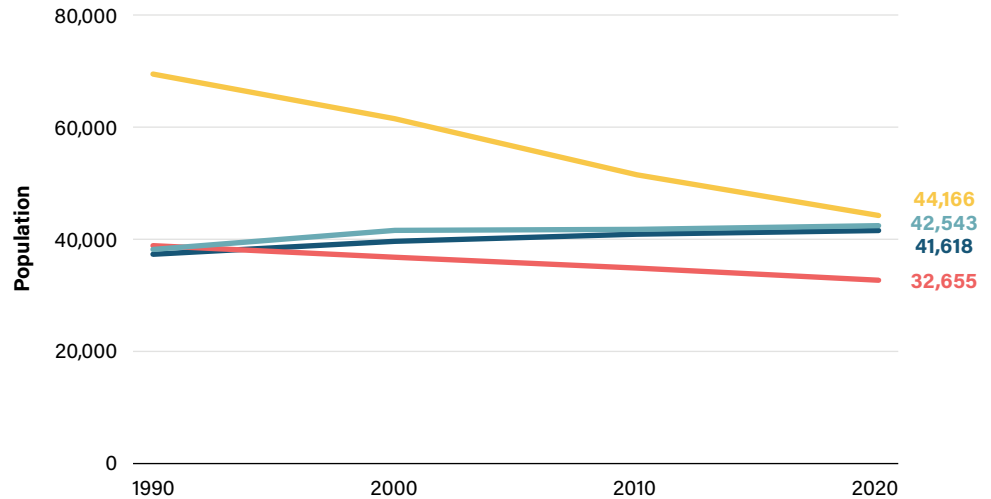


# Population

After a period of intense population growth in the mid-20th century, Midland’s population has been largely stable and has only grown slightly since 1980. Since 1980, Midland has grown by approximately 5,500 people (12.9%). That growth has slowed even more over time, with only 858 people (2%) added to the population between 2000 and 2020. Midland’s 2020 population was 42,543.

**Population trends by community**  
(1990-2020)

- Midland
- Saginaw (city)
- Saginaw (twp)
- Bay City



**Growth Rate %**  
(1990-2020)

Midland	11.8%
Saginaw (twp)	10.4%
Michigan	8.4%
Bay City	-16.1%
Saginaw (city)	-36.5%

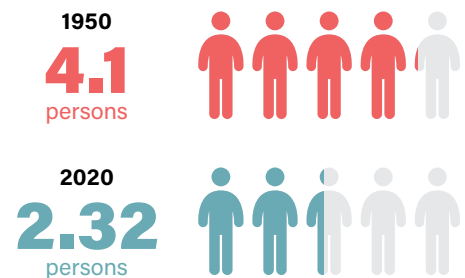
Midland’s slow but steady growth is consistent with the State of Michigan’s population growth since 1990. However, this growth stands in contrast to the shrinking populations in nearby Bay City and Saginaw, who have lost 16.1% (Bay City) and 36.5% (Saginaw) of their populations since 1990. Midland’s population has grown by 11.8% during the same period.

# Households

In 1950, the average household size in Midland was 4.1 persons; however, in 2020 that number decreased to 2.32 persons per household. This reflects, in part, the growth in single person households and a decrease in birth rates over the past several decades.

Despite slow population growth, the demographics of our community have continued to change. Household size has continued to slowly shrink while the overall number of households has increased at a slightly higher rate than the rate of population growth.

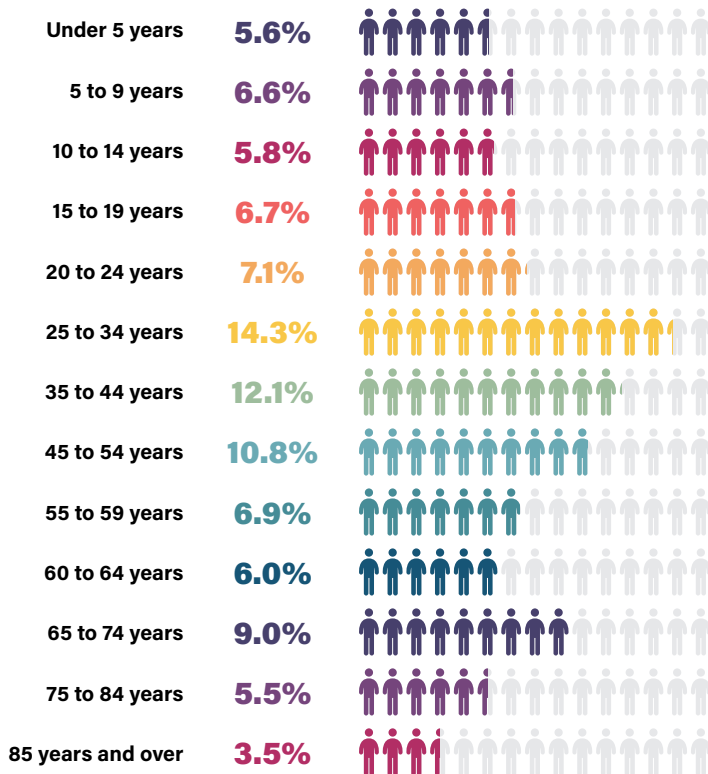
**Household Sizes**



# Age

The average Midlander is older today than they were at the last mid-century (and no, not just because they've had more birthdays). In 1960, the average Midlander was 23.9 years old; today, the average Midlander is 37.9 years old. Interestingly, though, the average age of our residents has been trending younger since 2010, when the average Midlander was 38.9 years old.

## Age breakdown



## How We Compare

Midland's population is similar in composition to that of both the state and nation in terms of age. The percent of Midlanders under 5 (5.6%), under 18 (21.7%), and over 65 (18.0%) is consistent with the same figures as the state and national population. Midland is also similar with regional peers on these statistics, although the City of Saginaw has more people under 18 and over 65 compared to Midland, Bay City, or Saginaw Township.

## Population by age

2020

	Persons under 5 years	Persons under 18 years	Persons over 65 years
Midland	5.6%	21.7%	18.0%
Bay City	4.8%	21.6%	14.6%
Saginaw (city)	8.0%	26.8%	13.8%
Saginaw (twp)	5.1%	18.0%	22.6%
Michigan	5.5%	21.4%	18.1%
United States	5.7%	22.2%	16.8%

### TREND TAKEAWAY:

## Aging Population on the Uptick

The number of Midlanders over 65 years of age **increased by 23%** between 2010 and 2020 to 7,658 people. In the same timeframe, the number of households with a member 65 years or older grew by 17 percent; however, this growth rate is significantly lower than comparable rates at the statewide (32% in both 65+ population and number of households) and national (38% in 65+ population and 37% in number of household) levels.

# Diversity

Midland is relatively less diverse than surrounding communities. Nearly 90% of our population identifies as White, with 87.4% identifying as White not Hispanic or Latino.

## Race by percent of population, 2020

	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
Midland	89.6%	2.5%	0.4%	3.1%	3.0%	4.2%	87.4%

## How We Compare

When compared to our neighbors, Midland's lack of diversity is distinguishable – particularly when compared to cities such as Saginaw, where the highest percentage of the population (45%) identifies as Black or African American alone. Midland's percentage of population in every non-White racial or ethnic category is lower than those seen in our state's and nation's populations.

## Race by percent of population, 2020

	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
Midland	89.6%	2.5%	0.4%	3.1%	3.0%	4.2%	87.4%
Bay City	89.6%	2.7%	0.2%	0.5%	6.2%	10.1%	83.6%
Saginaw (city)	42.2%	45.0%	0.3%	0.2%	9.4%	15.7%	35.9%
Saginaw (twp)	77.1%	13.6%	0.5%	4.0%	3.3%	8.4%	72.0%
Michigan	79.0%	14.1%	0.7%	3.4%	2.7%	5.6%	74.2%
United States	75.8%	13.6%	1.3%	6.1%	2.9%	18.9%	59.3%

## Foreign-born persons

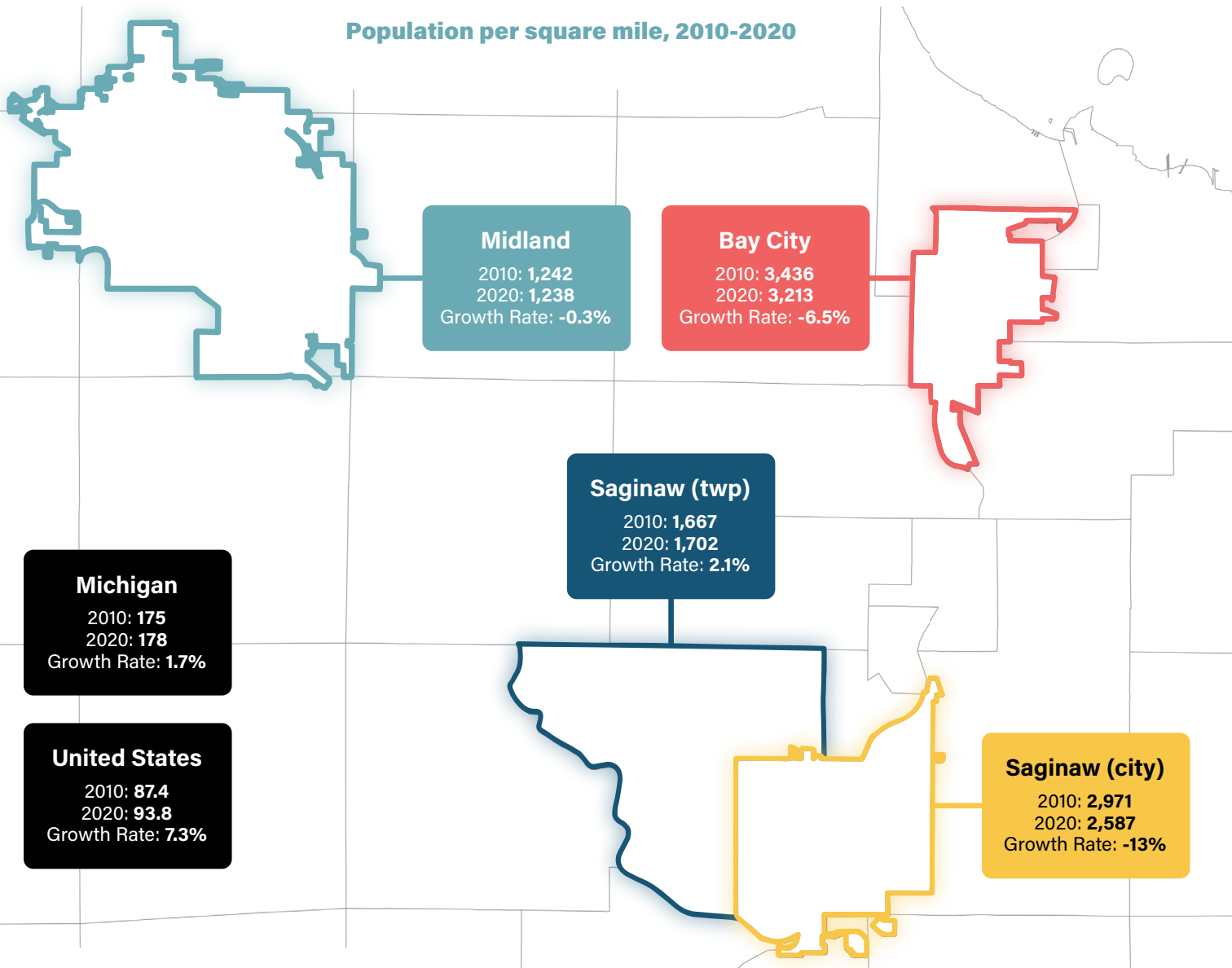
Midland	5.8%
Bay City	1.0%
Saginaw (city)	0.8%
Saginaw (twp)	6.1%
Michigan	6.9%
United States	13.6%

The percentage of foreign-born residents (5.8%), while below both state and national levels, is considerably higher in Midland than in our neighboring communities. This may be attributable to the presence of a global company's headquarters and operations sites for other global organizations within our community.

# Population Density

With relatively slow population growth, shrinking household size, and a unique annexation policy, it is unsurprising that Midland's overall population density has shrunk even as the population has increased. Overall population density fell by 0.3% between 2010 and 2020, meaning that the land area of the city is growing at a slightly faster pace than the overall population.

## Population per square mile, 2010-2020



## How We Compare

Midland has significantly less population density than Bay City, Saginaw, or Saginaw Township, which is related in part to the abundant open space contained within Midland's city limits and the extensive footprint occupied by our industrial areas. (These areas generally contain no countable population, but are still factored into citywide density calculations.) Of our regional peers, Saginaw Township's 2020 population density is closest to the population density in Midland: 1,702 people reside per square mile in Saginaw Township, a 37% more dense population than Midland's 1,238.

# Education

Midland remains an affluent and educated community: Over 95% of residents 25 or older have a high school diploma, nearly 45% have a bachelor's degree, and only 10.5% of residents are in poverty. These numbers have remained consistent or improved slightly since 2010.



**95.7%**

**High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+**  
2017-2021



**44.8%**

**Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+**  
2017-2021

## How We Compare

**Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+**  
2017-2021

Midland	44.8%
Bay City	16.2%
Saginaw (city)	12.6%
Saginaw (twp)	33.7%
Michigan	30.6%
United States	33.7%

**High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+**  
2017-2021

Midland	95.7%
Bay City	87.4%
Saginaw (city)	83.0%
Saginaw (twp)	93.2%
Michigan	91.6%
United States	88.9%

## TREND TAKEAWAY:

### School enrollments trend downward

K-12 school enrollment in Midland has fallen between 2010 and 2021 by 10%, with 745 fewer students enrolled. This is slightly less than the rate of decline in school enrollment across the state during the same period (13%). However, it stands in contrast to national school enrollment figures, which show no change during this period.

**-10%**

**School Enrollment**  
2010 - 2021



# Income

Median income for Midland households was \$67,558 in 2021, compared to \$48,647 in 2010. This is a 13% increase when adjusted for inflation.

## How We Compare

### Median household income in 2021 dollars, 2017-2021

Midland	\$67,558
Bay City	\$41,959
Saginaw (city)	\$32,241
Saginaw (twp)	\$58,619
Michigan	\$63,202
United States	\$69,021

### Persons in poverty, percent 2021

Midland	10.5%
Bay City	23.6%
Saginaw (city)	35.6%
Saginaw (twp)	11.2%
Michigan	13.1%
United States	11.6%

While median household incomes in Midland remained below the national median of \$69,021 in 2021, they continue to exceed those of the State of Michigan (\$63,202) and all regional peers. With regard to the percent of persons in poverty and educational attainment, the City of Midland outperforms regional peers, the state, and the nation.



## TREND TAKEAWAY:

### Poverty rates fall

Midland's poverty rate declined from 13.3 percent in 2010 to 10.5% in 2021. Both state and national poverty rates also decreased during the same period, but by approximately half the rate of Midland's decline. Midland's poverty rate remains below that of the state and nation.

# 4.3%

**Unemployment Rate**

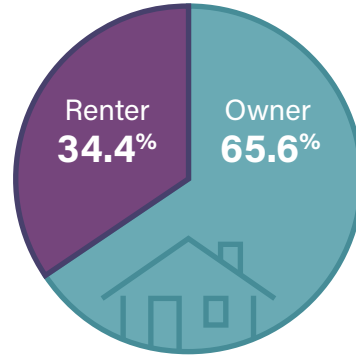
June 2023

# Housing & Spending

The majority (65.6%) of housing units in the City of Midland are owner-occupied, with the remaining one-third of units occupied by renters.

## Household type (owner/renter)

2017-2021



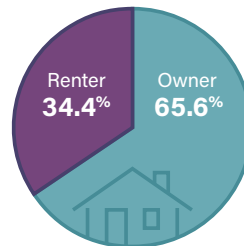
## How We Compare

Midland's owner-occupied housing unit rate is comparable to most regional peers and national rates, but slightly below the statewide rate (72.2%).

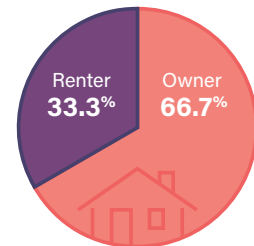
## Owner-occupied housing unit rate

2017-2021

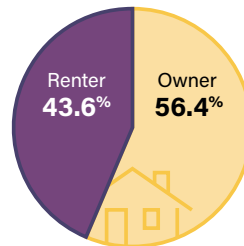
Midland



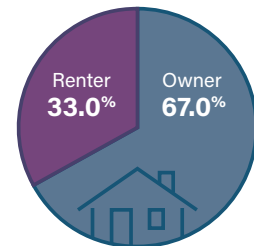
Bay City



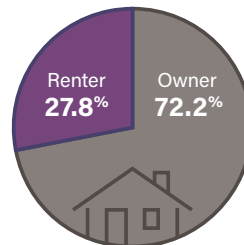
Saginaw (city)



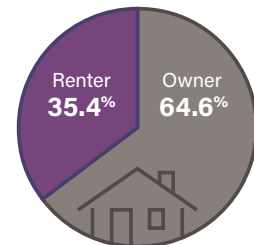
Saginaw (twp)



Michigan



United States

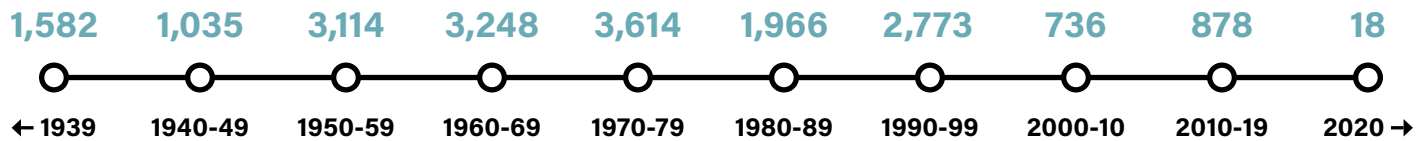


## Housing Stock

Over 91% of housing units in Midland were constructed prior to 2000 and almost half were constructed prior to 1970. The 1,614 housing units constructed in the two decades from 2000 - 2020 was a lower level of construction activity than the number of units constructed in every 10-year period between 1950 and 1999.

### Number of housing units by year built

American Community Survey, 2021 estimates



## Housing Prices

While relatively expensive for the region, the median value of owner-occupied housing in Midland (\$161,300) is still low compared to the State of Michigan (\$172,100) and the nation (\$244,900).

### Median gross rent

2017-2021

Midland	\$870
Bay City	\$651
Saginaw (city)	\$793
Saginaw (twp)	\$882
Michigan	\$946
United States	\$1,163

### Median value of owner-occupied housing units

2017-2021

Midland	\$161,300
Bay City	\$71,300
Saginaw (city)	\$43,900
Saginaw (twp)	\$141,500
Michigan	\$172,100
United States	\$244,900

Median gross rents in Midland (\$870), meanwhile, are comparable with regional peers but lower than state (\$946) and national (\$1,163) levels.

### TREND TAKEAWAY:

## Rent prices on the rise

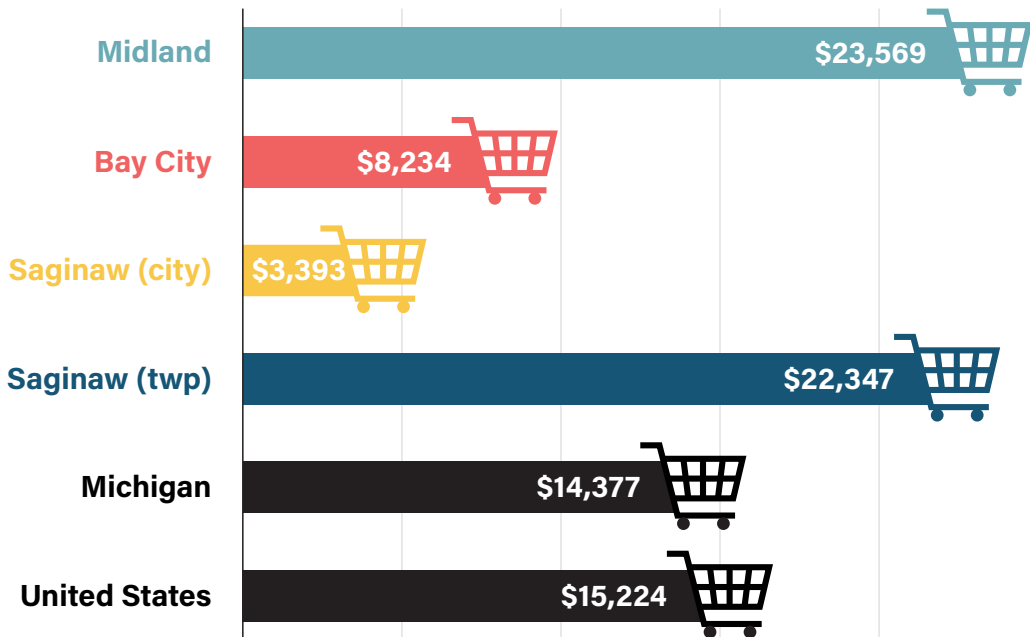
Median rents in Midland also **grew between 2010 and 2021 at a faster rate (40%) than the state (31%) or national (38%) rate**. Median rent in Midland rose approximately 10% faster than inflation during the same period. However, the median rent of \$870 remains below state and national median rent.

# Retail Spending

The retail environment in Midland is very strong compared to regional peers, the state, and the nation. Midland's \$23,569 in retail sales per capita vastly exceeds Bay City (\$8,234) and Saginaw (\$3,393) and slightly exceeds Saginaw Township (\$22,347).

## How We Compare

Retail sales per capita, dollars



### TREND TAKEAWAY:

## Keeping growth in the (city) limits

Midland's significantly higher retail sales dollars than our surrounding communities are likely the result of strong local spending by relatively affluent (by regional standards) city residents as well as spending by residents from throughout the region in retail stores located in the city limits. These numbers also reflect a distinction between the growth policies of the City of Midland and its regional peer cities, with nearly all new retail growth in the Midland area occurring within the city limits throughout its history in contrast to retail growth in the periphery of Bay City (Bangor Township) and Saginaw (Saginaw Township and Kochville Township).

# Transportation

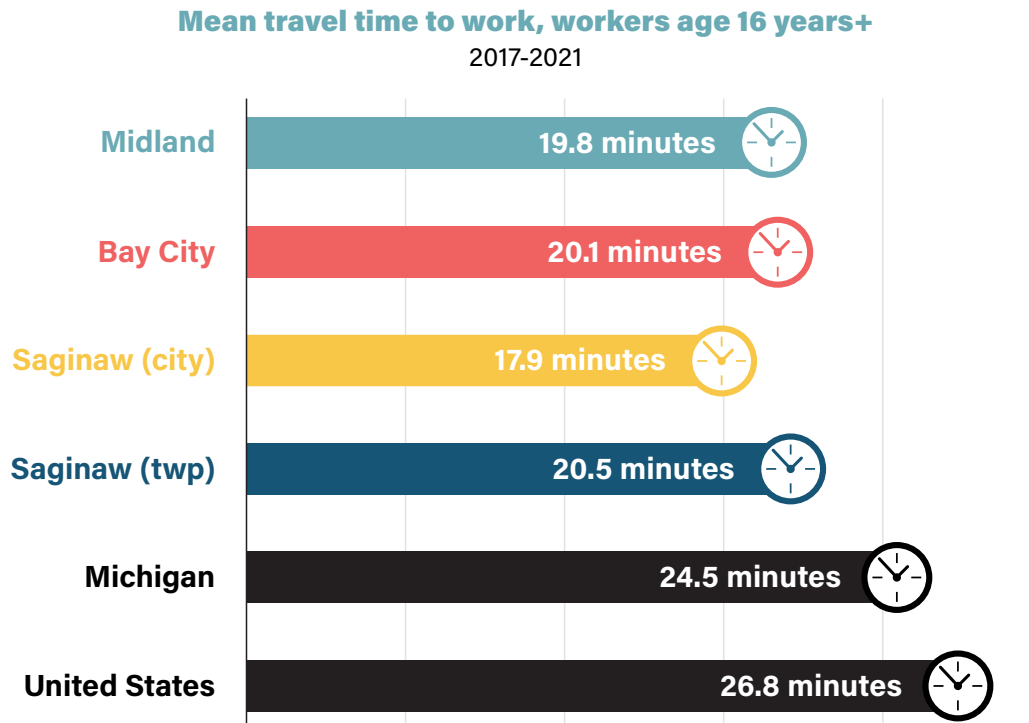


Midland remains a fairly convenient community in which to travel and one with abundant employment opportunities. While similar to travel times regionally, Midland’s mean travel time to work of 19.8 minutes is 24% lower than the state average and 35% lower than the national average.

## 19.8 minutes

Mean travel time to work, workers age 16 years+  
2017-2021

### How We Compare



### Means of Transportation to Work

Most Midlanders commute to work alone in a car, truck, or van (81.3%), with 8.4% working from home without a commute and 7% percent carpooling to work. Additionally, only 2.8% of Midlanders travel to work by walking, biking, or using public transit.

**88.3%**

Car, Truck, or Van

**8.4%**

Work from home (no commute)

**1.9%**

Walked

**0.7%**

Public Transportation

**0.6%**

Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means

**0.2%**

Bicycle

### TREND TAKEAWAY:

More households go car-free

The number of households with no vehicles in Midland has **grown by 9% from 2010 - 2021 to 1,477 households**. Carless households also increased at the state and national level, but at slower rates than Midland.

## Looking Into the Future

Ok, so we can't predict the future with absolute certainty; however, we do know that change is an inevitable part of life. Therefore, it's important that we plan accordingly for any scenarios that could impact our community while writing this plan. Some changes will likely influence Midland's future whether we take action or stand still; however, Midlanders have taken ownership in their own futures by sharing their input and helping to create the goals and objectives that will be implemented through Midland City Modern.

Earlier in this section, we shared current statistics about the Midland community and compared these metrics against regional, state, and national data. These pieces of information were compiled from a variety of resources that can help us analyze current data trends and make educated decisions about how we approach future challenges. Everywhere we looked, one challenge (or opportunity!) for the next 25-30 years kept coming up...

---

**One of the most critical issues facing both Midland – and Michigan as a whole – is population.**

### An Overview

Population projections for the State of Michigan vary, but generally come to the same conclusion: Michigan will experience a very low rate of population growth through the mid-21st century; in fact, among the lowest of all states. In addition to low growth, trends indicate that Michigan's population age will continue to get older, with significant reductions in the working age population and the effects of "brain drain" as young, native Michiganders leave for other states. Net migration (number of people coming in vs. number of people moving out) is generally expected to be slightly positive statewide, with the primary source of population gain in this context coming from international immigrants' relocating to Michigan.



Population change is expected to be unevenly distributed throughout the state, with future growth anticipated in the same areas already experiencing relatively high levels of growth today (metro Grand Rapids, metro Detroit, Traverse City) and population decline in many rural areas of the state. Most projections indicate that **Midland County will experience some population growth during this period**; however, it will be at lower levels than seen in other areas. In contrast, Bay and Saginaw counties are expected to experience population decline higher than the projected growth in Midland County, resulting in an overall decline in regional population.

Let's take a deeper dive into what some experts have to say about the future of Michigan's population.



### Citizens Research Council of Michigan

*"State's Population Aging, but Not Growing"*

In May 2023, non-profit public affairs research organization Citizens Research Council of Michigan (CRC) released *Michigan's Path to a Prosperous Future: Population and Demographic Challenges and Opportunities*. This report discusses the stagnation of Michigan's population over the past several decades and the anticipated continuation of that trend, along with further aging of the Michigan population, as we move toward 2050. The report identifies potential ideas to increase Michigan's population – including **retaining more young people, capturing more domestic and international migration, and investing in quality of life** – but is clear that the current trajectory is one of continued, but very slow, population growth.



### Michigan Department of Transportation

*"Midland County Grows, Other Counties Shrink"*

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) produces population forecasts to assist with transportation planning activities throughout the state. MDOT's outlook for Midland County is slightly more positive than other reports mentioned in this section mentioned, projecting our county's population to grow by approximately 15% by 2045 to 96,226 people. Like the LMISI projections, however, MDOT anticipates a less-positive outlook for the region: Bay County is expected to see a 5% population decline and Saginaw County an almost 3% decline by 2045.



### Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

*"Statewide Population Decline, but Potential Growth for Midland"*

The State of Michigan Department of Technology, Budget, and Management's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (LMISI) produces population projections for state government. Its most recent forecast, released in 2019, echoes the findings of the CRC report. LMISI estimates that Michigan's population will grow at a low rate, generally less than 0.5%, through 2040; after 2040, however, the growth rate becomes slightly negative. Why? LMISI expects that the **number of deaths is expected to eclipse the number of births in Michigan** from 2030 - 2045 as the baby boom generation shrinks and the birth rate remains flat. Net migration into Michigan is shown to trend generally positive statewide, but will decrease from 2035 to 2045.

LMISI projects that **Midland County's population will increase by 3.2% from 2020 - 2030, while most other counties in the region experience population losses**. Saginaw County is projected to lose 5.3% of its population during this period; in Bay County, a 4.6% percent decline is anticipated. While Midland County is expected to increase in population, our tri-county area within the Great Lakes Bay Region is expected to decrease – a trend that will likely have a direct impact on our community.



### University of Michigan

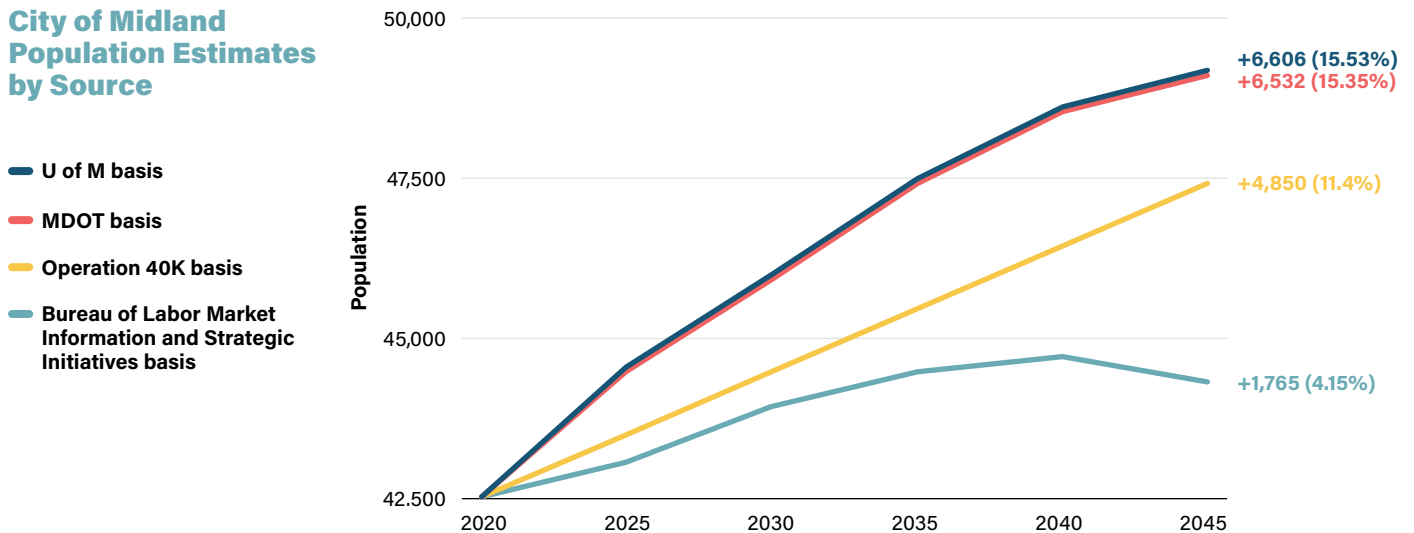
*"Limited Growth, Aging Population"*

In 2022, the University of Michigan Department of Economics released *The Economic and Demographic Outlook for Michigan Through 2050*. As with the other studies we've already mentioned, UM expects population growth to be limited statewide with areas – including Midland County – experiencing very modest growth. The report notes that **Michigan's percentage of the population that is 65 years and older may exceed the percentage of that same age group in Florida's population by the mid-2030s**.

## So... What Does This Mean?

Together, these reports indicate that the City of Midland should expect continued, slow population growth through 2045 of 4 - 15%, which is approximately 1,700 to 6,600 additional Midlanders. (You can find their projections side-by-side in the graph below.) While these numbers indicate relatively modest growth, these new residents will require housing, jobs, places to shop and dine, and other services and amenities that create a rich quality of life. Ensuring that current and new residents have equitable access to these items is critical to the future success of our community.

### City of Midland Population Estimates by Source



## So... What can WE do?

Slow population growth, an aging population, and stagnant or declining population in the region can and likely will create a multitude of challenges for Midland. A smaller pool of potential employees will limit opportunities for business growth and inhibit new businesses from starting up. A lack of growth will fail to produce and support the variety of cultural, dining, and retail options Midlanders want. Flat or declining populations of young people will create ongoing challenges for our educational organizations. However, there is opportunity in these challenges.

Photo taken by Lucrecia Di Bussolo



**Retain young talent, attract new residents.**

Keeping more young Midlanders living in the community into adulthood, while also attracting new residents from other areas of Michigan and the United States, can help Midland meet or even exceed population projections. **Midland offers an outstanding quality of life for residents today that can be leveraged to attract new residents.**



2

See future challenges as an opportunity.

It is possible that factors like climate change will affect where individuals choose to live in the future, both in America and abroad. Michigan – and Midland by extension – **is well-positioned to meet this challenge with abundant fresh water and relatively moderate temperatures.**

3

Support state and regional efforts to increase population.

Efforts are underway at regional and state levels to increase population growth in Michigan. In August 2023, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the creation of a bipartisan population council, the Growing Michigan Together Council, that will be tasked with **creating a plan to help attract young people to Michigan and slow the emigration of native Michiganders to other states.**

A complementary effort led by the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance is underway in the Great Lakes Bay Region called Operation 40K, which aims to grow a four-county region (Bay, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw counties) by 40,000 residents by the year 2040. This effort focuses on creating innovative jobs, developing our workforce through educational initiatives, and placemaking within the core urban areas of the region – including Midland. The group's goal of 40,000 new residents represents an approximate 10% growth for the region by 2040.

4

Build new housing at the levels required to support current and future needs.

**Additional housing units will be required to serve expected growth** as well as address the removal of units due to age or obsolescence. As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, just 1,614 units of housing were built in the city from 2000 - 2020 – an average of 81 per year – and the vast majority of existing housing units in Midland were constructed prior to 2000. Furthermore, the rate of new unit construction has slowed over the past five years, with an average of 64 new units per year and seven unit demolitions per year. That means our housing stock has grown by about 57 new units citywide per year between 2018 and 2022. At this time, Midland's housing stock is increasing too slowly to supply appropriate housing for the anticipated growth in population forecast by nearly every source provided in this section.

5

Leverage our infrastructure to build greater prosperity.

The City can continue to utilize various tools to direct the location, nature, and type of investments made in the built environment during the next 25 - 30 years. The Urban3 Value Per Acre Analysis conducted in 2022 showed the revenue-generating benefits the City can realize from encouraging compact, dense forms of development. **The City can leverage existing infrastructure capacity** to add taxable value to the community and create space for the housing, employment, and service needs required by both current and potential future residents without adding additional, long-term liabilities. Additional tax revenues can support the many high-quality City services and amenities that contribute to the excellent quality of life Midlanders expect while also preserving the open spaces on the periphery of the City that provide aesthetic value and support our natural systems.



# LOCAL

**A strong, diversified economy in Midland and the surrounding Great Lakes Bay Region is critical to our community's current and future successes.** Luckily for us, Midland has several advantages – the global headquarters of a Fortune 100 company, a nationally recognized public school system, a regional hospital affiliated with the University of Michigan, and beautiful natural features – that make it a community of choice in the region, state, and beyond. In addition to these advantages, we are fortunate to be home to a generous philanthropic community and highly involved partner organizations that help make conceptual ideas –

even the seemingly impossible ones – into reality. These partners include several local foundations, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies. Together, each organization's work aids in creating a community where our residents can prosper – and they all play a role in executing the goals contained in this Master Plan.

Midland City Modern is written with a desired economic future for the community in mind. This is no accident: A strong economic base ensures not only residents' individual prosperity, but also that community services remain readily available and



# ECONOMY

accessible to all who need them. In Midland, our residents recognize the importance of supporting current commercial and industrial economic growth, while also challenging us to grow the existing tax base and to mindfully preserve the area's natural features. Transportation and communication are no longer major hurdles in today's global marketplace; instead, companies now realize that the keys to success are held by a talented and educated workforce, creative innovation, and the ability to adapt at a rapid pace. As an aggressive and enthusiastic supporter of industrial and manufacturing growth, Midland is uniquely

positioned to attract and retain businesses like these to support the local economy.

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**Through thoughtful consideration of the current landscape and curious exploration of the future, Midland can continue to chart a unique course and develop an economic environment that provides abundant opportunities for residents and local businesses.**

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Employment Sector Profile

As of 2021, the number of people in the City of Midland's civilian labor population (16+ years old) was estimated to be 19,448.

Midland continues to be a hub of chemical and technology manufacturing. The merger of the Dow Chemical Company with DuPont in 2017 was followed by the spin-off of three new firms in 2019. Dow, with a focus in material sciences, remains the largest industrial employer in Midland as both its global headquarters and a significant manufacturing footprint are located in the city limits. While not headquartered in Midland, DuPont – with a focus on specialty products – and Corteva Agriscience – with a focus on agriculture – both have sizable professional

and manufacturing employment presences here as well.

Dow Michigan Operations Industrial Park (I-Park) is home to a significant portion of Midland's manufacturing economy, including operations for Dow, DuPont, Corteva, Cabot Corporation, International Flavors and Fragrances, Hemlock Semiconductor, and Trinseo. The I-Park spans 2,600 acres on the south side of the city and was dedicated in 2018, aided in part by the City's vacation of S. Saginaw Road through the campus. Location in the I-Park helps tenants increase their global competitiveness by leveraging best-in-class manufacturing practices and safety and environmental standards while also offering integrated utilities, logistics infrastructure, emergency and security services, and waste management that they would otherwise have to provide on their own. Recent I-Park investments have included a new visitor center, roadway improvements, and facility improvements: A notable example is a \$242 million expansion by Corteva to support its insect management product lines, which was completed in 2022.

### City of Midland Employment by Industry NAICS Code, 2021

NAICS Code	Industry	Employment (2021)
<b>61,62</b>	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	4,896
<b>31-33</b>	Manufacturing	3,953
<b>71, 72</b>	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	2,279
<b>54, 55, 56</b>	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,965
<b>44-45</b>	Retail trade	1,798
<b>52, 53</b>	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	1,092
<b>81</b>	Other services, except public administration	896
<b>22, 48-49</b>	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	769
<b>92</b>	Public administration	634
<b>23</b>	Construction	598
<b>42</b>	Wholesale trade	298
<b>51</b>	Information	243
<b>11, 21</b>	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	27

**Companies located  
in the Dow I-Park:**



## FUTURE TRENDS

### Future Employment Trends – Manufacturing

The increasing focus on advanced manufacturing automation – called “Industry 4.0” by economic experts – and the convergence of digital and physical technologies, such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence, will cause a shift in the nature of manufacturing work toward more data-influenced, knowledge-based decision-making. Many former manufacturing and chemical processing jobs will become more technology-focused, utilizing software, robotics, and automation to achieve results that were formerly done by manual processes. This offers many benefits, including lower exposure risks for employees and higher levels of process efficiency.

### Future Employment Trends – Healthcare

In the last decade, healthcare, education, and social services has emerged as the largest employment sector of the local economy, driven in large part by growth at the community’s largest employer, MyMichigan Health. Midland serves as the headquarters for the non-profit health system, which serves 25 Michigan counties through eight medical centers and two affiliates. The system provides services through a variety of settings, including urgent care centers, home healthcare, and telehealth services, as well as medical offices in more than 80 specialties and subspecialties. MyMichigan Health is aligned in a clinical and business partnership with Michigan Medicine, the academic medical center of the University of Michigan.

Located on 225 acres of wooded campus, MyMichigan Medical Center Midland is a 324-bed facility that offers a broad range of primary care and specialty care services, including 24-hour emergency care and a Level II Trauma Center. Several major investments have been made on the MyMichigan campus in recent years, including a \$115 million expansion and renovation in 2011; a \$220 million heart and vascular center in 2020; and a \$61.5 million,

115,000 square-foot cancer services center that is anticipated to open in 2024.

Healthcare employment is likely to continue to increase within the city. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that overall employment in healthcare occupations will grow by 13% between 2021 and 2031, a rate much faster than average for all other occupations.

## Future Economic Trends and Cluster Development

Industry clusters are strategic groupings of businesses and industries that locate within close proximity of each other, or near a strategic resource, to gain mutual economic benefit. Companies within a cluster may include suppliers, service providers, and supporting educational facilities. Clusters are typically export-oriented and have a regional concentration of related businesses that is higher than the national average – such as chemicals or plastics in Midland’s case.

A “cluster analysis” of these interconnected companies can be useful when describing Midland’s current economic status as well as when planning for future growth. Additionally, understanding the supply chains of cluster industries and the specific companies within the cluster can increase the effectiveness of international business attraction efforts by identifying gaps in the chain and providing more targeted ideas for encouraging new investment. The Midland Business Alliance, the local economic development organization for Midland County, works

closely with cluster organizations in our community to understand their business challenges and access relevant resources that help them operate and grow more efficiently. Not only does this help our current core economic base, but it can also entice new companies to Midland that complement existing industry/cluster strengths or fill supply chain gaps.

A Targeted Industry Analysis of current market conditions in Midland conducted by the Midland Business Alliance indicates strong economic health and the greatest likelihood of growth and expansion in the following target industries:

- **Chemical Production, Research & Development**
  - Plastics
  - Building Material & Composites
  - AgriSciences
- **Healthcare Services, Support & Technology**
  - TeleHealth & Health IT
  - Medical Tourism and Promotion
  - Research & Affiliations
- **Food Production – Technologies, Processing & Distribution**
  - Crop & Farming Sustainability
  - Food Processing & Distribution
  - Food Safety
  - All-Season Greenhouses
- **Technology, Innovation, & Entrepreneurship**
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Work/Live Anywhere
  - Cloud Computing & Data



James T. and Elsa U. Pardee Cancer Wellness Center



MyMichigan Medical Center



## OTHER TRENDS & OPPORTUNITIES

### Economic Development Zone

Midland's industrial complex consists of nearly 5,000 acres of existing operations for chemical manufacturing, power generation, research and development, and manufacturing support services. As mentioned earlier in this section, this area has recently seen significant investments to drive innovation, collaboration, efficiency, and growth. Development of the complex began in 2012 through the creation of a residential property purchase program that acquired properties within the city limits that were already surrounded by industry and landlocked by major transportation corridors (US-10 Business Route, M-20, and Saginaw Road). After acquisition, properties are marketed for redevelopment by the Midland Business Alliance and sold to developers for industrial uses. As other commercial and industrial properties in the zone become available, they are strategically evaluated for acquisition by the Midland Business Alliance to continue strengthening and growing the complex.

Midland Business Alliance works closely with other economic development partners, including the State of Michigan, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and regional and local entities to create a business environment that promotes new business creation, technology commercialization, attraction of international technology companies, and establishing new relationships with educational partners.

### Downtown Development

Midland's vibrant downtown district is the heart of the community. Downtown Midland boasts a minor league baseball stadium, the Tridge, an internationally-recognized Santa House, and two major hotels with great shopping, dining, and entertainment features. Downtown is also a center of civic activities, including Midland City Hall, the Midland County Administrative Building, and the historic Midland County Courthouse.

Established in 1987, the Downtown Development Authority helps drive reinvestment in this district, which stretches from Jerome Street to Dow Diamond and Indian Street to the Tittabawassee River. Tax increment financing, a shopping area assessment, and a 2 mill tax levy help to fund a variety of support activities for the district, including events, marketing and promotions,

business incubation, façade improvements, streetscape maintenance, and horticulture and beautification.

Since 2014, the Downtown district has successfully attracted \$93.5 million in new investment. Improvements include: The \$25 million The H Residence development on the corner of Ashman and Main; a new \$13 million Midland campus for Delta College on E. Ellsworth; an \$8 million Fairfield Inn and Suites on Buttles; and several residential and commercial projects in the district. Several new business openings – including Brinstar Beercade, PrimSage, Duo Design, and Bookmarks – have added additional energy and variety for downtown visitors.

The reconstruction of the Main Street streetscape in 2017 transformed both the aesthetic appearance and operational functionality of Downtown Midland, particularly just as the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the way we shop, dine, and interact with one another. The \$8.5 million project was funded entirely by private investment dollars and included new lighting, traffic control (replacing traffic signals with all-way stops), landscaping, public amenities, expanded sidewalks and gathering spaces, and a curbless

“festival” street design that makes Main Street easier to access for pedestrians and more event-friendly for activities. Each June to October since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, Main Street closes to vehicle traffic from Ashman to Rodd streets to create a car-free Pedestrian Plaza for outdoor dining, games, music, and activities. Changes to Michigan liquor laws that same year permitted the creation of The Commons Refreshment Area, a multi-block boundary in which takeout alcoholic beverages from participating downtown establishments can be purchased and consumed. Over 68,000 beverages were sold in The Commons during its first two years of operation, resulting in a surge in support for downtown businesses.

The DDA operates under a long-range strategic plan that guides its investments and activities. The current plan was adopted in 2015 and lays out the district's goals of Economic Sustainability, Social Interaction, and Infrastructure. At the time of this plan's writing, the DDA is also updating its strategic plan to both recognize significant achievement of the previous plan's goals and address the district's next direction as we move into the future. The Downtown Midland Strategic Plan is expected to be completed in 2024.

Photo taken by Lars Larsen





Several exciting opportunities lie ahead to build on Downtown Midland’s current momentum. In 2023, a transformative \$15 million Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan was adopted. This plan outlines potential improvements on public land along the northern banks of the Tittabawassee River in Downtown Midland, an area that currently plays host to a variety of community events – including Parks and Recreation’s Tunes by the Tridge and the annual Midland Area River Days Festival – and is home to the unofficial symbol of all things Midland: The Tridge. Plan elements include the replacement of existing public assets; relocation of parking areas; realignment of the Pere-Marquette Rail Trail; and development of new amenities that were prioritized during the plan’s development. The planning process also helped solidify plans to relocate the Midland Area Farmers Market from its longtime location near the Tridge to a location outside the floodway. The potential of a new farmers market location presents an additional opportunity to add vitality to the Downtown district.

The 2016 Streetscape Plan has been partially realized through the reconstruction of Main Street, but the plan also includes redevelopment of several

additional downtown streets. These projects would transform outdated public streetscaping elements including lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping, and improve the function and aesthetics of the side streets in line with the new Main Street streetscape. Streets included in Phase 2 of the plan are identified on the Future Transportation Map.

Many private development opportunities remain within the Downtown area. Priority redevelopment or renovation opportunities include:

- **Larkin Block building (southwest corner of E. Main and McDonald streets)**
- **Former Midland Daily News site (south half of block bounded by Ann, Ashman, and McDonald streets)**
- **Strosacker Building (northwest corner of W. Main and Gordon streets)**
- **Oddfellows Building (northeast corner of E. Main and Rodd streets)**
- **Land parcels along and between Buttles and Indian Streets**





## Center City Development

Center City is the city's second-oldest business district. This area began to develop in the 1930s around Ashman Circle and the Saginaw Road corridor as the US-10 bypass of Downtown Midland was routed through the area. Since then, the area has grown into the home of both local businesses and national chains.

The Center City Authority was created in 2008 to oversee the creation and implementation of district development plans. A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan was adopted in 2012, providing a source for the district to fund signage, painting, landscaping, and façade improvements that hope to help attract new private investment . Unfortunately, due to the loss of

significant tax generators in the district since the TIF plan was created, Center City does not currently have funds available from this source to be reinvested into the district.

In 2019, the City adopted the Center City Redevelopment Plan as a strategic initiative to attract new investment; increase safety for pedestrians, motorists, and non-motorized users; and improve aesthetics. Phase I of the plan brought eight-foot pedestrian pathways, new aesthetic lighting, and updated landscaping elements along S. Saginaw Road from Dartmouth to Patrick and was completed in 2023. Much like the Main Street reconstruction in Downtown Midland, this project was funded primarily by private investment dollars. Phase 2 of the S. Saginaw Road Streetscape Renovation will include similar work on Saginaw Road from Dartmouth



to Ashman Circle, with design and engineering expected to occur in 2024.

In 2022, the City adopted additional zoning tools to facilitate redevelopment in this area: The Center City Overlay District. This overlay district provides both increased zoning flexibility and enhanced standards to enable walkable, mixed-use development throughout the district that promotes the vision outlined in the 2019 Redevelopment Plan. Unique standards were created for areas north and south of Dartmouth to reflect differences in both current context and anticipated future development patterns in those areas of Center City.

Recent private investments in Center City include the \$1.5 million offices of Ten16 Recovery Network in

2018, the \$1.7 million Full Circle Vision Care building in 2020, and a \$650,000 Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen in 2023.

## New Commercial Development

Midland residents continue to indicate a desire for more shopping and dining options, local businesses, and national chains – and plenty of opportunities to bring them into Midland exist throughout the community. The new location of national retailer Costco in 2021 has brought focused attention to the Bay City Road corridor in southeast Midland. Reinvestment in the Midland Mall is underway as Hobby Lobby moves in to occupy a previously vacant anchor tenant space. As we continue to market Midland to these retail sectors, the City can play a proactive role in recruiting new businesses by providing necessary utility infrastructure, well-maintained transportation corridors, and a streamlined planning review process.

## Neighborhood Commercial

Small-scale commercial opportunities exist in and adjacent to many Midland neighborhoods, providing residents with convenient access to goods and services on foot or by bike or car. The City can support neighborhood commercial opportunities and, in turn, vibrant and thriving neighborhoods by adequately maintaining its current infrastructure, improving accessibility where needed, and encouraging these types of uses to develop. The City must provide well-maintained sidewalks and streetlights to provide safe, clean, and maneuverable access to places residents need to go. Zoning regulations can allow for and encourage new appropriate neighborhood commercial uses, including convenience stores and necessary services for residential neighborhoods. Throughout this process, impact on the existing neighborhood should be considered: Adequate buffering and landscaping can be used to ensure the commercial property fits into the residential setting and protects the value and character of adjacent homes.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

## Economic Gardening – Local Business Assistance

Traditionally (and especially in Michigan), economic developers focus on expanding local companies and attracting new ones by making the current business climate more favorable. This is usually done by helping to secure incentives and assisting with the local and state permitting process. The Midland Business Alliance (MBA), the economic development organization serving Midland County, still recognizes this approach as a vital component of the assistance it provides to local



**MIDLAND  
BUSINESS  
ALLIANCE**

businesses; however, this traditional model does not address the potential to assist companies in developing their growth entrepreneurially.

To address these unique opportunities, the Midland Business Alliance also maintains an “economic gardening” program that helps companies develop and commercialize new products, new customers, and new markets and address challenges to their growth. The program uses knowledge of business development and technology commercialization, both from its own staff and partner agencies

throughout the region. This assistance can take many forms, including establishing connections with local marketing intelligence providers and other resources, vetting new ideas for commercialization, providing networking opportunities, and reviewing business plans to identify resources to drive growth.

The differences and complementary strengths of each approach are summarized in the following chart:

Traditional Retention and Expansion	Industry
Annual visits to many companies of all sizes	Focus on second-stage companies with the desire, capability, and opportunity for growth
Focus on reducing costs	Assist with developing core strategy
Tools are primarily tax abatements and regulatory assistance	Tools are sophisticated business support services
Work with companies after they have identified their strategies	Meet frequently to build strategy proactively
Connect companies with local resources	Connect companies with local resources



Photo taken by Midland Business Alliance

## Business Attraction

Business attraction activities in our community are spearheaded by the Midland Business Alliance and other partners. These activities are primarily focused on companies in the Target Industries identified in the Future Economic Trends section above. Current initiatives include:

- **Utilizing two primary sources for qualified leads or targets: The State of Michigan's RFI process and Gazelle.ai (as part of a regional initiative)**
- **Receiving qualified leads from existing client companies (i.e. a Midland-area company works with a supplier that is expanding or has interest in relocating)**
- **Developing connections with site consultants (relationships built with site consultants that work in targeted industries)**

Most business site selectors will base initial location decisions on factors such as transportation availability, available facilities, workforce demographics, environmental considerations, and community support. To remain competitive in a global marketplace, Midland must continue to work diligently in improving and maintaining the following areas.

## Housing

In 2018, a Housing Analysis was prepared that examined issues in the Midland County housing market. Among the findings, the analysis showed the following:

- **For the median household, Midland County is an affordable place to live**
- **Existing housing inventory is not well-aligned to current needs**
- **Midland County has overproduced owner units relative to the growth of owner households**
- **Midland County has underproduced rental units relative to the growth in rental households**
- **These market dynamics create issues for individual households and the community**

A detailed look at the inventory of owner and rental units within the community found an undersupply of 9,435 units for owner households at 110% area median income (AMI) and up and an oversupply of 9,349 units for owner households below 110% AMI, which is generally consistent with the overall finding that Midland County is a relatively affordable place to live for the median household. In the rental market, there was an undersupply of 2,066 units for households up to 30% AMI and 3,228 units for households 75% AMI and up and an oversupply of 5,294 units for households 30 – 75% AMI.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This indicates that low- and moderate-income households are often competing for rental units with higher income households and often paying higher rental rates as a result.

The analysis further shows that low-income rental households are often cost burdened because the supply of affordable housing in our community is insufficient; however, the production of new affordable housing developments typically only occurs with local, state, and/or federal subsidy. This situation puts neighborhoods at risk of deterioration: An oversupply of average-priced single family units and an undersupply of rental units creates an incentive for owners or developers to turn single-family homes into rental units but does not provide sufficient rental income to support ongoing investment. Many Midland neighborhoods, particularly those located in the city's central and east side areas, have been identified as being at particular risk for deterioration for these reasons.

A lot has changed since the analysis was conducted in 2018. Inventories of available owner housing are at historic lows since the onset of the COVID-19



pandemic. An aging population needs different housing types, including smaller units and accessible units. The average size of homes relative to household size has grown, placing further strains on the market. In addition, housing affordability has declined, with reduced inventory, higher interest rates, and new construction costs all contributing to existing issues.

The City must pursue solutions to these challenges to ensure the ongoing success of the community. Currently, the City lacks the opportunity to attract higher-income households who must either settle for cheaper housing options with fewer amenities or opt to purchase housing in other jurisdictions such as Larkin Township, Freeland, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, lower-income households are pinched, settling for housing at rental rates that are not financially sustainable, living in other communities, or going unhoused.

In recent years, we have made some strides in addressing these issues. About 500 housing units are in the pipeline to be developed in the city, including over 400 multifamily units at a variety of price points. This still falls well short, however, of the inventory numbers required to address market needs and support any level of population growth within the city. A variety of tools, including tax incentives and zoning flexibility, will be needed to adequately meet the housing needs of Midland moving forward.

Housing is also an issue for employers. An employer roundtable event conducted in association with Midland City Modern found broad agreement among employers that housing (along with childcare) availability was the top challenge facing their companies in attracting and retaining talent. The Midland Business Alliance has also identified housing as a critical need to support the economic health of the city.

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**In 2023, the MBA launched a multi-year initiative known as Housing Forward to address the reality that a shortage of housing dramatically limits business expansion and attraction and, in turn, limits economic growth.**





## Childcare

Another critical economic challenge facing Midland is the availability of quality, affordable childcare. A regional coalition of economic development entities, employers, parents, and providers was formed in 2023 for the State of Michigan's Region 5 Prosperity Region (Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw counties) to identify ways to address this issue. That coalition has found that significant competition exists for childcare slots within the region at all age levels: Infant/Toddler (under 3), Preschool (3-5), and School Aged (6-11). Several areas of the region, including Midland, are childcare deserts with more than 3 children competing for each available slot. The city's two primary zip code areas (48640 and 48642) are both childcare deserts for Infants/Toddlers and School Aged; additionally, the 48642 zip code is a desert for Preschool care while the 48640 zip code has competition for available slots below the desert threshold.

The State of Michigan has responded to statewide childcare availability challenges through modifications to childcare licensing regulations and incentives to spur the creation of new or expanded childcare facilities. The City can support those efforts by similarly reviewing zoning standards which apply to childcare facilities to remove unnecessary obstacles for new and expanded facilities and supporting regional efforts to expand and improve access to childcare.

## Placemaking

Midland has been proactive in recognizing the value that a sense of place can cultivate among its residents and businesses; in fact, emphasizing the city's unique attributes and amenities can support economic development. The community developed a placemaking strategy in 2006 and has since undertaken many projects that aim to create an outstanding, distinctive sense of place that is vibrant for residents and attractive to visitors. Recent planning initiatives have focused on the

**Photos taken by:**  
**Stacey Patrick** (right)  
**Dana Hill** (top left)  
**Jonathan VanDerhoof** (bottom left)

importance of connecting people and places through programs and projects big and small.

Placemaking ties directly to economic development: In today's economy, talent attraction and retention represents a major opportunity to create prosperity and support the local economy. Currently, many employers report challenges attracting or retaining talent and, in today's modern work environment where many employees can choose to live anywhere, quality of place is increasingly important to being seen as a community of choice. Midland must continue to leverage investments that create great places throughout the community for residents to gather, connect, recreate, learn, and play. The City should continue to work with partners in the community to develop initiatives that bring people together and connect people with places. This will not only create an outstanding quality of life for residents, but also strengthen the local economy.

### Utility Infrastructure

Reliable water, sewer, gas and electric power, waste removal, wireless telecommunication coverage, and high speed internet service are all utilities companies need to be successful. In addition to the City of Midland, companies providing utility services on the local level include Consumers Energy and Midland Cogeneration Venture (MCV), the largest natural gas-fired combined electrical energy and

steam energy generation plant in the United States. With a generating capacity up to 1,633 MW, MCV, is a major supplier of electrical energy to customers in Michigan and the Midwest and a supplier of bulk process steam energy to nearby chemical production companies. Midland Cogeneration Venture was purchased for \$894 million in 2022 by Capital Power Corporation and Manulife Investment Management.

The City of Midland should continue to plan proactively for the future by identifying, budgeting for, and implementing infrastructure improvement projects that will support existing and future needs of the community. The City's six-year Capital Improvement Plan is an essential tool for this purpose. Other studies of infrastructure needs, conducted in alignment with the future development patterns envisioned by this plan, may be necessary over time to further inform that process.

### Education

An educated workforce is necessary for the survival of any industry. According to the 2017-2021 American Community Survey US Census, 44.8% of Midland's population had obtained a bachelor's degree compared with 33.7% of the U.S. population overall. The high percentage of college-educated adults in Midland can most likely be attributed to the nature of our major employment sectors discussed in this section.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Northwood University**, a private four-year college, is located in Midland. Several other post-secondary institutions – **Delta College**, **Davenport University**, **Central Michigan University**, and **Saginaw Valley State University** – have a campus in Midland or within 30 minutes of the city.





## Transportation

Access to major highways is imperative to the success of nearly any type of business. Midland is conveniently situated adjacent to US-10, which runs east and west and connects with Interstate 75 about 15 miles east of the city and with US-127 about 23 miles west of the city. Each of these highways provide an easy corridor connection with the larger cities of Detroit and Lansing, respectively. In addition to the interstate and federal highway, Midland has several state highways that provide access to other cities in the region including Mount Pleasant, Bay City, and Saginaw.

In addition to the highway system, Midland has access to an international airport, seaport, rail transport and bus service.

## Incentives and Enhancement Programs

The City of Midland offers tax incentives to manufacturers and other businesses that meet relevant criteria. The primary incentive tool used by the City is the tax abatement authorized under Michigan Public Act 198 of 1974, which grants a reduction of approximately 50% of real and personal property tax to a manufacturing business for a set period of time. Eligibility for P.A. 198 assistance and the use of these incentives is governed by the City's tax abatement policy enacted in 2011.

## Transportation in Midland

### Airport

Located just eight miles southeast of Midland in Freeland, MBS International Airport is the seventh busiest airport for commercial passenger boardings in Michigan. MBS is a tri-government facility operated by the City of Midland, the City of Saginaw, and Bay County. The City of Midland also owns and operates the Jack Barstow Municipal Airport, a general aviation airport located north of US-10 and west of Eastman Avenue.

### Bus service

The City of Midland operates Dial-a-Ride, which provides on-demand curb-to-curb service within the city limits. County Connection provides similar curb-to-curb bus service to all of Midland County. Bay Metro Dial-A-Ride provides some regional service to and from Bay City. Greyhound passenger service is available in Saginaw and Bay City (approximately 20 – 30 minutes from Midland).

### Rail transport

CSX, Inc. and Central Michigan Railroad both provide service to the community. Amtrak passenger rail service is available in Flint (approximately one hour south of Midland).

### International seaport

A US Customs and Border Protection Port of Entry is located 18 miles east of Midland and is connected by pipelines, rail, and limited-access highways.



# THE PROCESS

The process of creating Midland City Modern began in February 2020. At this time, it was identified that a new Master Plan was desired and a very general scope of work was set out. We decided on the brand “Midland City Modern” for a few reasons: It embraces Midland’s nickname as The City of Modern Explorers (and our desire to live and plan with that mindset!) and acknowledges that this plan will establish the community’s vision for the mid-21st century.

The year 2020 provided a vivid illustration of the need for strong community planning as Midland faced not one, but **two** generation-defining events in just a two-month timeframe: The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March and, in May, historic regional flooding due to heavy rains and resulting dam failures on the Tittabawassee River. These events helped to demonstrate the strengths of the community, particularly the generosity of its residents,



businesses, and philanthropic organizations, and had significant impacts on the lives of Midlanders that are still felt today.

Understandably, these events also shaped the master planning process in ways that we could not have predicted when Midland City Modern began. In addition to delaying progress in the early months of the project, the impacts of these events shaped the strategies we used to get input from the Midland community and, unquestionably, also influenced the priorities identified by the community input we received.

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**Midland City Modern is the result of thousands of hours of individual and collaborative input over the planning process by Midlanders of all ages, incomes, and abilities.**

## PHASE 1 IMAGINE IT

# 2,553

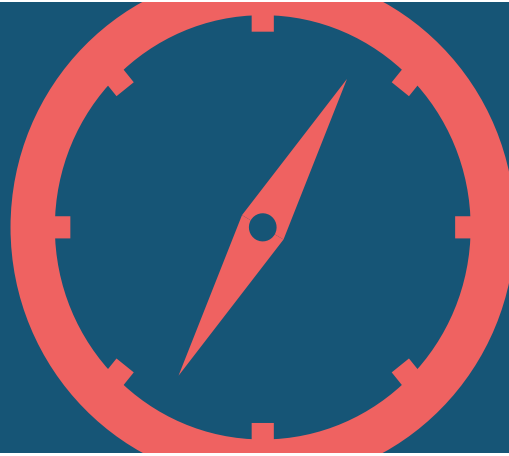
Responses collected from the community from six surveys, conducted in 2021

The first phase of outreach for Midland City Modern, 'Imagine It,' asked Midlanders to provide feedback on general priorities that would shape the goals, objectives, and strategies of the plan. Significant public engagement during Phase 1 included 23 stakeholder meetings, six public input surveys, five Midland Moves mobile events, and development of a Midland City Modern website and newsletter. The six surveys in this phase, conducted in 2021, collected 2,553 total responses from the community.

Three focus areas for the plan were identified during Phase 1: Neighborhoods and Livability, Transportation and Mobility, and Sustainability and Resiliency. These focus areas provided a framework used by both the Planning Commission and the public to take a deeper look at priorities for the next 30+ years and beyond.

## PHASE 2

# PLAN IT



# 791

Survey responses received  
- and one special listening  
session with our 2023  
Citizens Academy class!

Following Phase 1, a work plan was developed that outlined ways to involve the most important beneficiary of this process – **you!** – in the Master Plan. In the ‘Plan It’ phase, we very deliberately built on successful elements found in Phase 1 and hit the streets to take the planning process out into the community to engage Midlanders where they live, work, play, and serve.

The key objectives for the Plan It phase were:

- **Ensure ongoing, authentic collaboration with the community and key stakeholders through a visible, accessible, and engaging process;**
- **Build on current and past planning initiatives and public engagement;**
- **Leverage outside resources to provide greater depth and breadth to the plan; and**
- **Create momentum for plan implementation.**

During the ‘Plan It’ phase, we strongly encouraged ongoing engagement with the community to test and refine the main elements of the plan. In general, engagement shifted from discussing broad themes at the beginning to identifying specific strategies for plan implementation at the end of the process. A variety of processes were utilized in the development of Midland City Modern, including the following.

## Pop-Up Planning Studios

These events, held monthly beginning in October 2022, took the planning process on the road to reach a broad cross-section of the community in a casual, conversational setting. Pop-Up Planning Studios were held in the following locations:

- October** WhichCraft Taproom and Three Bridges Distillery
- November** Coffee Chaos
- December** Midland Civic Arena
- January** Senior Services at Trailside Activity & Dining Center
- February** Riverside Place and Washington Woods
- March** Live Oak Coffeehouse
- April** Northwood University
- May** Virtual Pop Up Studio via the City of Midland social media channels
- June** Tunes by the Tridge
- July** Plymouth Park



# Surveys

In February 2023, two online surveys were posted on the City's E-CityHall online public engagement platform to let the public weigh in on plan priorities based upon preliminary goals identified by the Planning Commission. The surveys offered "choose your own adventure"-style options: One survey was short and more generic, while the other provided an opportunity to dive deeply into the provided topics. The short survey received 322 responses and the long survey received 379 responses.

In May 2023, the public was invited to review and comment on the draft Future Land Use and Future Transportation Maps. The maps were hosted through an online mapping tool, allowing respondents to digitize their comments and place them directly on the area(s) where they wanted to provide input. Through this process, 90 interactive and illustrated comments were received about potential items to modify or include! Results of the surveys can be seen at: [www.cityofmidlandmi.gov/futuremaps](http://www.cityofmidlandmi.gov/futuremaps).



## Pizza & Planning

If there are two things Midlanders love, it's public input and pizza! In collaboration with the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, the Planning Department created an exciting take on the traditional "meeting in a box" format: Pizza and Planning. This take-home activity provided participants with an opportunity to weigh in on plan priorities by collaboratively building a pizza with available toppings that represented draft plan objectives. In total, 34 groups and 185 Midlanders provided feedback through a Pizza and Planning kit in 2023.

Photos taken by Erin Vogel (left) and Dondra Underwood (right)

## Open Houses

Two open house events were held during the planning process to provide a more traditional, structured input opportunity. These events provided attendees with the chance to share their opinions on the priority of the goals in the plan, to review and mark up the plan's maps, and to interact with City staff and other members of the community to discuss needs for the future. These events were held on February 2, 2023 at the Greater Midland Community Center and April 27, 2023 at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. The April open house was conducted in coordination with National Library Week and included an interactive "Build a City" activity that continued beyond the open house date.



## Youth Engagement

Midland City Modern represents a vision for the future, so who better to ask than the Midlanders who will be living and implementing it? To ensure that the voices of young Midlanders were represented in this process, the City partnered with Midland Public Schools, St. Brigid Catholic School, and Northwood University to engage students in visioning activities at their respective school campuses.

Nearly 200 students at H.H. Dow and Midland High Schools, Northeast and Jefferson Middle Schools, and St. Brigid Catholic School participated in in-person focus groups in late 2022 and early 2023. In each session, students reflected on their experiences as young people in Midland today, their intentions to remain in Midland as adults, and what an ideal future version of Midland would look like to them.

Don't worry, though – we didn't forget about our smallest Midland residents! City staff coordinated with Midland Public Schools, primarily at the second grade level, to include Midland City Modern as a component of its elementary schools' curriculums. Students were able to learn about their roles as citizens in a democratic society and provide input that will help shape their futures in Midland. A short introductory video was produced by MCTV featuring

MPS elementary students encouraging their peers to provide their experiences as children today in Midland and their ideas for 2050.

Student leadership students at Jefferson Middle School decided to dive deeper into their Master Plan input by conducting a school-wide survey to capture students' opinions about and utilization of various community amenities. They successfully obtained feedback from approximately half the school population and presented that feedback to City staff in the Spring 2023 semester. The results? Jefferson's students are very active in our community and place a high priority on spaces that reflect their needs as well as spaces that they can access independently (i.e. without a parent or guardian).

Another focus group was held with Northwood University students, which collected unique perspectives from a diverse group of students – including international students choosing to pursue their education in Midland. The feedback they shared regarding the City's Master Plan offered creative solutions and valuable insights from the perspective of young adults planning their next phases of life and covered issues including transportation, housing, and community amenities.

# Outside Agencies & Subject Matter Experts

The Midland City Modern process included extensive coordination of internal and external experts on a variety of issues such as development, transportation, and programming. These voices helped to ensure that the plan addresses all community needs; is pragmatic and practical in its approach to the future; and represents a broad consensus for the future.

City staff from numerous departments provided essential feedback for this plan's creation. In addition, external organizations who provided extensive contributions to this process include, but are not limited to:

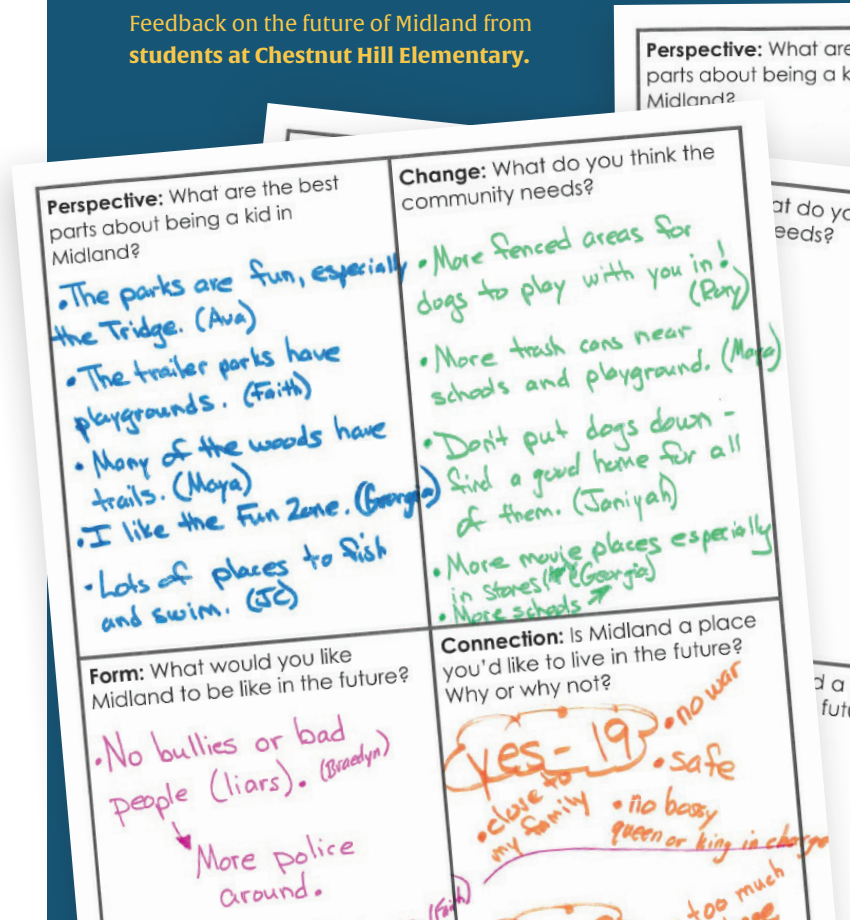


# Board Outreach

The City of Midland benefits greatly from the passionate efforts of volunteer board and commission members. These boards and commissions are generally focused on a specific element of the community and, as a result, have valuable perspectives they can bring to the planning process. The following boards were included in the completion of this plan and provided specific input in its development:

- Aviation Advisory Commission
- Beautification Advisory Committee
- Center City Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Housing Commission
- Library Board
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- West Main Street Historic District Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Feedback on the future of Midland from students at Chestnut Hill Elementary.



## Other Plans & Documents

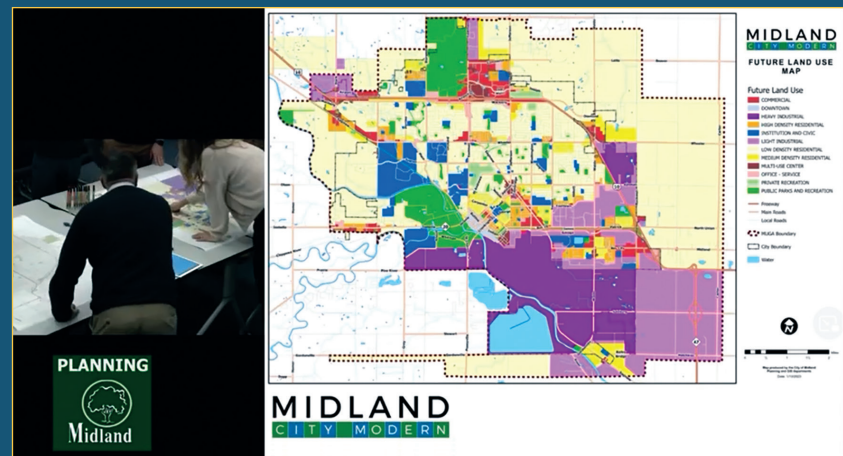
Midland City Modern was developed with careful consideration of other plans and documents that have or will shape land use, transportation, policy, and programming in Midland and adjacent communities during the implementation period. This review helped influence the plan's development and will reduce the likelihood of future conflicts as we and others implement the activities that will bring these plans to life. Other plans or documents utilized through this process include, but are not limited to:

- **Adjacent jurisdictions' Master Plans**
- **City of Midland Master Plans (1926 to present)**
- **City of Midland Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (2013)**
- **Downtown Midland Streetscape Plan (2016)**
- **Midland County Housing Analysis (2018)**
- **Center City Redevelopment Plan (2019)**
- **City of Midland Fair Housing Plan (2020)**
- **Downtown Development Authority Strategic Plan (2020 - 2022)**
- **East Michigan Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2021 - 2025)**
- **MATS Long Range Transportation Plan (2022)**
- **Urban3 Land Productivity Analysis (2022)**
- **Downtown Riverfront Master Plan (2023)**
- **Resilient Communities Program Community Resiliency Assessment and Key Strategy Memos (2023)**

## Special Meetings

The City Planning Commission held nine special meetings during Phase 2 of the process. These meetings were open to the public, televised by MCTV, and live streamed via the City's website. In this section we'll review these special meetings and the components of the plan that these meetings discussed.

In October, November, and December 2022, the Planning Commission developed and refined a draft list of priorities for the plan. Each special meeting focused on one of the three areas identified during Phase 1: Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation and Mobility, and Sustainability and Resiliency. These draft priorities became the basis that the public used when sharing their input and providing ideas for achieving their goals on the Midland City Modern surveys on E-CityHall.





## Survey says...

Midland City Modern reflects the issues and priorities identified by Midlanders like you. Check out the lists below to see what topics were selected as the highest priorities by participants in several of our public engagement opportunities. These goals and objectives were initially developed by the Planning Commission during its Midland City Modern special meetings and provided a foundation for the Implementation section of this plan.

### Greater Midland Community Center - Open House Priorities

- 1 Provide higher-quality infrastructure for walking and biking
- 2 Develop and implement a plan to keep rivers, creeks, and other waters clear of debris and invasive vegetation
- 3 Support the vitality of Downtown Midland by encouraging businesses to offer extended hours of operation, expanding the availability of The Commons, and providing public restrooms
- 4 Work with state and federal policy makers to protect the Great Lakes as the City's source of fresh drinking water
- 5 Address drug abuse issues through alternatives to jail/arrest, such as mental health intervention and education
- 6 Ensure the provision of high-speed internet and high-speed wireless connectivity
- 7 Green/sustainable city facilities/infrastructure
- 8 Consider a ban on single use plastics for larger corporations or all consumers
- 9 Provide farmers market opportunities in different parts of the city
- 10 Create opportunities for dense Live-Work-Play housing, co-working, and shared working spaces







### Short-Form Survey Priorities





- 1 Support the vitality of Downtown Midland by encouraging businesses to offer extended hours of operation, expanding the availability of The Commons, and providing public restrooms
- 2 Encourage the adaptation of existing buildings to new uses by amending the zoning ordinance
- 3 Provide walkable, neighborhood-oriented commercial opportunities throughout the city
- 4 Provide higher-quality infrastructure for walking and biking
- 5 Transform the Midland Mall area into a walkable, mixed use regional center
- 6 Account for the needs of aging residents when implementing programs and services
- 7 Address drug abuse issues through alternatives to jail/arrest, such as mental health intervention and education
- 8 Create more opportunities for formal and informal events in Midland, Center City, and other spaces beyond Downtown
- 9 Amend the City's stormwater regulations to reflect varied needs throughout the city
- 10 Review Midland Urban Growth Area policy and Urban Cooperation Act Agreements to ensure they continue to support the long-term vitality of the City of Midland and greater region

## Long-Form Survey Priorities

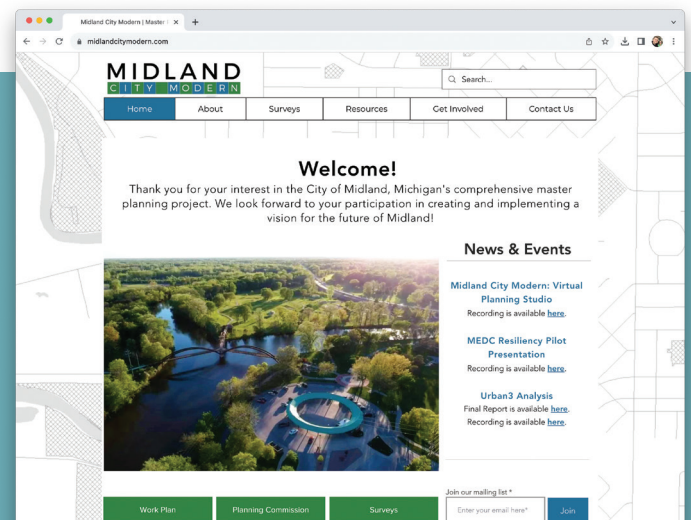
- 1 Continue to support and expand recycling and reuse opportunities, including more frequent curbside recycling collection
- 2 Increase standards related to construction and flood plains
- 3 Focus on quality-of-life initiatives to attract and retain talent
- 4 Work with state and federal policy makers to protect the Great Lakes as the City's source of fresh drinking water
- 5 Continue to clean and open up the riverfront
- 6 Repurpose/recycle existing/available lots and materials
- 7 Address drug abuse issues through alternatives to jail/arrest, such as mental health intervention and education
- 8 Ensure maintenance is the top budget priority for public infrastructure
- 9 Optimize signal timing to create predictable and efficient traffic flows throughout the city
- 10 Ensure the provision of high-speed internet and high-speed wireless connectivity

## Midland's Perfect Pizza

-  **Extra Cheese:** Provide higher-quality infrastructure for walking and biking
-  **Ranch:** Address drug abuse issues through alternatives to jail/arrest, such as mental health intervention and education
-  **Anchovies:** Provide walkable, neighborhood-oriented commercial opportunities throughout the city
-  **Red Pepper Flakes:** Support the vitality of Downtown Midland by encouraging businesses to offer extended hours of operation, expanding the availability of The Commons, and providing public restrooms

-  **Grilled Chicken:** Amend the City's stormwater regulations to reflect varied needs throughout the city
-  **Pineapple:** Be a leader in sustainable municipal operations
-  **Tomato:** Account for the needs of aging residents when implementing programs and services
-  **Feta Cheese:** Transform the Midland Mall area into a walkable, mixed use regional center

Photos taken by: **Scott Friend** (top left), **Jonathan VanDerhoof** (top right), **Kristen Inman** (middle left), **Aria Segura** (bottom left), and **Katie Lyon** (bottom right)



To dive deep into the complete results of these engagement surveys, visit:

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



