

# 2012 City of Owosso

# Master Plan



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## **City Council**

Mayor Benjamin Frederick  
Mayor Pro-Tem Cindy Popovitch  
Loreen Bailey  
Thomas Cook  
Michael Erfourth  
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Vice Chairman Francis Livingston  
Secretary Melvin Renfrow  
David Bandkau  
Thomas Kurtz  
Cindy Popovitch  
Brent Smith  
Thomas Taylor

## **City Attorney**

William Brown

## **Special Thanks**

Michigan State University

# ADOPTING RESOLUTION

Approved by the Planning Commission on: October 22, 2012

Adopted by the City Council on: November 19, 2012

WHEREAS, the City of Owosso Planning Commission has been engaged in the drafting of the city's first master plan since late 2010; and

WHEREAS, a plan was drafted that contains community profile data, a community vision, future land use data, implementation strategies, and other information as required by state law and encouraged by best practices; and

WHEREAS, the planning commission has finished such a draft and has submitted the document to the city council for review and distribution in accordance to the Planning Enabling Act (PEA); and

WHEREAS, the city council approved the distribution the plan in accordance with the PEA for a review period of no less than 63 days; and

WHEREAS, a subsequent public hearing was held by the planning commission to deliberate on any and all comments related to the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Owosso Planning Commission found that the plan, with the inclusion of changes resulting from public comments, is reflective of the community and satisfies the legal and best-practice needs of prudent planning; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing and subsequent deliberation was held by the city council on November 19, 2012.

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED THAT City of Owosso City Council, County of Shiawassee, State of Michigan, finding the 2012 City of Owosso Master Plan to meet all statutory obligations and practical intentions of a community plan, hereby approves said plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the same council hereby directs staff to supply an electronic copy of the master plan to all entities as required by Michigan law.

City Council

Planning Commission

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Benjamin Frederick  
Mayor

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William Wascher  
Chairperson

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Amy Kirkland  
Clerk

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Melvin Renfrow  
Secretary

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 INTENT OF THE MASTER PLAN
- 1.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS
- 1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT
- 1.3 THE MASTER PLAN AND ZONING

The City of Owosso master plan provides an exhaustive guide for future change within the city that conforms to the community's vision. The plan identifies the goals and objectives of the community, details the existing conditions in the city, discusses critical issues and areas, provides a future land use map, and includes strategies to implement the desired changes.

The master plan promotes a future land use map and developmental ideology that is consistent with the community's short and long-range goals. The master plan is intended to be used by the Owosso Planning Commission, city staff, and elected officials to guide decisions regarding public and private uses of land, zoning regulations, and the provision of public facilities and services. The plan is intended to guide change in the city over the next 10 to 20 years.

## 1.0 INTENT OF THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan document has been recognized and regulated by Michigan statute. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that a city planning commission "approve a master plan as a guide for development" within the city. In addition, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that the city's zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.

In addition to applicable law, the master plan is a document created by the city that is intended to:

- Unify the community behind a common vision and set of initiatives.
- Address the desires and needs of the residents, businesses, and property owners to preserve and enhance relevant qualities of the community and natural aesthetics.
- Provide a land use pattern which will result in a sustainable community with a diversified tax base and to support the desired facilities and services with reasonable tax rates.
- Present a future land use map that illustrates how the city desires future development, redevelopment, and other land based changes to occur.
- Ensure that the city remains a highly desirable community in which to live, work, and visit.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations for the type, intensity, and timing of development.
- Address the status and needs of infrastructure, recreational amenities, and public services.

### 1.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS

The master plan represents an on-going effort by the planning commission, city officials, staff, residents, community organizations, as well as the assistance of Michigan State University. Development of the plan involved collection and analysis of data on land use, the environment, transportation, infrastructure and socio-economic conditions.



In 1970, Owosso developed a zoning plan in collaboration with the other entities in the mid-county area (Caledonia Township, Owosso Township, and the City of Corunna). This document provided the historical backdrop for land use decisions and zoning in the city. However, this plan was not comprehensive in nature and is outdated.

In May of 2008, the City Council appointed the Blue Ribbon Committee for the purpose of “creating a cohesive forward vision for the City of Owosso.” This committee was not only created to set forth a vision but to offer “a distinct pathway to successfully spring over the bar.” In January of 2009, the committee delivered the Blue Ribbon Committee Report (BRCR) to the City Council. This document contains many categorized statements that express the vision and goals for the community.

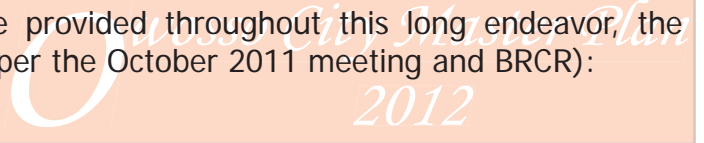
In 2010, the city committed to furthering the Blue Ribbon Committee Report (BRCR) by creating a comprehensive master plan for the city. This process officially started in September of 2010 when letters were sent to vested stakeholders notifying them that the city was beginning the master plan process. On October 11, 2011, the planning commission held an initial public workshop to engage the public concerning the plan. At this workshop, and with a corresponding press release, the public was educated on what the plan was and how it would be developed and used. The public was then asked for preliminary feedback concerning the plan’s contents and the community’s vision.

After the initial plan outreach and feedback session, the city retained the services of Michigan State University to explore the existing demographic, economic, and housing characteristics of the city. This information was essential to ensuring that the planning commission could properly identify community strengths, challenges, and pertinent issues. This process, performed in conjunction with the city staff and a focus group, was completed in May of 2011. The deliverable that was produced was a substantial report on the demographics of the city and relevant findings therein.

In May and June of 2011, city staff and the planning commission used the existing report from MSU, as well as the Blue Ribbon Committee Report to draft initial sections on existing conditions and community goals. Once completed, these sections were presented to the public for general input. Other documents used to influence this process include the Parks and Recreation Plan, The Shiawassee in Motion regional plan, and the OFANS Strategic Plan.



Numerous comments and suggestions were provided throughout this long endeavor, the themes and focus of which are listed below (per the October 2011 meeting and BRCC):



- Focus services and resources on rehabilitating older neighborhoods and the housing therein
- Create a sense of place and culture through the development of downtown, Westtown, commercial corridors, the river, and the entertainment/cultural amenities
- Encourage a healthy community through the provision of multi-use quality parks, trails, and sustainable development
- Encourage mixed uses and a variety of densities to complete urban neighborhoods
- Encourage regionalization for the purpose of reducing expenses and expanding services, especially recreation
- Control traffic and integrate non-motorized forms of transit on corridors
- Encourage preservation of natural features while integrating these features, most notably the river, into the urban lifestyle

The master plan process identified and examined a wide range of existing conditions including population, housing, natural resources, traffic, utilities, public services, and land use. The planning commission was then able to analyze and translate the implications of each into a series of goals and policies for the city. Action steps were then identified to implement change in the city. This effort resulted in the creation of the master plan, which included recommendations for future land use that will assist leaders in making substantive, thoughtful decisions concerning the long-term development of the community.

## 1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

This is Owosso's first master plan. Previously, the city made use of a zoning plan from 1970 but this is now outdated. There is also a parks and recreation plan, most recently updated in 2011, that supplements this document.

This plan reflects significant changes that the city has experienced in the preceding decades when the city was in a stronger growth mode. These include, but are not limited to:

- The continued expansion of adjacent urban regions that have impacted Owosso, such as population exodus from Flint and Lansing.
- The massive decrease in industrial production and employment in Owosso and across the mid-west since the 1970's.
- The development and expansion of the Baker College Campus.
- The continued preference towards the automobile as the primary form of transportation and as the primary customer for businesses, leading to a new pattern of business growth away from downtown and onto M-21.

Most recently, the city has experienced further changes that include:

- An unprecedented decrease in housing demand, fueled by a national housing crisis.
- A decrease in economic activity and population resulting from a restructuring of the automotive industry, that is potentially in a recovery mode.
- An increase in poverty and unemployment related to the economic activity decrease.
- The substantial aging of some neighborhoods and businesses in the city.
- The continuation of a downtown revitalization based upon a combination of programming, grants, and entrepreneurial activity.
- A restructuring of state finances that has resulted in less general revenue for the city and fewer abatement and grant options for redevelopment of historic and obsolete or contaminated properties.

This master plan will reflect these changes and position the City of Owosso for the type and amount of change that is anticipated during the next 10 to 20 years.

### 1.3 THE MASTER PLAN AND ZONING

The master plan provides general direction on the future development patterns, policies, and actions for community leaders to consider. While the master plan itself does not change the zoning ordinance or zoning of any property, some of the plan recommendations will be implemented through zoning text and map amendments.

Zoning is a regulatory mechanism for controlling the classification and regulation of land use. It has the force of law.

Essentially, the master plan provides the basis and justification for changes in the zoning text and map, as well as the general developmental trends and changes in the city. The zoning regulations, with the force of law, specify exactly how such changes and developments occur.

State law requires that a zoning ordinance be based on a plan and that the future land use map classifications correspond to classifications in the zoning map. Therefore, the master plan forms the basis upon which zoning decisions are made. With a valid master plan in place, zoning decisions consistent with the plan are presumed by the courts to be valid.

| Master Plan.   | Zoning Ordinance.  |
|--|--|
| Provides general policies, a guide.  | Provides specific regulations, the law.  |
| Describes what should happen in the future, recommends land use for the next 10 to 20 years. | Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions. |
| Adopted under the Municipal Planning Act, Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended.                | Adopted under the Zoning Enabling Act of 2006, as amended.                     |
| Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.                             | Deals only with development-related issues under city control.                 |
| Flexible to respond to changing conditions.  | Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change.                             |

Some of the other differences between the master plan and the zoning ordinance are listed in Table 1.

# CHAPTER TWO: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY STATEMENTS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PLANNING GOALS

2.2 PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2.3 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND AREAS

2.4 NON-RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND AREAS

2.5 PUBLIC AND NATURAL AREAS

2.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.7 SUMMARY

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Before a community can actively plan for its future, it must first set specific goals and objectives that define the boundaries of its needs and aspirations and, thus, establish a basis for future land use plan formulation. These goals and objectives must reflect the type of community desired and the kind of lifestyle its citizens wish to follow, given realistic economic and social constraints.

The following describes the goals (the ultimate purposes or intent of the plan), objectives (means of attaining community goals), and initiatives (specific statements which guide action) which are intended to guide local decision-makers in reviewing future land use proposals. These initiatives will be further focused into specific actions during the implementation phase.

## 2.1 PLANNING GOALS

### **Vision Statement**

The City of Owosso will provide superior municipal services and implement guiding principles that continually enhance quality of life. Owosso will be the proud home of numerous creative entrepreneurial leaders and will function as the heart of Shiawassee County. The community will be a vibrant, progressive, knowledge-based community, which promotes the highest quality of life.

### **Guiding Values of Owosso**

- Protection of health, safety, and general well being of the community
- Excellence in customer service from the city
- Fiscal responsibility and sustainability of the city
- Involvement, engagement, and participation of the community in public affairs
- Leadership as an active member of the greater Shiawassee community
- Equitable provision of public services for the city citizens
- Provision of community accessibility for citizens with varying needs
- Acceptance of the diversity of the community in its many forms
- Recognition, preservation, and enhancement of the community's physical and cultural heritage
- Promotion of "green" principles and environmental sustainability
- Balance of individual rights with the public interest

## Community Goals

- Create safe, tranquil, clean, and healthy neighborhoods with enduring character
- Increase and maintain the mobility of Owosso citizens through a comprehensive and well-planned transportation system
- Deliver urban development and management that strives to preserve and include our natural environment
- Support well planned, quality and sustainable growth
- Enhance and promote historical community resources
- Develop and maintain quality, cost effective community facilities, infrastructure and services which ensure our city is cohesive and well connected
- Pro-actively create new educational and economic opportunities for all citizens
- Create more youth activities and amenities that service the community and neighborhoods
- Make Owosso a center for culture and entertainment in Mid-Michigan
- Ensure Owosso provides a lifestyle that accommodates for the aging population
- Make Owosso a regional center of health care service excellence
- Be known as a community that delivers healthy and active lifestyles

## 2.2 PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Vision: The City of Owosso is recognized to provide high-quality public services without overburdening the tax payers of the city.

### Initiatives

- Continue to work toward regionalization of public services with adjacent municipalities and other levels of government
- Develop a flexible, knowledgeable workforce that can adapt quickly to change by providing training opportunities and a competitive work environment that encourages innovation and individual accountability
- Invest in capital infrastructure by prioritizing a maintenance approach in which fiscal prudence is encouraged
- Develop a comprehensive capital improvement program that integrates street repairs with the repairs of public underground utilities
- Encourage a regional approach to the provision of recreational amenities
- Increase the city's ability to engage residents through social media and advanced customer service initiatives
- Develop a transportation network that accommodates motorists, walkers, bikers, and those who need public transit
- Design corridors in which the uses have a direct relationship with the street as well as the adjacent uses
- Ensure that underground and above ground utilities are functional and sustainable in their funding

- Encourage green technologies and environmentally friendly practices in public buildings
- Seek recycling and energy conservation programs in the community
- Reduce the cost of government and stabilize property tax rates
- Support and encourage the school system to retain and expand its presence within the city.

## 2.3 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND AREAS

Vision: The City of Owosso will promote comprehensive neighborhood planning, development and management of sustainable housing, and neighborhood rehabilitation and preservation through housing programs that address the needs of various population groups including multi-purpose, affordable, senior, and upscale housing.

### Initiatives

- Continue to physically and symbolically integrate neighborhoods with surrounding areas by connecting streets, sidewalks, and greenways
- Devote adequate resources to the city's housing department to perform rental inspections, oversee housing loan and grant programs, and to provide general planning and assistance to homeowners
- Encourage a culture of reinvestment, beautification, and pride
- Discourage commercial "spot zones" and better manage commercial corridor development consisting of residential structures
- Consistently increase code enforcement to conform with existing standards over time
- Assist homeowners with conversions from multi-family and duplex structures to single family
- Assist homeowners with additions and conversions of older structures to suit modern needs and marketplace desires
- Invest in the city's ability to conduct more code enforcement within residential neighborhoods
- Investigate zoning setbacks to ensure that they generally are in line with historical development patterns so that expansion and redevelopment is not discouraged
- Develop a culture of customer service to assist homeowners with issues that relate to public services or infrastructure (such as historic flooding issues or encroachment issues)
- Continue to promote and engage in annual efforts to assist the community with routine maintenance and waste collection
- Assist neighborhood groups, formal or informal, that wish to investigate neighborhood watch groups, historic districts, or special assessments
- Pursue the Safe Routes to School program to improve the connections children use to access their neighborhood schools
- Encourage neighborhood identity through wayfinding signage and other means
- Pursue demolitions or code enforcement actions on substandard housing

- Consider residential design and functionality standards
- Consider city-wide trash collection and recycling programs

## 2.4 NON-RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND AREAS

Vision: The City of Owosso will provide for a full range of commercial facilities which are adequate to serve the resident population within the Owosso market area and which support regional needs. The city will further encourage development that may economically stimulate the downtown and Westown areas and by attracting retail, office, convention, hotel, entertainment, and other needs that serve a broader market. Owosso will also ensure that industrial parks are globally competitive and flexible to market needs.

### Initiatives

- Capitalize on Owosso's role as the center of the mid-county area and as a potential center to a broader retail area
- Provide the market with options to develop planned commercial and/or office centers in close proximity to major street intersections and integrate such areas into the existing urban fabric, thus providing the opportunity to offer a variety of goods and services most conveniently, rather than fostering the development of strip commercial development
- Strip commercial thoroughfare frontage developments should be discouraged except where it can be substantiated that there is a need for highway-oriented type businesses and other business uses that are not typically involved in comparison or multi-purpose shopping trips
- Encourage the use of marginal access drives and limit the number of entrances and exits serving commercial uses as a means of reducing traffic conflicts along major business corridors
- Provide public parking locations in the downtown that provide sufficient access and volume for business and residential needs, while preserving and prioritizing the urban fabric and placing an emphasis on pedestrian needs
- Ensure that private parking for areas outside of the downtown is flexible and suited to the needs of business access and volume while still encouraging pedestrian needs and a traditional urban form
- Ensure commercial development has a positive, functional, and aesthetic relationship to the abutting corridor and the neighborhood for which such development is included, perhaps through the establishment of design criteria
- Encourage and/or regulate commercial developments, conversions, expansions, and redevelopment projects so that they are built to a "pedestrian scale" with adequate pedestrian connections and a strong connection to the street corridor



- Recognize and compensate for the market failures present for redeveloping historic and/or aging properties
- Integrate contemporary needs (such as large office floor plates) into existing structures and commercial areas
- Promote the mixture of uses within commercial sites and within structures
- Limit land use regulations for industries that are beyond the influences of non-industrial uses, such as those within a designated industrial park
- Consider environmentally friendly development practices
- Improve the condition and aesthetics of vacant commercial structures through code enforcement; consider a program to install temporary displays or window coverings in such structures as well as to replace boarded windows
- Encourage reserved spaces and shelters for public transit vehicles within commercial areas

## 2.5 PUBLIC AND NATURAL AREAS

Vision: Owosso will provide for award winning public and semi-public use areas that offer a variety of opportunities for human fulfillment and will also maintain and preserve sufficient natural areas to satisfy the needs of the city residents.

### Initiatives

- Assist and guide semi-public and citizen groups in their efforts to provide needed community facilities
- Consider regional cooperation to solve recreation and other needs that function at the regional level
- Work with schools and other institutions that may expand, relocate, or construct to better integrate such uses with the respective neighborhoods.
- Develop a comprehensive trailway and street plan for the city that coordinates with the rest of the mid-county area
- Partner with community groups and citizens to get maximum programming out of parks and other areas
- Utilize and protect the Shiawassee River as a viewshed, a recreational amenity, and as a natural area
- Protect the city's wellheads and other drainage features
- Consider or conditionally permit passive recreation and/or community gardens on city lands in residential neighborhoods
- Continue to support diverse tree plantings along the river, in parks, in right-of-ways, and other public spaces; maintain Owosso's status as a "Tree City"

## 2.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: The City of Owosso will be known as a Michigan leader in the new economy by transforming Owosso into a place where talented workers choose to live and grow local businesses. The city will provide such a high quality of life that Owosso attracts personal, business,



and industrial investment. The community will support industrial development but will be known for its strong retail, cultural, entertainment, and tourism based economy that serves a broader area.

## Initiatives

- Create a “sense of place” for Owosso citizens by developing and maintaining recreational facilities
- Develop and promote a community that embraces and encourages art as a cultural amenity
- Identify and invest in programs that promote Owosso as the best entrepreneurial climate to live, work, learn, and play
- Develop plans that promote redevelopment of strategic areas of Owosso, including the river front areas, downtown, and other vacant land areas
- Support agencies such as the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership, the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau as they promote business development, entrepreneurial growth, and tourism.
- Actively seek marketing reuse for existing buildings and development areas that could support job growth
- Develop a strong retail, service, residential, dining, and entertainment district in the downtown area
- Encourage home-based businesses, live-work space, mixed uses, and flexible commercial spaces to accommodate the new economy worker and business
- Encourage green technologies and sustainable development practices
- Encourage the growth of primary industries and institutions such as Memorial Healthcare and Baker College, both in terms of capacity and as an integrated land use in the city
- Reinvest in industrial parks and redevelopment areas to provide opportunities for expansion and growth of traditional and advanced manufacturing; support such efforts across Mid-County
- Promote tourism by facilitating regular and frequent events in the downtown and Westown business districts in conjunction with the evolution and improvement of existing events such as the North Pole Express
- Encourage and facilitate historical preservation
- Define and beautify gateways and corridors
- Promote and support a regional approach to economic development that is business friendly and easily accessible by businesses
- Support economic development that integrates with surrounding neighborhoods
- Provide flexible parking and land use options for developments
- Encourage or require retail and similar commercial uses throughout the street level of downtown, with office and residential uses strongly encouraged for upper floors
- Encourage and facilitate use of public transit as an alternative to the car in order to free up parking space and attract new residents who value the availability of transit

## 2.7 SUMMARY

The proposals enumerated above for the city are guidelines for the future development and evolution of the city. If the planning program is to be more than a confusion of varied opinions, then it is essential that these goals and objectives be seriously considered. They will help maintain an orderly, prosperous, and attractive set of changes in the city. These statements are suggested as a starting point for the local officials. As the planning process progresses, the goals, objectives, and policies may be altered and new ones formed. Thus, these recommendations are flexible and need constant attention. It is recommended that the goals, objectives, and policies be reviewed and updated as necessary.

# CHAPTER THREE: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS

- 3.0 INTRODUCTION
- 3.1 GENERAL GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES
- 3.2 PUBLIC SAFETY
- 3.3 PUBLIC WORKS
- 3.4 INDEPENDENT MEDICAL SERVICES
- 3.5 PUBLIC UTILITIES
- 3.6 ENGINEERING, STREETS, AND  
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
- 3.7 HOUSING SERVICES
- 3.8 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
- 3.9 BUSINESS SERVICES
- 3.10 PARKS, RECREATION, AND ENVIRONMENT
- 3.11 OWOSSO COMPONENT UNITS
- 3.12 OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ASSETS AND GROUPS
- 3.13 SUMMARY

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Owosso is a full service city in the State of Michigan. The city is adjacent to Owosso Township to the west and Caledonia Township to the east, in the heart of Shiawassee County. The city is bisected by M-21, M-52, and M-71, as well as numerous rail lines and the Shiawassee River. An aerial view of the community is presented on Map 1.

Service provision for the city is carried out by the City of Owosso, its component units, and numerous other partners, non-profits, authorities, and other entities. This section of the plan provides some basic information about the city as well as some of the fundamental local services and the pertinent providers. This information is expected to be referenced in the plan to support relevant findings. It can also be used by interested citizenry, developers, and newly appointed staff, appointees, or elected officials.

Below is an overview of some pertinent facts and service provisions for the city:

#### General Facts

- Incorporated: 1859
- Name Origin: Chief Wasso, Ojibwa Tribe
- Nickname: O-Town
- Form of Government: Home rule, council-manager
- County: Shiawassee
- GPS Coordinates: 42°59'46"N 84°10'28"W
- 2010 Population: 15,194
- Land Area: 5.0 sq. mi. (12.9 sq. km.), 0.40% water
- Elevation: 728 ft. (222m)
- Time Zone: Eastern (EST) (UTC-5)
- FIPS Code: 26-61940
- Federal ID Number: 38-6004723
- GNIS Feature ID: 0634254
- State House District: 85
- State Senate District: 22
- U.S. Congressional District: 4

#### Climate

Owosso experiences hot summers, colorful falls, and cold winters. Owosso averages twenty-nine inches of rain per year and forty-one inches of snow. Average daytime highs in July peak at over 80°F and average daytime highs in January are below 30°F. The average growing

season in Owosso is 144 days. Each year Owosso averages eleven days with temperatures below 0 °F (−18 °C), and nine days with temperatures above 90 (32 °C).

### 3.1 GENERAL GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

- City Manager: Oversees all of the day-to-day activities of the city under the direction of the city council, also coordinates numerous boards and commissions
- Assessing: Provides real and personal property assessment for all tax collecting entities
- Treasury: Provides tax collection and distribution for all taxing entities, this office also oversees the Historical Commission
- Finance: Drafts the city budget, performs accounting, and executes the city audit
- Clerk: Records all official functions of the local government and retains all official records, this office also oversees the Cable Commission
- Personnel: Responsible for the management of the city's human resource function
- Engineering: Performs technical tasks related to the design and construction of public infrastructure
- Building: Responsible for enforcing the city's building and maintenance codes
- Community Development: Responsible for planning, zoning, and economic development activities, as well as the city's Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks and Recreation Commission, Downtown Historic District Commission, Downtown Development Authority/Owosso Main Street, Westown Corridor Improvement Authority, and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Housing: Oversees the cities housing rehabilitation programs and rental inspection programs

### 3.2 PUBLIC SAFETY

The Department of Public Safety encompasses all life and property safety services of the city. This department includes the police, fire, and life support services that are considered essential to the community. The department also cooperates and supports other services such as the rental inspection program, code enforcement, and community promotions.

#### Police Services

Owosso police department dates back to the early 1900s. The police department was housed in the basement of city hall until the mid 1970's when they moved to the current location in the Public Safety Building on Water Street.



The Owosso Police Department has been entrusted with the duties and responsibilities of preserving, protecting and defending the public and its property, maintaining social order; and providing essential services to its citizenry. To fulfill these duties, the Owosso Police shall provide leadership, coordination and the delivery of law enforcement services for the safety and protection of all the citizens, their constitutional rights and their property. The department is responsible to respond to calls for service from citizens, as well as to patrol by vehicle and foot to prevent crime and enforce city/state laws within the city limits.

Currently, the department has 20 full time employees (includes the director, 16 sworn police officers, and 2.5 clerical), as well as a part-time parking enforcement officer, a drug enforcement officer, and 18 seasonal crossing guards.

Some other services that the department provides include: the registration of guns, bicycles, and sex offenders; home vacation checks; provision of the Detective Bureau; PBT alcohol testing for probationers; drug enforcement; and blight enforcement. The department carries out its charge with seven marked patrol cars with in-car computers and radios and three unmarked radio cars.

The department involves itself in the community through: crime watch meetings, Boy Scout Explorers, community talks at schools, and other special safety events sponsored by hospital, churches and other community groups. The department also partners with the regional 911 dispatch with other Shiawassee county agencies, as well as with the emergency management team of Shiawassee County.

The Owosso Police Department is funded mostly by the city's general fund. The department does contribute to the general fund in the form of fines and fees. The 100 Club of Flint and the Department of Justice provide grants for equipment and programming from time to time.

Recently, many police officers have chosen to take advantage of on-call fire fighter training. This dual training provides a strong human resource asset, the implications of which should be considered by city staff to ascertain how such cross trained professionals might be best utilized in the future as an asset to the city.

#### **Fire and Life Support Services**

The Owosso Fire Department was established as a fire department in 1876 with four companies. These companies were formed by volunteers and stationed around the city. The formation of the Owosso Fire Department was due to several large fires that happened in Owosso and a large conflagration that happened in 1871 and resulted in the loss of several large buildings and homes.

In 1890 the City of Owosso assumed control over the fire department and the fire companies were disbanded and a smaller volunteer fire department was formed under the control of the

mayor and city council. In 1907, the city passed the ordinance to start a full time department with a chief, four hose men (firefighters) and two teamsters (officers). In 1924 the department was organized into a two platoon system each working alternating 24 hour shifts with 24 hours off. In 1937 the Owosso Fire Fighters became unionized and joined the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) as Local 504. Staffing for the fire department is five per day (six with no leave time). The average response time from the 911 dispatch to the alarm is less than five minutes. The department responds to over 2100 runs per year (1800 medical runs and 300 fire and rescue runs).

Today the Owosso Fire Department is the only full time fire department in Shiawassee County. The current staffing is 17 employees; with two shifts of six employees and one shift of five. The department also has 20 reserve firefighters to supplement the staffing on large emergencies and fires. The Owosso Fire Department is part of the Shiawassee Fire Mutual Aid Pact. Mutual aid covers the entire county and is made up of ten departments, as well as three departments from neighboring counties.

The Owosso Fire Department offers the residents of Owosso the following emergency and public services:

- Fire suppression and rescue
- Fire and rental inspections
- NFPA certification
- Fire education for schools, organizations and businesses
- Fire based EMS: Advance life support
- CPR and first aid training
- Specialized training
  - Hazardous materials to the technician level
  - Water & ice rescue
  - Technical rescue
  - High angle
  - Confined space

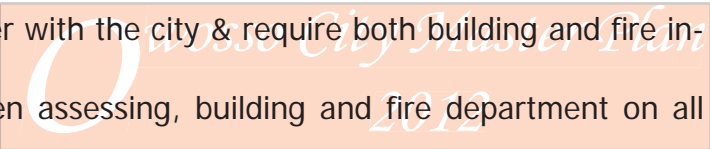
The department provides the following equipment:

- 3 ALS/Medic Units, (2001 & 2003 x2)
- Two engines (E-1 1996 & E-2 1986 Reserve Engine)
- 104' Platform or Tower (2008)
- Grass truck/utility (2000)

The fire department is currently funded from the city general fund through taxes. Revenue derived from EMS billing and charges related to fires is deposited to the general fund. Alternates and/or additions to funding the department are:

- Development of a fee schedule for rental, fire and building inspections

- Require all new businesses to register with the city & require both building and fire inspection at time of application
- Share inspection information between assessing, building and fire department on all businesses in the city



Concerning future needs, the city should consider a maintenance and replacement schedule in order to maintain the current level of service

**Emergency and Disaster Warning and Response Services**

The City of Owosso has in place an Emergency Action Plan to deal with emergencies. The City of Owosso Mayor or designee declares a local state of emergency and notifies the municipal Emergency Coordinator (EC) and the county Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) of the decision. When municipal resources are exhausted, the Shiawassee County Emergency Management Agency coordinates assistance to help satisfy the unmet needs. The City of Owosso also maintains a weather warning system for its residents.

**3.3 PUBLIC WORKS**

The City of Owosso Public Works Department provides the expertise and labor to carry out many of the physical functions of government. This department consists of seventeen (17) employees that perform general labor, in addition to those in the water and sewer departments. Two of these employees are certified arborists, eleven are equipment operators, two are mechanics, a building/concrete tradesman, and one is a water foreman.

This department is responsible for repairing water leaks, installing new water services, adding water main, and installing hydrants. Furthermore, the department is charged with the regular maintenance and winter clearance of streets and parking lots. Employees also maintain and mow the parks, perform leaf pickup & brush collection, and provide forestry services.

The public works department operates out of 522 Milwaukee Street. The department has numerous trucks, including a boom truck, bucket truck, four wheel drives, standard pickup trucks, and dump trucks. The department also has a street sweeper, two backhoes, two front end loaders, a wood chipper, a stump grinder, street patching equipment, and many other specialized pieces of equipment.

This department carries out many of the essential services of the city. In addition, these employees can be called upon to provide the labor necessary to perform specialized functions to improve the buildings and grounds of the city and to assist in the execution of special events and downtown programming.



### 3.4 INDEPENDENT MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical services are a crucial element for residents that seek a high quality of life. In the modern economy, such services also contribute heavily to job creation. The presence of health care in the community is very strong and is expected to continue to contribute to the enhanced quality of life and economic growth.

#### Memorial Healthcare

Memorial Healthcare operates a hospital in Owosso that has a campus on King Street west of North Shiawassee (M-52). This is a 150-bed facility with over 170 medical staff providers. Memorial is the county's largest employer with over 1,000 employees.



Memorial Healthcare has its roots as a post WWI hospital for the Owosso community. It now has satellite offices all over Shiawassee County, including Owosso. Each year, the hospital treats over 25,000 patients in its emergency department; 240,000 outpatients; and over 4,600 inpatients. The hospital recently added its cancer center at the corner of King Street and N. Shiawassee (M-52), as well as a community conference space at the intersection of W. Main (M-21) and Chestnut Street. The institution continues to be a large, positive influence on the community.

Memorial Healthcare is currently reviewing responses to a request for proposals to partner with another hospital in an effort to improve local services.

#### Mobile Medical Response, Inc.

Mobile Medical Response, Inc. is a non-profit ambulance company that operates from Owosso Charter Township. This service provides 24/7 coverage for the township on a contractual basis. The service employs 14 full-time employees and is funded through a \$30 per household assessment.

### 3.5 PUBLIC UTILITIES

Public utilities are some of the most fundamental needs that are provided by the public sector. In Owosso, these include the provision of water and sewer treatment and transportation. Without these services, dense residential development, as well as business and industry would not be able to function. Owosso provides these basic services on a regional level. Currently, these utilities deliver a superior level of service, with additional capacity to spare.

Owosso provides superior municipal water service throughout the city for residential, commercial, and industrial customers and for fire protection. Owosso also provides retail water service to nearby portions of Owosso Charter Township and Caledonia Charter Township customers, and wholesale water supply to the City of Corunna, under contractual agreements with those respective governmental entities. Owosso has a long history of providing high quality drinking water, continuously meeting all federal and state drinking water standards.

The water supply system is designed to produce an average of 3 MGD (MGD = million gallons per day) with a 6 MGD maximum day capacity for peak demands. Current water production averages 1.7 MGD, leaving more than adequate reserve capacity for anticipated future needs in the mid-county service area.

The groundwater supply is from 6 wells in 3 separate well field areas. Typically only 2 to 3 wells are used to meet average daily flow requirements. All the wells pump water to a central treatment plant located at 1101 Allendale. The wells draw from gravel formations above bedrock with intake screens generally between 60 and 140 feet below ground surface. Owosso has developed a Wellhead Protection Program. The aquifers we draw from have more than adequate, sustainable capacity for our 20 year projected needs. The existing wells can be maintained, requiring significant well cleaning and pump repair on a planned 6 year cycle (one well per year). However, the Hintz Road well can no longer be restored to full capacity by cleaning and is in need of complete replacement with an offset well planned on the same site (cost estimated at \$250,000).

The water plant provides complete treatment including pre-aeration, lime softening, re-carbonation for pH adjustment, filtration, chlorination and fluoridation. Residuals from lime softening are stored in on-site lagoons, dewatered and re-used as an alternative agricultural liming product. The plant was originally constructed in the 1940-50 era as an iron removal process, modified and expanded in 1968-70 for lime softening, and upgraded in 2002-04 to a more efficient and modern lime softening process. The treatment plant is staffed by certified operators maintaining a 24/7 operation. A \$4.8 million revenue bond financed the 2002-04 plant improvements with a debt retirement schedule extending to 2022. Projected capital outlay projects at the plant are relatively minor and include replacing the filter backwash pump, filter control sensors and instrumentation, and replacing some older pipe sections, and rehab of the in ground reservoir at the plant.



Treated water is continuously pumped from a 1.4 million gallon in-ground reservoir at the water treatment plant through a distribution system consisting of 90 miles of piping ranging from 24 inch down to 4 inch. Distribution system storage includes a 1.2 million gallon standpipe with booster pump located on the south side of Owosso and a 0.6 million gallon elevated storage tank located on the west side of the system. This storage is used for peak hour and fire flow demands. The Owosso water system is designed to supply in excess of the 3500 gallon per minute fire flow recommended by the ISO (Insurance Services Offices) for municipal systems our size serving commercial and industrial facilities. The main water transmission grid and system storage generally provide adequate fire flows and reliable transmission of water throughout town. Projected transmission upgrades include completion of a north end 12" connector across the river between Chippewa Trail and Chipman Lane and improvements to the west side industrial area (former Genessee Stamping and Sugar Beet site) between the railroad tracks west of Chipman and south of W. King St.

Upgrade of the booster pump station at the standpipe is a planned capital outlay project. The standpipe and the west side elevated tank also require repainting in the near future. Street water main replacement should be accelerated to replace between one and two miles of water main on an annual basis due to the overall age of the water mains. Replacement priority is coordinated with street reconstruction and the following water main factors: adequacy of pipe size, break history, pipe age and condition (lined or unlined), and adequacy of pipe bury.

Under the water agreements with Owosso and Caledonia Charter Townships, they are responsible for replacing, extending and upgrading the water distribution systems in their respective townships. The city charges a double rate for retail water service out-of-town but shares 25% of that revenue with the respective township to be used for water main replacement and system improvements in the township service area.

In summary, the Owosso water system is properly designed to provide high quality drinking water at adequate flow, volume and pressure for residential, commercial, industrial and fire fighting needs in the Owosso and mid-county area. This is a major component of the city infrastructure, easily valued at over \$50,000,000. The primary future need is to sustain this critical infrastructure in order to maintain reliable, high quality service at an affordable cost for future generations. This is a basic municipal service that must be provided and sustained to build upon a high quality of life for the Owosso citizenry.

Development of an asset management program for the water (and sewer) utility is highly recommended. An asset management program would provide council, the citizenry and staff with a more structured and cost-effective approach to planning for both near term and long term (3 to 5 year and 20 year) capital replacement and improvement needs. The asset management program would also provide the basis for establishing adequate and defensible water (and sewer) rates to properly finance the utility and the capital improvements and replacements needed to sustain high quality service.

The Mid-County WWTP provides wastewater treatment for the mid-county area including Owosso, Corunna, and portions of Owosso Charter Township and Caledonia Charter Township pursuant to a 1977 agreement, as amended, between the four jurisdictions. The city provides staff and operates the plant. Budgeting and decisions related to operation and maintenance of the plant are under the jurisdiction of the city council through the Owosso city manager and plant superintendent. A Plant Review Board, comprised of representatives for the four governmental partners in the Mid-County Plant, provides oversight and is charged with projecting future needs and funding for capital replacements and improvements in accordance with the mid-county agreement.

Plant operating, maintenance and replacement costs are shared by the four “service units” based on their portion of the overall monthly flow as determined by master meters. Debt service or major capital costs are shared by the capacity allocation percentage as listed below. As of 2011, there is no debt on the plant and the Plant Replacement and Improvement Fund balances total just over \$2,000,000. The 1980-86 plant capital cost was approximately \$17,000,000, with over \$12,000,000 provided by federal and state grant programs that are no longer available.

The plant has a 6 MGD (million gallons per day) average design capacity with the following allocation per the 1977 agreement:

|                            |          |       |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|
| City of Owosso             | 3.18 MGD | 53.0% |
| Owosso Charter Township    | 1.29 MGD | 21.5% |
| Caledonia Charter Township | 0.98 MGD | 16.3% |
| City of Corunna            | 0.55 MGD | 9.2%  |

Each unit of government is responsible for their own wastewater collection system. The two townships have established a utility authority to provide for the joint operation and maintenance of the townships wastewater collection systems. Corunna also has a separate agreement for the joint use of township interceptor lines for delivery of their flow to the Mid-County WWTP. Owosso operates and maintains its wastewater collection system under its “Sewer Fund”, which is budgeted and accounted for separate from the WWTP Fund. Each of the four service units determines their own wastewater user charges and separately bills their retail customers for their share of the costs for the mid-county plant plus their cost for their collection system.

The plant is located on Chippewa Trail in Owosso Charter Township just north of the city limits on land (approximately 13 acres) owned by the City of Owosso. This was the site of the original Owosso wastewater plant constructed in the 1930s, providing just primary or very limited treatment. The current plant was constructed beginning in 1978 and phased into service beginning in 1980. This plant was designed with a rather unique physical chemical treatment process. However, that process failed to meet its treatment objectives and was beset with

operating problems and high cost. This led to a major modification in 1986-87 to replace elements of the physical chemical treatment process with more cost-effective and reliable biological treatment. That modification was successful and has provided high quality and cost-effective treatment since that time.

The plant has more than adequate capacity for "dry weather" wastewater flows from the mid-county service area and consistently meets its state/federal permit requirements for the treated effluent, which is discharged to the Shiawassee River. The discharge permit requires baseline or secondary treatment with disinfection through the cold weather season, and advanced or tertiary level treatment during the warm weather season when the river ecosystem is more sensitive. However, the plant is stressed under wet weather conditions when excessive **inflow** of storm water and **infiltration** of groundwater ("I/I") increase the flow to the plant beyond its design capacity.

The City of Owosso and Corunna have ongoing programs to tighten up their nominally separate wastewater collection systems in order to reduce this excessive I/I that historically has led to sanitary sewer overflows from their respective sewer collection systems upstream from the plant. If the service units, and particularly the City of Owosso with the largest flow contribution, are not successful at reducing the excessive I/I, there is the possibility of having to provide additional wastewater storage and/or capacity at the plant in order to meet plant discharge permit requirements even under extreme wet weather conditions.

The majority of the plant has now provided more than 30 years of service. The plant has a replacement schedule (averaging \$126,000 per year) and financing mechanism to provide for capital replacement of equipment, such as pumps, valves etc., with a design life of 20 years or less. As of June 30, 2010 over \$1,700,000 in capital replacement projects have been accomplished and the replacement and improvement fund reserves on hand total just over \$2,000,000.

After 30 years of service it is evident that a major plant upgrade, beyond the scope of the current replacement fund, will be likely within 5 years. The plant review board has directed the hiring of an engineering consultant to prepare an assessment of the current plant and a long term capital improvement needs study, complete with financing plan. The study and plan is expected to be completed in 2012. That study will also incorporate any new discharge permit requirements, including those that may be required to meet peak wet weather flows that may arise during the 5 year re-issuance of our discharge permit.

#### **Owosso Wastewater Collection System**

The Owosso wastewater collection system consists of approximately 70 miles of gravity sewer piping ranging in size from 8 inch collector sewers to a 30 inch main interceptor, about 1000 access manholes, three relatively small sewage lift or pumping stations, and approximately 5500 building sewer connections. The vast majority of the piping is vitrified clay tile, with the 30 inch main interceptor being concrete pipe, and newer or replacement sewers being of PVC piping.

A significant portion (over 50%) of the wastewater collection system was constructed prior to the 1930s serving the core of the city. In those early years the wastewater sewers discharged directly to the river. It wasn't until the 1930s that a main interceptor was constructed to transmit flow from these wastewater collector sewers to the first area wastewater treatment plant. Between 1940 and 1980 wastewater collector sewers were extended outward to the limits of the city such that essentially all of the city, except for a few isolated properties, are served by city sewer.

In 1980, Owosso and Caledonia Townships installed their own wastewater collection system to serve the populated area around the city with flows transmitted separately to the mid-county wastewater treatment plant. Except for limited areas such as the Osburn Lakes subdivision off North Gould Street, there is no extension potential for the Owosso wastewater collection system, as the areas around the city are served by the township system.

Generally the wastewater collection system is properly designed and sized to handle normal wastewater flows. However, the system receives significant volumes of additional flow during wet weather from inflow of storm water and infiltration of groundwater, known as excessive I/I (inflow/infiltration). Under severe wet weather conditions, occurring about once every two years on the average, this results in flows exceeding the capacity of the collection system and the overflow of untreated wastewater, known as a sanitary sewer overflow or SSO, from low lying manholes along the main interceptor well upstream from the treatment plant.

The city has entered a consent order with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality agreeing to carry out a program to reduce the excessive I/I to the wastewater system in order to reduce the frequency of overflows to less than 1 in 10 years. The multi-year compliance schedule for that program extends to 2017. This program will largely direct the capital outlay spending for the Owosso wastewater collection system for that period of time.

In 2007 all the system manholes were inspected, followed in 2008 by an \$800,000 manhole rehabilitation project. The collection system has been smoke tested to identify potential sources of storm water inflow such as roof drains, area drains, and interconnection with storm sewers. Separation of identified sources is underway. Another program element is to assess the entire 70 miles of the public sewer system through a televised inspection program. This will lead to priorities for replacement or lining of sections of the sewer system that are subject to infiltration through defective joints or cracked pipe, or are otherwise structurally deficient.

The other main source of excessive infiltration is from residential building foundation drains discharging clear groundwater to the wastewater system via either a direct gravity connection to the building sewer or via a sump pump discharge improperly connected to the building sewer. Prior to the 1970s such connections were commonly accepted, but we now realize they discharge significant volumes of clear groundwater that overload the wastewater collection system and treatment plant. Elimination of footing drain groundwater discharges is a major, but necessary component of the city's sanitary sewer overflow control program.

The city is currently developing an inspection program for all residential structures with basements (approximately 3000) to determine if there is a footing drain connection. Based on currently available information, it is estimated that there are approximately 1000 such connections and that somewhere between 200 and 500 need to be separated to prevent the wastewater collection system from overflowing under the state design criteria. The consent order compliance schedule requires this primary separation phase be completed by 2017. The residential separation program will first target homes with illicit groundwater discharges from existing sump pumps as these were not permitted in previous years, separation is less costly, and such pumped sources can even discharge to surcharged sewers. To assure such sources are not re-connected to the wastewater system, the sump pump needs to discharge to an approved storm sewer or natural outlet.

Separation of gravity footing drain discharges is more difficult and costly. A baseline program is proposed to require inspections and such separations prior to the transfer of ownership of a property (i.e. a time of sale ordinance). A financial assistance program is also proposed to encourage voluntary participation in accomplishing such separations, particularly targeting those properties in flood prone and/or high groundwater areas where sewer flow data indicates major groundwater flow contributions to the wastewater system. Properties that do discharge clear groundwater would also be billed a higher sewer usage rate to reflect the cost for treating such additional discharges to the wastewater system and to encourage separation. Revenues from that portion of the user charge should be dedicated to assist with the separation program.

Development of an asset management program for the wastewater collection (and water) utility is highly recommended. We are currently committed to a comprehensive assessment of the condition of the collection system, which is the first step for the program. This baseline assessment should be integrated with the city GIS (geographical information system) for tracking assessment information on both the public portion of the wastewater collection system and information on building sewers and compliance status with respect to the sanitary sewer overflow control program. A formal asset management program would provide a more structured approach to prioritizing and planning for needed capital improvements.

### **Owosso Storm Water System**

Owosso currently has a system of storm sewers and drains that provide for the routing of storm water from streets and adjacent properties to the river. This system is separate from the wastewater collection system. In addition there are several county drains, under the jurisdiction of the county drain commission, that serve drainage districts outside and within the city limits. These include the Owosso drain, the Chipman drain, and the Corlett Creek drain. Operation and maintenance and improvements to the city owned storm sewers and drains currently has an extremely limited budget under the general fund (major street, local street, and DPW departments). This lack of separate budget focus, extremely limited funding, and lack of clear responsibility leads to a largely neglected system and a reactionary rather than proactive approach to management and problem solving. There are several areas of the city that experience flooding of streets and low-lying properties due to inadequate storm drainage. These problems persist largely due to a lack of funding for needed capital improvements.

To address the current deficiencies and to provide for more proactive and cost-effective management of storm water, it is recommended that the city consider development and incorporation of a storm water utility. Such a utility would be financed by a user charge system similar to the wastewater and water utilities. User charges would be collected along with the current billing for water and wastewater. A storm water utility would also position the city to be more proactive with respect to likely future state and federal requirements addressing storm water impacts on receiving water quality.

The legal basis for storm water utilities and associated user charge systems in Michigan is currently uncertain due to a Michigan Supreme Court decision (*Bolt v. City of Lansing*). There has been proposed state legislation to clarify the legal basis and requirements for storm water utilities and associated user fees in Michigan. The city should closely track and support such proposed legislation, which is likely to be re-introduced to the state legislature.

Also recommended is development of an asset management program for the storm water system. As with the wastewater collection system this would begin with a structured assessment of the existing system including incorporation into the city GIS. A formal asset management program would provide a more structured approach to prioritizing and planning for needed capital improvements. The asset management approach, particularly if properly financed via a storm water utility, would lead to more pro-active and cost-effective management of the storm water system and better service to the public it serves.

### 3.6 ENGINEERING, STREETS, AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The ability of the city to meet the infrastructure and logistical needs of modern industry is crucial. The City of Owosso maintains an engineering department to oversee such functions and to provide assistance to all of the city's technical endeavors related to public works. Furthermore, the community and region provide other means by which this important logistics function is carried out, leading to a well-connected and accessible industrial base and labor market.

#### **Engineering**

The Owosso Engineering Department supplies technical engineering information for city staff and city construction projects. The department was previously staffed by one professional engineer, but those services are currently provided by a professional consultant as needed. The department does retain one engineer's aide and one executive secretary. The department is responsible for new construction and contracted maintenance work on sidewalks, curbs and street maintenance and inspection within the street right-of-way, including permits for private utility repair work within the right-of-way or the temporary occupancy of the street right-of-way by contractors or vendors.

The department also assists property owners with flood plain issues and retains the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) issued flood rate insurance maps for the city. The department is also responsible for soil erosion and sedimentary control permits and in-



spections. The geographic information system (GIS) operations are housed and maintained in the office as well. Engineering staff work with other staff on improvements to the city park systems, downtown projects, and the review of site plans before they go to the planning commission.

## Streets

Concerning streets, the city is laid out in a modified grid pattern, with M-21 and M-52 providing the primary east-west and north-south connections, respectively. M-21 connects Owosso with Flint, St. Johns, and Grand Rapids. M-52 connects to I-69 about 12 miles south of the city. M-71 provides a link between the city and downtown Corunna, as well as Vernon and I-69 in the City of Durand. There are 24.38 miles of "major streets" and 47.57 miles of "local streets" within the City of Owosso. The predominant surface type in the city is asphalt as listed below:

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| Gravel   | 0.278 miles  |
| Concrete | 0.116 miles  |
| Asphalt  | 71.334 miles |
| Brick    | 0.222 miles  |
| Total    | 71.95 miles  |

There are also over 100 miles of sidewalks within the city. The city spends about \$25,000 each year on sidewalk repair.



There are three state owned corridors in the city: M-71 (Corunna Avenue), M-21 (Main Street), and M-52 (Shiawassee Street). These corridors are controlled by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). While the city maintains these roads using monies supplied by the State of Michigan, the operations of the road (including design, signage, and usage) are largely controlled by MDOT. These corridors also account for 14 of the 15 traffic signals within the city; all of these 14 are controlled by MDOT.

In addition to streets and sidewalks, the city owns 12 parking lots with a total of 1,206 parking spaces. Most of these are in the downtown area. Furthermore, most of the street lights in the downtown are city owned and all the street lights in the residential area are owned by Consumers Energy. The city lighting bill is about \$12,000 per month. Currently, the city is converting its high-pressure sodium street lights in downtown to LED. If cost savings are realized, the city may investigate the provision for energy saving lighting throughout the city.

## Airports

Airports provide the gateway to the rest of the world. In the new economy, the global transportation of goods and personnel is essential to meet the demands of modern industry and business. To that end, Owosso is relatively accessible to many airports that provide for such global access. The community should continue to benefit from the expansion of the nearby airports in Flint and Lansing.

### Owosso Community Airport

The Owosso Community Airport (KRNP) is a public-use airport two miles east of the city. The airport is operated by the Shiawassee Airport Board, consisting of five members. The airport was originally transferred to the county for ownership in 1929 and eventually to the city. In 1982, the City of Owosso deeded the airport to the board.

As of 2008, the airport housed 61 aircraft and saw 25,000 aircraft operations yearly (68 per day). In 2005, the airport expanded its main runway which is currently a 4,300ft asphalt runway.

### Bishop International Airport

Located 25 miles east of the city, at the intersection of I-69 and I-75 in Flint, is Bishop International Airport (FNT). Bishop carried over 988,143 passengers in 2010, an approximate increase of 1% from 2009. The airport also enplaned and deplaned over 22,000,000 pounds of cargo (combined) and carried out 47,431 operations in the year.

Bishop Airport is operated by a regional authority that levies taxes in Genesee County. The airport provides an important function for a greater market area that extends as far south as Detroit and Ann Arbor, as well as to Saginaw and Owosso. The airport provides regular service links to Detroit Metropolitan Airport, as well as direct flights to other hubs and destinations such as Cleveland, Atlanta, Chicago O'Hare, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Tampa, and Orlando.

This airport is currently involved in an initiative to create an "aerotropolis" zone. This zone could provide for a regional authority that would have the power to plan, grant incentives, and market industries specific to the air modes of transportation. Because Owosso is within the applicable radius of this zone, such an authority could have implications for the Owosso community.

### Capital Region International Airport

Lansing's regional airport (LAN) is 35 miles south west of Owosso. This airport functions much like Bishop Airport. While passenger and cargo data are not known, a 2003 estimate indicates approximately 550,000 total passengers and 50 million pounds of cargo pass through LAN in

a year. The connections and destinations available from Lansing include: Detroit, Minneapolis, Washington National, Las Vegas, Chicago O'Hare, and Montego Bay.

In addition, to passenger traffic, the Capital Region International Airport also functions as Mid-Michigan's only US port of entry that allows for goods and passengers to clear customs through US Customs & Border Protection. This allows for international customs locally, without using the traditional airports of Detroit and Chicago.

### **Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW)**

About 90 miles southeast of Owosso is the state's primary airport. DTW is a full service international airport and is one of the nation's top ten international gateways. Metro, as it is often called, is one of the world's 25 busiest airports. The airport serves over 160 global destinations and was named the best large U.S. airport in customer satisfaction by J.D. Power & Associates in 2010. Currently, 14 airlines serve the airport, with the largest being Delta. The top destinations by passenger volume are Atlanta, Orlando, and Chicago.

### **Railroads**

All railroads in the city have provided and continue to provide an important function for industrial and economic prosperity. However, due to their layout and function, the rails have also resulted in the closing of many public streets and the isolation of many neighborhoods. Most of the community's first industries were located along the rail lines, and many of these are now gone, leaving contaminated parcels and abandoned structures behind. This phenomenon can be observed in the geographic representation of the existing brownfield plans as illustrated in Map 2.

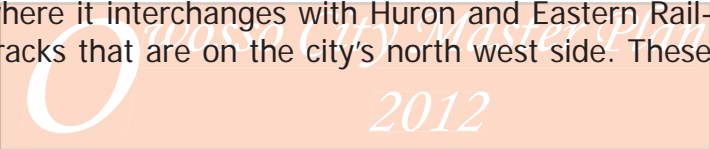
As such, the city must plan for and mitigate these issues in order to provide for appropriate redevelopment of areas along the rail corridors. Such development should be conducive to the rail corridor, the surrounding neighborhood, and reintegration of these parcels with areas that may have previously been cutoff due to road closures.



### **Great Lakes Central Railroad Inc. (GLC)**

GLC is a class II regional railroad that is headquartered in Owosso, on Oakwood Avenue by the river. It was formerly called Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Railway. This is the largest regional railroad in Michigan, covering 424 miles of track. In the Owosso area, this railroad is responsible for the lines that run from the city's east side to the facility located on the south side of the river by the Steam Railroading Institute. The rail then crosses Washington just south of the riv-

er and parallels west along Cass Street to where it interchanges with Huron and Eastern Railway. The rail then proceeds north on both tracks that are on the city's north west side. These lines run from Traverse City to Ann Arbor.



Currently, GLC is responsible for implementing one of the state's first commuter rail services from Howell to downtown Ann Arbor. GLC also indicates that the company may begin daily service between Ann Arbor and Traverse City, through the city of Owosso, but this is not confirmed. What potential there is for a dedicated commuter or daily service in Owosso is unclear.

**Huron & Eastern Railroad Co., Inc,**

Huron & Eastern is a short line railroad that operates in Owosso that is owned by Rail America. This railroad operates generally in the thumb of Michigan, but it owns the rail from Dutchtown in Owosso to the south, as well as all that portion of the rail that bisects the community from west to east. This rail corridor is abandoned west of the city near the crossing of M-21 in Owosso Township. From this point to the west a rail-to-trail corridor is planned that will go to St. Johns, Michigan and beyond. Huron & Eastern, as well as the parent company have been approached to allow a rail-with-trail through the city, but Rail America notified the city in writing that it does not cooperate on such initiatives.

**Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency (SATA)**

Located on Delaney Road, west of the city, SATA began operating in 2000. The vehicles from Memorial Healthcare, Shiawassee Area Council on Aging, the ARC of Shiawassee, and the Regional Education Service District (RES D) were transferred to the newly organized Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency. These vehicles now operate an demand response, curb-to-curb transportation service for residents of Shiawassee County, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in Owosso, Corunna, and the townships of Caledonia and Owosso (till 6:00 p.m. in the rest of the county).

SATA was formed under Act 7 by the communities of Owosso, Corunna, Perry, Durand, and the RESD. The agency is overseen by a board of 11 community representatives. In 2009, 99,292 passengers were transported over 425,883 miles, with an operating budget of \$922,344. SATA is largely funded by federal, state, and local municipalities which receive public transportation services from SATA. They also collect charges for services. SATA does not provide any fixed route services at this time.

In 2008, a mobility management program entitled Transportation Solutions was added. It is a one-stop office designed to solve transportation issues for county residents. Among its services are trips for senior citizens and those with disabilities to destinations outside the county for medical and job-related reasons using agency vehicles and volunteer drivers.

## Indian Trails

Headquartered on Comstock Street in downtown, Indian Trails celebrated 100 years of service in 2010. This company is a for-profit inter-city bus transportation service. They offer charters, tours, shuttles, airport transfers, and casino runs. Indian Trails also offers daily routes throughout the state, including Kalamazoo, Flint, Lansing, Sault Ste. Marie, Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Traverse City. Throughout this network, there are dozens of stops, as well as daily destinations to Chicago and Milwaukee. They service more than 750,000 passengers each year and employ more than 100 people. This is the biggest bus service in Michigan with other locations in Kalamazoo and Romulus (by DTW airport). This is a growing company with a solid national reputation.

## 3.7 HOUSING SERVICES

There is a wide array of housing options available within the City of Owosso. While the majority of housing units are single family structures located within traditional neighborhoods, the city is also home to a variety of housing choices including: condominiums, duplexes, upper story apartments in the downtown, multi-family apartment complexes, assisted living facilities and a manufactured home community.

In 2009, city officials became concerned as they recognized that the city's housing stock was steadily deteriorating. Single family homes and rental dwellings alike were beginning to show signs of disinvestment as foreclosed and vacant properties began to present problems of blight and property maintenance issues.

Acknowledging the need to address these housing concerns, the city stepped up its code enforcement efforts and hired a housing manager to begin implementing strategic housing initiatives throughout the community. This office now oversees many local and county-wide programs that support home improvements and rental improvements with community development block grant funds and other funds from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. In early 2012, the city also hired a full time building official and code enforcement officer to assist with enforcing the property maintenance code, rental inspections, inspections, and blight compliance.

The goals of the city's housing department are to ensure that safe and adequate housing options exist within our community for all of our residents, to promote the maintenance of the existing housing stock of the city and to connect citizens in Owosso with available housing resources. To that end the housing department administers housing rehabilitation programs that offer assistance to low and moderate income homeowners to make home improvements; provides incentive programs for the development of affordable rental units in the downtown; participates in overseeing the rental registration and inspection program; and serves as a referral service to other housing resources available within the area.

More information on the status of housing in the city is detailed in Chapter 4: Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile.

### 3.8 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Education plays one of the most important roles in the new economy. As the economy in the United States continues to shift from one of production to one of service, a knowledgeable and talented workforce is replacing traditional infrastructure as the most important resources for business. Owosso offers quality education at all levels to meet this need.

#### Owosso Public Schools

The Owosso Public School (OPS) system is the only public school provider for K-12 education in the city. The district educates about 3,200 students in three elementary schools (Central, Bryant, and Emerson), the Middle School, and the High School. The district also offers an alternative education program at the Washington Campus, which is a former elementary school.

All of these facilities play an important role in the community. In addition to providing education, these facilities play critical roles in neighborhoods by providing play facilities for children, offering open space, creating a sense of identity, and providing locations for community gatherings and events. The active facilities are located as follows and as illustrated in Map 3.

|                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Owosso High School   | 765 E. North St.  |
| Owosso Middle School | 219 N. Water St.  |
| Central School       | 600 W. Oliver St. |
| Washington Campus    | 645 W. Alger St.  |
| Bryant School        | 942 Hampton St.   |
| Emerson School       | 151 E. Oliver St. |

Lincoln School, which formerly housed the alternative education, is currently sitting vacant, with this program and the administration offices moving to the Washington school. The current administration building has the potential to be used as a daycare facility, and the future of the Lincoln school remains unclear. This building, which is located immediately west of downtown on the corner of Main Street and Michigan Avenue, may be a good candidate for senior housing.

While all of the building locations function as assets in their respective neighborhoods, there is a recognized potential to reuse the Owosso Middle School and the Lincoln School for senior housing, office, or some other mixed use space.



The OPS offers numerous educational and community oriented programs. The school system consistently scores above the state average in standardized tests and boasts smaller class sizes than the state average. However, per pupil spending is currently slightly lower than the state average, and the percentage of children receiving free or reduced lunches is slightly higher.

The OPS high school offers a seven period schedule, nine Advanced Placement classes, dual college enrollment, and is the only high school in Michigan presently offering the Virtual Enterprise Incorporated class. This school was ranked 36 out of 838 Michigan high schools in a "U.S. News and World Report" national ranking of high schools. The district also offers the Bentley Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Center which includes the Summer "Sun"sations program, the Infant, Wobbler, and Toddler Child Care, and the 3 and 4-Year old preschool.

### **Baker College**

Located on Washington Street on the south side of the city is Baker College of Owosso. Baker is a private college that enrolls 3,300 students on the Owosso campus, 500 of these students reside in student housing. This is a career oriented institution that occupies more than 50 acres in and around the Owosso area. Architecture on the main campus resembles a small Swiss or Bavarian village. Other facilities throughout the community include student apartments at Woodard Station, the new Auto/Diesel Institute on M-52, and the Business and Corporate Services Division at the Bentley campus just north of downtown. Baker offers many programs of study related to health sciences, business administration, computer information systems and technology, and education and human services.

Baker College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities. The Baker College System is approved to offer certificates, associate, bachelor, master's, and doctorate degrees.

The campus in Owosso has expanded by a factor of 20 over the last 20 years. Due to the physical and geographic expansion of the campus, as well as the increases in enrollment and student housing, the implications of Baker's impact on the job market, downtown, and the community culture are encouraging. For every one dollar invested in tuition dollars it is estimated that it returns three dollars in local economic gain. Baker College also offers an alternative high school education program.

### **St. Paul's**

This is a fully accredited Catholic school in Owosso that hosts grades K-8. It is located on Main St. between downtown and Westtown.

### **Salem Lutheran School**



Located on M-52, across the street from Bentley Park is the Salem Evangelical Lutheran School. This school has been in operation since 1894. This school employs five teachers and has approximately 70 students.

### **Shiawassee District Library**

The Shiawassee District Library has a branch location in Owosso at 502 W. Main St., between downtown and Westtown. This branch dates back as far as 1867 when the Ladies Library Association was organized. The building that is used today was built in 1914 and is owned by the City of Owosso. The library is operated by an independent authority with an eight member board. The branch provides rentals of books, music, periodicals, and many other materials in multiple media formats. The library also provides computer, internet, photocopying and other business-type services. Furthermore, the Owosso branch hosts reading programs, craft times, puppet shows, and other special programs. The library reviews its needs as they relate to the facility capabilities on an on-going basis.

More information on the educational statistic of the Owosso community can be found in Chapter 4: Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile.

## **3.9 BUSINESS SERVICES**

The following business service providers play an important role for local economic development. By providing specialized functions, these partners are able to improve the workforce, help small business owners, attract outside investment, and take the Owosso story out into the global market place.

### **Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce**

The chamber is located in front of the armory on Water Street, at Exchange. The chamber is overseen by a board of 15 members whose mission is:

“The Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce advances the economic success of our community by aligning information and resources and investing in people who create the future.”

The chamber holds daily office hours during the work week and employs six staff members that oversee programs related to: membership development, technology development, leadership training, career preparation, small business development, as well as programs related to governmental affairs and local ambassadors.



The chamber director also oversees a satellite office of the Capitol Region Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center.

### **Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership (SEDP)**

Located in the same building as the chamber, the SEDP's mission is "To improve Shiawassee County's economy through business attraction, retention, and expansion." This agency is overseen by a board of 15 community and business leaders and is funded through local investors. The SEDP's two full-time employees are dedicated to the creation of jobs and economic benefit through job creation. To this end, the SEDP markets and promotes the community's properties and other resources, as well as enhances the ability of existing businesses to enhance performance through advanced business solutions.

The City of Owosso currently supports the SEDP through an annual contribution of about \$30,000.

### **Next Michigan Development Corporation**

In 2012, over 30 communities from Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, and St. Claire counties united under PA 275 of 2012 to form the I-69 NMDC/Aerotropolis. The NMDC will enable the I-69 corridor to market the region's strengths to businesses that are engaged in international multimodal commerce. This entity has the ability to leverage funds and incentives to entice such businesses to locate in proximity to international transportation exchange points. In addition to Bishop Airport, key intermodal assets in the area include major freeways, the Blue Water Bridge, CSX and Canadian National rails and several water ports.

### **Shiawassee Convention and Visitors Bureau**

Located with the SEDP and the chamber, the SCVB promotes tourism throughout Shiawassee County. Funded by investors and a local hotel tax, this is a full service office, open during normal business hours each business day.

## **3.10 PARKS, RECREATION, AND ENVIRONMENT**

The natural features and outdoor recreational opportunities in the city play an important role in the provision of a high quality of life for the Owosso community. Natural features and open space provide for relaxation, passive recreation, exercise, organized sports, and child play. These areas and fea-



tures also help sustain important ecological systems that provide animal habit, sustainable natural resources such as clean water, and fundamentally desirable 'green spaces.' Together, these attributes play a strong role in the quality of life and the local economy. Because of this, the city must be cognizant of these features and plan for their integration into the broad scope of the master plan.

## Parks and Recreation

The City of Owosso has an official parks and recreation plan that has an inventory of the park system, establishes a vision, and makes recommendations for future improvements and programming. The parks and recreation plan, adopted in 2006 and amended in 2011, should be consulted for detailed information concerning the park system of the city.

Briefly, the park system consists of approximately 250 acres with 90 different facilities dispersed over its 12 parks. When combined with school parks, the plan finds the distribution of open space and recreational opportunities to be nearly equitable for the city's neighborhoods. From the one acre Fayette Square to the 164 acre Collamer Park, Owosso serves the community's various needs and neighborhoods.

In its current form, the park plan has over 17 stated goals, the most primary of which is "to recognize the many benefits of parks and recreation to promote healthy life styles, relieve environmental stress, attract tourists, offer recreational outlets for youth, attract retirees, enhance property values, and help preserve the natural environment."

To see this through, the plan has detailed objectives for each park that were to occur over a five year period. The city also has plans to make use of its natural features, such as the river, as well as integrating the park system with that of its neighbors. This could be accomplished through trail connections to regional trail systems or the provision of a regional park authority.

Due to funding constraints and circumstances, all of these objectives have not been met, but some other initiatives have. This document was reviewed and updated in 2011 by the Owosso Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the city council, to reflect recent changes to

the parks and future objectives. Such initiatives include a splash pad and disc golf.



Recent initiatives, improvements, and reductions in the system include: planning for a comprehensive trail network, a new playscape at Bentley Park, the provision of a dog park and community garden at Collamer Park, the construction of concession stands

a Rudy DeMuth Field, a new sledding hill at Holman Park, and the demolition of the pool at Holman Park. The updated park plan includes these endeavors, as well as addressing the larger objectives that the city council has for walkability and integrated recreation.

## Environmental Features

The most notable geographical feature in the City of Owosso is the Shiawassee River. The river winds through the City of Owosso and passes through the downtown area. The 110-mile river, which begins just north of the City of Howell and drains into the Saginaw Bay, offers recreational opportunities including fishing, kayaking and canoeing. Other amenities associated with the river in Owosso are the Bicycle River Walk and the Don & Metta Mitchell Amphitheater, which faces the river and hosts a variety of concerts and events during the summer. With over 180,000 people residing within its watershed, the Shiawassee River provides a place for recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

This Shiawassee has a long history in the community as a provider of commerce and navigation, as well as stream power for mill operations. To that end, the original rapids were removed, some water was diverted for mill purposes (through what is currently Water Street), and three dams were established.

Today, the river provides habitat for numerous creatures. It also provides for recreational opportunities and generally serves as a desirable water feature of the community. The Shiawassee River is considered an asset that is to be protected and further integrated into the community's plans for future prosperity.

The Shiawassee River encompasses nearly 1,200 square miles and has nearly 60 species of fish. The headwaters of the river start in northern Oakland County, near the Village of Holly, and the river passes through the communities of Fenton, Corunna, Owosso, and Chesaning, among others before emptying into the Saginaw River. The river flows through Owosso from the southeast to the northwest. While the stream provides the community with an asset within the community, it also poses a threat to property due to the hazards of flooding.

Map 4 indicates where the floodplains are within the City of Owosso. These areas are identified to be at risk of flooding to a degree of 1% each year (100 year flood plain). Because of this, construction and redevelopment within this area is problematic. Structures that were previously built in the floodplain are subject to higher flood insurance premiums, in addition to the existing risk of flood damage. As such, the city should consider solutions to protect or move existing uses within the floodplain. Furthermore, the city must ensure that any proposed work in the floodplain conforms to applicable state, federal, and local laws.

Currently, the Friends of the Shiawassee River are taking preliminary steps to explore the future of Owosso's three dams. This study will engage the public to ascertain what is possible and what is desirable concerning these dams. Decisions made during this process could have large implications on fish migration patterns, the river's navigable use, and the other functions of the river.

Other natural features include the wetlands identified in the Osburn Lakes development on the city's northeast side, as well as those located in the southwest portion of the city. These areas have been accounted for in the developmental plans to be protected and integrated as passive recreational areas for the new housing, and are illustrated in Map 5.

### 3.11 OWOSSO COMPONENT UNITS

The following entities are corporate entities that function as creatures of the City of Owosso. These units have special and specific purposes as provided for in state statute and function under the budgetary auspices of the city council.

#### **Owosso Downtown Development Authority (DDA)/Owosso Main Street (OMS)**

The Owosso DDA was formed in 1977 for the purpose of reversing physical and economic decay in the downtown area. This authority consists of a nine member board that is a corporate body of the City of Owosso as permitted under Act 197 of 1975. The DDA collects revenues from taxes generated by a 2-mil levy and a tax increment financing (TIF) district. Map 6 illustrates the boundaries of the DDA. Proceeds from these revenues are used as operating monies and as debt service for physical improvements and other activities in the downtown. The DDA/TIF plan was last revised in 2003 and will be valid till 2028.

The Owosso Main Street program was established in 2009 to further develop and promote business and activity in downtown Owosso. This authority is operated by the DDA and has boundaries that are slightly smaller in scope as illustrated in Map 6. The programming of OMS is done in cooperation with the Michigan Main Street office and upholds the four program pillars: Economic Restructuring, Design, Promotions, and Organization.

This group is very involved in infrastructure planning and event planning in the downtown area. Such initiatives include community-wide wayfinding, streetscapes, and the farmers' market. This group will be key to developing the businesses and physical spaces downtown.

#### **Owosso Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (OBRA)**

The city has a brownfield redevelopment authority composed of a board of nine members that also serves as the local development financing authority board. The purpose of the OBRA is to redevelop contaminated and obsolete sites within the city of Owosso under Public Act 381 of 1996. This authority has the power to approve brownfield plans for specific sites and projects within the city. This designation would allow the OBRA to collect taxes on new property tax increase increments to pay off eligible expenses onsite over time. Such a designation previously made the site eligible for state tax credits (via the Michigan Business Tax) and other state programs. The current tax credit replacement is funding from the Community Reinvestment Program.

**Table 2. Brownfield Projects**

| #  | Name              | Address               | Year Created | Year Amended | Active | Inactive |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------|----------|
| 1  | Owosso Cinema     | 214 E. Comstock       | 5/1/00       |              |        | X        |
| 2  | South Side Shell  | 145 Corunna Ave.      | 1/1/12       |              |        | X        |
| 3  | TiAL Products     | 615 Cass St.          | 11/1/12      | 6/1/07       | X      |          |
| 4  | Alliance HNI      | 525 S. Gould          | 11/1/00      |              | X      |          |
| 5  | Hudson Dealership | 222 Water St.         | 4/2/12       |              |        | X        |
| 6  | Owosso Inn        | 102 S. Washington St. | 12/2/12      |              |        | X        |
| 7  | Reserved          |                       |              |              |        |          |
| 8  | Sugar Beet        | 1500 W. Oliver        | 11/2/12      |              | X      |          |
| 9  | Robbins Loft      | 1231 W. Main          | 12/5/12      |              | X      |          |
| 10 | 1000 Bradley      | 1000 Bradley          | 10/5/12      |              | X      |          |
| 11 | Capitol Bowl      | 219 S. Washington     | 4/6/12       |              | X      |          |
| 12 | Woodard Station   | 317 S. Elm St         | 9/6/12       |              | X      |          |
| 13 | Wesener Building  | 104-108 N. Washington | 9/7/12       | 8/1/11       |        | X        |
| 14 | Lebowski Bulding  | 122 E. Main           |              |              | X      |          |

The OBRA has been successful at redeveloping contaminated and functionally obsolete sites and putting them into use; creating jobs, tax revenue, and ameliorating blight. To date, the OBRA has worked with 14 BRA sites, 8 of which are still active. One of the most notable projects is the Woodard Station project on the corner of Cass Street and M-52. A list of all projects is detailed in Table 2 and is also illustrated in Map 2.

#### **Owosso Downtown Historic District Commission**

Formed in the fall of 2010, this regulatory commission is responsible for reviewing all applications for exterior work that is completed within the Downtown Historic District Commission (HDC) boundaries. Map 7 illustrates the boundaries of this district.

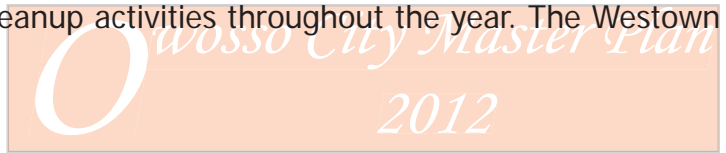
The HDC board comprises of seven members that use the Secretary of the Interiors Guidelines to review permits for work. The historic designation also permits contributing structures within the district to apply for State Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

As of mid-2012 a nomination for the National Register for Historic Places is being completed.

#### **Westown Corridor Improvement Authority**

The Westown Corridor Improvement Authority is a seven member authority that is a corporate governmental entity, similar in structure and purpose to the DDA. The district for this authority, illustrated on Map 8, is focused on the historical area of Westown on M-21. Currently, this authority does not have an active tax increment financing plan nor any other revenues to effect much change in the district at this time. However, the authority does meet at least quarterly

and engages the public in decorating and cleanup activities throughout the year. The Westtown Merchants Association is still active.



### Owosso Historical Commission

The Owosso Historical Commission comprises of nine community members that oversee the preservation and maintenance of historic structures and properties that the city owns. The historical commission also catalogues and preserves other historical items, as well as encouraging a culture of historical appreciation. This authority maintains its own budget as funded through donations and a contribution from the city.

### Channels 95 & 96 - Cable Access Advisory Commission (CAAC)

Owosso Community Television (OCTV) has been established to provide a platform for video casting locally produced television programs of public interest to inform, communicate, educate, and entertain. The purpose of the CAAC is to provide the people of the city and organizations in the Owosso area with an opportunity to be involved in using the television medium through the administration of Charter channels 95 & 96.

The CAAC serves as an advisory body to the city council with regard to all aspects of Owosso Community Television and public access cable service in the city. Among other volunteer supplied content, this locally broadcast station records and broadcasts city council meetings.

## 3.12 OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ASSETS AND GROUPS

In addition to the governmental and other service providers described above, the Owosso community has many other non-profits, institutions, and additional partners that contribute to the community in some fashion. The following is a list of such partners:

#### Entertainment and Recreation

- Owosso Community Players
- Curwood Castle Museum
- YMCA
- Comstock Inn and Conference Center
- Shiawassee Arts Council
- Steam Railroading Institute

#### Service Clubs & Associations

- Kiwanis AM & PM
- Lions Club
- Masonic Lodge
- Owosso Rotary
- Owosso Friends and Neighbors (OFANS)
- American Legion Club
- Eagles Club
- Elks Lodge

- Knights of Columbus
- VFW Owosso Memorial Post 9455
- WFLA/ZCJB Hall
- Friends of the Shiawassee River
- The Cook Family Foundation
- The Shiawassee Community Foundation
- The Curwood Festival (Group)
- The Shiawassee Realtors Association
- The Shiawassee Homebuilders Association

#### Other Mid-Town Governmental Assets

- Owosso Township
- Caledonia Township
- City of Corunna

#### External Governmental Partners

- Shiawassee County (Including all divisions and commissions)

- Shiawassee Regional Education Service District
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (Region V)
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Print Media

- Argus Press
- Shiawassee Independent

Radio Media

- WJSZ Z92.5FM
- WOAP The Big 1080

Telecommunications and Utilities

- Consumers Energy
- Frontier Communications
- Daystar Communications
- Charter Communications

### 3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a snapshot overview of many of the community's services and assets. The findings gleaned from this will be revisited in sections that pertain to future land use and critical areas, as these sections provide for policy and planning recommendations that are based on issues and opportunities identified herein. The following chapter complements this section by further investigating the community's demographics, housing, and economy.

# CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIO-ECONOMIC & DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- 4.0 INTRODUCTION
- 4.1 METHODOLOGY
- 4.2 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS
- 4.3 SOCIO-ECONOMICS
- 4.4 HOUSING
- 4.5 SUMMARY



## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

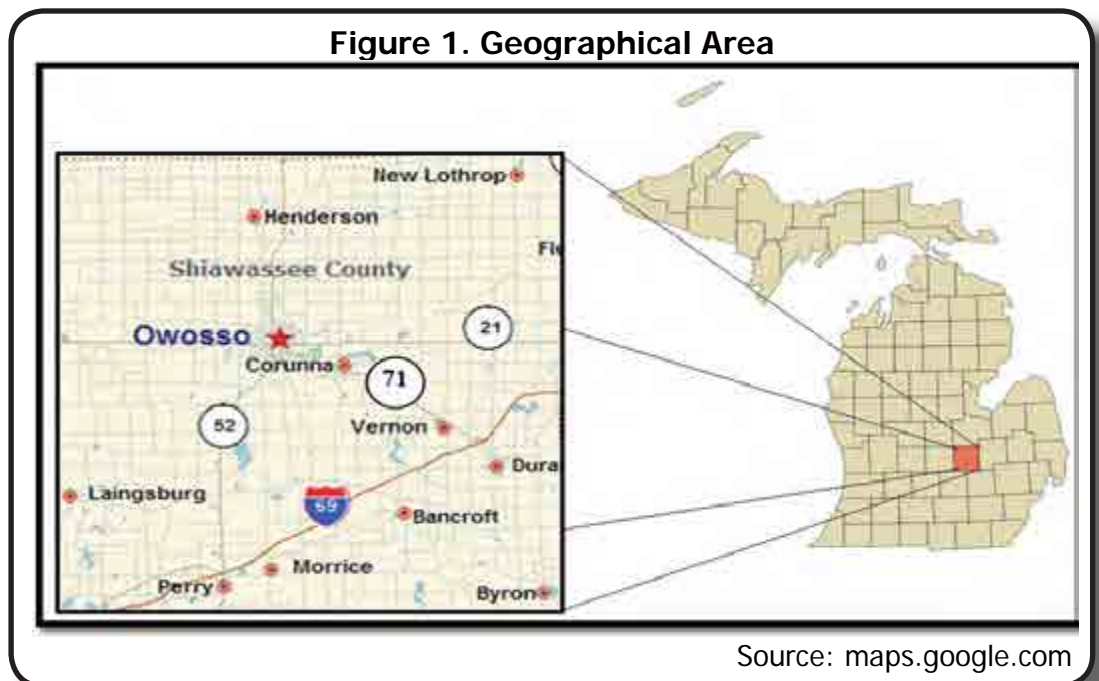
An examination of socioeconomic characteristics such as population, employment, income base, and housing can identify trends and opportunities that will influence future land use decisions and policy choices. Because the demographics of a neighborhood or larger community do not function in a vacuum, this analysis is benchmarked, when possible, to the larger socioeconomic environments and trends of the county, state, and nation. Note that the "county" is often referred to as the "region" because Shiawassee County represents a broader market and demographic area that encompasses numerous communities that share common traits with and interact with the Owosso community.

Also, note that the most recent comprehensive and reliable data were taken during the 2000 census, and may not accurately reflect the current situation. More recent facts, figures, and estimates are used when available and appropriate. However, the intent of this section is to portray trends, projections, and general issues more than it is to provide detailed reporting on the current statistics of Owosso and the region.

The City of Owosso is a community of approximately 15,000 people located in the mid-Michigan region. Owosso is located in Shiawassee County, Michigan, half way between Lansing and Flint, just north of I-69. See Figure 1. M-52 and M-21 intersect in downtown Owosso. M-21 runs from Flint to Grand Rapids. M-52 begins at the border between Michigan and Ohio and runs north to Hemlock; just west of Saginaw. Travel time to Owosso from Lansing and Flint is 30-40 minutes. Owosso is located one and a half hours away from Detroit and Grand Rapids, and one hour away from Saginaw. The City of Owosso is surrounded by the City of Corunna, Owosso Township, Caledonia Township, Bancroft, Morrice, Perry, Laingsburg, Henderson and New Lothrop.

The city was incorporated in 1859 and like many Michigan settlements, Owosso first developed as an agricultural community. The city later evolved into a prominent mid-Michigan manufacturing center. Owosso's proximity to General Motors' manufacturing facilities in Lansing, Flint and Saginaw was primarily responsible for the abundance of vehicle parts that were once produced in Owosso.

Figure 1. Geographical Area



With the downturn of automotive manufacturing in the State of Michigan over recent decades many manufacturing companies based in Owosso stopped production or moved out of the area.

This series of events created some hardships for the city. Some population moved away, households shrank in size nationwide, wages in Michigan went down while unemployment went up, and the community began to age in a physical and demographic sense. All of these issues are part of the expected community growth-decline-growth cycle, but Owosso must still find ways to address them and prosper.

As described, the City of Owosso has experienced the same unfortunate fate as many manufacturing communities across the state and nation; however, Owosso does possess several attributes that give it an advantage over other communities in the region and that make Owosso very competitive. The following data and analysis will provide more insight into the existing conditions that are present in the community. Knowing these conditions will permit the city to identify issues, focus on appropriate goals to address these issues, and develop and plan for prudent strategies and actions.

## 4.1 METHODOLOGY

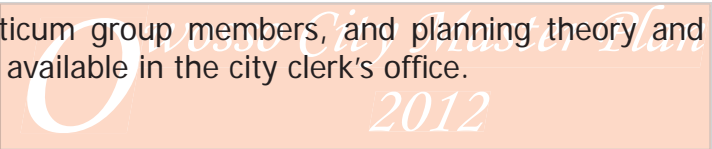
The City of Owosso engaged a team of students from Michigan State University to complete this section of the master plan. These students were all training in urban planning and were completing this study to fulfill the requirements of their practicum. This team functioned independently under the loose supervision of their staff counselors and the director of community development from the City of Owosso.

The practicum team collected and analyzed data in order to gain an understanding of trends in the City of Owosso. The primary data source for this report is the United State Census Bureau. Data was analyzed from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Censuses. For current population data, the 2010 census was utilized, for most other current data the 2005-2009 American Community Survey was used.

In addition to data collection and analysis, the practicum team made several visits to the City of Owosso to tour the city and make observations in order to gain a more complete understanding of the community. During this time practicum team members identified potential assets and liabilities present in Owosso. Team members met with city staff, and a team representative participated in a local community event discussing placemaking strategies for Owosso. The practicum team handled all pieces of the focus group process including participant identification and invitations, session facilitation and analysis of content.

The client also asked the practicum group to provide findings and items for future consideration as the city moves forward with the development of its master plan. The findings section incorporated the data collected and analyzed by the group, feedback from commu-

nity members, observations made by practicum group members, and planning theory and research. The unabridged student report is available in the city clerk's office.



## 4.2 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic data analyzed for Owosso consisted of population trends; age and race distributions; school enrollment; and educational attainment. Comparisons were made between the City of Owosso and the State of Michigan, Shiawassee County and the neighboring City of Corunna in order to provide a context for Owosso's data. The City of Corunna was chosen as a comparable community primarily because of its proximity to Owosso and shared regional identity. In order to examine trends, data from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 census, along with estimations from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (ACS), were examined and analyzed.

Profile

### Population Trends

Data for the State of Michigan show a slow increase in population between the 1980 census and 2000 census, with a decline in population between 2000 and 2010. The 2010 census data available at the time of this report showed a population loss of 54,804 residents in the State of Michigan between 2000 and 2010. The data for Shiawassee County, the City of Corunna and the City Owosso also demonstrates a trend of population decline over the last decade. Further data suggest that this decrease is largely due to the application of the national trend towards smaller household sizes.

Table 3. shows the population at the state, county and city levels from 1980 to 2010. Examination of this data reveals that the population of Owosso has been declining since 1980. Between 1980 and 2010, Owosso lost 7.7% of its population. Population loss in Owosso has been holding steady at around 3.5% per decade over the last twenty years. Population trends for the City of Corunna have shown growth in the city over the past twenty years, while Shiawassee County's population trends have been more inconsistent. Using 2010 census data, Owosso has experienced an overall population loss of more than 1,250 residents (7.7%) since 1980.

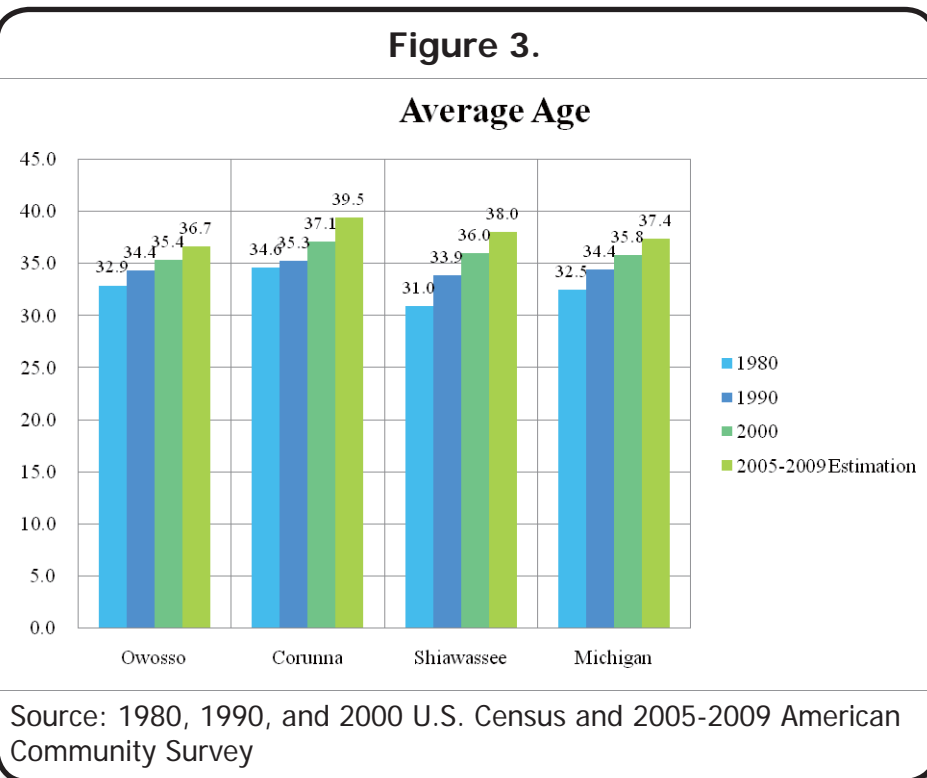
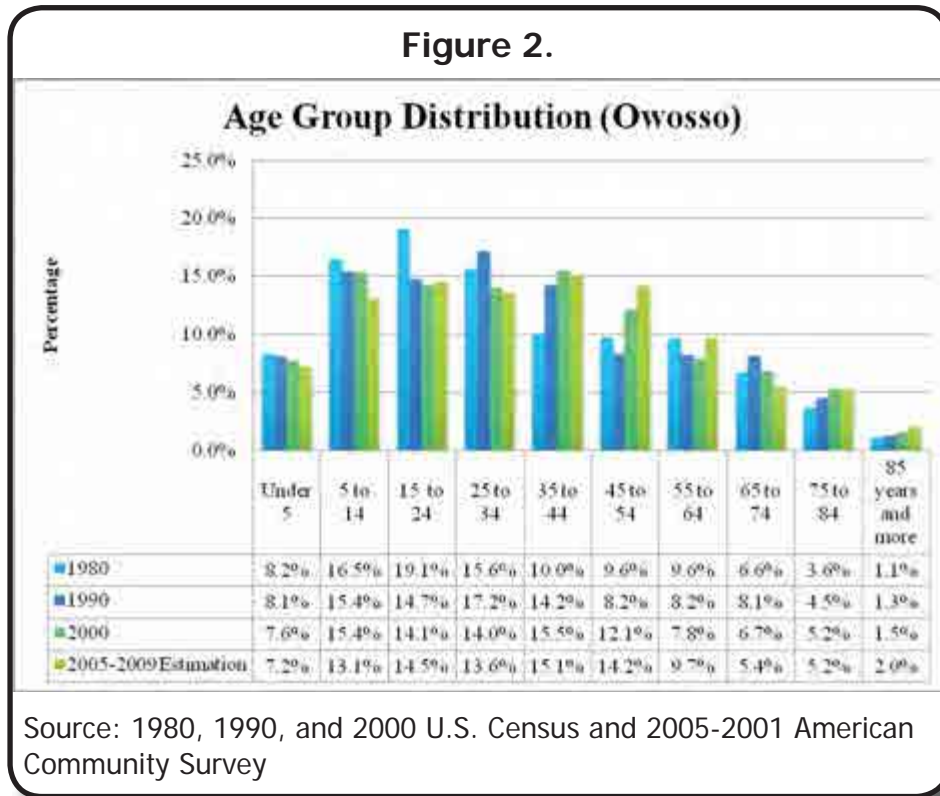
| Year (% change) | 1980      | +/-% | 1990      | +/-% | 2000      | +/-% | 2010      | +/-% |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| Owosso          | 16,445    | -    | 16,322    | -0.8 | 15,713    | -3.7 | 15,194    | -3.3 |
| Corunna         | 3,206     | -    | 3,091     | -3.6 | 3,381     | 9.4  | 3,497     | 3.4  |
| Shiawassee      | 71,140    | -    | 69,770    | -1.9 | 71,678    | 2.7  | 70,648    | -1.4 |
| Michigan        | 9,262,078 | -    | 9,295,297 | 0.4  | 9,938,444 | 6.9  | 9,883,640 | -0.6 |

Source: 1980, 2000, 2012 U.S. Census

## Age Group Analysis

The comparison of the age group distribution is illustrated in Figure 2, showing that the population for the community is aging slightly. The largest age cohort has been getting older with each decade. The largest age cohort in 1980 was in the 15 to 24 year old age bracket. In 1990 the largest population was in the 25 to 34 year old age range, and by 2000 the 35 to 44 age range was the largest. Another trend worth noting is that the age cohort of 85 and older has grown each decade since 1980. Although the group is still small, it is a growing population in the City of Owosso.

Figure 2.



As Figure 3 indicates, the population of Owosso has been aging since 1980. This is in line with trends at the state and county level, as well as trends in the City of Corunna. The City of Owosso has the youngest population average of all the comparable areas, with an average age of 36.7 years.

The City of Owosso currently has a larger percentage of individuals in the 25-34 age range than Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan as a whole. This age group is often viewed as vital to the success of communities that are looking for young knowledge workers. Examination of the data also shows that Owosso has the largest percentage of individuals in the 35 to 44 year old cohort, 15.1%.

As Figure 3 indicates, the population of Owosso has

## Race Distribution Analysis

The City of Owosso is a racially homogenous community. Table 4 shows the racial distribution for the cities of Owosso and Corunna, Shiawassee County, and the State of Michigan. Data was collected from the 1980-2000 censuses and the 2005-2009 ACS.

The State of Michigan as a whole has become more racially diverse over the past thirty years. Racial distribution of residents in Shiawassee County and the City of Owosso, however, has changed very little. While the percentage of minority residents rose 5.3% at the state level over the last thirty years, the percentage of minority residents in Shiawassee County rose only 1.5%.

Contrary to this trend, the City of Owosso has become less diverse over the last thirty years with an increase in the percentage of white residents of .3%. The City of Owosso and Shiawassee County have a higher percentage of white residents than the state as a whole. It should be noted that the neighboring City of Corunna has experienced racial diversification over the

| Race  | Location   | 1980 (%) | 1990 (%) | 2000 (%) | 2005-2009 Estimation (%) |
|-------|------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| White | Owosso     | 98.4     | 97.6     | 97       | 98.7                     |
|       | Corunna    | 98.9     | 98.3     | 95.4     | 93.9                     |
|       | Shiawassee | 98.9     | 98.4     | 97.3     | 97.4                     |
|       | Michigan   | 85       | 83.4     | 80.2     | 79.7                     |
| Black | Owosso     | 0.1      | 0.1      | 0.2      | 0.1                      |
|       | Corunna    | 0.1      | 0.6      | 1.5      | 5.7                      |
|       | Shiawassee | 0.1      | 0.1      | 0.2      | 0.5                      |
|       | Michigan   | 12.9     | 13.9     | 14.2     | 14                       |
| Other | Owosso     | 2        | 3.5      | 5.6      | 6.3                      |
|       | Corunna    | 1.0;     | 0.6      | 0.5      | 2.1                      |
|       | Shiawassee | 1        | 1.2      | 3.2      | 0.4                      |
|       | Michigan   | 1.6      | 2.3      | 2.8      | 1.3                      |

Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and 2005-2009 American Community Survey (\*note: percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth)

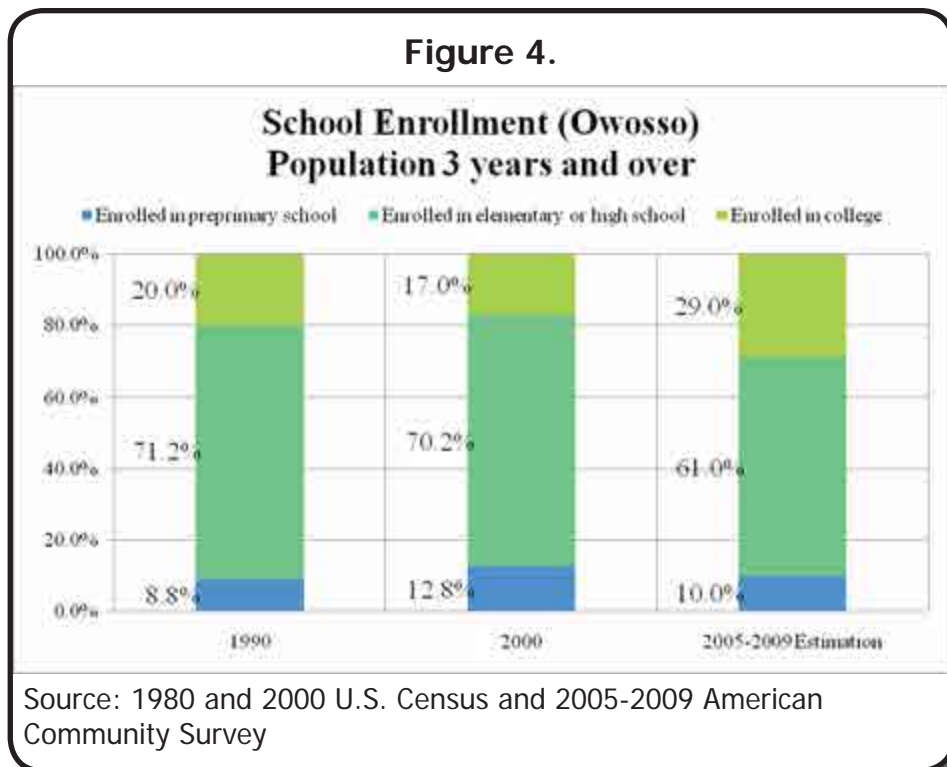
past decade that more closely mirrors the state as a whole. A lack of diversification is not generally in line with the traits of areas that thrive in the new economy and that integrate into a large economic region.

## School Enrollment

School enrollment information was collected from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey. The data, illustrated in Figure 4, includes residents who are three years and older who are enrolled in pre-school, elementary through secondary school, as well as post-secondary education.

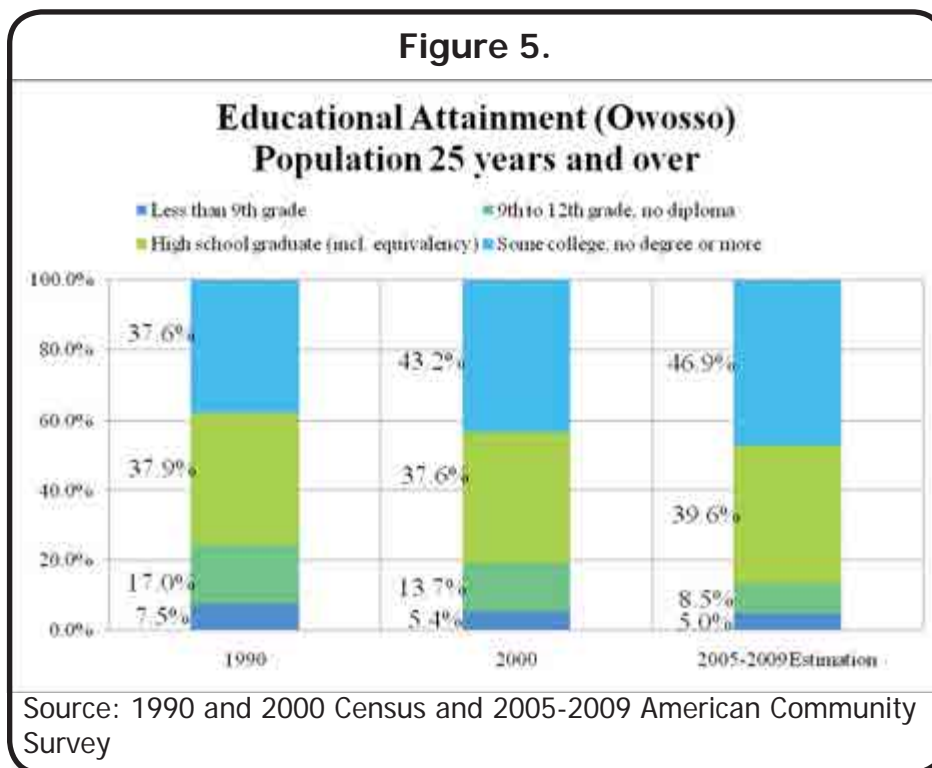
The most notable feature of this data is the change in the percentage of students enrolled in college in Owosso. The other categories such as pre-primary and elementary through high

school have similar trends compared to the state and county. However, the percentage of students enrolled in college has increased from 17% in 2000 to 29% in the 2009 estimate. This percentage is also higher than the City of Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan. This trend most likely reflects the increasing presence of Baker College. While depressions often drive up college enrollment, Owosso's dramatic increase indicates other forces at work. Graphs for school enrollment data for the City of Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan can be found in the full report.



### Educational Attainment Analysis

Educational attainment data was collected from the 1990 and 2000 censuses, as well as the 2005-2009 American Community Survey. This data examines the level of education attained by individuals aged 25 and over and is illustrated in Figure 5. This data was examined at the city, county and state levels.



The most notable trend regarding educational attainment involves college data. Owosso is consistent with the City of Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan over the past twenty years with regards to an increased percentage of residents with at least some college education. However, the total percentage of residents aged 25 or older with at least some college

education is lower than percentages for Corunna, Shiawassee County, and the State of Michigan. This relative lack of college educated adults is not in line with the general expectations of the new economy and may reflect an undereducated workforce. For graphs of educational attainment data for the areas of comparison please see the full report.

### 4.3 SOCIO-ECONOMICS

The socio-economic data examined for Owosso included median household income, poverty rate, as well as industry and employment data. Each characteristic is compared to Shiawassee County, the State of Michigan, and when available, the City of Corunna. The data were obtained from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses, as well as the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

#### Median Household Income

Table 5 shows the growth of median household income for Owosso, Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan. Median household income for the City of Owosso has continued to grow from 1980 to present day. Since 1980, Owosso's median household income has grown \$18,291; more than doubling. Although the overall income has been increasing, the percent change over time has declined. From 2000 to 2009, median household income in Owosso had risen only 6.65%. Percent changes in median household income from the 2005-2009 estimates are similar across Owosso, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan; all show single digit percent income increases.

|         | Owosso   | Percent Change | Corunna  | Percent Change | Shiawassee County | Percent Change | Michigan | Percent Change |
|---------|----------|----------------|----------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| 1980    | \$16,452 | -              | \$17,923 | -              | \$19,722          | -              | \$19,223 | -              |
| 1990    | \$23,220 | 41.14%         | \$24,784 | 38.28%         | \$30,283          | 53.55%         | \$31,020 | 61.37%         |
| 2000    | \$32,576 | 40.29%         | \$29,831 | 20.36%         | \$42,553          | 40.52%         | \$44,667 | 43.99%         |
| '05-'09 | \$34,743 | 6.65%          | \$38,961 | 30.61%         | \$46,260          | 8.71%          | \$48,700 | 9.03%          |

Source: 1980, 1990 & 2000 U.S. Census and 2005-2009 American Community Survey

These recent changes are the smallest increases to occur over the last thirty years. The trend of increasing incomes at a declining rate can be seen at the county and state levels as well. When accounting for inflation, Owosso's incomes have been seriously compromised since the year 2000.

#### Poverty Rates

Poverty in Owosso has fluctuated since 1990. Using the most up-to-date estimation data from 2009, Owosso is faced with a heightened level of poverty. The poverty rate has increased 9.8% since the 2000 Census to a current rate of 23%, as illustrated in Figure 6. This level is above the geographical areas of Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan.

This estimated poverty rate is much higher than the comparables and indicates an issue that should be addressed. In the past, Owosso's poverty levels mirrored the rates of Corunna and the State of Michigan. Overall, Shiawassee County has experienced the lowest levels of poverty in comparison to the City of Corunna. An overall trend of increased poverty rates since 2000 can be observed in all geographical areas.

### Industry and Employment

The following section will examine trends and comparisons of industries, and employment within those industries, for the City of Owosso, the City of Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan.

Figure 7 shows the employment trends for the City of Owosso since 1980. Since 1980, the total number of employed persons increased until it peaked at 7,375 jobs in 2000. From 2000 to the 2009 estimation data, Owosso faced a large drop in total number of employed persons. This drop may be attributed in part to the loss of manufacturing jobs and related sectors during the same time period. The total number of employed persons in the City of Owosso was 6,334 during the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

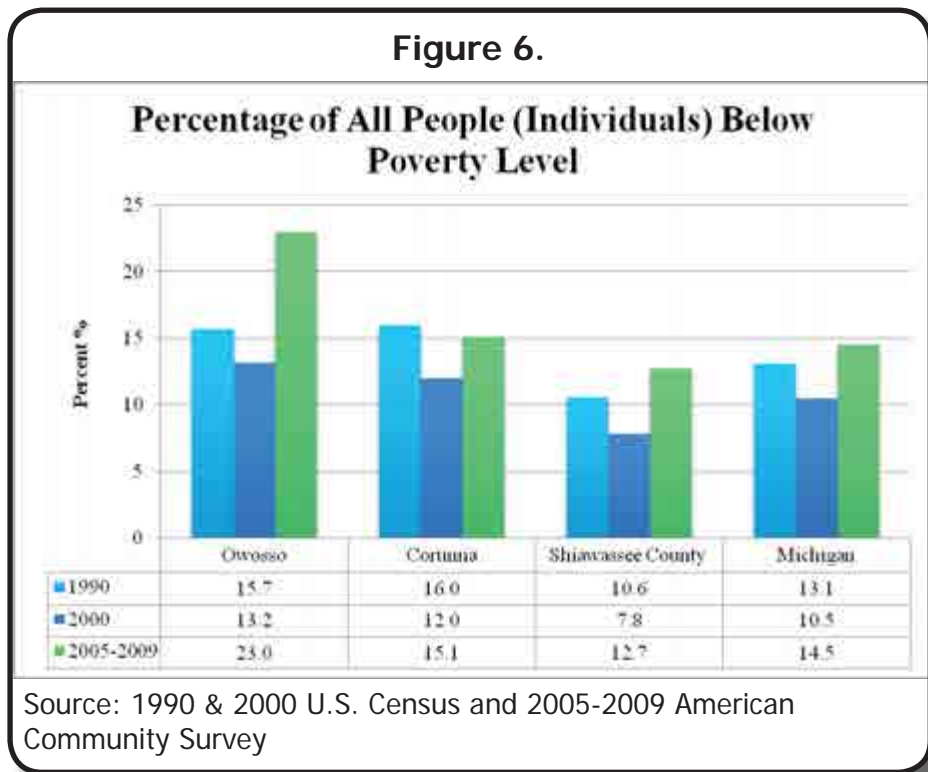
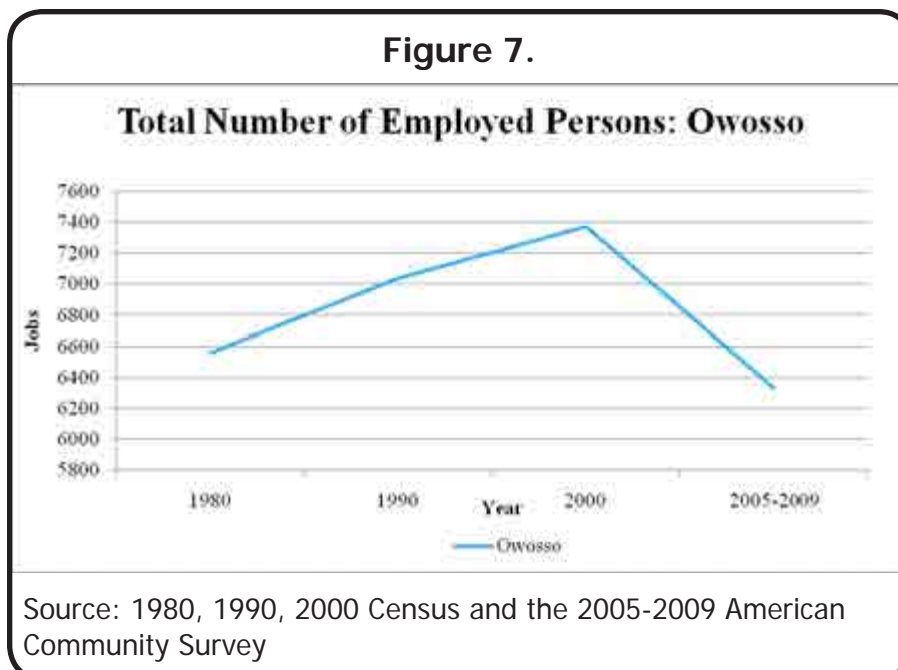
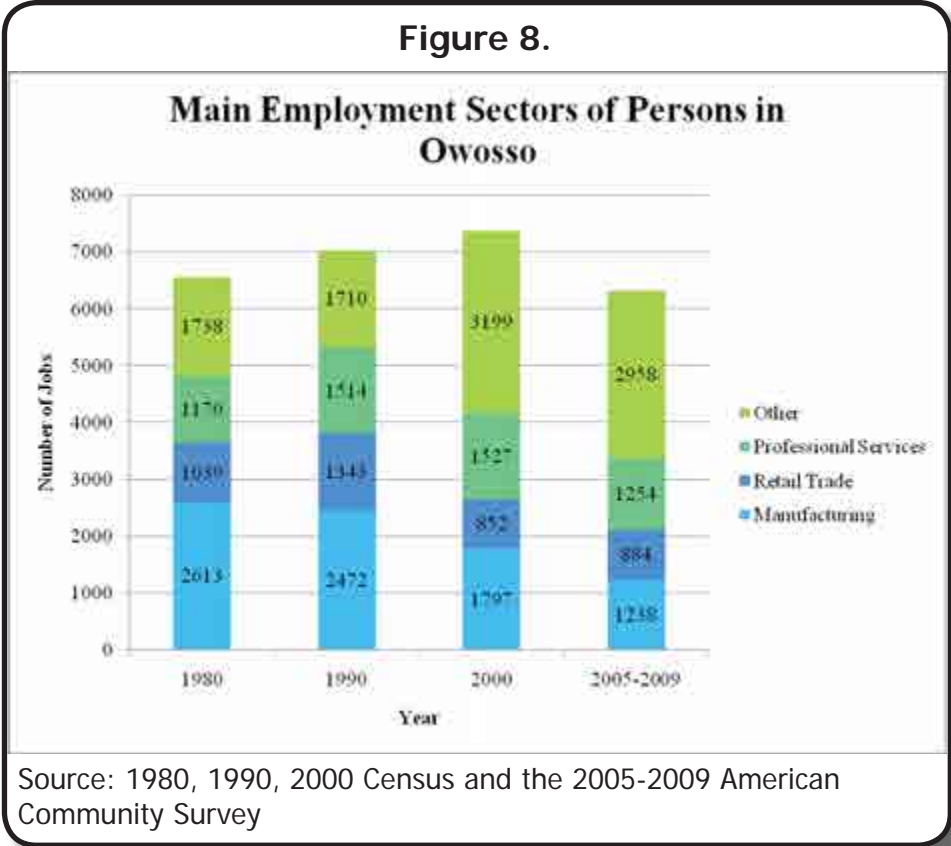


Figure 8 explains the major employment sectors located within the city of Owosso. The largest are education and health care services (also known as professional services), the manufacturing sector, and retail trade. Prior to 1980, manufacturing was Owosso's main sector of employment. Over the past 30 years, manufacturing has experienced a significant decline and continues to lose jobs. In 1980, a total of 2,613 manufacturing jobs existed in Owosso. In 2009,



only 1,238 jobs were retained. This shift mirrors national trends, but it is still very problematic for a workforce that historically prepared itself for jobs that required little education or specialized training.

Retail trade, as a substantial employer in the economy, has fluctuated over time with a large increase between 1980 and 1990. It reached its highest number of jobs in 1990 with 1,343. In 2000, the number of retail trade jobs significantly dropped to 852, but has since rebounded. The professional services sector gained jobs between 1980 and 2000, but a decline in this sector has occurred since 2000. This category represents the secondary economy that is supported by primary employment trends in industry.



The "Others" category includes the following sectors: arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services; professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management; construction; transportation, warehousing, and utilities; public administration; finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing; information; wholesale trade; and agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining. These categories are further reviewed below.

Figure 9 displays the current (2009 estimation) distribution of jobs based on industry for Owosso. According to the U.S. Census, there are thirteen major employment categories. Owosso has four main employment sectors, which are defined as those industries providing more than 10% of total employment to population. The main employment sectors are education and health services (19.8%), manufacturing (19.5%), retail trade (14%) and arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services (12.4%).

The largest driver of Owosso's economy by jobs is in the education and health care sector. This is not surprising given the presence of Baker College and Memorial Healthcare, as well as the provision of standard K-12 educational services. Manufacturing employs nearly as many people. This is important as it indicates that these jobs still support many households and that such jobs are still present and viable in the community.

The other main industries are related to retail, entertainment, and accommodation services.

While a cluster is not readily observable, this concentration of employment in the city indicates a large workforce and a substantial amount of economic activity that is engaged in the secondary economy. Whether this economy generally serves the local population or if it 'exports' its services to visitors in a substantial manner is unclear.

### Location Quotient (LQ)

#### Analysis

The location quotients in Shiawassee county can tell a lot about the current and trending industry clusters. Figure 10 illustrates the LQ's observed in the county and to what degree they are growing or shrinking.

Any value above 1 indicates that the region is more specialized in this industry than the rest of the nation. Any positive value in regards to the LQ change indicates growth in an industry. As such, it is observed that while environmental tech and IT represent unspecialized, shrinking fields there is growth and specialization in tourism, energy, and advanced waste management. There is also strong growth in advanced manufacturing, construction, and advanced transportation manufacturing.

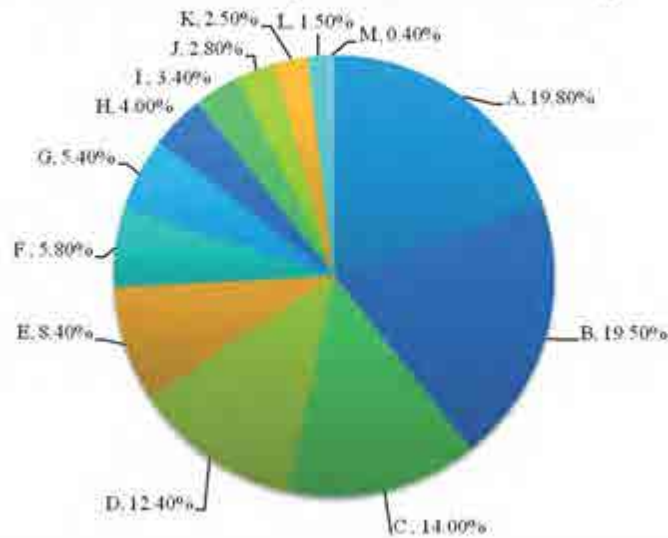
These trends indicate a balanced set of industries that show growth in many sectors of the new economy. Given Owosso's assets and position in the regional economy, the pursuit of advanced forms of manufacturing, tourism, education, and healthcare should be considered.

### Unemployment Trends

Figure 11. displays the unemployment rates over the past 20 years. Owosso has experienced the greatest fluctuation of unemployment of the four geographical locations. When the stu-

Figure 9.

### Industry of Employed Person and Labor Force: Owosso (2005-2009 Estimate)



- A. Educational and health services
  - B. Manufacturing
  - C. Retail trade
  - D. Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services
  - E. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services
  - F. Other services, except public administration
  - G. Construction
  - H. Transportation and warehousing, and utilities
  - I. Public Administration
  - J. Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing
  - K. Information
  - L. Wholesale trade
  - M. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining
- Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

dents performed their study in the spring of 2011, Owosso's unemployment rate was 14.3%, which is the highest it has been over the past 20 years. As of April 2012, it fell to 8.6%. This is a tremendous improvement.

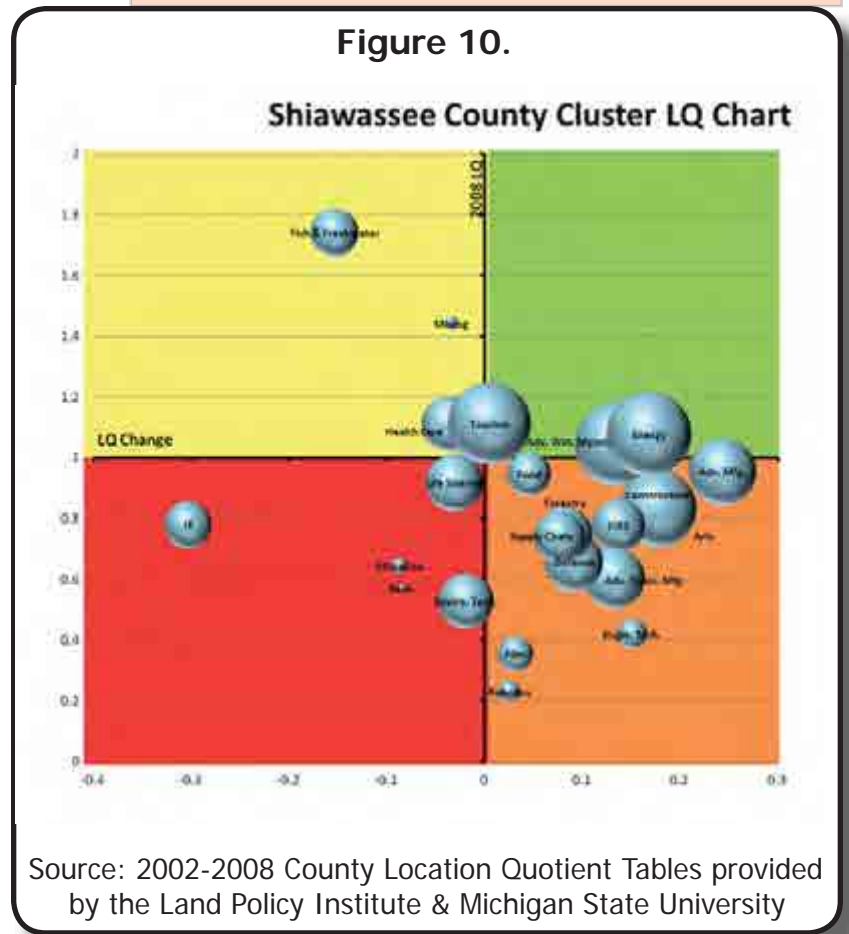


### Future Employment Trends

This Master Plan WILL NOT project future employment trends. The uncertainty of the current international, and regional economy are not conducive to any accurate employment projection by industry or volume. However, there are generally observable circumstances in the regional economy that will function as indicators as to how the region will function in the international economy. Some are positive, and some are negative.

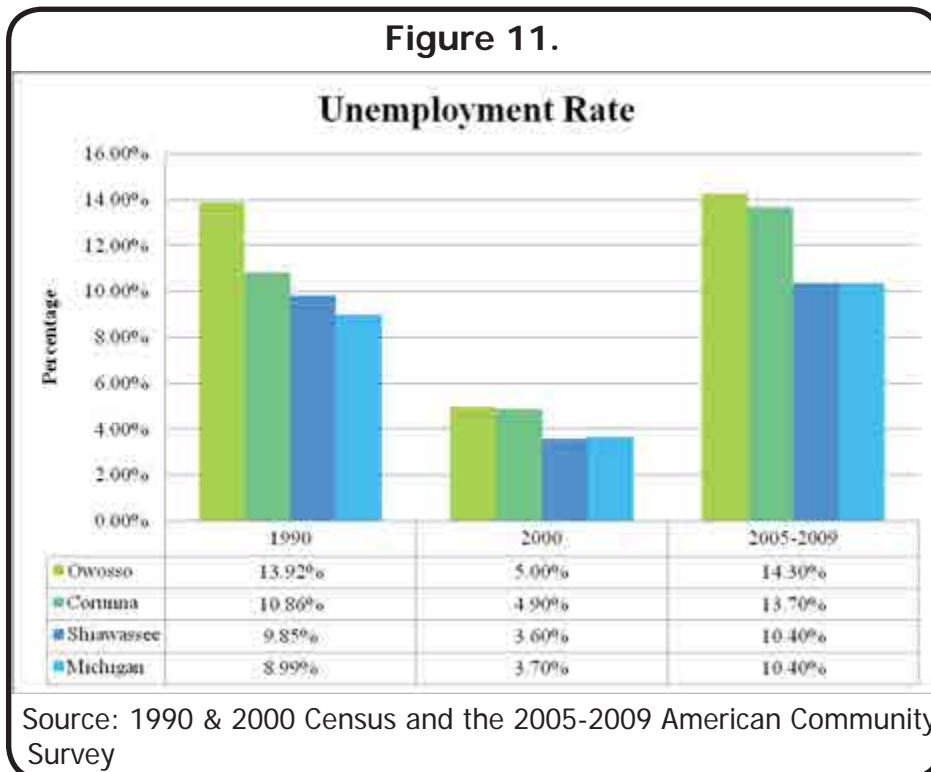
The United States economy has been experiencing significant economic restructuring since World War II. Two trends in particular have had profound impacts upon the nation's economy and employment: globalization of the world

Figure 10.



economy and a reorientation away from manufacturing to service producing industries. Both trends have had a lasting impact at the national, regional, and local levels.

Figure 11.



Mid-Michigan has been hit hard by this transition. The labor force in the region, which will determine employment opportunities for Owosso, is mixed in its virtues. First, the labor force is aging and is not being replaced by younger workers with skills because such workers are seeking other areas for

employment. These younger, mobile persons seek places for employment based upon quality of life factors, and Shiawassee County does not currently rank high on these lists. Furthermore, the percentage of women entering the workforce is leveling off and this is reducing the growth potential of the regional labor market. This is a national trend that began after World War II and is slowing down at a participation saturation point roughly equivalent to the male employment.

Second, the regional labor force is not nearly as educated as most regions in the nation. Owosso and the county are substantially lagging behind the state and nation in the percentage of persons with a bachelors degree or higher.

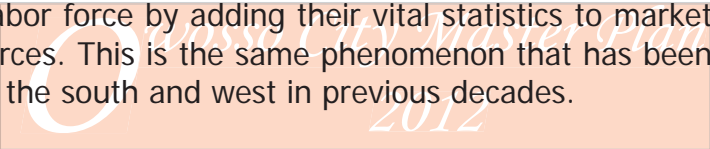
While advanced degrees were not a necessary component of the former regional economy, such degrees are imperative to the post-industrial economy. As such, the lack of bachelor or higher degrees in the region indicates that the workforce may have problems seeking employment in the new economy. With this in mind, institutions of higher learning will be crucial to the region's success. Furthermore, the ability of the region and Owosso to attract educated persons to reside in the area will also be imperative. As such, Owosso should plan with the intent to attract educated migrants to the area.

The good news is that the proportion of the population with advanced educational attainment is increasing. The labor force in the region, as well as neighboring Genesee County and greater Lansing is also decreasing in price on the global market. This is largely due to the reduction in unionized labor and tiered union contracts. The reduction of these wages is reverberating through the region and will likely make the region more attractive to advanced manufacturing and freight related industries. This is especially true since the region's transportation, water, and freight resources are still in place. Like the labor force, real estate and other goods and services produced and served locally are dropping in price. In a global market, this will make the region more competitive.

As stated previously, many of the future jobs shall be in the service industry. Unfortunately, most of these jobs are not export jobs that will bring resources into the community. For example, local educational and health jobs do not bring in resources by serving local residents. However, regional or global jobs of the same purpose at the college or with the healthcare level can. As such, Owosso could look to rebound by tying its future to exporting education to out-of-area residents (as a college town) and by bringing in patients to its healthcare centers from outside the region. Owosso may also look to attract visitors to increase its accommodation and recreation job base. Transitioning to a tourist destination or to a larger bedroom community could bring in more economic activity.

Lastly, Owosso may look to benefit from the labor forces in Genesee County and the Lansing area. Many workers in these regions have and will continue to migrate to the Shiawassee County region, due to its strategic location, quality of life, and lower real estate values. These workers will effectively be exporting their trade outside the region in exchange for wages that will be spent inside the region. The county will thereby realize the effects of what is known as the employment multiplier without actually offering the employment. These workers will spend money in the region on goods and services, creating jobs. Furthermore, these workers

will eventually build up the capacity of the labor force by adding their vital statistics to market studies and through their locally spent resources. This is the same phenomenon that has been observed in some retirement communities of the south and west in previous decades.



In summary, Owosso could seek an influx of workers from outside the region, and these workers will begin to build-up a more sustainable and balanced economy. Furthermore, the region will likely see gains in advanced manufacturing and high level service jobs due to the decreasing cost of the available labor market and infrastructure. Following the trends and initiatives of adjacent regions, these gains are generally expected to be in the fields of energy development, advanced automotive, healthcare, and education. The expected numbers for employment and the timeline for this employment are unknown.

## 4.4 HOUSING

The housing data analyzed for Owosso includes total housing units, owner occupied and renter occupied housing units; vacancy rates; and foreclosure rates for the city, county and nation as a whole. Home ownership data were also examined including single family and multifamily homes, housing values and household size trends. The data were collected from the 1990 and 2000 Census, as well as the 2005-2009 American Community Surveys. Data were also obtained from the GIS database maintained by the City of Owosso. Foreclosure data was gathered from [www.realtytrac.com](http://www.realtytrac.com). RealtyTrac is a company that collects and maintains foreclosure listings for over 2,200 U.S. counties and 90% of U.S. households.

### Number of Housing Units

The first aspect of the housing analysis examined was the number of total housing units within the City of Owosso. Additionally, the number of units in Corunna and Shiawassee County was analyzed for the purposes of comparison. Between the years of 1990 and 2009 the total number of housing units in Shiawassee County rose from 25,833 to 30,443; which equals a 15.14% increase in the number of housing units. The total number of units in the City of Corunna rose from 1,152 to 1,424; which equals a 19.10% increase in the number of housing units. The total number of units in the City of Owosso rose from 6,716 to 6,954, giving Owosso the lowest percentage of growth with 3.39%. This rate means little given Owosso's limited ability to build upon vacant land.

| Location          | Owner Occupied  |                  | Renter Occupied |                  | Total Units | Vacant Units | % Vacant |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
|                   | Number of Units | % of Total Units | Number of Units | % of Total Units |             |              |          |
| Owosso City       | 4,114           | 61.3             | 2,363           | 35.2             | 6,716       | 239          | 3.56     |
| Corunna           | 657             | 57.03            | 458             | 39.75            | 1,152       | 37           | 3.21     |
| Shiawassee County | 19,321          | 74.8             | 5,543           | 21.5             | 25,833      | 969          | 3.75     |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Table 6 shows data collected on housing units from the 1990 U.S. Census. This table shows the total number of housing units available in the City of Owosso, Corunna and Shiawassee County. It further divides the data into owner-occupied, renter-occupied, total housing units and vacant units for each geographical area. Table 3.3.1 shows that in 1990 there was a total 6,716 housing units in Owosso; 61.3% are owner occupied, 35.2% are renter occupied and 3.56% of all units are vacant. There was a total of 1,152 housing units in Corunna in 1990; 57.03% were owner occupied, 39.75% were renter occupied and 3.21% of all housing units were vacant. Shiawassee County had a total of 25,833 total housing units; 74.8% were owner occupied, 21.5% were renter occupied and 3.75% of all housing units were vacant. The following two tables make the same comparison as table 6 does for the years of 2000 and 2005-2009 (estimate).

| Location          | Owner Occupied  |                  | Renter Occupied |                  | Total Units | Vacant Units | % Vacant |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
|                   | Number of Units | % of Total Units | Number of Units | % of Total Units |             |              |          |
| Owosso City       | 4,170           | 62               | 2,170           | 32.3             | 6,724       | 384          | 5.71     |
| Corunna           | 686             | 48.75            | 634             | 45.06            | 1,497       | 87           | 6.18     |
| Shiawassee County | 21,775          | 74.9             | 5,121           | 17.6             | 29,087      | 2,191        | 7.53     |

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 7 contains housing data collected from the 2000 U.S. Census. This table contains the same geographical representation as the data collected in Table 6. The data from the 2000 U.S. Census show an increase in housing units as well as an increase in housing vacancies. The number of owner-occupied housing units for Shiawassee County fell by 3,280, whereas the number of owner-occupied housing units in the cities of Owosso and Corunna increased. However, all three geographical areas experienced an increase in vacant housing units.

Table 8 shows the most up-to-date data for the cities of Owosso and Corunna, as well as Shiawassee County. This data comes from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey. This data is based on a stratified survey and should be an accurate representation of data that will be shown in the 2010 U.S. Census.

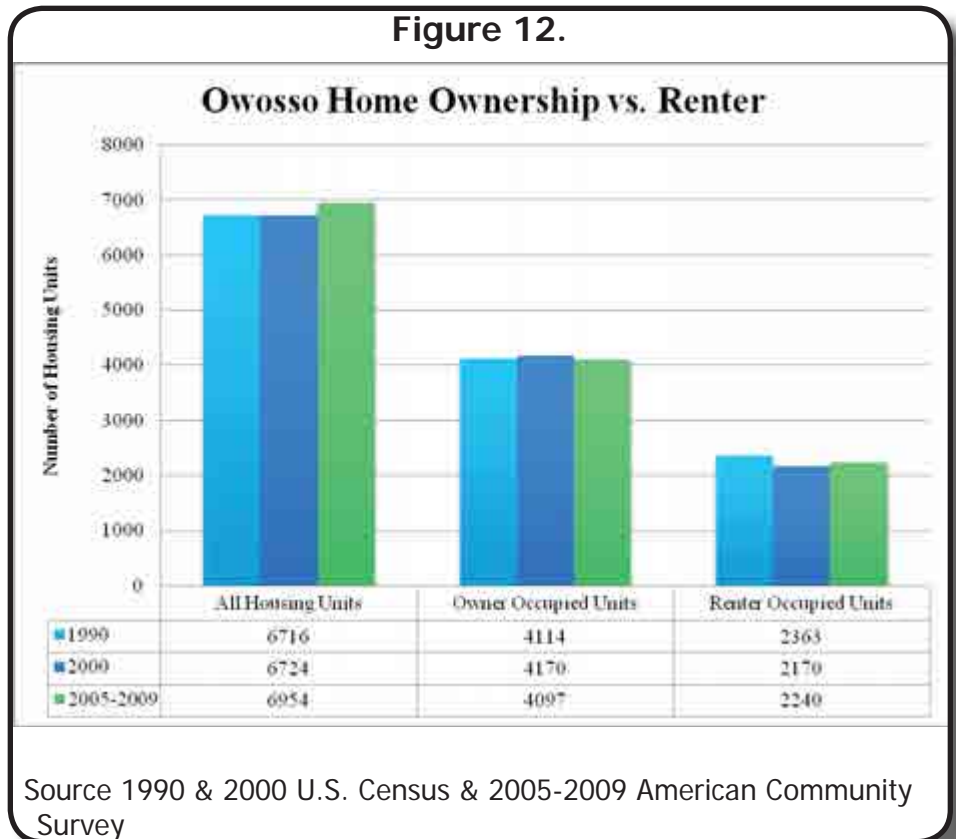
| Location          | Owner Occupied  |                  | Renter Occupied |                  | Total Units | Vacant Units | % Vacant |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
|                   | Number of Units | % of Total Units | Number of Units | % of Total Units |             |              |          |
| Owosso City       | 4,097           | 58.9             | 2,240           | 32.2             | 6,954       | 617          | 8.87     |
| Corunna           | 621             | 43.61            | 703             | 49.37            | 1,424       | 100          | 7.02     |
| Shiawassee County | 21,970          | 72.2             | 5,871           | 19.3             | 30,443      | 2,602        | 8.55     |

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

One of the major notable trends that occurred in Shiawassee County, the City of Owosso and the City of Corunna was the fact that housing vacancy rates continued to increase throughout the observed 19 year period. Shiawassee County's vacancy rate rose from 3.75% in 1990 to 8.55% in 2009 resulting in a net increase of 4.8%. The city of Corunna's vacancy rates rose from 3.21% in 1990 to 7.02% in 2009 resulting in a net increase of 3.81%. The City of Owosso's vacancy rates rose from 3.56% in 1990 to 8.87% in 2009 (estimate) resulting in a net increase of 5.31%. This data further indicates that the City of Owosso experienced the greatest net gain in vacancy rates over the 19 year period.

## Home Ownership Analysis

The percentage of owner occupied units in the City of Owosso fell slightly from 61.3% in 1990 to 58.9% in 2009, as illustrated in Figure 12. This was the smallest change, with Corunna dramatically increasing its share of renter occupied housing from 39.75% to 49.37%. The percentage of renter occupied units for the City of Owosso were stable, with renter housing making up 35.2% of the total housing stock in 1990 and 32.2% in 2009. The other geographical areas of Corunna and Shiawassee County experienced roughly the same distribution of owner and renter occupied housing. The most notable trend was the increase in vacancy for all units by 4-5% for all areas.



In addition to the number of rental units, it is important to consider the type, condition, and location of rental units. Recently, the city engaged in a rental registration program to track some of these statistics, as well as to establish a rental inspection program. Current records show that there are 1,969 registered rental units within the city located on parcels that are counted as follows:

1 unit w/ business = 21

Multi unit w/ business = 12

Single family units = 545

Multi-family = 112

Owner-occupied multi-family = 2

2-unit w/ business = 17

Condo units = 2

Duplex = 194

Owner-occupied duplex = 28

**Figure 13.**



Source: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census & 2005-2009 American Community Survey

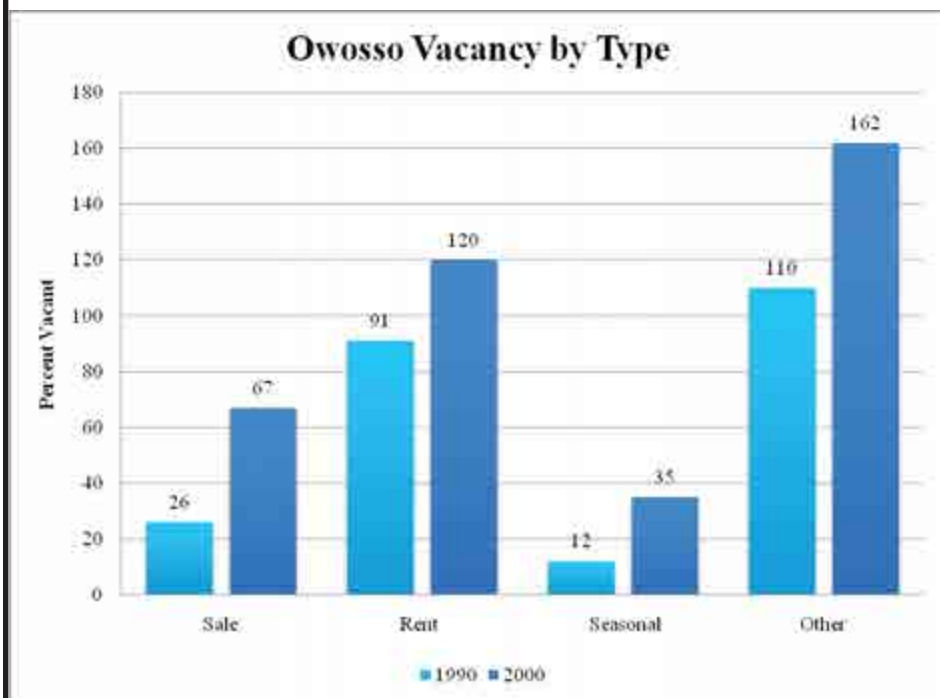
Of these units, 545 are within single family structures. This has created some issues with the upkeep of the units because single family units are more costly to maintain at market rents than multiple family units. As such, the lack of multiple family units may have contributed to the conversion of many single family units to rentals that are more prone to deterioration.

**Occupied & Vacant Property Analysis**

A comparison of housing vacancy rates was made using the data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. One of the most notable features related to Owosso's housing stock is the fact that the amount of vacant housing units increased by 5.31% between the years of 1990 and 2009. Whereas the City of Corunna only had a 3.81% increase in vacant housing and Shiawassee County had a 4.8% increase in vacant housing units over the 19 year period. See Figure 13 for a depiction.

The information in Figure 14 is from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. The information presented is a percentage of total vacant housing units in the City of Owosso. Between the years of 1990 and 2000 the City of Owosso's vacant units for sale increased by 41 units; vacant rental units increased by 29, number of seasonal units increased by 23 and all other vacant units increased by 52. The category of all other includes units for migrant workers as well as condominiums or any other designated purpose.

**Figure 14.**



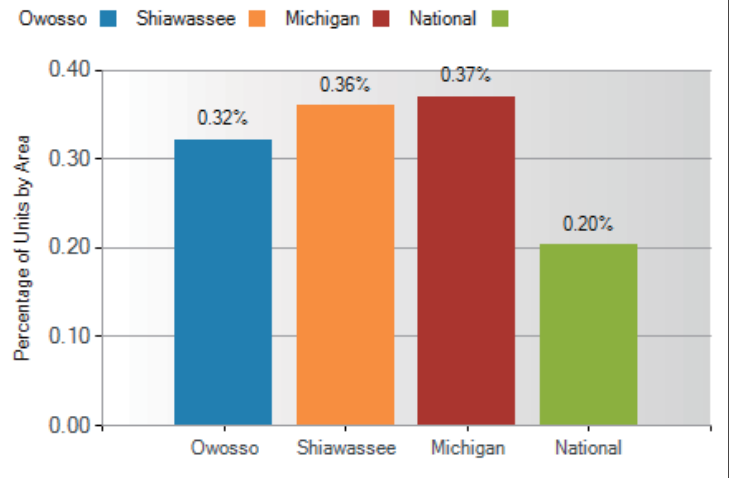
Source: 1990 & 2000 U.S. Census



**Foreclosure Data**

The data obtained from Realty Trac shows that the City of Owosso has a relatively high foreclosure rate compared to many of the surrounding cities. One in every 312 housing units in Owosso is in foreclosure. In Corunna, one in every 269 housing units is in foreclosure as of 2011. Figure 15 shows a geographical comparison of foreclosure rates from January 2011. The data shows that the City of Owosso has a foreclosure rate lower than that of Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan. All three communities are higher than the National average. Foreclosure is a national issue that is resulting from increased unemployment and a lack of equity in homes. The future of this trend is unclear as some experts believe there will be a 'double-dip' in the housing market.

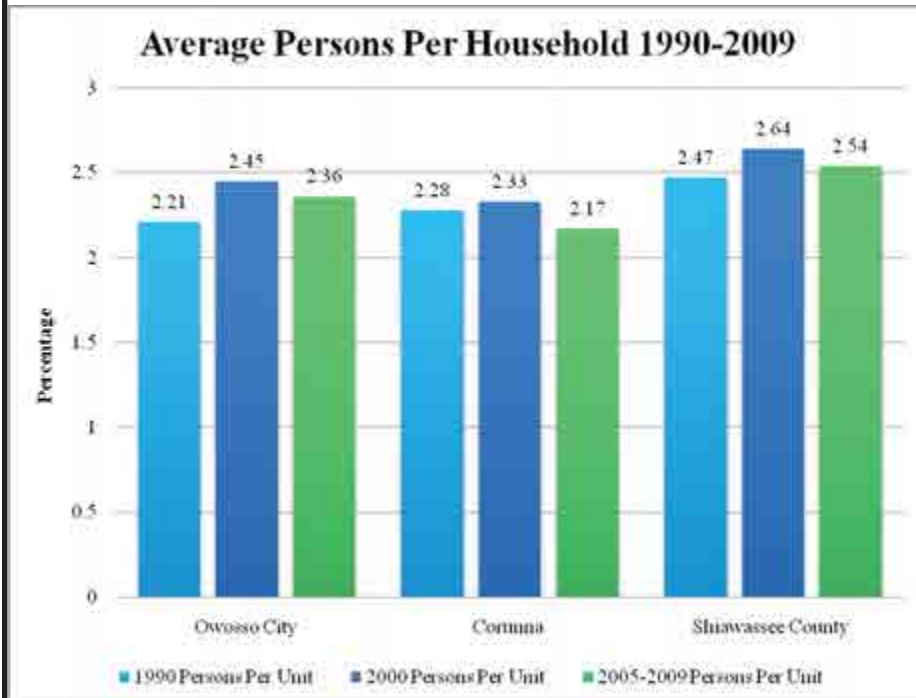
**Figure 15.  
Foreclosure Rate**



Source: RealtyTrac.com

**Persons per Household**

**Figure 16.**



Source: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census & 2005-2009 American Community Survey

The data in Figure 16 was tabulated from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census as well as the 2005-2009 American Community Survey for the cities of Owosso and Corunna, as well as Shiawassee County. All three areas experienced an overall net gain in persons per unit between 1990 and 2000. However, between the years of 2000 and 2009 all three areas experienced a net loss of persons per unit. The City of Corunna had the largest loss of persons per unit, from 2.33 persons per unit in 2000 and 2.17 persons per unit in 2009, a decrease of .17 persons per unit.

An ongoing characteristic of today's population is the declining size of households as measured by the number of persons per household. As a result, it has not been uncommon for communities to register a net increase in the housing supply while simultaneously recording a population loss. This trend has evolved to a large extent, due to the declining size of families. People are marrying at a later age, postponing having children, and having fewer children when they do start a family. Furthermore, single parent households and retiree households are increasing in number. These trends are common throughout the developed world. These trends are so extreme in some developed countries, that population loss is inevitable unless in-migration is adequate to offset the decreasing birthrate that is associated with the modern lifestyle.

Married couple families still comprise the largest group of households, but the number of single parent (male or female) headed households is increasing and expected to grow, contributing to the decline in average household size. Finally, as the baby boom generation ages, they will swell the ranks of single-person, non-family households.

Married couple families will continue to be the largest and economically most powerful household segment. Even though families are smaller than they once were, the earning potential and market demand is higher and more diverse than it once was. Such families still demand housing with numerous bedrooms for specialty rooms (home office, hobby, guest space) and additional bathrooms and garage space.

Dual income families generally have more resources for the numerous demands within a family household, and these demands are often out-sourced due to this added income and reduced amount of leisure time. For example, a dual income family is intuitively more likely to contract for lawn care or child services, since there are less contact hours at home to complete this work themselves and the resources of a dual income family often offset such costs.

However, if future city households mirror demographic forecasts, the city may see a continued rise in the number of single parent households. Single parent households face many of the same challenges as married couple, dual-income families, but tend to do so with less income. Consequently, convenience and value for money will be even more important for this household group.

Single, working parents will need accessible, affordable child care located near the home or the workplace. Assuring adequate space for sustainable, multiple family developments could also be important since single parents are less likely to be homeowners, and will tend, more than married couple families, to live in rental housing. The current state of the housing market complicates things. Housing prices are very affordable; however, the job market and lending environment are not conducive to supporting single-parent home ownership.

The diversification of the family structure places unique demands on housing, community services, and the service economy within the community. Though difficult to plan for, the commission must be mindful of these demands when planning for future housing and when establishing commercial areas or contributing to policy.

**Age of Structure**

Figure 17 illustrates the age of housing structures in Owosso. 45.6% of Owosso's housing was built in 1939 or earlier, whereas Corunna only had 24.1% of its housing units built in 1939 or earlier. Shiawassee County only had 29.1% of its total housing units built in 1939 or earlier. In comparison to the other geographical areas, Owosso has the oldest supply of current housing stock at 2,877 units built in 1939 or earlier.

Profile

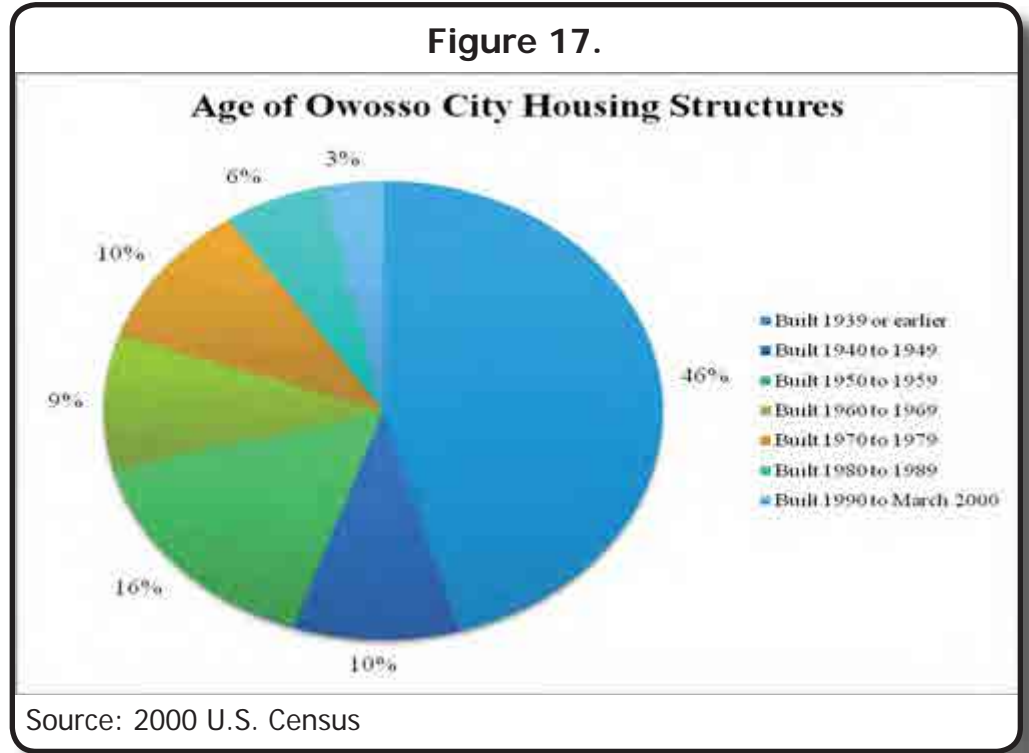
The age of this housing stock can present some challenges. As stated above, the varied structure of modern families creates needs that did not exist before 1940. Modern families may require and/or desire home offices, large rooms for entertainment, 'wired' bedrooms, walk-in closets, master bathrooms, energy efficiency, large kitchens, larger yards, two-car garages, and modern code compliance.

These needs of the market place can be difficult to address with the uniform provision of traditional, pre-WWII housing, especially if there are additional maintenance needs.

Older housing does have some benefits as well. Many of these older structures were built with quality heartwood from old growth trees and have desirable features, such as large porches.

**Home Sales and Home Values**

The average sale prices of homes in Owosso, as shown in Table 9, were on an upward trend through the beginning of the decade. With the national housing market crash between the



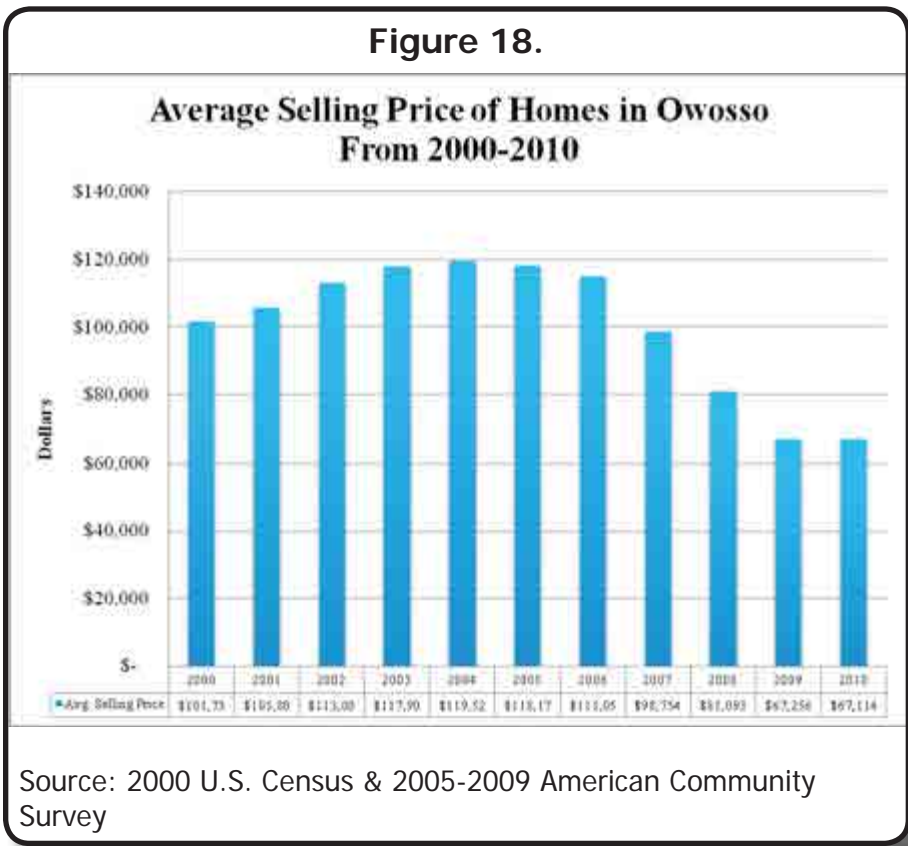
**Table 9. Average Home Selling Price**

| Year                                | 2000      | 2001      | 2002      | 2003      | 2004      | 2005                     | 2006      | 2007       | 2008       | 2009       | 2010     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Avg. Selling Price                  | \$101,732 | \$105,801 | \$113,006 | \$117,909 | \$119,526 | \$118,174                | \$115,053 | \$98,754   | \$81,093   | \$67,256   | \$67,114 |
| Change in Price                     | -         | \$4,069   | \$7,205   | \$4,903   | \$1,617   | (\$1,352)                | (\$3,121) | (\$16,229) | (\$17,661) | (\$13,837) | (\$142)  |
| 2004-2010 Prices = -\$52,542 or 56% |           |           |           |           |           | Source: Argus-Press 2011 |           |            |            |            |          |

years of 2007 and 2008, the City of Owosso suffered a decline in the average sale prices of homes. From 2004 to 2010 average selling prices for homes in Owosso had fallen by \$52,542, that is just under half of the selling price of homes in 2004.

Table 9 shows the active household sale price at the end of each year from 2000 to 2010. The graphical representation of this data, as shown in Figure 18, shows a trend of increasing home values between 2000 and 2004, followed by a constant decline over the next six years.

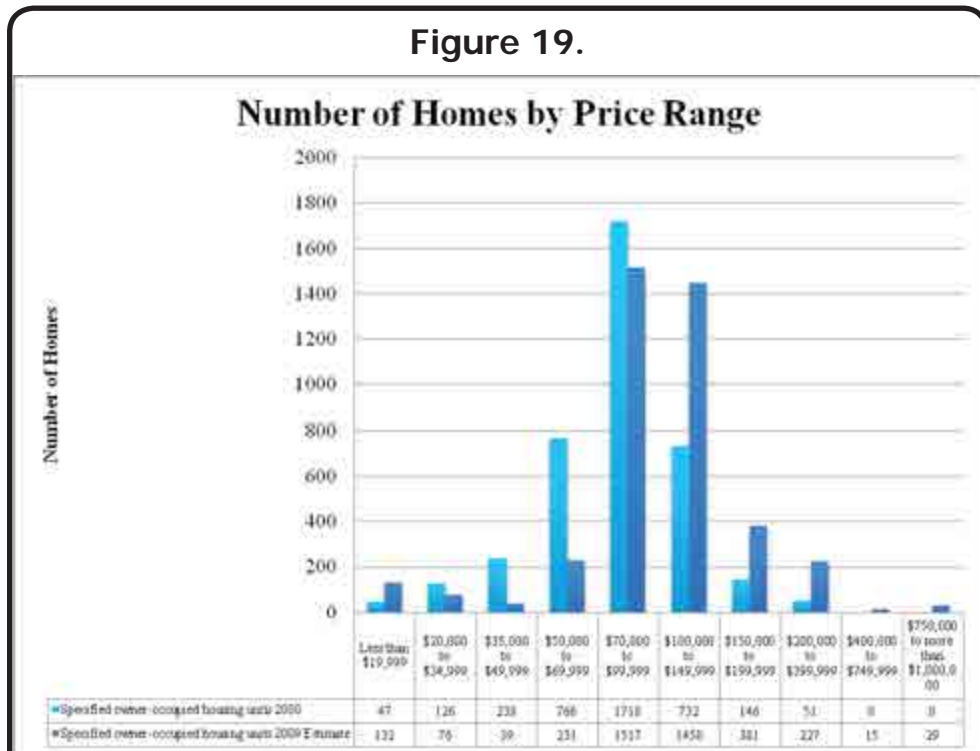
Figure 18.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census & 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Data on housing values was analyzed from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey and results are illustrated in Figure 19. The comparison of this data shows the number of homes by value range for Owosso. As the data from the 2000 census and the 2009 ACS are compared, the data shows there was a slow decline in the number of homes with values in the \$20,000 to \$99,999 ranges. The 2009 estimate shows that the number of homes with values greater than \$100,000 is higher than in 2000.

Figure 19.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census & 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Another trend to note is that in 2000 the number of homes with values in the range of \$50,000 to \$69,999 was relatively high; the 2009 estimate shows that the number of homes in that value range dropped dramatically.

The data in Figure 20 shows a comparison of the percentage of homes with certain values in 2000. The data compared is from the 2000 U.S. Census.

A notable trend is that Owosso and Corunna have a close relationship in the percentage of homes in each data range. Both Owosso and Corunna have a large percentage of their housing stock valued between the ranges of \$50,000 to \$99,999, with the single largest percentage of their housing stock valued between the combined ranges of \$70,000 and \$99,999. For the City of Owosso, 45.6% of their housing stock and 46.1% of Corunna's housing stock lies within this range. Shiawassee County also has a large percentage of its total housing stock valued between the same dollar ranges as Owosso and Corunna; however Shiawassee County has more houses valued between the ranges of \$100,000 and \$199,999, a total of 30.2% of its total housing stock.

In short, housing values in Owosso and throughout the nation have fallen precipitously and this has created problems. While homeownership may be more accessible due to lower prices, access to lending and the jobs to support these purchases are less accessible. Furthermore, a decrease in home equity discourages investment into homes because they are now depreciating assets and because there may not be equity in the home to borrow against. Such value losses also directly impact the city's general fund budget via property tax collections.

Figure 20.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

### Condition of Housing Structures

One of the most pronounced issues resulting from the age of housing structures and the observed devaluation is the deteriorating condition of houses in the city. Physical and functional obsolescence is an issue with homes built before WWII. There are also concerns that absentee ownership is creating an environment of neglect. This obsolescence and devaluation is having a negative impact on the viability of homes for the desired quality of life as well as the tax base.

Throughout the public engagement process, one of the most pronounced issues of concern was the condition of houses. As illustrated in Figure 21, the condition of houses was cited as the area of highest concern among respondents. This concern also applied to the overall health of neighborhoods during the focus group sessions.

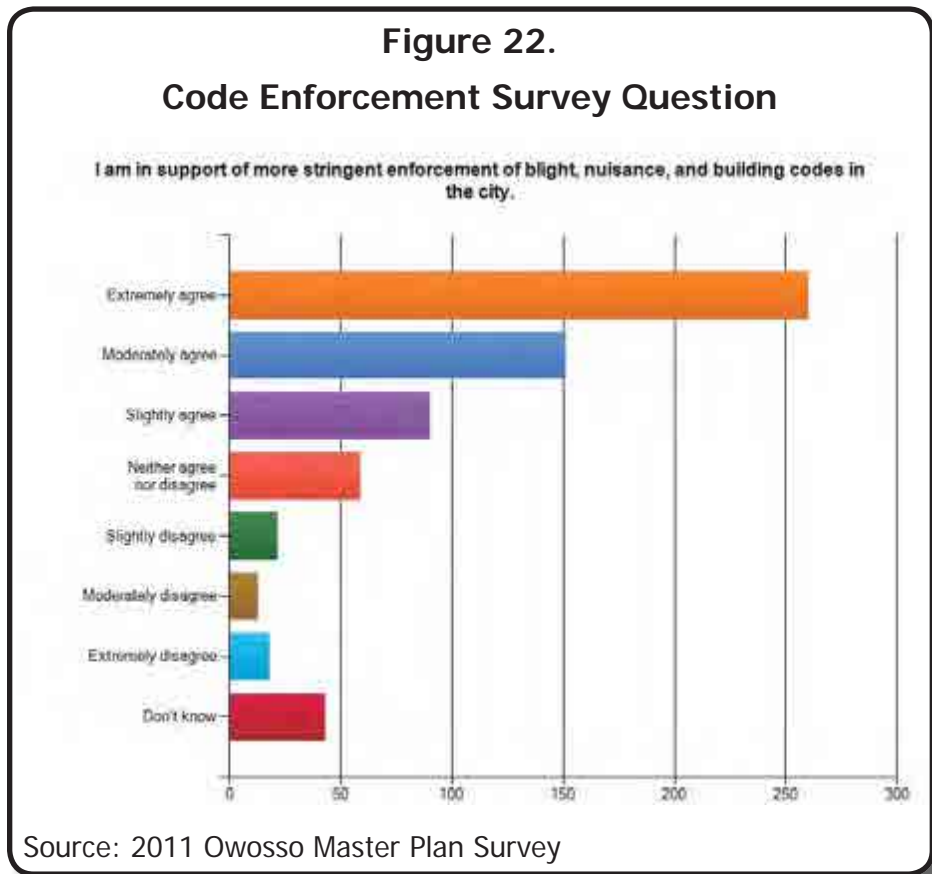
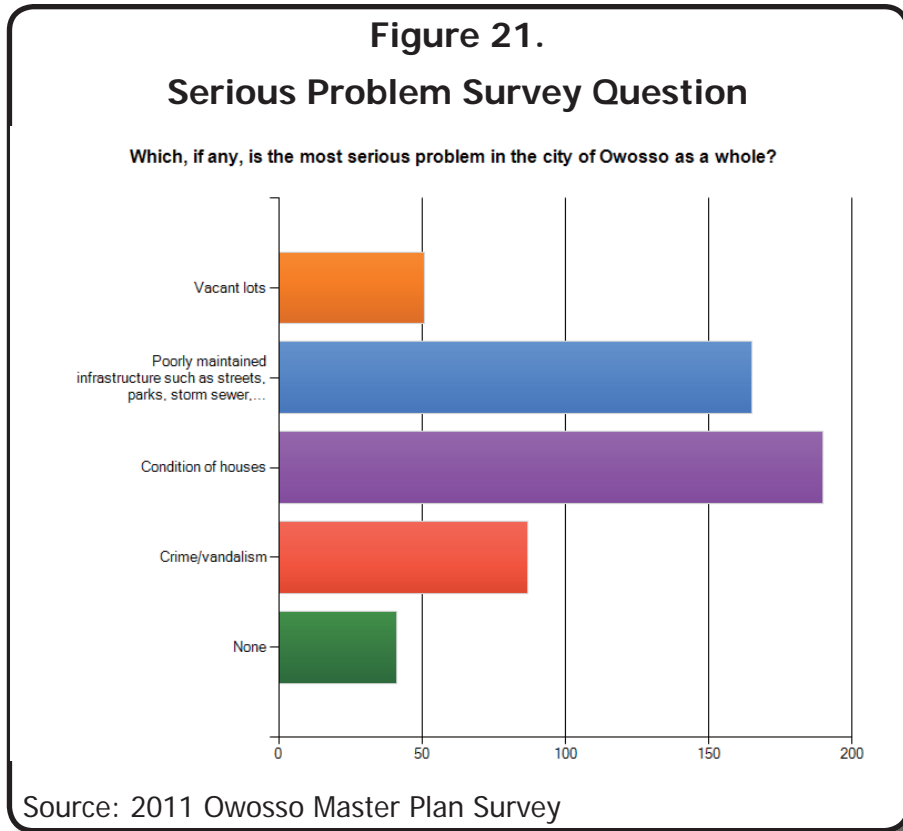
As a follow-up question, the community was gauged on the level of support for code enforcement as a solution to blight, nuisance control, and building code enforcement in the city. Figure

22 indicates that respondents were heavily in favor of increased code enforcement as a methodology to improving property and relieving nuisances within the city.

## 4.5 SUMMARY

The City of Owosso has experienced many difficulties over the past thirty years. Many of these difficulties stem from the loss of manufacturing that has occurred in the mid-Michigan region.

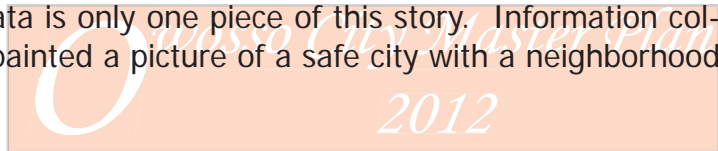
An examination of Owosso's demographics raises some concerns about the current state of the city. Owosso has experienced a steady population decline since 1980. This loss has short term implications, such as the loss of spending power per household, as well as long term implications for the city's composition and image.



Steady population loss can contribute to the image of a city in decline, which can make the community unattractive to outsiders and create an uninviting business climate. It should be noted that this population loss is more of a result of the changing structure of the typical family in the nation than it is to any other reason.

The poverty and unemployment rates for Owosso are higher than the other comparable areas. Median income within the city is also lower than other comparable areas. The combination of this data paints a picture of a community that is struggling economically and may be in general decline.

It is important to note, however, that the data is only one piece of this story. Information collected from residents during a focus group painted a picture of a safe city with a neighborhood feel.



The City of Owosso is also more racially homogenous than Corunna, Shiawassee County and the State of Michigan. This lack of diversity can make the community racially isolated and leave residents less prepared to function in an increasingly global economy. The community is also experiencing some difficulties with the educational attainment of its citizens aged 25 and older. Owosso has a lower rate of individuals 25 and older who have completed at least some college. Good news for the City of Owosso, however, is that the rates of individuals who are currently enrolled in college are higher than other comparable communities. This bodes well for the future of the city and may demonstrate the increased presence of Baker College in the community, signaling the rise of a college town.

Profile

A significant obstacle for the City of Owosso as they move into the future is the age of the city's housing stock. Almost half of the city's housing stock was constructed prior to 1940. Housing of this age is likely to require significant ongoing cosmetic upkeep and physical maintenance; such upkeep can be costly and time consuming. This type of housing is appealing to some, but it does not meet the expectations of most modern home buyers. This disconnect between the current housing stock and the desires of most home buyers raises concerns about the attractiveness of the community to potential newcomers. It also raises concerns as to whether or not people looking to move within the city will be able to find housing that meets their needs.

Much of this housing is used for rental purposes as well. While this is a perfectly normal and expected trend, the fact that so many rental units are in single family homes could potentially create more maintenance issues that destabilize neighborhoods. Another issue related to housing is the fact that Owosso has a higher vacancy rate than Corunna and Shiawassee County. This could potentially mean more neglected homes within the city. It likely means a lack of investment in many homes and a lack of updates and renovations to existing housing stock. This could lead to the potential decline in housing values throughout the city.

The age of Owosso's housing stock is a concern for the community. Maintenance of these homes can be costly and time consuming. With the City of Owosso's poverty levels increasing over the past decades, as well as lower median income levels compared to the State of Michigan and other surrounding communities, some community members may not be able to adequately finance home improvements. The city should be sure to communicate the presence and availability of city and statewide resources that can aid with home improvements and repairs. Any funds and assistance that the city can provide to residents to address the upkeep of housing could be valuable to the community in the long run.

The city also needs to think about the presence and prevalence of rental housing units in Owosso. There has been an increasing number of vacant housing units in the city. Programs that monitor, maintain, and improve rental units will be crucial to maintaining a safe, equitable, affordable, and economically viable housing stock.

# CHAPTER FIVE: EXISTING LAND USE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

5.1 METHODOLOGY

5.2 LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

5.3 SUMMARY



## 5.0 INTRODUCTION

Realizing the vision of this master plan will not be possible without understanding the current configuration and function of the existing land uses within the community. This section shall illustrate and explain how, where, and to what degree economic, social, residential, institutional, and other uses occur within the city. This map and description is central to the formulation of a future land use map that shall attempt to achieve the goals of the master plan. This section focuses on the use of the land as the primary indicator of function instead of the other demographic and physical attributes that were outlined in the existing conditions section.

This existing land use inventory and map is useful for the planning commission in considering zoning and land use changes or developmental projects because this map illustrates what the current uses are as opposed to the planned or zoned uses. With this in mind, the planning commission can better judge how proposed land uses would integrate with the existing built environment, leading to more efficient transitions in land use and more prudent zoning changes. This map can also indicate areas where spot uses or problematic uses should be targeted for change or redevelopment.

The existing land use map will serve as a ready reference for the city in its consideration of land use and infrastructure improvement proposals. While Owosso is largely built out and will not be considering vast or substantial changes in its land use pattern, the map will still serve to shape policy and future land use.

## 5.1 METHODOLOGY

Existing land uses were determined by combining city assessment records with aerial imagery and field survey data. The initial map was created using assessment data as applied to the global information system (GIS) mapping software. Using this data, each parcel in the city is categorized as agricultural, residential, commercial, manufacturing, utilities, or exempt classification. Furthermore, the parcels are designated as vacant or improved within the above classifications.

Using this as a base map, uses were further delineated and checked against the field survey and aerial imagery. For example, though equalization records categorize apartment buildings as 'commercial improved,' a windshield survey would reclassify such properties into multiple-family residential on the existing land use map.

Once land uses were identified by using the above data sources, the map was delivered to the planning commission to ensure that no errors were committed and that the provided land use categories were adequate.

## 5.2 LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

Each existing land use was placed in one of ten general land use categories. The Map 9, depicts the geographic distribution of the land use classifications.

In general, the city of Owosso is a medium density, urbanized area that was built between the late 19th century and present day. The city is bisected by the Shiawassee River, three state highways, and numerous railroads. Downtown is centralized in the city, connecting to the primary corridor, M-21, which connects Westtown to the west and the community's primary commercial corridor to the east. The city is easily divided into four walkable quadrants that each contain a school, neighborhood retail, and neighborhood parks.

The modern industrial area of the city is in the extreme southeast, however, many existing and abandoned industrial sites exist in the community's core along the rail lines and the river. Commercial uses are located predominantly in the downtown and along the M-21 corridor. Large institutional uses included Baker College on the south side and Memorial healthcare on the north side, both off of North M-52.

Outside the city, there is a large industrial park west of town south of M-21, additional commercial uses north of the city on M-52, and a large concentration of modern commercial (mostly retail) east of town on M-21. The predominant uses outside of the city are agricultural and low density residential.

Table 10 indicates the approximate usage of land in the city in terms to parcel count and acreage. Improved residential accounts for over 62% of land use in the city, monopolizing over 5,000 parcels. Improved commercial and industrial parcels account for the second and third most prevalent

| Prop Class | Number | Acreage | Percent | Description               |
|------------|--------|---------|---------|---------------------------|
| All        | 6524   | 2025    | 100.0%  | All properties            |
| 201        | 375    | 221.66  | 10.9%   | Commercial Improved       |
| 202        | 48     | 19.07   | 0.9%    | Commercial Vacant         |
| 301        | 37     | 200.36  | 9.9%    | Industrial Improved       |
| 302        | 5      | 13.11   | 0.6%    | Industrial Vacant         |
| 303        | 3      | 1.67    | 0.1%    | Utility Improved          |
| 304        | 14     | 4.61    | 0.2%    | Utility Vacant            |
| 401        | 5080   | 1192.35 | 58.9%   | Residential Improved      |
| 402        | 292    | 68.82   | 3.4%    | Residential Vacant        |
| 601        | 11     | 3.51    | 0.2%    | Reference Real            |
| 701        | 15     | 1.91    | 5.4%    | Public Schools            |
| 702        | 3      | 0.47    | 0.0%    | Parochial Schools         |
| 703        | 52     | 7.85    | 0.4%    | Churches                  |
| 704        | 134    | 128.5   | 6.3%    | City Property             |
| 706        | 5      | 1.01    | 0.0%    | State Property            |
| 707        | 2      | 0.76    | 0.0%    | Federal Property          |
| 709        | 49     | 1.6     | 0.1%    | Railroads                 |
| 711        | 3      | 0.35    | 0.0%    | Cemeteries                |
| 712        | 44     | 16.2    | 0.8%    | Other Exempt              |
| 713        | 2      | 0.2     | 0.0%    | Utilities                 |
| Other      | 341    | 34.49   | 1.7%    | Condominium - Common Area |

Source: Owosso GIS and Assessing Department

land uses at 11.6% and 10.4% respectively. About 6.7% percent of land is used for city purposes, mostly parks, and about 5% of the city is vacant.

## Vacant

Vacant land has the most diverse potential, ranging from use as a natural area to industrial and everything in between. It is also the cheapest land to acquire and develop. Unfortunately, there is not much of this in the city. The vacant land that does exist is primarily contaminated, in low-lying areas, or is composed of small and isolated parcels.

Most of the vacant land is owned by the city and is noted and classified as Institutional: Public land. These vacant tracts of land are generally divided between former commercial/industrial sites and greenfield sites. The city maintains a database and map detail for city-owned properties.

The most noteworthy vacant sites in the city consist of the acreage owned by the city on the southwest side of town on South Street, the property accessible from Aiken Road in the industrial park, phase II of Osburn Lakes Subdivision off Gould Street, and the former industrial sites southeast of W. King and Chestnut Streets. The city owns smaller tracts off Rain Street, Monroe Street, and in downtown. The largest privately owned tracts are located on McMillian Avenue in the industrial park, M-21 in Westtown, and on the northeast corner of W. King and Chestnut Streets. Though the intent for these properties has not been detailed, current zoning indicates the proposed uses:

- South Street tract: Conservation east of the railway, industrial west of the railway
- Aiken Road: Industrial, currently used for composting
- Osburn Lakes: Residential, conceptual plan approved
- SE King & Chestnut tracts: Industrial
- Rain Street: Residential
- Monroe: Industrial
- Downtown: Commercial
- NE King & Chestnut: Industrial
- McMillian Ave: Industrial
- Westtown: Commercial

The remainder of vacant parcels are small parcels, predominately in residential areas. These vacant properties will be further discussed in the future land use section of the plan.

## Low Density Residential

The single-family residential category includes site-built single-family detached structures used as a permanent dwelling, manufactured (modular) dwellings, mobile homes located outside of designated mobile home parks, as well as condos (including site and duplex), small apartments (three units or less), and accessory buildings, such as garages, that are related to these units. Most of these units are platted properties. However, recent trends in housing have encouraged some new condominium housing in the form of condos as observed off of N. Chipman and Gould Street.

In effect, this classification attempts to encompass those structures and neighborhoods in which a single structure provides housing for one or two families on a platted or master deeded parcel. This use is the predominate use in the city in both area and numerical terms. This use occurs mainly on platted parcels in recorded subdivision on lots that are 60-80 feet wide for single family units. The housing along the Shiawassee River, north of downtown, is an exception, with these lots being larger and more irregular.



Existing Land Use

In Owosso, this use is established on a grid pattern of streets that has expanded concentrically from downtown and Westtown over the years, with the newest housing on the northeast side of the city. These neighborhoods almost universally contain sidewalks and are walkable to schools and local retail. The housing sub-section of the existing conditions section has more details on housing and related demographics.

Concerning the existing land use, a principal problem confronting some low density residential areas is incompatible land use relationships and/or incompatible zoning. Incompatible land use relationships occur when adjacent land uses, either by the nature of the activity or scale of development, negatively impact the enjoyment or use of one or more of the properties. An obvious example of this condition is a residence located next to an industry.

Incompatible zoning exists where residential structures are zoned for a higher use and these structures effectively become 'holding' uses on an interim basis till the use 'upgrades.' This status often results in a lack of upkeep, lending difficulties for residential sales, and absentee ownership, leading to neighborhood destabilization. The above problems are observed on East Main Street, M-71, and on the periphery of downtown.

Other issues concerning housing are detailed in the critical areas section of the plan.

**High Density Residential**

This multiple-family residential category includes structures commonly referred to as apartments or other multifamily structures that contain four or more units. These may be apartments, multi-unit condominiums, or townhouses developed individually or in complexes. It also includes related lawn areas, parking lots, and any accessory recreation facility.

Multiple-family development accounts for a small amount of land area and usage in Owosso. Major developments include Kona Villa, Dor-Ray, Ginger Square, Kingswood Estates, and Corlet Creek. These establishments are so few in number, that it is likely that the spillover demand for affordable rentals has encouraged the conversion of many single-family and condo homes into rentals. There is a concentration of such housing between Oliver and William Street in the central part of the city. The city maintains a database of registered rentals in the city that account for many rental establishments.



In many communities, multiple-family developments have provided a transitional land use between single-family areas and nonresidential developments. In Owosso, these uses are better integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods. However, nearly all of the major complexes are located on the periphery of the city and are not within walking distance of downtown or other services.

located on the periphery of the city and are not within walking distance of downtown or other services.

There is a noticeable absence of high density housing in and around downtown. This is especially true for senior housing, which is located at Kona Villa. Additional high density housing is provided on-campus by Baker College and within the Woodard Station complex on Elm St.

**Mobile Home Park**

The mobile home park category includes land assembled for the purpose of locating a planned mobile home community on the site. Land so classified includes related service and recreational areas.

Candlewick Court is the only classified mobile home parks in Owosso. This use is located on the southwest side of the city and is relatively disconnected from the community from a distance and access standpoint.

While mobile homes were once hailed as a desirable method to accommodate low-income and elderly populations, the inability to acquire these homes due to lending restrictions on depreciable assets has made the viability of many of these parks challenging. The recent trend in this industry is to prefabricate larger housing and bring it to the site with the intention of creating value in a more established community setting.

## Commercial

The general commercial category includes convenience stores, shopping centers, medical facilities, offices, hotels, restaurants, entertainment and most other commercial businesses.

Most of this development is clustered in the city's downtown and extends west to Westtown and south to M-71. Dutchtown, on the corner of Chipman and Stewart also provides a traditional node of commercial establishments, and M-71 has sporadic commercial use on the corridor.



Much of the commercial in Owosso is traditional, meaning that it was constructed with the pedestrian as the primary user, however new commercial that exists between downtown and Westtown is newer and was designed with contemporary automobile needs in mind. This is also the case for some commercial establishments east of downtown.

Most of the city's commercial is office space or local restaurant and retail. The regional retail needs are generally fulfilled in Caledonia Township on M-21 or on M-52 in Owosso Township by the relatively newer 'big box' stores that exist there. However, downtown is the primary location for many entertainment, governmental, legal and other professional services.



As stated previously, each quadrant of the community provides some amount of neighborhood retail. In the northwest quadrant, it is at the corner of King and Shiawassee; in the northeast, it is at Washington and King; in the southwest, it is in Dutchtown, and in the southeast, it is on Alger, near Auburndale. This is a positive attribute for each neighborhood.

The downtown commercial area contains many specialty and entertainment func-

tions. This area has a greater potential that is further discussed in the critical areas section. This is also true for Westtown, which is extremely underutilized. There is a pronounced lack of commercial services near the college.

## Industrial

The industrial category includes manufacturing, assembling and general fabricating facilities, warehouses, heavy auto repair facilities, and nonmanufacturing uses which are industrial in their character (significant outdoor storage or shipping/receiving requirements).

Owosso has a dedicated industrial park on the southeast side of the city. While there is some vacant land here, nearly all properties are occupied. There are also many industrial sites located throughout the city, primarily along the rail lines. There is a concentration of such uses between Washington and M-52 south of downtown, as well as on Chestnut Street. There are industrial sites on the city's west side along the north bound rail lines, west of Chipman as depicted in the Brownfields Map (Map 2).



These industrial uses provide much needed jobs and tax base for the city. Unfortunately, there is not a strong market for industrial uses or spaces at the present time, with the market value of such space being far below the cost to construct.

Due to circumstance, most of these uses exist harmoniously with their surroundings and have adequate access to transportation and other infrastructure needs. However, the industrial sites along the Great Lakes Central rail line, south of downtown, are underutilized and serve as a physical and functional gap between downtown and the south side, including the college.



Specifically, the Washington Square Business Park, between Washington and Shiawassee and the Consumers Energy site on Shiawassee, north of Bentley Park, are in need of new investment or redevelopment. These sites have much potential for redevelopment that could leverage many nearby assets such as the river, downtown, Bentley Park, the college, and three state highways.

From a big picture standpoint, while manufacturing demand is still down, some of these uses continue to expand in this area due to the ability to access the greater Detroit, Flint, Lansing,

and Saginaw supply markets. The Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership is retained by the city to ensure that these sites are utilized to the highest degree in order to provide jobs and tax base. To that end, the city should maintain industrial sites in proximity to the state highways and the rail assets and continue to work to support efforts in the Owosso Township Industrial park.

## Utility/Railroad

Because of the large presence of rail corridors in the city, this land use has been delineated, along with other identified utility properties such as telecommunications and energy providers.

There are two rail lines that enter and diverge on the east side of the city, converging west of S. Cedar Street. These rail lines effectively isolate properties south of Monroe from the rest of the city to the north. They also limit the use of properties on M-71 by virtue of the size limits imposed on those sites by the rail. The northern convergence of this line leads to the Great Lakes Central rail yard, as well as the Steam Rail Road Institute. While this is the line that carries the North Pole Express, both of these lines cross Washington and Shiawassee Street just south of downtown, creating 'islands' of property that are difficult to use and effectively bisecting the city at this point.

There is also an abandoned rail line that enters the city on the southwest side and bisects Dutchtown and Westtown. This rail is not abandoned north of the interchange, and it diverges and exits the city on the northwest side. Again, this rail bisects much of the city's west side and creates additional industrial 'islands' between Westtown and King Street.

While crucial to the city's industrial heritage and development, these rail lines now function more to physically bisect the city's neighborhoods, limit transportation connectivity, and they have left a legacy of problematic industrial parcels behind. However, the fate of these lines is not under the city's purview, and it must be recognized that these lines are still essential to some local business function, including the SRI.

Aside from the rail lines, there are utility properties identified on Water Street and Mason and on King Street near Gould. No issues or concerns are identified for these properties.

## Institutional: Public Owned

This category represents city and state owned properties. This includes all city buildings and structures, such as city hall, as well as all park land and vacant land. This category also includes the state offices on Gould Street, the federal post office on Washington Street, and the armory at the end of W. Exchange Street.





Aside from the vacant properties discussed earlier, most city parcels are dedicated to providing essential services or parks. Map 3 illustrates how these and school lands combine to provide recreational services. The other notable land uses in the city are the water treatment facility east of Gould Street on Allendale Avenue, the public Safety Building on Water Street, city hall on Main Street, the department of public works building on W. Milwaukee Street, and the Osburn Lakes Subdivision lots.

### **Institutional: Private**

This category includes most tax exempt properties that perform a special function. Such uses include churches, parochial schools, Baker College, Memorial Hospital, and the YMCA. Identified church housing is also illustrated. These uses are generally permitted in all zones and are scattered throughout the city. Pictured is the Shiawassee Arts Council.



### **Public Schools**

The public schools for Owosso are located exclusively in the city. There is an elementary school in each quadrant of the city (with the notable exception of the recent conversion of Washtington School into the administration building), with the middle school located downtown, and the high school located on the northeast side. This arrangement of schools is very conducive to strong neighborhoods that are walkable and that possess a strong identity around the school facility and its recreational amenities.

The school administrative offices have been moved to the southeast side of the city, leaving the current offices at the Bentley school grounds vacant. The school also recently abandoned the Lincoln School in downtown, off Michigan Avenue.

## **5.3 SUMMARY**

The land uses in Owosso are well balanced and serve the needs of the local population well. The land use pattern is very reflective of a compact, pre-automobile development era which is conducive to many of the city's place making economic and quality of life goals. The critical areas section of the plan will further examine how areas such as downtown, Westtown, the corridors, and the institutional areas can further contribute to positive change.

The future land use map will consider any necessary changes to land use based upon the vision and findings of the entire plan. This will account for future needs, spot zones, incompatible land uses, and strategic development plans.

# CHAPTER SIX: CRITICAL AREAS & ISSUES

- 6.0 INTRODUCTION
- 6.1 DOWNTOWN
- 6.2 WESTOWN
- 6.3 STATE HIGHWAYS
- 6.4 EDUCATION & HEALTH INSTITUTIONS
- 6.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 6.6 BROWNFIELDS
- 6.7 AGING INFRASTRUCTURE
- 6.8 HOUSING
- 6.9 SHIAWASSEE RIVER
- 6.10 SUMMARY

## 6.0 INTRODUCTION

Critical issues and areas of the City of Owosso are paramount to the master plan. Many of these areas or topics are intrinsically tied to the stated goals and objectives of the city, and an understanding of them is essential for the community to proceed with achieving the broader vision.

Critical areas, by their nature are unique in their circumstance and tied to a specific geography. These areas might have unique features, such as those areas adjacent to the river, or they might be under a separate set of redevelopment standards, such as the brownfields. Either way, when and if change is to occur for such areas, it is imperative that a shared vision exists to guide such change based upon the unique circumstances that are present.

Critical issues are issues that may be temporary, dynamic, or profound in nature. These issues can drastically alter the circumstances under which a plan was developed. Examples are the housing market crash and the potential partnership of Memorial Healthcare.

This section is intended to further detail and describe these areas and issues with a higher level of scrutiny. Such details were discovered through observations by staff and officials, focus groups, surveys, and other means. By tying the specific conditions of these areas and issues to the community vision and goals, guidelines are then formed on how to proceed with change in the future. These guidelines are further detailed as implementation steps in the implementation section of the plan. The areas and issues are illustrated on Map 10.

### 6.1 DOWNTOWN

#### **Circumstances:**

The downtown of Owosso is a relatively large and historic downtown by contemporary standards. The area is built on a modified-grid street pattern, with the river transcending through the south and west side. There are strong connections to neighborhoods to the north and east, and there is a strong transportation connection to M-21, including Westtown and the commercial areas of the Caledonia Township. Map 6 illustrates this area in more detail. Map 23 gives more detail on the anticipated land uses and patterns in downtown.

Downtown has struggled due to the observed dominance of the automobile and related businesses over the past half century. During this time, the buildings have lost some functionality, and the infrastructure has deteriorated. However, the downtown is home to many core businesses, a few new housing units, a large school, improved streetscape and parking features, and area attractions.

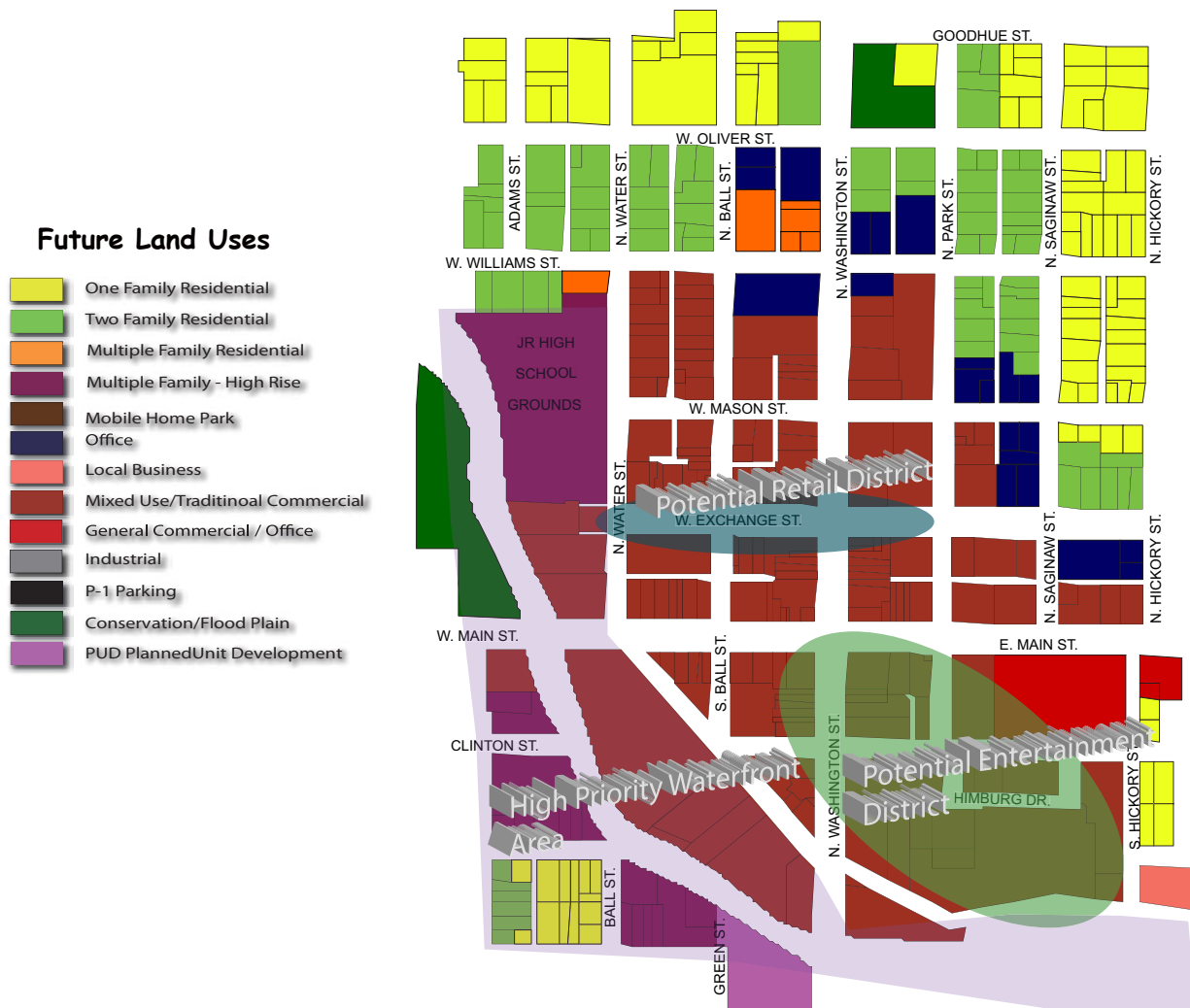
Based upon the stated goals and objectives for downtown and the economy of the community  
Council Approved Edition

ty, this area is to be a focus of the city's efforts moving forward. Using the existing assets of downtown, the city intends to continue to improve this area so that it will generate economic activity from a regional standpoint as well as to improve the quality of life for residents by providing a vibrant place to live, work, and recreate.

**Assets:**

- The Shiawassee River provides a scenic vista. The river also serves as a recreational amenity to the community by providing the river walk trails, fishing, and kayak/canoe functionality. Generally used access points are Curwood Castle Park and the Jerome Street area.
- The Steam Railroad Institute is a tourist draw and cultural attraction for Owosso. This facility on the south side of the river provides a museum, the North Pole Express experience, and other activities of interest.
- The Lebowsky Center is currently undergoing reconstruction, but this facility provides numerous local shows and performances on an annual basis with the potential to expand its function and market even further.

**Figure 23.  
Downtown Land Use Patterns**



Critical Areas

- Curwood Castle Park is an historical structure of unique purpose and design on the banks of the Shiawassee. The castle and surrounding park combine to offer an attraction for locals and visitors alike.
- The Shiawassee Arts Council provides for local and destination art display, sales, and network activities for the community.
- The streetwalls created by the historic, multi-story buildings of downtown provide a dense and historic urban fabric that is very conducive to the experience economy.
- The Owosso Main Street Board carries out many events, such as the farmers' market, in and around downtown that benefits local businesses and gives residents and visitors something to do.
- The downtown was the target of much recent investment, including substantial streetscape work, a new fountain on Ball Street, and the Main Street Plaza.
- The amphitheater near the middle school is very active in the summer, providing local entertainment.

### Challenges:

- The scope and scale of planning for and effecting change in the downtown shall require a new plan. The current plan from 2003, created by the Downtown Development Authority, is no longer relevant based upon the structure of Owosso Main Street and the vision of the community.
- Business hours are not sufficient to serve many potential downtown patrons. The survey indicates that later hours and more weekend hours would better serve most respondents.
- There is not a critical mass of diverse business in the downtown, especially for engaging entertainment and dining options.
- Many structures in the downtown are functionally obsolete and will require resources above the market rate to address these issues. Examples include lead and asbestos abatement, the need for elevators and/or fire suppression, and historic preservation.

### Opportunities for Change:

- Creation of an entertainment district downtown, connecting South Washington with the bowling alley, Lebowsky Center, SRI, and the movie theater.
- Stronger code enforcement activities that add value and function to the downtown buildings.
- Investment in a form based code with design guidelines for downtown to encourage preservation and new construction that complements existing buildings.
- Encouragement and support for upper floor residential rehabilitation and occupancy.
- Maximization of downtown parking times and locations for benefit of the entire area.
- Potential zoning changes that would restrict assembly and other non-retail and non-restaurant uses on the first floor of primary downtown streets.
- Encouragement of activities on the street, including dining and open alcoholic containers (within gated areas).
- Designation of a retail area in downtown, most likely on Exchange Street.
- Development of a downtown for bikes and pedestrians as primary and/or equal users in relation to auto users.
- Enhanced marketing for the area.

- New accommodations for visitors.
- The potential reuse of Jerome Street parking area for alternate uses that might include a river front park, or new commercial space.
- A study of the market for large institutional expansion and tourism for entities like the SRI and OCP.

## 6.2 WESTOWN

### Circumstances:

Westown is a railroad era community with a high degree of historical significance and traditional urban function, very similar to a downtown area. This area primarily sits on the M-21 corridor, but also incorporates some areas on Elm Street, including Woodard Station, and the blocks behind the M-21 frontage.

There is a corridor improvement authority for Westown that is dedicated to the area's improvement. However, because this authority does not have a viable tax increment financing plan, the area has tended to have more success involving a less formal merchants' association.

The survey conducted by city staff indicates that this is the foremost geography of the city that respondents are interested in investing in rehabilitation. This area functions as a gateway to the city for travelers from the west and also serves as a neighborhood center of commerce, with potential to serve a larger market with niche goods and services, perhaps related to the arts.

### Assets:

- Westown is in an area of high visibility with high traffic counts.
- This area has a good collection of history, mixed-use buildings that are built to the pedestrian scale.
- Parking is available on M-21 and in a lot north of the streetwall buildings.
- There is a core group of active business owners and other stakeholders that meet regularly to address issues in the neighborhood.
- The area is thought to have good ties to employees of Memorial, students from Baker, and the neighborhoods to the north and south.
- The rail in the community was identified as an asset, especially when the North Pole Express is operating.



**Challenges:**

- Westtown has many blight and functionality issues with its buildings and properties that the open market will not likely be able to solve. It is also an area with a strong negative stigma.
- Parking is an issue, especially on the south side of M-21 where the primary lot is unimproved and small.
- Traffic moves faster than posted speeds, and crosswalks are limited, creating an environment that is not ideal for pedestrians.
- Infrastructure is generally in poor condition, with little or no landscaping or public green space.
- This area does not have as many financial resources as other parts of the community.

**Opportunities for Change:**

- Potential for a streetscape similar to that in the downtown, including waste receptacles.
- Connection of Westtown to the wayfinding signage system and any future trails/bike routes.
- Stricter code enforcement efforts in the area to improve the appearance of structures and property.
- Consider building an distinct identity for Westtown and find a marking mechanism.
- Provision of additional beautification and landscaping.
- Provision of programming to maintain the traditional buildings in a downtown state, such as design guidelines, façade programs, rental rehab credits, B-3 zoning, and historic preservation.
- The reduction of speeds through traffic calming or other measures, consider another pedestrian crossing of M-21.
- Construction and/or improvement of parking behind the south side buildings on M-21.

## 6.3 STATE HIGHWAYS

**Circumstances:**

Owosso has three state highways that function to connect auto and freight traffic to the rest of the world. M-52 connects Saginaw in the north to I-69 in the south. M-71 connects to I-69 via Corunna), and M-21 bisects Owosso and connects Grand Rapids to Flint. These corridors play a valuable role in connecting Owosso to other places which makes the community a viable place for business and for residency. They also play a fundamental role for properties located directly on the corridor and as a symbolic gateway to what the community's identity is.

## Assets:

- M-52 has been identified as a valuable connection to I-69 and Lansing. In fact, the survey results indicate that Lansing is the primary place for shopping, dining, recreating, and working outside of the community.
- These corridors allow Owosso to have access to regional markets, universities, airports, and other amenities without bisecting the community with an interstate highway.
- These corridors provide business opportunities within the city because of high traffic counts, and they also support Baker College and Memorial Healthcare.
- The roads are generally observed to be well maintained and in good operable condition.

## Challenges:

- Traffic on these corridors can be fast and loud for properties with frontage.
- M-52, with only two lanes south of town, can move slowly and inefficiently at times.
- Blight is observed on the frontage of these streets because of older structures and an incompatible mixture of uses. M-71 is a prime example.
- These corridors, if blighted, reflect negatively on the community for visitors and residents alike.
- Pedestrian and bike uses, including parking, are problematic on these roads because their primary function has previously been the movement of cars and freight in mass quantities without regard to frontage uses.

## Opportunities for Change:

- Improvement of state corridors would send a positive signal to visitors and residents.
- Improvement of Westtown as an independent neighborhood on the west side of the city on M-21.
- Code enforcement efforts on these corridors would have a higher impact on the community.
- Streetscape and traffic calming methods which balance the need to move traffic efficiently.
- Bike trails on side streets next to the state highways would provide more safety.
- M-52, north of M-21 could match the south portion of M-52, resulting in a smoother transition at M-21 and more traffic calming.
- Five lanes, with parking, can be expanded east on M-21 to Oak Street if needed.
- M-71 could be reduced to three lanes with bike lanes to calm traffic and provide more biking opportunities. This would make the properties on this corridor more accessible and potentially more valuable as residences.
- Land use recommendations as detailed in the future land use section could result in more property viability, neighborhood harmony, and private enterprise. Figures 24-26 indicate how nodal patterns of development can better support the mix of existing uses along these corridors.



Figure 24.  
M-71 Potential Land Use Patterns

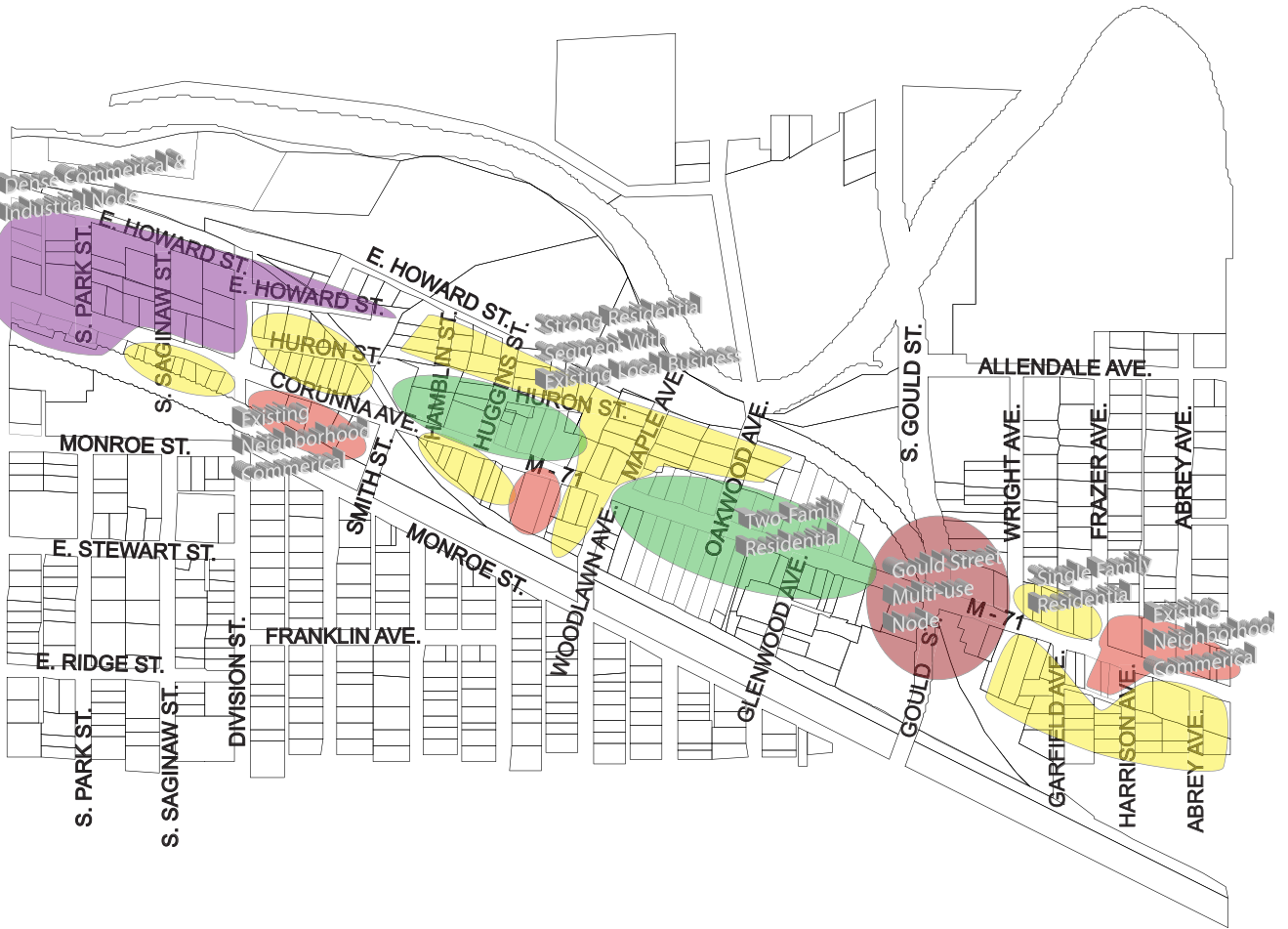
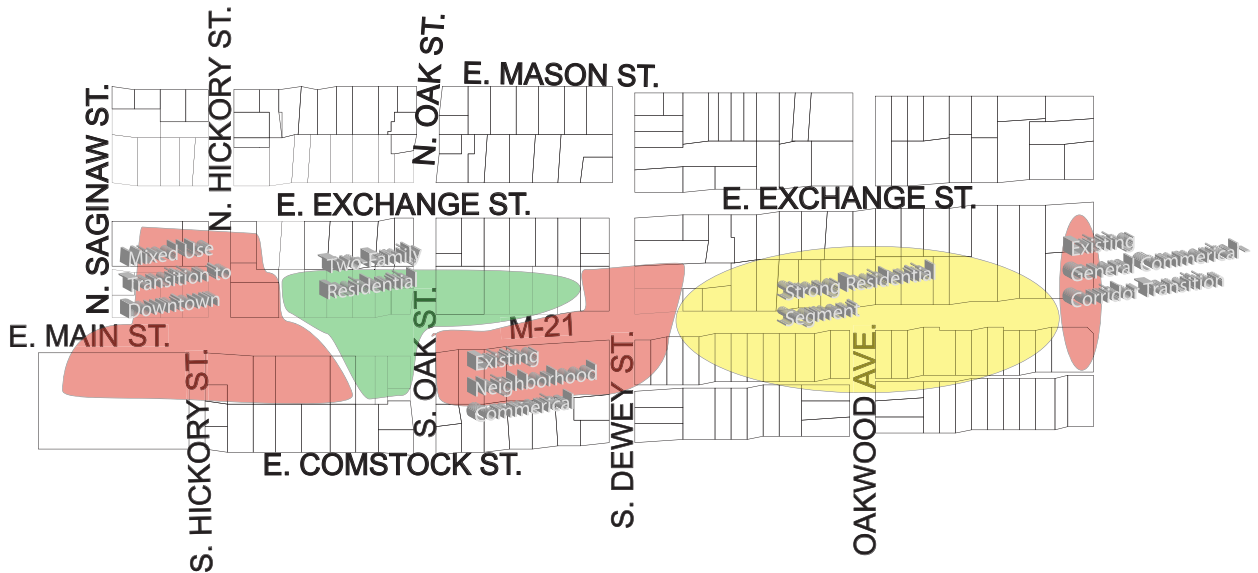


Figure 25.  
East M-21 Potential Land Use Patterns



## 6.4 EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS

### Circumstances:

The city has many local schools, a complete hospital/healthcare network, and a regional college. These institutions provide employment, shape neighborhoods, provide services, and shape the workforce of the community. As land uses, these institutions are large traffic generators that employ thousands in the community. They require major streets, adequate public utilities, and a strong workforce. These uses are instrumental in shaping the future economy of the community and in providing essential wellness and educational services.

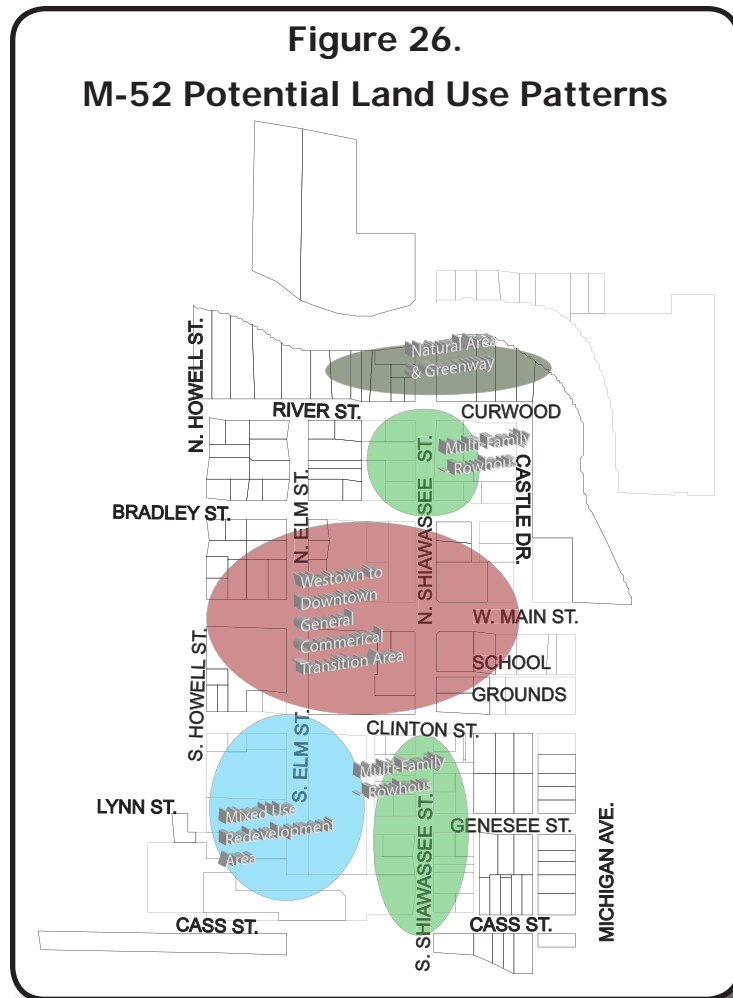
### Assets:

- Opportunity for life long learning with the presence of Baker College, K-doctoral education in the community.
- Ability to train locals to work in the healthcare industry.
- The Owosso Public Schools offer:
  - a. A stadium
  - b. The International Baccalaureate Program
  - c. Recreational facilities
  - d. Community involvement
  - e. All day pre-K
  - f. Superior college preparation
  - g. The #36 high school in Michigan (2012 US New and World Report)
- Owosso is a complete community for recruitment of medical practitioners and educational staff.
- Memorial Hospital is profitable, state-of-the-art and growing, with most general services provided in the community.

### Challenges:

- Schools are perceived as dated.

**Figure 26.**  
**M-52 Potential Land Use Patterns**



- Webpages, media, and public do not seem to gravitate towards promotion and positive news.
- The perception of the community does not always promote the attraction of new talent to work at these institutions.
- There is a lack of some amenities that new employees in today's economy seek, such as a large scale recreation facility, a vibrant downtown with variety of entertainment options, and community diversity.

### Opportunities for Change:

- Provision of a medical pavilion.
- Talent attraction via the arts, diversity, entertainment, and recreation.
- A new community culture wherein local employers build their health coverage plans around local hospital services.
- Community improvements to make the community pleasant for users and employees of these institutions, derived from code enforcement and rental inspections.
- A county-wide health levy that would increase wellness and use of the local healthcare system.
- Investments in the local school district that would improve facilities and allow for adaptive reuse of older structures.
- New facilities that integrate well into neighborhoods by applying smart growth principles in their design.
- Stronger connections with these institutions to build a culture of cooperation and networking.
- A Baker College that is more integrated with downtown via Washington Street and potential student housing.
- More accommodation space and convention space.

Critical Areas

## 6.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Circumstances:

As stated in the existing conditions analysis, the community faces some economic hardship as a result of global and local trends alike. The reduction in industrial activity in Owosso has led to lower wages, higher unemployment, decreased housing/tax values, and social issues. However, the community has identified potential strategies that could serve to improve the quality of life and the economic output of the community at the same time. Many of these initiatives directly coincide with the city's goals pertaining to place making and the new economy, as well as downtown development.

### Assets:

- The Shiawassee River was identified universally by stakeholders of the city's focus groups as well as those of the sub-regional planning effort as a place for recreation, a strong natural feature, and an area for enhanced activities such as waterfront dining.

- Downtown Owosso, including those institutions and attractions noted in section 6.1, provide economic draws to Owosso from outside the community and also contribute to the place making economy.
- Baker College as an employer, a provider of life-long learning, a workforce development tool, and a cultural amenity.
- Memorial Healthcare as an employer and provider of an essential wellness service.
- A strategic location near three regions (Lansing, Flint, and Saginaw).
- An independent and identifiable community culture.

### Challenges:

- Owosso is not a diverse community or region.
- The park system is not very robust.
- The community's gateways are not very functional or attractive (M-21, M-52, & M-71).
- There is a lack of accommodation and convention space to permit higher level activities and events from occurring.
- Industrial and quality office space is in short supply.
- There is not strong coordination between governments, community groups, and institutions.
- There is not adequate wayfinding in the community to direct visitors and inform the public.

### Opportunities for Change:

- There is a general opportunity to make Owosso a destination community, thereby generating economic activity from visitors and creating an improved quality of life that is conducive to attracting a diverse array of residents and entrepreneurs.
- The Steam Railroading Institute is interested in expanding its operations from a programming and facility standpoint, making it a larger draw.
- The Owosso Community Players and the Lebowsky Center would like to investigate the possibility of taking the theater to a professional level for some of its programming in an effort to support another destination in the community.
- Coordination of marketing of Owosso could better capture the 7.3 million people that live within 90 minutes of the community.
- A campus setting in parts of the community could enhance the cultural and 'college' appeal of the community and further build the education component of Owosso's economy.
- Leveraging natural amenities, such as the river walk and expanded biking and walking options can attract and retain populations that seek these amenities.
- Senior housing, upper floor housing, and riverfront housing options can add a new market to the community housing supply that will encourage and support downtown activities.
- Industrial development could still be accommodated by making new industrial spaces available in a manner consistent with Corunna's new industrial park.

## 6.6 BROWNFIELDS

### Circumstances:

As an older community that is nearly out of developable land, the city is faced with redeveloping former industrial or obsolete sites in order to mitigate existing blight and contamination, as well as to provide space for new development or growth. Such sites are commonly referred to as brownfields and are more explicitly defined by state statute.

Because Owosso has a lot of former industry, there are many sites that are no longer used that are contaminated or are functionally obsolete. These existing or potential sites can have a profoundly negative impact on the neighborhoods they are in and citywide because of their real or perceived impact on the environment, property values, and the lingering industrial stigma. As such, the community seeks to account for contamination and blight, as well as to add new and valuable land uses to the city by redeveloping these sites.

### Assets:

- Many former industrial or commercial sites are located in strategic areas near the core of the city and in its older neighborhoods, and these sites are ready or potentially ready for redevelopment.
- As a distressed, core community Owosso has access to all of the state's redevelopment tools under the Brownfield Redevelopment Act, the Community Reinvestment Program and other tax tools and financing tools.

### Challenges:

- Most brownfield sites are not able to be redeveloped if relying exclusively on the free-market. Tools created by the state to address this market failure, while still in existence, have been reduced in their potency.
- These sites require a high level of expertise to remediate and plan for their reuse.
- The drop in economic activity is not conducive to many forms of construction, limiting further the likelihood of action at these sites.
- Property control for such sites is always an issue. While redevelopment may be in the public's best interest, the rights of the property owners' to own, operate, and maintain property may create practical difficulties to establishing a mutually beneficial partnership.

### Opportunities for Change:

- The city has partnered with other local governments and applied for a brownfield assessment grant in the amount of \$200,000 that would fund site investigations and preparation activities. Though this was not awarded in 2012, future attempts could make this money available for more intensive brownfield planning.

- The Map 2 illustrates existing brownfield plans, as well as other potential brownfield sites. These sites are situated heavily along the river and rail lines of city and have much potential for integration into new development and trailway development.
- The city can actively seek acquisition and/or potential partnerships to redevelop these strategic sites to enable the economic and physical vision of the community.

## 6.7 AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

### Circumstances:

Owosso is an older community by mid-west standards and its infrastructure is of an age wherein it is in need of initial or secondary replacement and/or upgrade. Utilities such as water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and streets form the backbone of the city's tangible services. These utilities share related features by virtue of their location and/or function and are in need of new investment in order to maintain the functionality of property and its associated real and perceived value.

### Assets:

- As stated in the existing conditions section, Owosso has a very expansive network of streets and underground utilities, as well as forestry and lighting elements.
- Owosso is engaged in a partnership to share water and wastewater services with adjacent communities, benefiting from economies of scale and added economic activity.
- The underground utility system, though aging, is adequate for all service and fire suppression needs.

### Challenges:

- Many of the storm water lines in the city were undersized when engineered decades ago, leading to capacity issues and potential flooding.
- The drain areas of special concern, as detailed in in the Map 4, represent geographies that cannot accommodate an increase in impervious surface or other construction till appropriate drainage solutions are implemented by the city or the developing party.
- The need for the replacement of one utility may not coincide with the need to replace adjacent or affected utilities. For example, a sewer line may need to be replaced before the street that it is under requires reconstruction, or vice-versa.

### Opportunities for Change:

- An integrated capital improvement plan for aging local streets and their associated underground utilities would economize expenses and ensure sustainable services.
- A shift in focus from a 'worst-first' effort to an asset management program that utilizes an advanced 'cost-benefit' approach would further economize investment and add life to the system.

- Special levies to support reinvestment in such assets, if earmarked for specific improvements, could support such efforts while further engaging and educating the public.
- Stronger relationships with adjacent municipalities could result in better coordination on system-wide improvements and common interests.

## 6.8 HOUSING

### Circumstances:

Housing conditions were identified as the number one issue in the City of Owosso on the survey conducted in the fall of 2011. The housing in Owosso is quite diverse, with a high number of historic and aging homes, serving a high renter population.

### Assets:

- Owosso offers a diverse array of housing options in the city; including single family homes of all sizes and ages, duplexes, new builds on larger lots, modern apartments, senior apartments, and lofts.
- There are many historic homes and neighborhoods near the community core that are very viable for single, duplex, and multi-family uses.
- Owosso offers a close-knit, small town atmosphere.
- The city is almost universally 'walkable,' with neighborhood schools and local markets in each quadrant of the city.

### Challenges:

- While many Owosso houses are historic, some are suffering from maintenance and functional issues due to sheer age.
- Many houses and properties in Owosso are in an obvious state of disrepair, thereby reducing the function and trade value of those uses and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Many houses are located in the floodplain, indicating an increased risk for damage and inducing the need for flood insurance.
- There is a perceived culture of apathy in many areas of the city.
- Corridors in the city reflect negatively on the neighborhoods that are nearby.
- Code enforcement on structures and property has been inadequate.
- Many larger homes have been converted to multi-family homes, creating stress on the neighborhoods through increases in activity and parking.
- Many single family homes are being utilized as rentals, and the aggregate practice of this has stressed neighborhoods.
- The national and local housing market is still trending downward.
- There appears to be a general lack of quality affordable housing for renters.

## Opportunities for Change:

- Increased consistent code enforcement by qualified inspectors could stabilize neighborhoods. (Enforcement should be uniform for all property classifications. Additional effort should be made to focus enforcement on traffic corridors to improve “first impressions” of our community.)
- A new sense of pride in the community by building neighborhood investment by property owners. (Incorporate public education, employ public relations tactics and engage civic groups in these efforts.)
- Partnerships with civic groups/non-profits to provide targeted neighborhood programs/projects and clean-ups.
- Continued administration of the CDBG funded homeowner rehabilitation programs both for the city and Shiawassee County.
- New programs that provide resources to assist low and moderate income homeowners with home improvements could be started by city staff.
- New relationships with stakeholder groups to assist with informed policymaking regarding housing and neighborhoods. (Suggested stakeholders include landlords, realtors, the HBA, etc.)
- Targeted and increased demolitions on substandard housing to control supply and hazards.
- Targeted acquisition and demolition of properties within the flood plain could provide enhanced stability and potential use value to adjacent homeowners in riverfront areas.
- Partnerships for addressing functionally obsolete properties are available (both investor owned and owner occupied).
- Continued rental inspections to ensure basic health and safety standards are being met. (Work with landlords’ association to improve the rental inspection process. Investigate the option of creating a rating system for units that meet all city standards.)
- Potential incentives for the conversion of multi-family and duplex structures to single family/or when necessary.
- Encouragement for remodeling of older homes to include modern amenities and floor plans.
- New housing for senior citizens within the city limits, especially near downtown and/or Westtown.
- The creation of upper story rental units and condo units in downtown.
- Modern homes on vacant lots.
- The potential student driven market for housing intended for Baker College students.
- Housing efforts, including state and local grants and loans, code enforcement, social programs, and public improvements that are concentrated in specific neighborhoods for greater effect.
- Redevelopment efforts near the city core that could include an affordable housing or rental housing element, especially along the river front or by the Washington Business Park.



## 6.9 SHIAWASSEE RIVER

### **Circumstances:**

The Shiawassee River was noted as a very important and underutilized amenity by all focus groups and the sub-regional planning group. The river has the potential for stronger recreational use, riparian uses, and economic functions.

### **Assets:**

- Curwood Park along the river in downtown provides a venue where cultural and natural features merge with a high density downtown.
- The river is generally navigable by canoe and kayak, with portaging or advanced boating skills required to navigate the dams at certain times.
- Many homes along the river have added value because of the river's presence.
- There are three dams in the river, including one just north of Main Street.
- The river is a viable fishing habitat.
- The river walk is a well-used component of the trail system that connects downtown to the City of Corunna using various formal and informal paths.



### **Challenges:**

- The river has the potential to flood and create damage to many homes and structures in the community.
- The Shiawassee is subjected to sanitary sewer overflows on a yearly basis during high volume rain events.
- The river is very shallow and loses some of its navigability during the late summer.
- Many properties along the river are blighted or contaminated.

### **Opportunities for Change:**

- Properties along the river could be at a premium for redevelopment, especially the middle school, the armory, and the Mathews Building.
- In partnership with the Friends of the Shiawassee River, options for the dams in the river could achieve economic and natural feature goals of the city.

- Riparian areas between the river front and any new development could add use and exchange value to properties.
- More opportunities for boat launches exist in the city, especially the downtown.
- Promotion of the riverfront as prime real estate for new and existing housing or commercial developments could maximize the river as an asset in privately held areas such as those on the south side of the river, west of M-52.
- Jerome Street has the potential to be a much larger regional park that could replace the flood-prone homes in the vicinity.

## 8.10 SUMMARY

The above issues and areas should be the focus of the city's policy and spending priorities above and beyond the core functions of government. As such, though the future land use map that follows illustrates a guide for potential change or development of these areas, it is prudent to consider the identified opportunities as further guidelines to regulating and encouraging the scope, scale, and type of change that will occur. Therefore, when and if unforeseen events occur, the overarching goals and objectives of the master plan and the solutions provided herein can guide the planning commission to accommodating change in a positive way.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- 7.0 INTRODUCTION
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## 7.0 INTRODUCTION

The future land use plan provides a comprehensive overview of the community's desired future development pattern and is intended to serve as a guide for change in the city.

To provide a consistent, long-term foundation for decision making, the future land use plan is wide-ranging in its consideration of the relationships between future goals, existing land uses, economic influences, natural features, and the surrounding communities. The plan was created based on studies of existing development patterns, natural feature conditions, demographic trends, and the community's goals and objectives.

The Owosso master plan includes Future Land Use Maps (Maps 11-16) that will be used to help determine where new uses should be developed and how existing land uses are expected to further evolve. This section is a guide in the decision-making process for future modifications to the city's zoning ordinance, consideration of development proposals, rezoning requests, variance requests, and other planning and development concerns that may arise.

The land use recommendations, as presented on the future land use maps, are not necessarily related to property lines. Specific site analysis should occur at the time a rezoning or site development request is made. Further, the future land use plan must be a flexible document that is adaptable to changing conditions. The implementation of the plan will reflect economic, social, and political trends which are occurring in the region, state and nation. Periodic review and revision of the plan is necessary in order to reflect changing community development goals and needs.

The future land use plan illustrates how the city land will be utilized upon achieving the current vision. It does not imply that all of the implied changes should occur at once. While the future land use map designates all parcels and lots with a specific land use category, the zoning does not have to be changed immediately. A key factor to consider is the timing of land use changes. Some uses that may be desired in twenty years may be inappropriate today. Likewise, this plan does not call for the immediate elimination of all nonconforming land uses. Those uses should be changed over time so as not to create a hardship for current property owners.

Land use change should proceed in a manner and timeframe that is consistent with policies on the environment, infrastructure, and other matters. Deviations from the future land use map should be predicated on altered conditions otherwise unforeseen in this document and should be carefully considered to ensure that general consistency is maintained when making decisions on planning and development matters. Decisions that are in direct conflict with the future land use map, or which could undermine the long-term objectives of the community, should be avoided.

## 7.1 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The future land use plan was primarily driven by: the existing development pattern and land uses, the transportation network, the layout of the community as it relates to the rail lines and river, and the community's development and preservation goals.

The future land use plan was also prepared to reflect input received during the public participation process, discussions with government officials, and the consideration of accepted planning principles. This input and other factors affecting land use patterns are summarized below:

**Existing Land Use.** Extensive changes to the existing land use pattern are not proposed. A significant amount of the city's land has been developed for residential purposes and, to a lesser extent, commercial and industrial uses. For a more thorough analysis, see the existing land use section.

The theme of existing land use in Owosso is one of a railroad community with walkable neighborhoods surrounding a downtown in which the city desires to redevelop former industrial sites that exist along the many rail lines throughout the community. Because the city is almost entirely built out or developed, existing land use will be the most important element of the future land use plan. While individual property uses may change, altering the use or function of the city's neighborhoods is very challenging due to circumstance. Such efforts must be clearly articulated and focused.

**Existing Zoning.** Because there is not an existing master plan, the existing zoning carried substantial weight in developing the future land use plan. This official document provides a strong sense of what the desired land use pattern was for the city. This document has evolved over time to address the city's needs as represented by the conditions of the market and the intent of the council.

There is no "vested interest" that guarantees zoning will not change, and zoning changes are suggested by this plan. However, such changes must be carefully considered to ensure the general development arrangement remains consistent and landowners will retain a reasonable use of their land.

This plan proposes that zoning classifications only be changed to conform to the future land use map when development is proposed or imminent and such development conforms to the other recommendations of this plan. Furthermore, such changes should be guided so that newly zoned properties are adjacent to like zoned properties that are developed. For example, new commercial developments along the M-21 corridor should be within or adjacent to developed commercial areas of the corridor instead of being 'spot zoned' in areas that are planned for future commercial but are still predominantly residential or vacant. In the mean time, properties should be zoned for their current use unless it is the intent of the city to make such uses non-conforming.

**Infrastructure and Public Facilities/Services.** Owosso provides universal public water and sewer access within its jurisdiction. Utilities are generally sized to meet the current and potential transmission and pressure demands, and there is excess capacity for treatment of water and sewer. Utilities are also available in the surrounding townships and Corunna. The availability of utilities in the city and in the townships' developable areas ensures that there is supply of both vacant and developed land for site intensification.

As such, there does not appear to be a market force driving redevelopment of the urban areas in order to secure utilities. However, there is a limited amount of utility served areas outside of the city that will balance demand for such sites with those in the city based upon principles of relative scarcity. Summarily, the provision of utilities in Owosso is not a substantial factor in determining future land use.

**Land Use Patterns in the Region.** Land use patterns for the surrounding areas of Shiawassee County were considered to ensure that the new plan would be compatible with and compliment those patterns. In general, much of the county development is centered in the Mid-County area. Most development is within the cities of Owosso and Corunna, with some additional and intense development on M-21 in Caledonia Township (commercial) and in the Owosso Township industrial park to the west. Most of the other developed land is on or near the state highways in close proximity to Owosso.

Outside of the currently developed areas, agricultural uses and extremely low residential uses dominate. Residential uses are primarily limited to land division act, large lot home-steads. The agricultural land around the city is very productive and has observed increases in value in recent years. Water and sewer utilities are limited outside of the urbanized areas in Caledonia and Owosso Township.

Currently, there is not much pressure to develop vacant properties anywhere in the Mid-County Area. There has been a recent market trend toward renovations of existing structures and former industrial sites that have access to state incentives. Many of these are in the City of Owosso.

Based upon these factors, the future land use map of the city was influenced more by the immediately adjacent properties than any other regional influences.

**Desires of the City.** The land use pattern desired by city officials and property owners has been an integral consideration in the development of the future land use plan. The public provided input during numerous focus groups, workshops, and public meetings.

**Land Use Categories.** Sixteen land use classifications are listed in the future land use plan; thirteen of these are proposed for the city as illustrated on the future land use map. These categories are composed of elements from the exiting land use map, zoning, and other future land use maps from the adjacent townships. The relationship that each of these categories has with zoning is described below. Some areas are subject to further consider-

ation based upon their specific neighborhood, such as the M-71 area. These categories are described in detail below.

## 7.2 PRIME, SHORT TERM, & RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL

These land uses are exclusive to the townships surrounding the City of Owosso. This land use classification is intended for intensive agricultural uses and low density housing, primarily that type of housing resulting from land division act farmstead divisions. This classification is not observed in the City of Owosso. This use is abundant on the boundaries of the city on the south and north east sides.

## 7.3 ONE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

One family residential is the single largest proposed land use in Owosso. This land use corresponds exclusive to the one family residential zoning classification. The intent of this classification is to provide single family occupancy of a structure on a platted or unplatted lot. These lots are intended to be developed with a maximum density of approximately six units per acre, providing for usable yard space in an urban environment. This classification is intended to provide for most of the city's housing needs. The objectives of this classification are:

- To protect the character of existing low density residential uses by excluding activities and land uses which are not compatible such as, but not limited to, principal commercial and industrial uses;
- To provide openness of the living space and to avoid over crowding by requiring that certain minimum yards and open spaces, and by restricting maximum land coverage and structural bulk;
- To provide for access of light and air to windows, and for privacy, as far as reasonable, by controls over the spacing and height of buildings and other structures;
- To protect residential areas from unnecessary traffic and to restrict the volume of traffic to the greatest degree possible; and
- To encourage development within residential areas that is attractive, consistent with family needs, and conducive to constantly improved environmental quality.

Complimentary uses within and/or adjacent to one family residential include conservation/open space uses, athletic fields, churches, day-care facilities, and small scale elderly housing.

## 7.4 TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This district is intended to permit higher densities of housing in areas of the city that generally maintain a residential character. Such areas may be in transition between commercial and residential uses or they may contain a large amount large homes that were converted

into more financially viable duplexes. This designation also permits the construction of semi-detached structures (duplexes) in which one side of the structure has a zero foot lot line and there is a separate entrance for each dwelling. The density of this development could be as high as 10 units per acre.

Subject to consideration by the planning commission, some of these areas near the city center may also be used for one family residential attached structures of three or more units (town or row houses). This use provides a dense urban housing option that still instills some degree of dwelling independence by means of separate access and dedicated home frontage to the street. These units may be under individual or common ownership.

This classification primarily refers to the city's R-2 two family residential zoning classification that is currently observed north and west of downtown, on M-71 and over a five block area near M-52 and south street. As stated, this category also refers to the floating R-T zoning classification that is not currently used but could be used on those properties on the periphery of downtown and those currently used as townhouses.

## 7.5 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The multiple-family residential classification is intended to provide opportunities for affordable housing and alternatives to traditional subdivision development. Permitted uses within this district are apartment structures, townhouses, elderly housing, and convalescent or nursing homes. This type of development is encouraged to locate in areas well served by the existing transportation network and where the amenities of urban living may be best provided and enjoyed.

Multiple-family developments may serve as a transitional land use, one which buffers one- and two-family units from commercial properties or the impacts associated with major transportation corridors and nodes. Multiple-family developments must be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer, storm drainage, and refuse disposal. Due to the higher density and trip generation potential of multiple-family developments, these uses should be sited so that ingress and egress is provided directly from a major thoroughfare or collector street.

The city should consider this use as a potential use to integrate with other uses such as office and neighborhood commercial uses in mixed use projects. The city should also consider design guidelines or zoning requirements for this use that would allow structures to be built using a more traditional urban design, with smaller setbacks and increased pedestrian amenities. The recommended residential density is ten to fifteen units per acre, depending on the dwelling unit type. This classification corresponds to the RM-1 multiple family residential zoning district. This use would be ideal for senior housing or other dense housing on the periphery of downtown.



## 7.6 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL – HIGH RISE

This classification reflects the intent of the multiple family residential district while permitting structures as high as 70 feet. This classification is further intended to place the city's highest permissible form of residential development in close proximity to the city center and major thoroughfares. Senior housing, student housing, low-income housing, and non-specific housing are all candidates for this classification. Structures of this scale are very efficient financially, are visually pronounced, and can generate high volumes of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Such uses would be best suited in transition zones between commercial areas and parks, the river, non-single family housing, and institutional spaces. The corresponding zoning classification is RM-2.

## 7.7 MOBILE HOME PARK

The mobile home park classification is intended to provide suitable locations for this type of high intensity residential land use. Generally, it is important for this type of use to have direct access to a major thoroughfare, be served by public sewer and water, and be in close proximity to public facilities (schools, parks) as well as be convenient to area shopping, education, and employment opportunities.

Site design standards for new mobile home parks are governed by the Mobile Home Commission Act and the rules promulgated by the commission. Currently, there is only one mobile home park in the city, located on the south west side. Because of the design of this development, expansion is not likely. No other areas are designated for future mobile home parks. There is a zoning classification specific to mobile home parks.

## 7.8 OFFICE

The office use is intended to accommodate destination office space for corporations, professional services, banks and similar uses. This classification is ideal for areas that do not have direct access to a vehicle thoroughfare or high visibility but are still in a transitional area between high intensity commercial zones and all other uses. This classification corresponds to the OS-1 office zoning classification that is prevalent on the north side of downtown.

## 7.9 LOCAL BUSINESS

This classification is intended to provide for retail, service, and office needs that serve residents and employees within the neighborhood or vicinity. The food and convenience stores located in Westtown, near Baker College, and on King Street are good examples. Local business is intended to integrate completely with the residential neighborhood around it and be of a very low impact. Outside of a mixed-use project this use can function on an iso-

lated parcel without being considered a spot zone, provided that the location is on a collector street intersection or is otherwise planned to integrate and/or provide a transition within a neighborhood. This use reflects the B-1 local business zoning classification.

In areas where a larger area is to be served by multiple businesses that can share a common entrance or parking area, the B-2 planned shopping center district may apply. This use is utilized in only one instance on North M-52, and should probably be eliminated and/or consolidated entirely.

## 7.10 MIXED USE TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL

This classification is designed to provide for office, retail, hotel, restaurant, service, upper floor residential, and related business activities that serve an immediate, local, and regional area. The intent of this classification is to provide for walkable areas that promote 'placemaking' and a mixture of uses and activities. This designation applies primarily to downtown and other areas of historic and/or traditional and walkable commercial development, including Westown.

This classification corresponds to the B-3 central business district zoning district. This use relies heavily upon shared elements and area planning to ensure adequate parking, design, and function. Consideration should be given to a form-based code or design standards that further detail building placement, minimum building heights, and first floor uses. It is expected that this classification remain in force downtown and be applied to Westown as well.

## 7.11 GENERAL COMMERCIAL/OFFICE

This district is intended to provide for commercial activities that are incompatible with the local and mixed use commercial zones. Such uses often serve a regional market and are dedicated to high volume automobile use, large lot uses, or other quasi-commercial trade functions. Examples include those places of business that are comprised of or are identified as wholesale trade, outdoor storage, fueling stations, car lots, and clinics. This should also be considered as the primary classification for commercial and institutional uses with substantial needs for assembly.

The corresponding zoning classification is the B-4 general business district. This use is zoned for much of M-21 and the western portion of M-71. Given the regional land use pattern that places much of this activity east of the city, as well as the goals of the city, these areas should be limited moving forward so that a general land use pattern conducive to pedestrians and mixed-use prevails.

## 7.12 INDUSTRIAL

This district is designed to accommodate wholesale activities, warehouses and industrial operations whose external, physical effects are restricted to the area of the district and in no manner affect in a detrimental way any of the surrounding districts. The I-1 light industrial district is so structured as to permit, along with any specified uses, the manufacturing, compounding, processing, packaging, assembly and/or treatment of finished or semi-finished products from previously prepared material. The general goals of these use districts include, among others, the following specific purposes:

- To provide sufficient space, in appropriate locations, to meet the needs of the city's expected future economy for all types of manufacturing and related uses;
- To protect abutting residential districts by separating them from manufacturing activities, and by prohibiting the use of such industrial areas for new residential development;
- To promote manufacturing development which is free from danger of fire, explosions, toxic and noxious matter, radiation and other hazards, and from offensive noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other objectionable influences;
- To promote the most desirable use of land in accordance with the plan; and
- To protect the character and established pattern of adjacent development, and in each area to conserve the value of land and buildings and other structures, and to protect the city's tax revenue.

Heavier industrial operations that are related to the processing of raw materials, storage of petroleum, and power generation plants are permissible in the city in the I-2 general industrial district. Because of the intensity and performance of such uses, these should be limited to areas of extreme isolation and/or compatibility. Locations along the rail lines in the center of the community are no longer appropriate. These uses have obvious economic benefits; however, integration of these uses with the community must be achieved in order to preserve the character of the city. These zoning classifications should be reconsidered with a new zoning provision that provides for all uses as of right or as a special land use in a single zoning classification.

## 7.13 PARKING

This land use corresponds to the P-1 vehicular parking district. This classification is generally intended to complement the B-3 zoning districts by providing supplemental off-street parking for nearby uses that have developed without adequate off-street parking. This use is intended to supplement the central business district's lack of parking that results from higher densities.

## 7.14 CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE

This designation, which corresponds to the C-OS conservation/open space district, is intended to permit maintenance and management of natural areas, to protect land under public owner-

ship, under permanent conservation organization or of high public value due either to their uniqueness or to their potential hazards to the public. This designation falls on vacant lands and those lands used for passive or active recreation.

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## 7.15 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

Areas designated for this use correspond to the PUD planned unit development zoning district. The purpose of this district is to permit flexibility in the regulation of land development; to encourage innovation in land use and variety in design, layout and type of structures constructed; to achieve economy and efficiency in the use of land, natural resources, energy and the provision of public services and utilities; to encourage provision of usable open space and protection of natural features; to provide adequate housing, employment and shopping opportunities particularly suited to the needs of the residents of the city; and to encourage the use, reuse and improvement of existing sites and buildings which will be developed in a compatible way with surrounding uses but where the uniform regulations contained in other zoning districts do not provide adequate protections and safeguards for the site or surrounding area. The district is intended to accommodate developments with one (1) or more land uses, sites with unusual topography or unique settings within the community or sites that exhibit difficult or costly development problems or any combination of these factors.

**Figure 27.**  
**Development Pattern Comparison**



This classification would be very beneficial on brownfield sites and on large parcels that might be developed for the first time or redeveloped. Examples include the industrial land north of Westtown and on Elm Street where new uses could be used to tie neighborhoods together while adding important use value to the property in the form of housing and business use. Figure 27 illustrates how a planned development pattern utilizing multiple uses in a high-density fashion can be much more functional and desirable than individually built uses using traditional zoning.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION

8.0 INTRODUCTION

8.1 USING THE MASTER PLAN

## 8.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to guide the actions of the city for the next ten to twenty years. In order for the master plan to have an effective impact on the next five years, steps are herein described to guide community leaders towards implementation. To that end, this chapter provides a summary of the recommendations described in the previous sections of the plan. It also acts as a quick reference for the city staff, planning commission, and the city council to evaluate its progress toward implementation of the Plan.

The following table is divided into five categories including the “Plan Recommendation” column, which refers back to specific issues identified in the plan. Several actions are suggested to accomplish each recommendation. The body or bodies that should be responsible for carrying out the suggested actions are identified, and the expected timing for the completion of the actions is also noted.

### \*Abbreviations

CC=City Council; PC=Planning Commission; DDA=Downtown Development Authority; OMS=Owosso Main Street; ZBA=Zoning Board of Appeals; BRA=Brownfield Redevelopment Authority; PRC=Parks and Recreation Commission; HDC=Historic District Commission; CIA=Corridor Improvement Authority; HC=Historical Commission; SCCVB=Shiawassee County Convention and Visitors Bureau; SEDP=Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership; SRI=Steam Railroading Institute; MDOT=Michigan Department of Transportation

| Plan Recommendation                               | Actions   | Responsibility                           | Timing       | Additional Resources |
|---|---|--|--------------|----------------------|
| General Plan and Future Land Use                  |   |  |              |                      |
| Schedule review of master plan and implementation | Review the master plan and prepare a report for the city council on its implementation.   | Planning commission; city council; staff | ~ Five Years | Nil                  |
| Implement future land use plan                    | Amend the zoning ordinance to address new issues and recommendations detailed in this or an amended master plan.                | Planning commission; city council        | On-going     | ~\$50,000            |
|   | Initiate appropriate re-zonings, especially where the future land use map recommends a lower intensity use than current zoning. | Planning commission; city council        | 0-1 years    | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation                              | Actions   | Responsibility                         | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|--|---|--|-----------|----------------------|
|  | Refer to the master plan when considering re-zonings to ensure the conditions upon which the plan was based are still relevant and the timing for the change is appropriate (the Future Land Use Map is a 10+ year plan). | Planning commission; city council; ZBA | On-going  | Nil                  |
| <b>Community Character</b>                       |   |  |           |                      |
| Regulate infill development                      | Develop architectural design standards for established areas and neighborhoods that have historical or traditional features.  | Planning commission; HDC; staff        | 1-2 years | ~\$15,000            |
|  | Promote infill housing in older neighborhoods and on established corridors to help rejuvenate such areas.   | Staff                                  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Develop design standards for non-residential structures that complement the historic character of the area while respecting the needs of modern businesses.   | Planning commission; HDC; staff        | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
| Provide transition between land uses             | Provide for appropriate transitional land uses in the zoning ordinance to reduce potential conflicts and maintain investment in properties.   | Planning commission; city council      | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Prohibit non-residential uses from disrupting highway corridors by developing these adjacent to existing nodes.   | Planning commission; city council      | On-going  | Nil                  |
| Establish standards for nonconforming situations | Unless causing a nuisance or hazard, welcome nonconforming land uses to continue but not be allowed to expand.  | Planning commission; city council      | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation                                   | Actions  | Responsibility                         | Timing               | Additional Resources |
|---|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|
|   | Encourage nonconforming sites to gradually upgrade and be brought more into conformance with the intent of the zoning ordinance.   | Planning commission; ZBA; staff        | On-going             | Nil                  |
|   | Consider incremental and/or isolated changes that are proposed for non-conforming uses that will bring aspects of such development closer to conformity.   | Staff                                  | On-going             | Nil                  |
| Promote "Place Making" within the city through design | Establish new setback and site design standards that respect the existing nature of the community and promote developments that are high quality and complementary to the city character.  | Planning commission; Developers; DDA   | Short-term; on-going | Nil                  |
|   | Create zoning provisions that require building materials to be high quality and durable.   | Planning commission; city council      | 1-2 years            | Nil                  |
|   | Move the sign ordinance into the zoning code and update it so that it adequately serves businesses but promotes more subtle materials, lighting, color, size, positioning, and landscaping that complements the building and neighborhood. | Planning commission; DDA; city council | 2-3 years            | ~\$5,000             |
|   | Require landscaping that enhances the development site along the street and within the parking lot.  | Planning commission; city council      | 1-2 years            | Nil                  |
|   | Continue to use landscaping to screen and buffer between sites that are not compatible.  | Planning commission; city council      | On-going             | Nil                  |



| Plan Recommendation   | Actions  | Responsibility                    | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
|   | Use the minimum amount of site lighting necessary to provide safe passage while avoiding negative off-site glare.  | Planning commission; city council | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Develop sites with the intention of expanding and integrating such developments with the current and future uses in the vicinity.                                  | Planning commission; city council | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Consider the potential of "build-to" lines, mixed vertical uses, and minimum heights in the downtown and in Westtown.  | Planning commission; city council | 2-3 years | Nil                  |
| Encourage maintenance of existing buildings                                     | Maintain buildings and sites with a neat and orderly appearance on all sides.  | Staff; PC; HDC                    | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Continue to support and staff a code enforcement/building official and housing manager to oversee rehabilitation programs and code compliance.                     | Staff; city council               | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Utilize the Downtown Historic District Commission to ensure preservation of downtown properties, while encouraging economically viable uses in existing buildings. | HDC; city council                 | On-going  | Nil                  |
| Provide a comprehensive pathway and pedestrian network throughout the community | Require all new commercial construction to provide pedestrian pathways along the roadway and require linkages from the building to parking areas and the pathway.  | Planning Commission, OPRC         | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Develop an implementation plan to create an integrated trail system for non-motorized transportation and recreation.   | OPRC; city council                | 1-2 years | ~\$10,000            |

| Plan Recommendation  | Actions   | Responsibility   | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|--|---|--|-----------|----------------------|
|  | Continue efforts to create pedestrian walkways throughout the community as part of an overall network.  | Staff; city council  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Pursue "safe routes to schools" improvements in partnership with the Owosso Public Schools  | Staff; city council  | On-going  | At cost              |
|  | Connect the riverwalk to the CIS rail-trail to the west.  | Staff; city council; OPRC; Owosso Township; CIS Trail Auth | 3-5 years | TBD                  |
| Ensure that entryways into the city create a positive impression of community. | Continue to develop and maintain a uniform or complementary wayfinding and identification sign program.   | Planning Commission; CIA, & DDA                            | On-going  | ~\$25,000            |
|  | Work with surrounding communities to establish land use, enforcement, and design standards that are consistent with the city's vision.                                  | staff  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Maintain the residential uses on major corridors until such time as more intense development can no longer be accommodated in established, zoned areas in the vicinity. | Planning commission; city council                          | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Prioritize code enforcement and blight control efforts on Westtown, East M-21, South M-52, and M-71.  | Staff  | On-going  | Nil                  |
| Repair & replace infrastructure in established neighborhoods                   | Coordinate an infrastructure improvement plan for streets and underground utilities, with design standards.   | Planning Commission; staff engineering                     | 1-3 years | Nil                  |
|  | Encourage sustainable design and aesthetic upgrades that will enhance the use and exchange value of property.   | Staff; PC, city council                                    | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation  | Actions  | Responsibility                                       | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|----------------------|--|--|-----------|----------------------|
|                      | Coordinate the improvement program with targeted neighborhood service programs in housing and enforcement.   | Staff; city council; landlord/homeowner associations | 1-3 years | Nil                  |
| Economic Development |  |  |           |                      |
|                      | Use downtown and attractions to foster economic development by 'exporting' the Owosso experience.  | Staff; DDA; SCCVB; merchants                         | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                      | Support a positive image of the Owosso community   | Community wide                                       | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                      | Increase investment in regional marketing  | City council; community partners                     | On-going  | TBD                  |
|                      | Continue to support the efforts of the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership   | City council; staff                                  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                      | Consider a coordinated study and plan effort that could drive tourism by increasing the draw to the Steam Railroading Institute, the Lebowsky Center, etc. | City council; SRI; SCCVB; DDA                        | 2-4 years | ~\$45,000            |
| Downtown             |  |  |           |                      |
|                      | Engage in a zoning revision that includes design guidelines and/or elements of a form based code for downtown and Westown.                                 | Planning commission; city council; staff             | 1-2 years | ~\$20,000            |
|                      | Continue to support biking, walking, and river activities in downtown.   | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA        | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                      | Engage in a plan that will identify a potential retail and/or entertainment district in downtown, tying in the SRI, SAC, theater, etc.                     | City council; SRI; SCCVB; DDA                        | 2-4 years | per above            |
|                      | Support outdoor dining and street activities.  | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA        | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation    | Actions   | Responsibility                                | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|------------------------|---|---|-----------|----------------------|
|                        | Encourage and support upper floor residential uses.   | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Limit, via zoning, large institutional & assembly uses from the ground floors in downtown, in favor of retail and restaurant space. | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Continue to support weekend and evening activities in the downtown.   | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Pursue code compliance and historic preservation through active code enforcement.   | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Actively pursue the reuse of the Armory and other river front buildings, as well as the middle school if appropriate.               | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | TBD                  |
|                        | Encourage a new strategic plan for the Downtown Development Authority that focuses on tourism.                                      | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | 3-5 years | ~\$20,000            |
|                        | Locate any new parking areas on the fringe of downtown and provide for flexible parking standards                                   | DDA; city council                             | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Limit new duplexes and multi-family housing on the periphery of downtown; permit B&B activity subject to special conditions.        | Planning commission; city council; staff; DDA | On-going  | Nil                  |
| Education and Wellness |   |   |           |                      |
|                        | Support the Owosso Public Schools with reasonable efforts to improve buildings and other facilities.                                | Staff; city council                           | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                        | Promote expanded and new school facility locations within the core of the city.   | Staff; city council                           | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation | Actions  | Responsibility                                | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---------------------|--|---|-----------|----------------------|
|                     | Build a student culture in the community between Baker College and downtown by encouraging strong pedestrian connections between campus, dorms, and downtown.              | Staff; DDA; planning commission; city council | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Foster stronger relationships between the public schools, local government, student groups, and community groups.  | Staff; city council                           | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Consider the impact of a county wide healthcare fund/plan that would provide coverage assistance to those without adequate insurance.                                      | City council                                  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Continue to pursue recreation improvements in accordance with the official Owosso Parks and Recreation Plan  | City council; OPRC; staff                     | On-going  | Per plan             |
|                     | Consider a regional effort to create an expanded recreational/community center.  | City council; staff                           | 3-5 years | Nil                  |
| Housing             |  |   |           |                      |
|                     | Continue the rental inspection program and the vacant & foreclosed home registration program.  | Staff   | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Continue to support the housing efforts of the city that include the Property Improvement Program, the Rental Rehabilitation Program, and Homeowner Rehabilitation Program | City council; staff                           | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Strongly pursue code enforcement on hazardous, unsafe, and ill-kept housing.   | Staff   | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation   | Actions   | Responsibility                           | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---|---|--|-----------|----------------------|
|   | Create a program for education of home owner associations, neighborhood associations/groups, landlord associations, and builder associations. | Staff                                    | On-going  | ~\$10,000            |
|   | Support code changes that enable home upgrades to meet contemporary market demands for garages, first floor bathrooms, and storage needs.     | Planning commission; city council; staff | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Investigate incentives for conversions of multi-family and duplex to single family.   | Staff; city council                      | 2-4 years | TBD                  |
|   | Develop neighborhood identities and service groups that can perform activities and events related to home improvements and networking         | Staff                                    | 2-4 years | TBD                  |
| Major Corridors   |   |  |           |                      |
| Maintain safe traffic circulation and speeds throughout the city. | Encourage bike routes on side streets instead of on state highways as appropriate   | Staff                                    | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Consider streetscape improvements on S M-52, E M-21, and M-71.  | City council; staff                      | 5+ years  | TBD                  |
|   | Develop corridors around nodes and maintain adequate driveway spacing and location standards.   | Planning Commission; staff engineering   | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Provide safe pedestrian circulation when designing access and circulation for vehicles.   | Planning Commission; staff engineering   | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Seek lower speeds on major streets and state highways through traffic calming design, especially on M-21 in Westown                           | Staff                                    | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation | Actions   | Responsibility                    | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
|                     | Consider implementation of the "complete streets" and "road diet" design concepts for all major streets and state highways.         | Staff; city council               | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Pursue a three lane concept for state highway corridors that have low enough traffic counts to support lane reductions.             | Staff; city council               | On-going  | Nil                  |
| Westtown            |   |                                   |           |                      |
|                     | Rezone the traditional business area of Westtown to B-3.  | Planning commission; city council | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
|                     | Attempt to utilize upper floor rental rehabilitation program in Westtown.   | Staff                             | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Focus code enforcement and blight controls in this area.  | Staff                             | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Consider investment in the M-21 streetscape and area sidewalks.   | City council; CIA                 | 3-5 years | TBD                  |
|                     | Consider decorative lighting on S. Elm Street.  | City council; CIA                 | 3-5 years | TBD                  |
|                     | Investigate mid-block crossings or other signals for pedestrians to cross M-21 between Chipman and Cedar.                           | Staff; MDOT; city council         | On-going  | TBD                  |
|                     | Keep Westtown separate and distinct from downtown while pursuing similar mixed-use and traditional building projects.               | Planning commission; city council | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Connect Westtown to the proposed trail system and consider additional wayfinding and street furniture, including waste receptacles. | Staff; CIA; OPRC                  | 3-5 years | TBD                  |

| Plan Recommendation   | Actions   | Responsibility                           | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---|---|--|-----------|----------------------|
|   | Develop a tax increment financing plan for the Westtown Corridor Improvement Authority at a time when taxable values are observed to be stable or increase. | CIA; staff; city council                 | 2-5 years | ~\$25,000            |
| Sustainability Goals (Going Green)  |   |  |           |                      |
| Develop policy that encourages and permits agricultural and energy related activities | Refine guidelines for community gardens on public, institutional, and private land  | Planning commission; city council; staff | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
|   | Consider an urban farming ordinance that could permit chickens, pygmy goats, and related agricultural livestock and activities                              | Staff                                    | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Develop an ordinance that permits solar energy and pursue LED conversions of public lights.   | Planning commission; HDC; staff          | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
|   | Embrace the city's status as a "tree city" and encourage further forestry activities in right-of-ways, on public lands, and on private lands                | Staff; city council                      | On-going  | Nil                  |
|   | Consider zoning changes that encourage rain gardens, permeable paving materials, LEED certification, and other sustainable development goals                | Staff; planning commission; city council | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
|   | Pursue implementation of city-wide, public recycling and waste management   | City council                             | 3-5 years | TBD                  |
|   | Consider a burning ban on waste materials contingent upon city-wide, public waste management services   | City council                             | 3-5 years | Nil                  |
| Shiawassee River  | Prioritize the Shiawassee River as an environmental, economic, and recreational asset for OWOSSO  | Planning commission; city council        | On-going  | Nil                  |



| Plan Recommendation                                  | Actions   | Responsibility                         | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|--|---|--|-----------|----------------------|
|  | Consider zoning changes that encourage or require riparian preservation   | Planning commission; city council; FSR | 1-2 years | Nil                  |
|  | Continue to observe strict soil erosion permitting  | Staff                                  | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Continue to support the Friends of the Shiawassee River in their attempts to protect and enhance the water quality.   | Staff; city council                    | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Pursue canoe/kayak launches and integrate their use into a larger visitor attraction.   | City council; OPRC                     | 1-3 years | ~\$5,000             |
|  | Develop a detailed plan for the Jerome Street corridor that would expand recreational options and eliminate flood risk to homes, potentially by closing the street and actively acquiring such homes. | DDA; staff; city council               | 3-5 years | TBD                  |
|  | Seek to develop and enhance the south side of the Shiawassee River, west of M-52, through demolitions, code enforcement, and neighborhood development services; Beehler St, River St, etc.            | Staff                                  | On-going  | Nil                  |
| <b>Other Initiatives</b>                             |   |  |           |                      |
| Seek release and acquisition of strategic properties | Consider passive acquisition of 220 Gute St. for a pocket park, preferable in conjunction with Baker College  | Staff; city council                    | On-going  | TBD                  |
|  | Consider raised bed community gardens on city properties that are known to contain subsurface contaminants  | Staff; city council                    | On-going  | Nil                  |
|  | Consider sale options for 210 Monroe Street that provide a private use transition between the adjacent businesses and homes   | Staff; city council                    | On-going  | Nil                  |

| Plan Recommendation | Actions  | Responsibility                           | Timing    | Additional Resources |
|---------------------|--|--|-----------|----------------------|
|                     | Consider a joint use of 300 S. Washington St. that could include the fire memorial, use by the adjacent business, and access to the river walk | Staff; city council                      | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Develop Rain Street properties for drainage as needed to service the west end of the city and new industrial development                       | Staff; city council                      | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Sell Osburn Lakes parcels at market value  | Staff; city council                      | On-going  | Nil                  |
|                     | Consider future development of Osburn Lakes for larger lot residential/recreation  | Staff; city council; planning commission | 5+ years  | Nil                  |
|                     | Seek a request for proposals for 1000 Bradley Street that will complement river front homes on Beehler St.                                     | Staff; city council; planning commission | 3-5 years | Nil                  |
|                     | Consider redevelopment of 1509 Oliver through a RFP process  | Staff; city council; planning commission | 5+ years  | Nil                  |

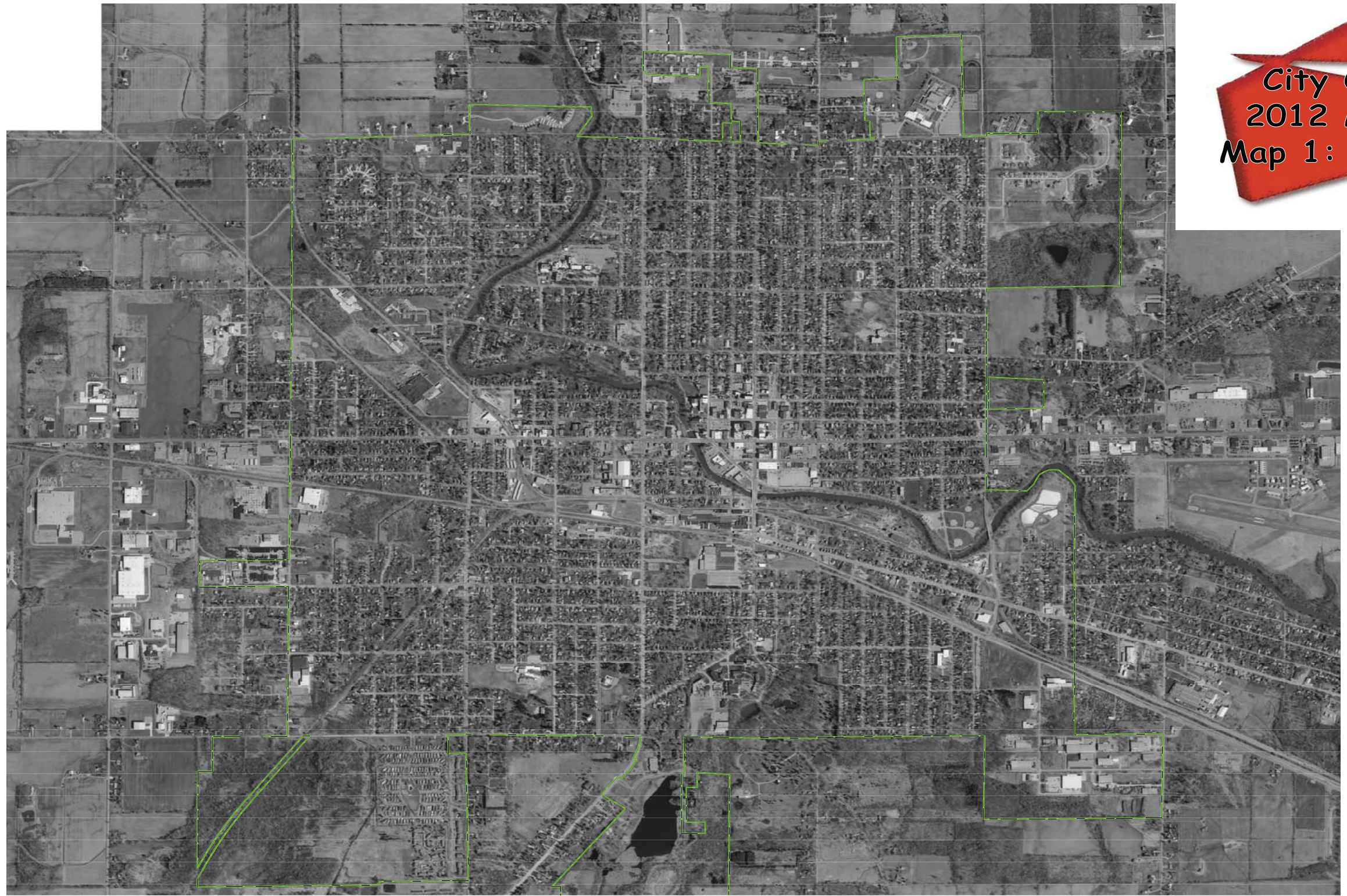
## 8.1 USING THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan is intended as a guide for city officials in land use, development, zoning, and capital improvement decisions. The city council, planning commission, staff, and the public should strive to ensure the continuous, consistent and effective use of this document. The master plan should be referenced and used to:

- Visualize what can be reasonably expected to occur - to provide some assurance and security with individual investment decisions.
- Review development proposals – to confirm that the proposal meets the goals and objectives of the master plan.
- Provide a basis for city initiated amendments to the zoning ordinance - to help realize plan goals.
- Review rezoning requests – to confirm the request is consistent with the city's criteria to consider rezoning; including existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, and consistency with the goals and policies of the master plan, and potential impacts on the city.

## APPENDIX A: MAPS

1. Aerial Image
2. Brownfields
3. Parks & Schools
4. Flood Hazards
5. Wetlands
6. Downtown/Main Street Boundaries
7. Downtown Historic District Commission
8. Westown
9. Existing Land Use
10. Critical Areas
11. Area Future Land Use
12. City Future Land Use
13. North West Future Land Use
14. North East Future Land Use
15. South West Future Land Use
16. South East Future Land Use




**City Of Owosso  
2012 Master Plan  
Map 1: Aerial Image**



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 2: Brownfields



- Attributes**
-  Existing Brownfields
  -  Brownfield Candidates
  -  Rail Lines



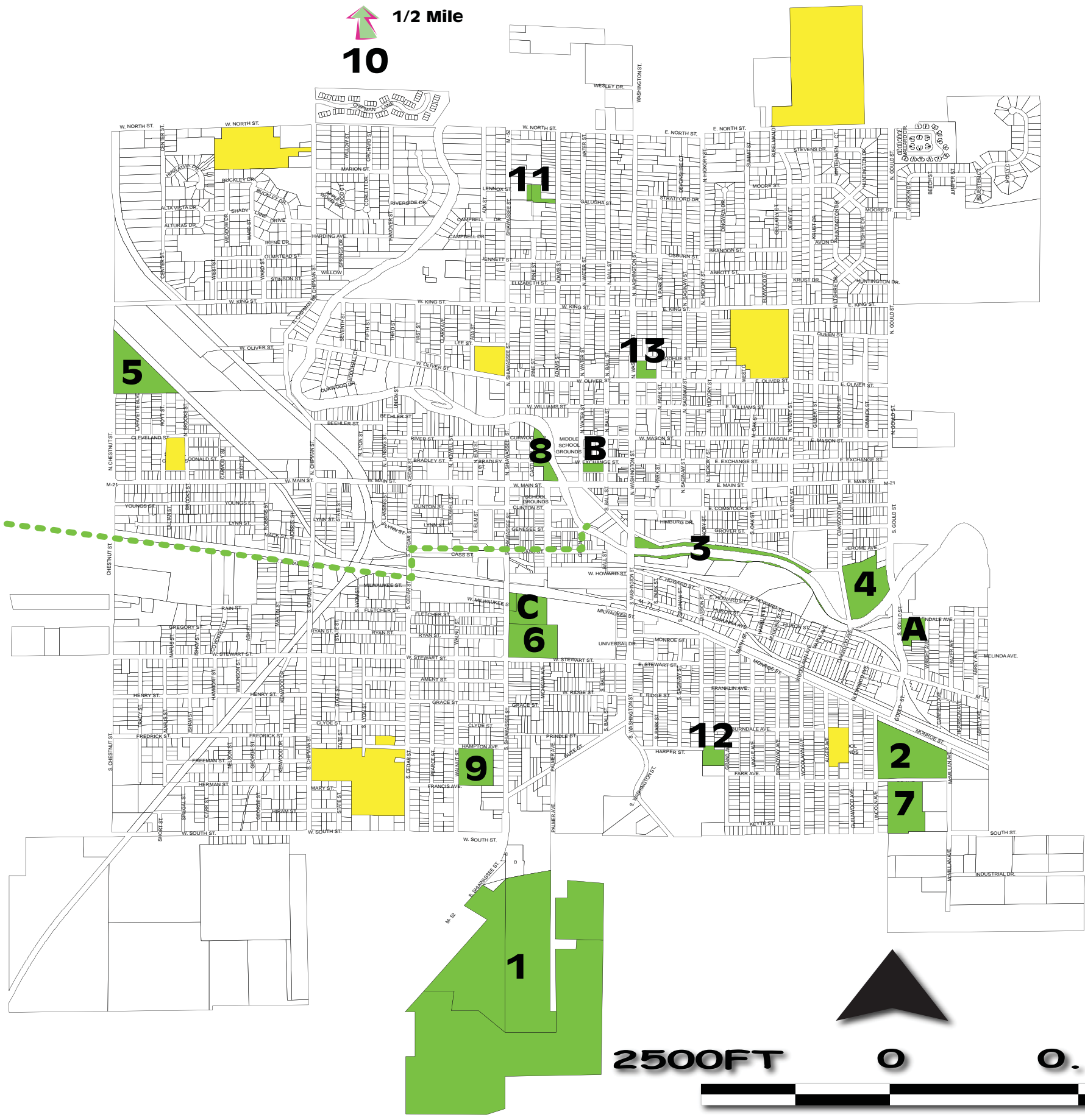
July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 3: Parks & Schools

## Park Facilities

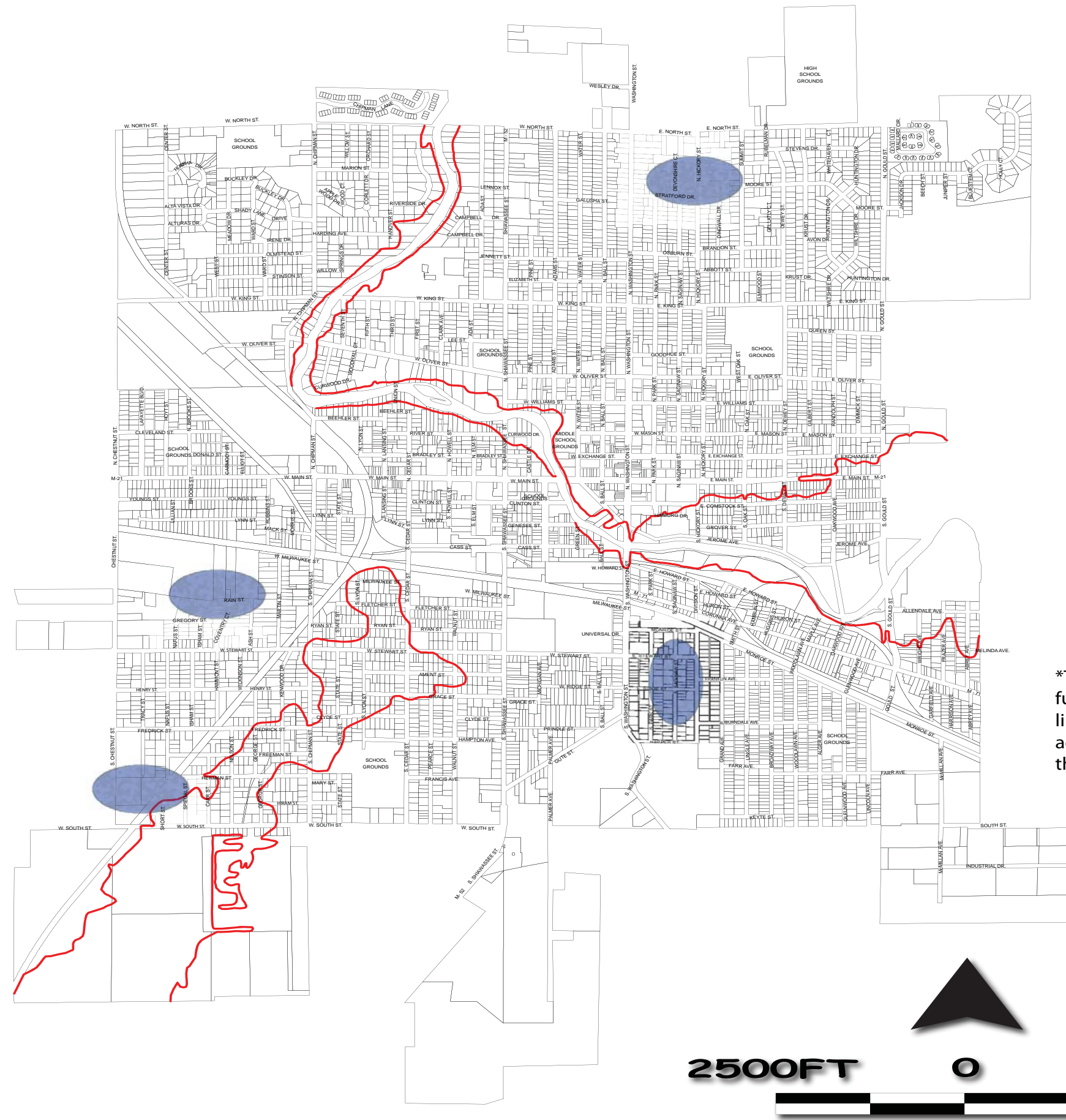
- 1. Collamer Park
  - 2. Hugh Parker Field
  - 3. James Miner River Walkway
  - 4. Rudy DeMuth Field
  - 5. Bennett Field
  - 6. Bentley Park
  - 7. Rosevear Park
  - 8. Curwood Castle Park
  - 9. Grove Holman Park
  - 10. Harmon Patridge Park
  - 11. Adams Park
  - 12. Grand Avenue Park
  - 13. Fayette Square
- 
- A. Skate and BMX facilities
  - B. Downtown Fountain
  - C. Coal to Gas Plant - Potential Trail Head
- 
- Park and Potential Park Lands
  - Schools with Play Equipment
  - Potential Trail Extension

1/2 Mile  
10



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 4: Flood Hazards



-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  Special Drain Areas\*

\*These areas are noted on page 91 as areas of special concern for future development. Flooding conditions are either observed or are likely in these areas, and future impervious surface should not be added to the drainage basin till such time as it can be accommodated through upgraded or altered infrastructure.



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 5: Wetlands

## Wetlands & Woodlands

### System



Lacustrine



Palustrine



Riverine

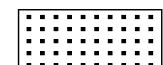
### Class



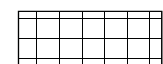
Aquatic Bed Wetland



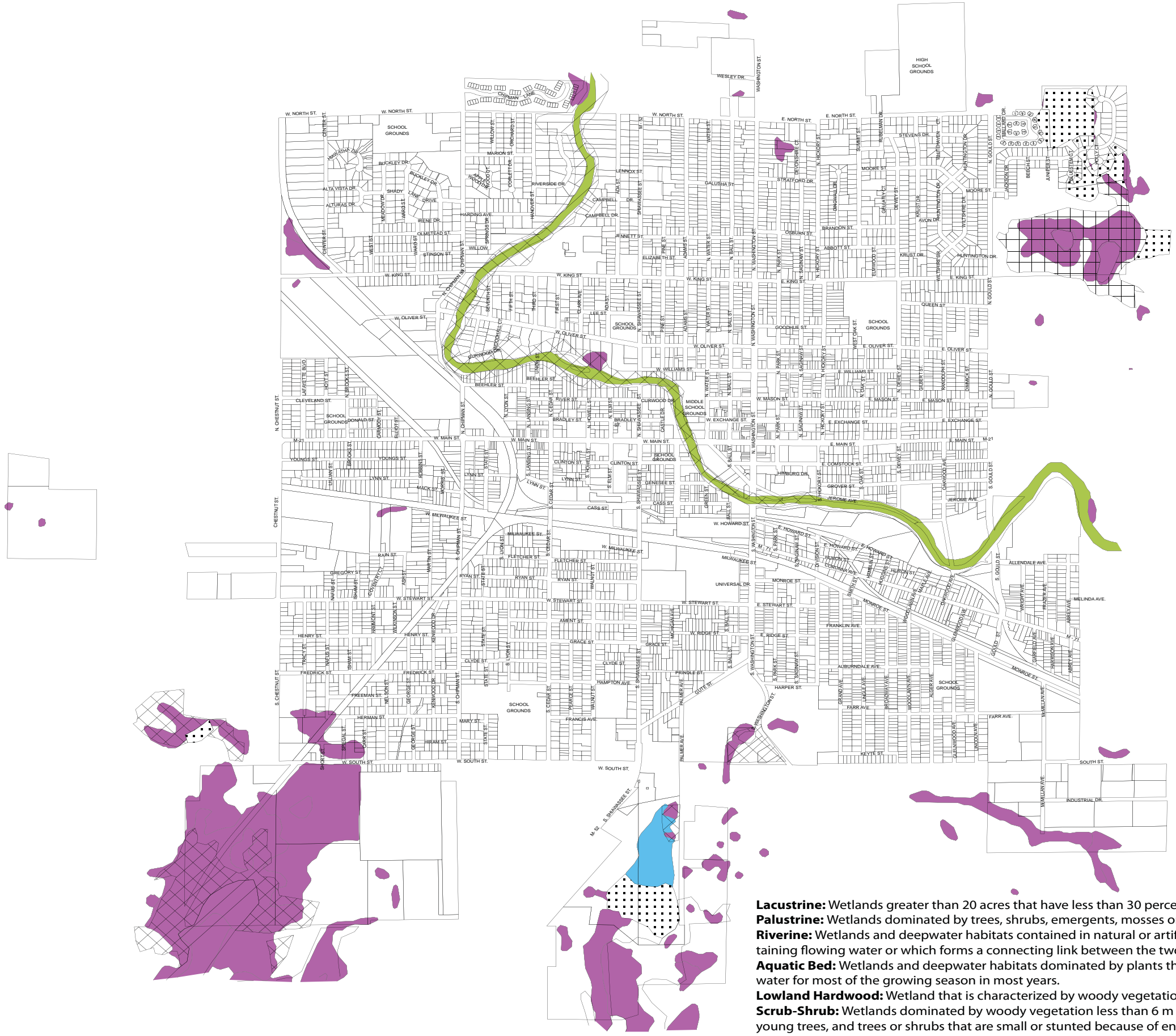
Lowland Hardwood



Scrub-Shrub Wetland



Wooded Wetland



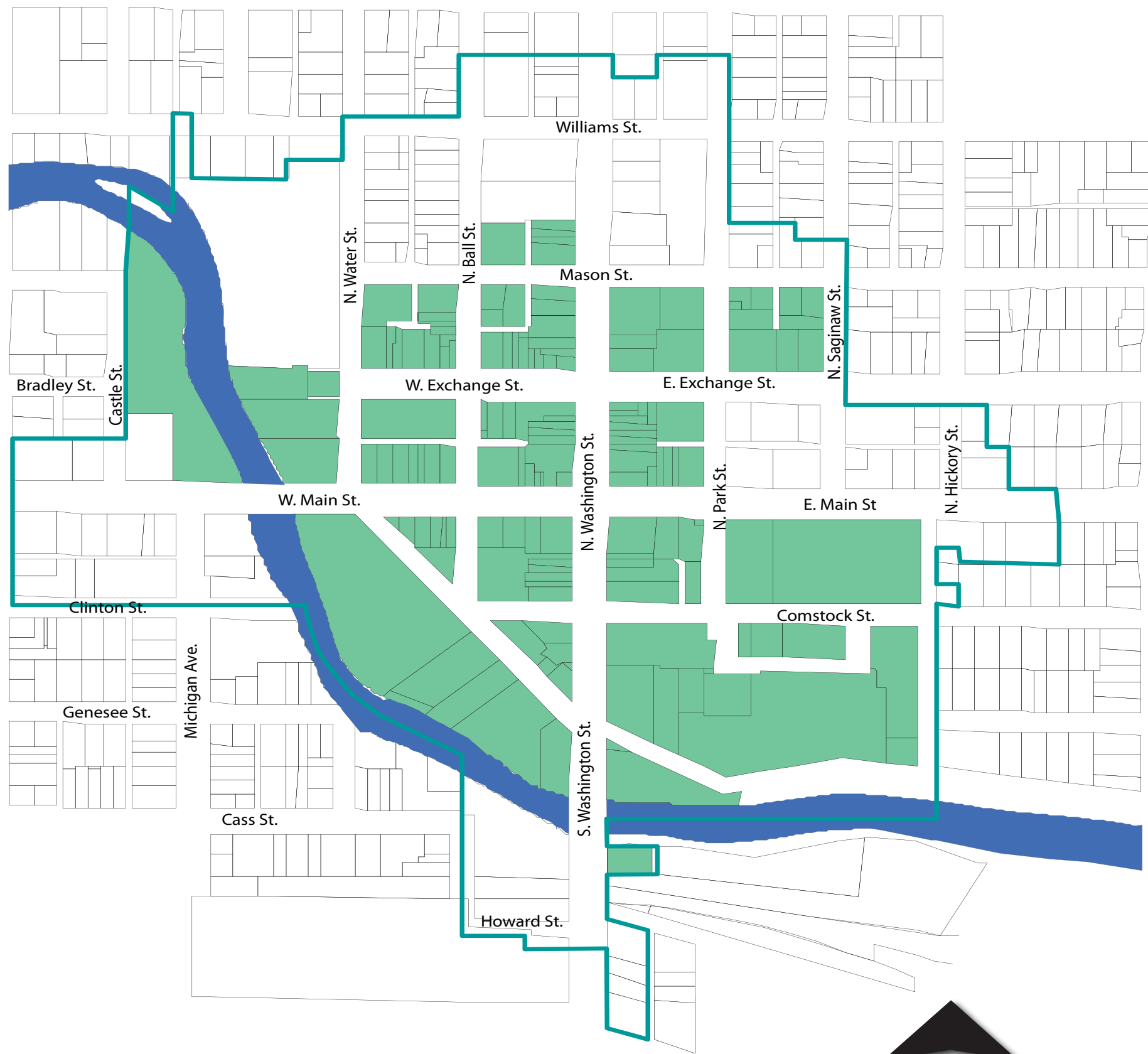
**Lacustrine:** Wetlands greater than 20 acres that have less than 30 percent cover of persistent vegetation.  
**Palustrine:** Wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses or lichens.  
**Riverine:** Wetlands and deepwater habitats contained in natural or artificial channels periodically or continuously containing flowing water or which forms a connecting link between the two bodies of standing water.  
**Aquatic Bed:** Wetlands and deepwater habitats dominated by plants that grow principally on or below the surface of the water for most of the growing season in most years.  
**Lowland Hardwood:** Wetland that is characterized by woody vegetation, of a hardwood variety, that is 6 m tall or taller.  
**Scrub-Shrub:** Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 m (20 feet) tall. The species include true shrubs, young trees, and trees or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions.  
**Wooded:** Wetland that is characterized by woody vegetation that is 6 m tall or taller.





July 24, 2012



# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 6: Downtown & Mainstreet Boundaries



## Districts

-  DDA Boundaries
-  OMS Properties



July 24, 2012

**City Of Owosso  
2012 Master Plan  
Map 7: Downtown Historic  
District Commission**



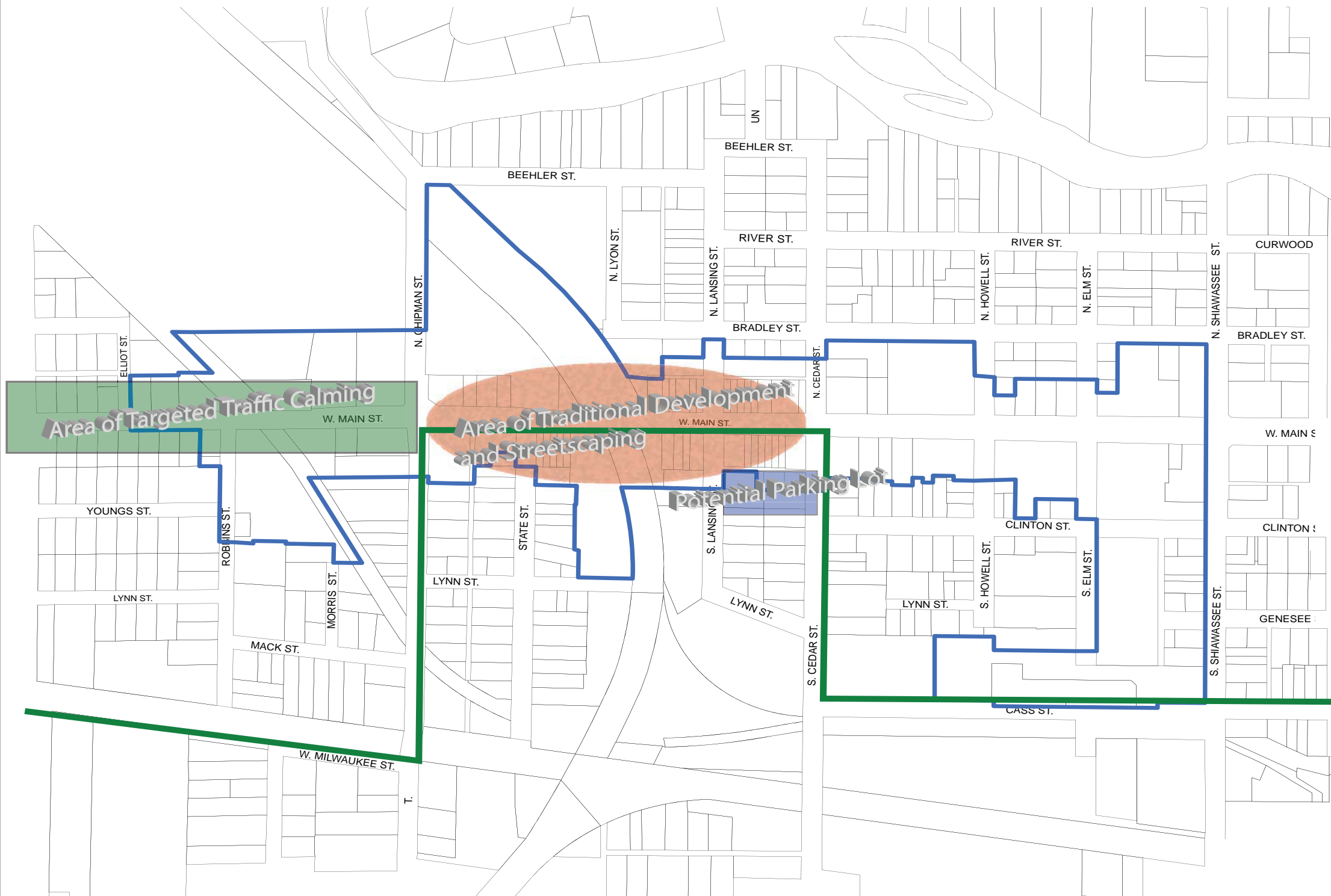
— Historic District  
Commission Boundary



July 24, 2012



# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 8: Westtown



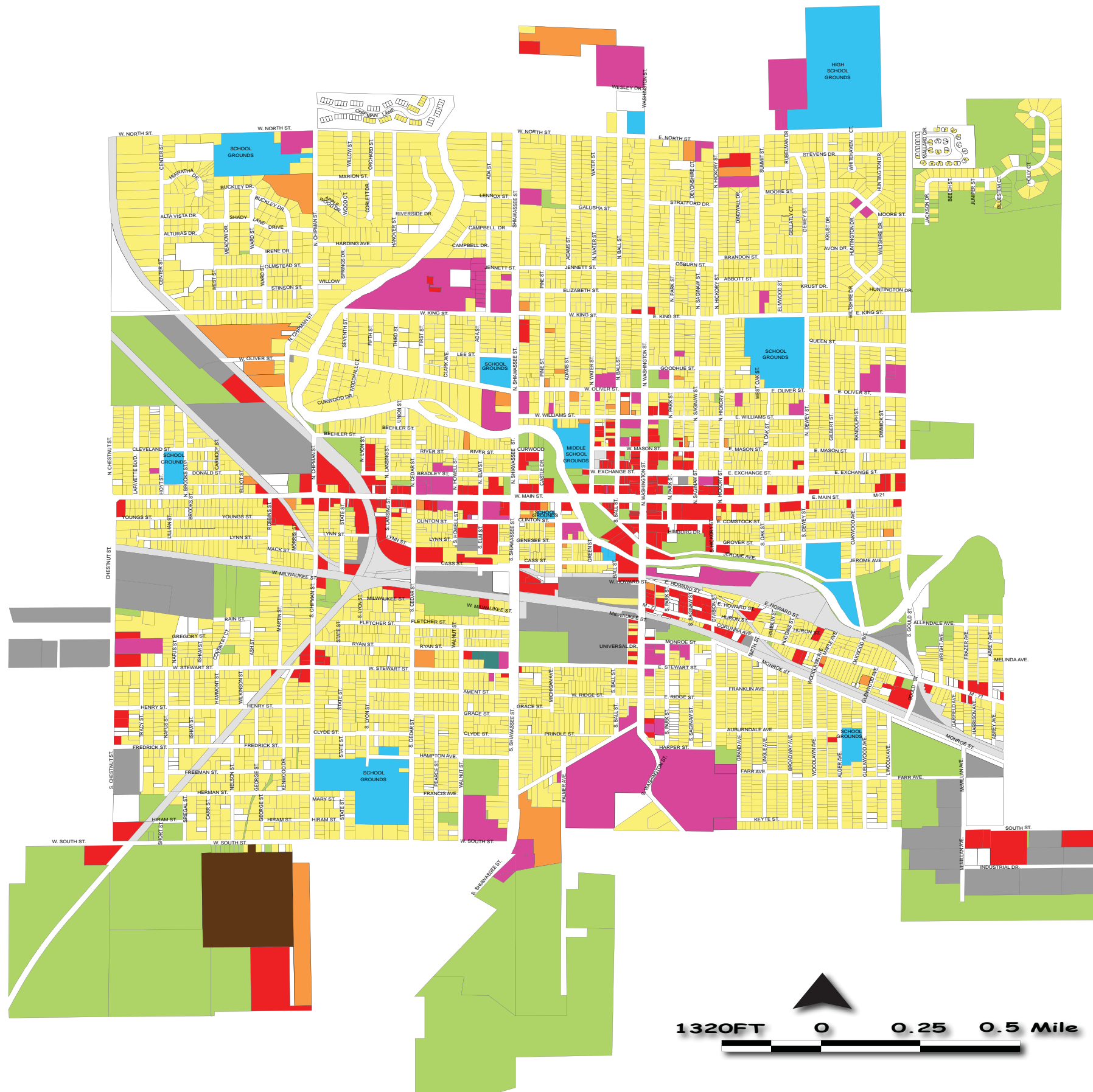
### Attributes

-  Corridor Improvement Authority
-  Potential Trail Loop




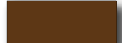

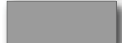





July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 9: Existing Land Use



## Land Uses

-  Vacant
-  Low Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Utility/Railroad
-  Institutional: Public
-  Institutional: Private
-  Public Schools



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 10: Critical Areas



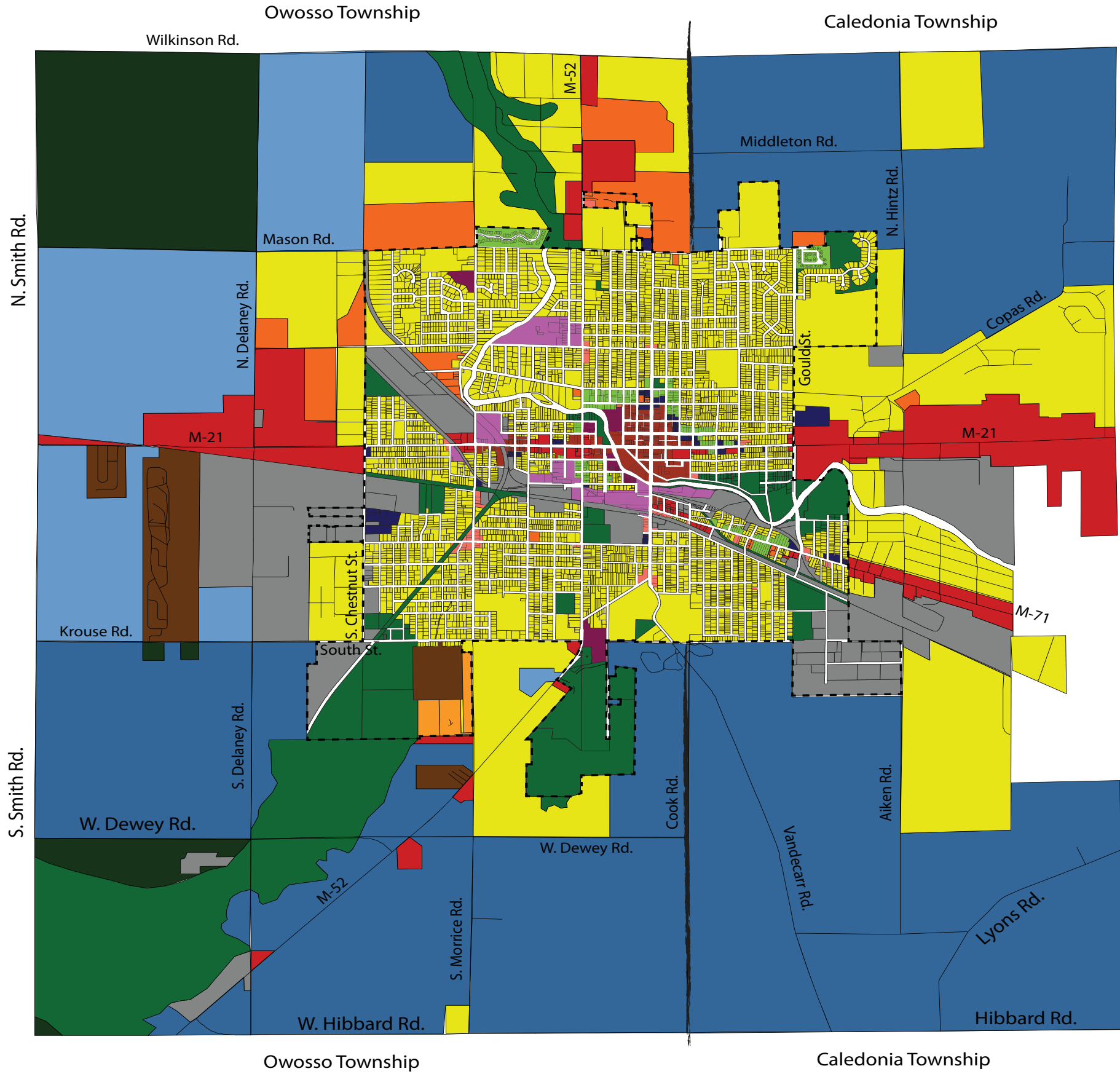
### Critical Issues

- Aging Infrastructure
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Shiawassee River
- Brownfields



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 11: Area Future Land Use



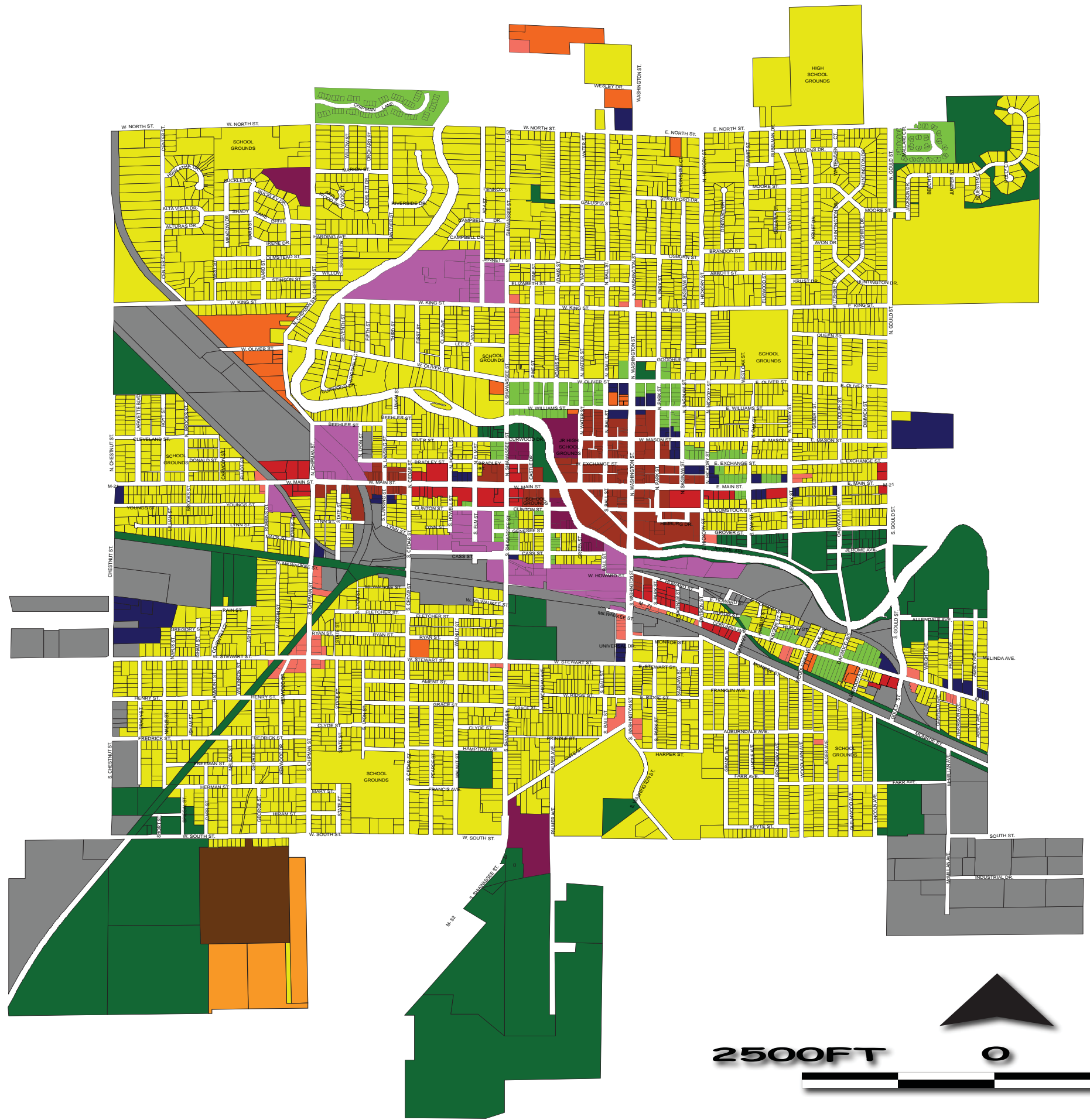
## Land Use

-  Prime Agricultural
-  Short Term Agricultural
-  Residential / Agricultural
-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development
-  City Limit



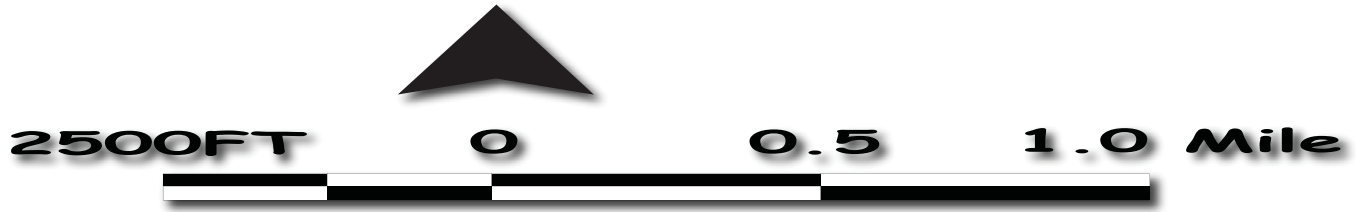
July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 12: City Future Land Use



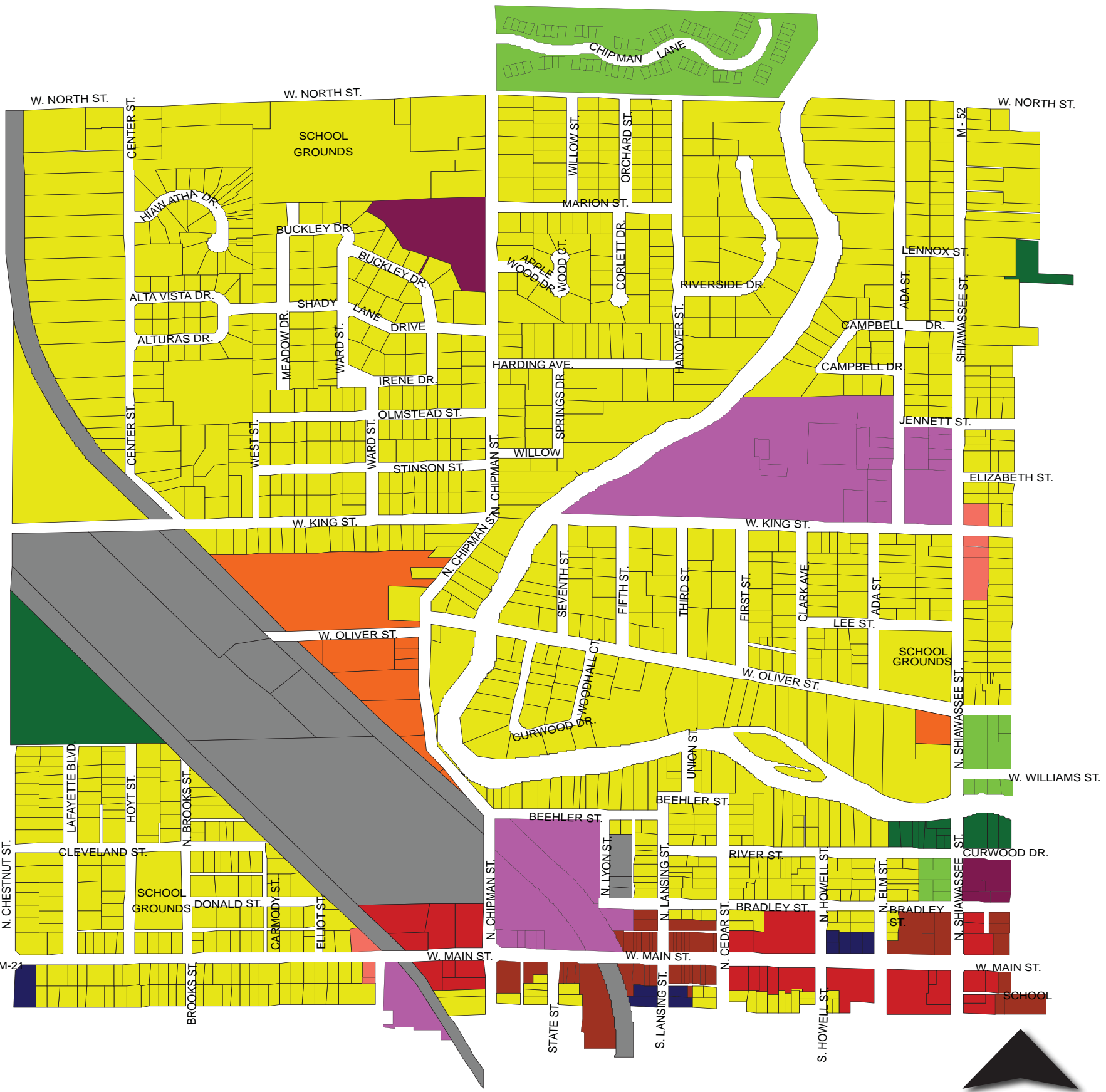
## Land Uses

-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development



July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 13: North West Future Land Use



## Land Uses

-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development



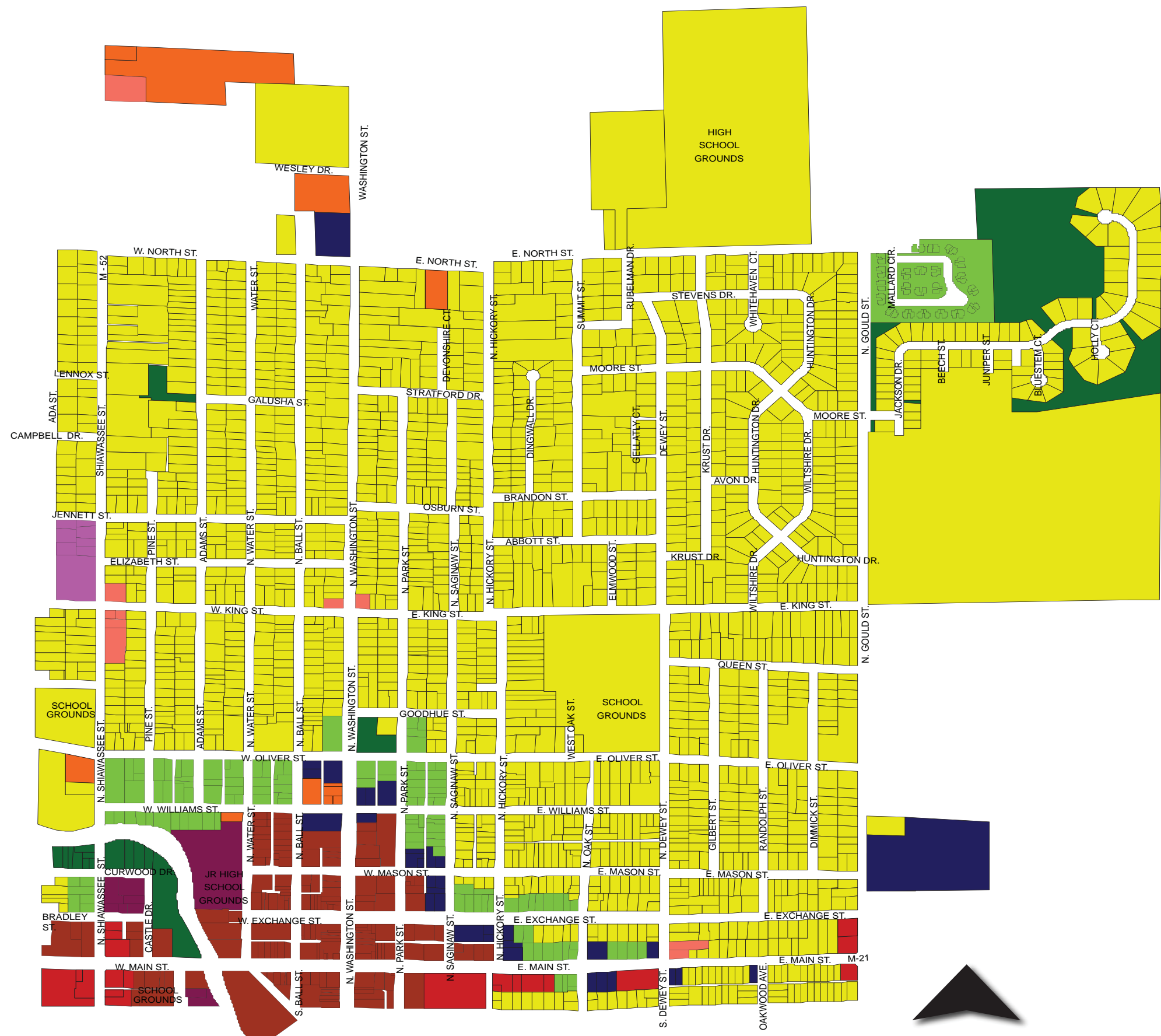
July 24, 2012



# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 14: North East Future Land Use

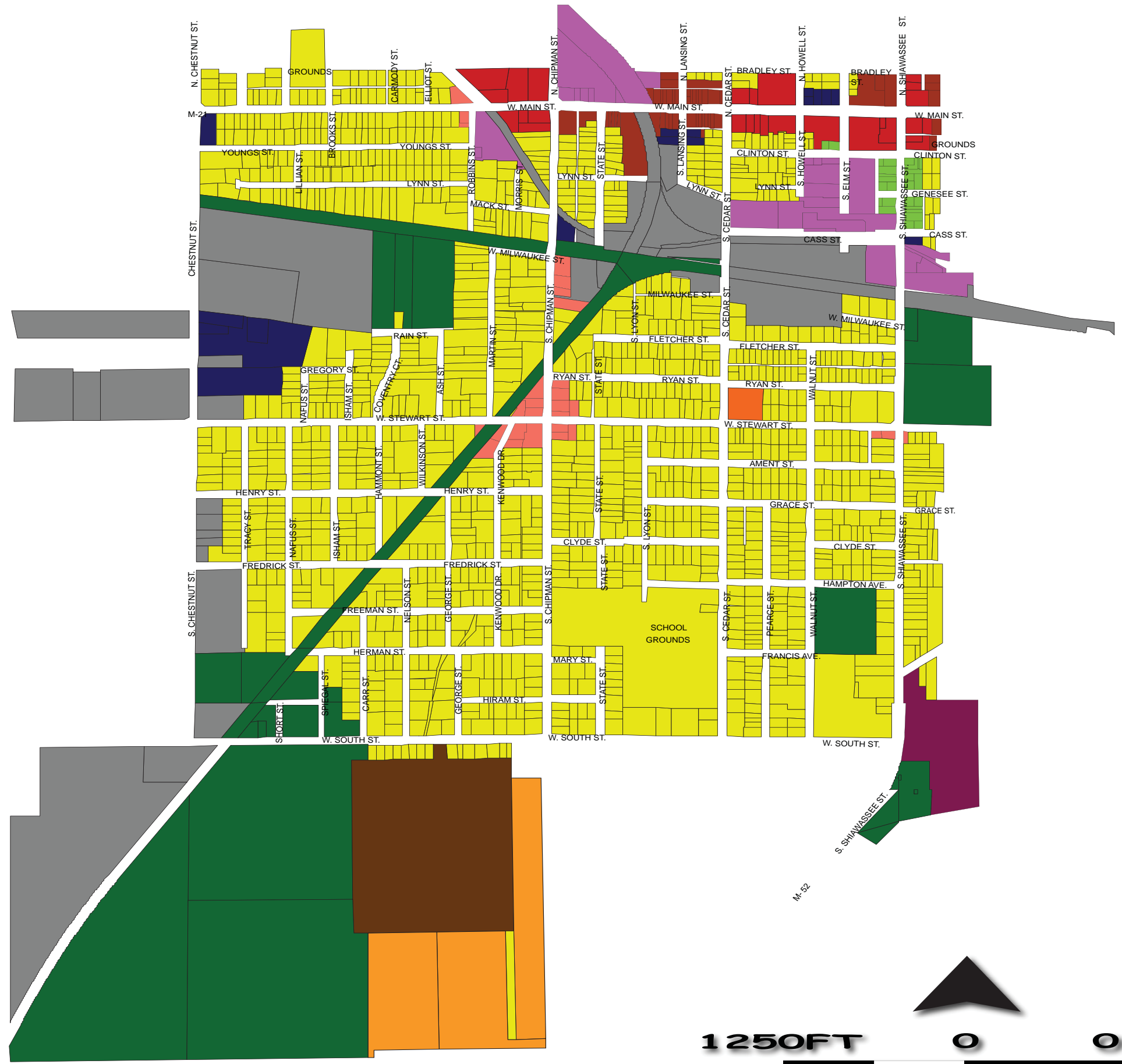
## Land Uses

-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development



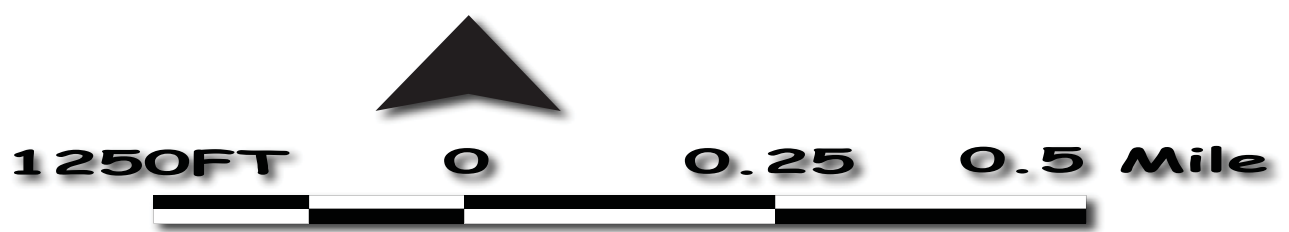
July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 15: South West Future Land Use



## Land Uses

-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development

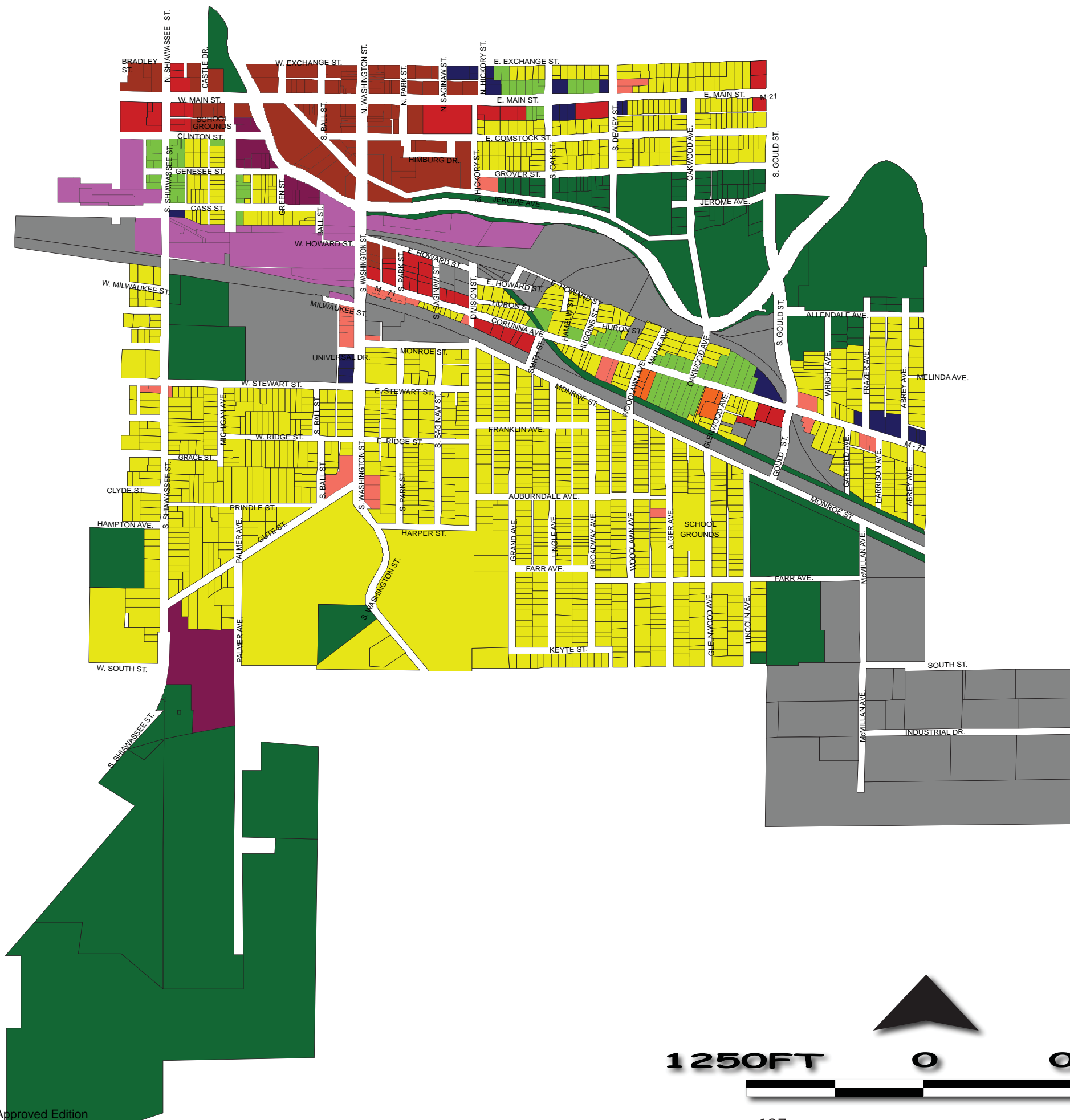


July 24, 2012

# City Of Owosso 2012 Master Plan Map 16: South East Future Land Use

## Land Uses

-  One Family Residential
-  Two Family Residential
-  Multiple Family Residential
-  Multiple Family - High Rise
-  Office
-  Local Business
-  Mixed Use/Traditional Commercial
-  General Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  P-1 Parking
-  Conservation/Flood Plain
-  PUD Planned Unit Development



Council Approved Edition








July 24, 2012


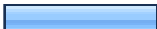




November 19, 2012

# APPENDIX B: SURVEY SUMMARY

**1. Which best describes your age?**

|                          |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| <25                      |  | 1.9%             | 11             |
| 25-44                    |  | 19.4%            | 110            |
| 45-54                    |  | 18.7%            | 106            |
| 55-64                    |  | 24.9%            | 141            |
| 65+                      |  | 35.1%            | 199            |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                  | <b>567</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                  | <b>7</b>       |

**2. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?**

|  |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| Less than high school degree                 |  | 2.5%             | 14             |
| High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED) |  | 22.6%            | 127            |
| <b>Some college but no degree</b>            |  | <b>25.8%</b>     | <b>145</b>     |
| Associate degree                             |  | 13.3%            | 75             |
| Bachelor degree                              |  | 19.0%            | 107            |
| Graduate degree                              |  | 16.7%            | 94             |
| <b>answered question</b>                     |   |                  | <b>562</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>                      |   |                  | <b>12</b>      |

**3. How much money did YOUR HOUSEHOLD earn in 2010? Include money from jobs; net income from business, farm, or rent; pensions; dividends; interest; social security payments; and any other income?**

|                            |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| \$0 - \$19,999             |  | 13.8%            | 72             |
| <b>\$20,000 - \$39,999</b> |  | <b>24.6%</b>     | <b>128</b>     |
| \$40,000 - \$59,999        |  | 23.8%            | 124            |
| \$60,000 - \$79,999        |  | 13.2%            | 69             |
| \$80,000 - \$99,999        |  | 10.7%            | 56             |
| \$100,000 or more          |  | 13.8%            | 72             |
| <b>answered question</b>   |  |                  | <b>521</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |  |                  | <b>53</b>      |

**4. Which best describes the location of your primary residence?**

|                          |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Owosso City</b>       |  | <b>89.1%</b>     | <b>507</b>     |
| Owosso Township          |  | 4.7%             | 27             |
| Caledonia Township       |  | 1.6%             | 9              |
| Corunna City             |  | 0.5%             | 3              |
| Other: Shiawassee County |  | 3.0%             | 17             |
| Other/not sure           |  | 1.1%             | 6              |
| <b>answered question</b> |  |                  | <b>569</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |  |                  | <b>5</b>       |






**5. If you live in the City of Owosso, which quadrant (as divided by M-52 and M-21) do you reside in (See map)?**

|                          |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Northwest (1)            |  | 24.3%            | 137            |
| <b>Northeast (2)</b>     |  | <b>36.4%</b>     | <b>205</b>     |
| Southwest (3)            |  | 17.4%            | 98             |
| Southeast (4)            |  | 14.6%            | 82             |
| Not applicable           |  | 7.3%             | 41             |
| <b>answered question</b> |  |                  | <b>563</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |  |                  | <b>11</b>      |




**6. How long have you lived at this residence?**

|                          |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| 0-1 year                 |  | 5.6%             | 32             |
| 2-5 years                |  | 12.9%            | 73             |
| 6-10 years               |  | 17.1%            | 97             |
| 11-15 years              |  | 13.9%            | 79             |
| 16-20 years              |  | 9.5%             | 54             |
| <b>21 years or more</b>  |  | <b>40.9%</b>     | <b>232</b>     |
| <b>answered question</b> |  |                  | <b>567</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |  |                  | <b>7</b>       |

## 7. I see myself continuing to reside in the community.








|                          |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree           |  | 47.8%               | 264               |
| Agree                    |  | 40.4%               | 223               |
| Disagree                 |  | 7.2%                | 40                |
| Strongly disagree        |  | 2.7%                | 15                |
| Not applicable           |  | 1.8%                | 10                |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                     | <b>552</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                     | <b>22</b>         |

## 8. What best describes your current housing situation?








|                          |  | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Rent                     |   | 5.5%                | 30                |
| Own                      |  | 93.6%               | 514               |
| Live with relatives      |   | 0.9%                | 5                 |
| Other (please specify)   |  |                     | 5                 |
| <b>answered question</b> |  |                     | <b>549</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |  |                     | <b>25</b>         |



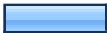




**9. Considering the condition of my home, I am satisfied with my current housing situation.**

|                                    |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Extremely satisfied                |  | 45.1%               | 247               |
| Moderately satisfied               |  | 39.1%               | 214               |
| Slightly satisfied                 |  | 5.8%                | 32                |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied |  | 4.0%                | 22                |
| Slightly dissatisfied              |  | 3.5%                | 19                |
| Moderately dissatisfied            |  | 1.5%                | 8                 |
| Extremely dissatisfied             |  | 1.1%                | 6                 |
| <b>answered question</b>           |   |                     | <b>548</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>            |   |                     | <b>26</b>         |


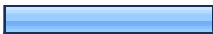





**10. Considering my ownership status, I am satisfied with my current housing situation.**

|                                    |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Extremely satisfied                |  | 52.1%               | 284               |
| Moderately satisfied               |  | 29.7%               | 162               |
| Slightly satisfied                 |  | 7.3%                | 40                |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied |  | 5.1%                | 28                |
| Slightly dissatisfied              |  | 3.1%                | 17                |
| Moderately dissatisfied            |  | 1.3%                | 7                 |
| Extremely dissatisfied             |  | 1.3%                | 7                 |
| <b>answered question</b>           |   |                     | <b>545</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>            |   |                     | <b>29</b>         |









## 11. How clean is your neighborhood?

|                          |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Extremely clean          |  | 15.0%            | 83             |
| <b>Very clean</b>        |  | <b>40.3%</b>     | <b>223</b>     |
| Moderately clean         |  | 37.0%            | 205            |
| Slightly clean           |  | 6.5%             | 36             |
| Not at all clean         |  | 1.3%             | 7              |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                  | <b>554</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                  | <b>20</b>      |









## 12. Are you satisfied with the parks in your neighborhood?

|                                    |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Extremely satisfied                |  | 11.1%            | 59             |
| <b>Moderately satisfied</b>        |  | <b>31.1%</b>     | <b>165</b>     |
| Slightly satisfied                 |  | 13.2%            | 70             |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied |  | 25.7%            | 136            |
| Slightly dissatisfied              |  | 8.9%             | 47             |
| Moderately dissatisfied            |  | 4.7%             | 25             |
| Extremely dissatisfied             |  | 5.3%             | 28             |
| <b>answered question</b>           |   |                  | <b>530</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>            |   |                  | <b>44</b>      |









**13. The City of Owosso has adequate housing for seniors (assisted living, nursing homes, etc).**

|                            |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 10.6%            | 59             |
| <b>Moderately agree</b>    |  | <b>26.9%</b>     | <b>149</b>     |
| Slightly agree             |  | 11.4%            | 63             |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 14.6%            | 81             |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 6.7%             | 37             |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 4.9%             | 27             |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 4.3%             | 24             |
| Don't know                 |  | 20.6%            | 114            |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                  | <b>554</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                  | <b>20</b>      |




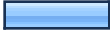


**14. The City of Owosso has adequate housing for low income citizens.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 11.0%                       | 61                        |
| Moderately agree           |  | 19.5%                       | 108                       |
| Slightly agree             |  | 10.8%                       | 60                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 14.1%                       | 78                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 6.0%                        | 33                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 5.2%                        | 29                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 6.1%                        | 34                        |
| <b>Don't know</b>          |  | <b>27.1%</b>                | <b>150</b>                |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                             | <b>553</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                             | <b>21</b>                 |









### 15. Programs and services for seniors satisfy the needs of the area senior residents.

|                            |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 7.0%             | 39             |
| Moderately agree           |  | 22.7%            | 126            |
| Slightly agree             |  | 16.7%            | 93             |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 14.4%            | 80             |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 7.6%             | 42             |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 3.2%             | 18             |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 3.8%             | 21             |
| <b>Don't know</b>          |  | <b>24.6%</b>     | <b>137</b>     |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                  | <b>556</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                  | <b>18</b>      |







### 16. If employed, which best describes the location of your employment?

|                          |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Owosso City</b>       |  | <b>49.5%</b>     | <b>154</b>     |
| Shiawassee County        |  | 19.0%            | 59             |
| Flint Area               |  | 7.4%             | 23             |
| Lansing Area             |  | 15.4%            | 48             |
| Saginaw Area             |  | 2.6%             | 8              |
| Flexible                 |  | 6.1%             | 19             |
| Other (please specify)   |   |                  | 129            |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                  | <b>311</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                  | <b>263</b>     |

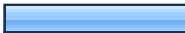





**17. Aside from the larger economy, which service do you feel would most improve your employment situation? Choose any that apply.**

|  |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--|--|------------------|----------------|
| Job training   |   | 16.2%            | 63             |
| Formal education (associates, bachelors, or advanced degree) |   | 11.1%            | 43             |
| Child care assistance  |   | 3.9%             | 15             |
| GED classes  |   | 3.1%             | 12             |
| Improved public transportation                               |   | 11.6%            | 45             |
| Internships/more experience                                  |   | 7.7%             | 30             |
| More jobs in my field  |   | 25.7%            | 100            |
| <b>Nothing. My job is fine.</b>                              |  | <b>46.8%</b>     | <b>182</b>     |
| <b>answered question</b>                                     |  |                  | <b>389</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>                                      |  |                  | <b>185</b>     |

## 18. What industry do you most strongly associate with the City of Owosso?




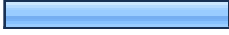


|                          |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Service                  |  | 25.3%               | 117               |
| Manufacturing            |  | 23.4%               | 108               |
| Professional             |  | 5.0%                | 23                |
| Arts/entertainment       |  | 2.6%                | 12                |
| <b>Healthcare</b>        |  | <b>33.1%</b>        | <b>153</b>        |
| Education                |  | 10.6%               | 49                |
|                          | Other (please specify)  |                     | 43                |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                     | <b>462</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                     | <b>112</b>        |

**19. What industries have the most potential to be introduced or expanded in the City of Owosso? (Select up to two.)**



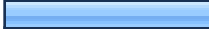

|                          |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Service                  |  | 27.0%                       | 138                       |
| <b>Manufacturing</b>     |  | <b>62.0%</b>                | <b>317</b>                |
| Professional             |  | 15.1%                       | 77                        |
| Arts/entertainment       |  | 13.9%                       | 71                        |
| Healthcare               |  | 25.2%                       | 129                       |
| Education                |  | 21.5%                       | 110                       |
|                          | Other (please specify)  |                             | 26                        |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                             | <b>511</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                             | <b>63</b>                 |











**20. Which two areas best describe the location of your time spent shopping, dining, or recreating? (Select up to two.)**

|                            |  | <b>Response Percent</b>  | <b>Response Count</b> |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Downtown Owosso            |   | 32.7%                    | 181                   |
| <b>Owosso/Corunna Area</b> |  | <b>74.7%</b>             | <b>413</b>            |
| Flint Area                 |   | 24.4%                    | 135                   |
| Lansing Area               |   | 33.6%                    | 186                   |
| Saginaw Area               |   | 1.3%                     | 7                     |
| Detroit Area               |   | 2.5%                     | 14                    |
|                            | Other (please specify)   |                          | 22                    |
|                            |  | <b>answered question</b> | <b>553</b>            |
|                            |  | <b>skipped question</b>  | <b>21</b>             |






**21. What would best improve Owosso as a place to recreate, shop, dine, and enjoy? (Select up to two).**

|  |  | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Later business/weekend hours<br>downtown               |   | 32.6%                       | 157                       |
| <b>More retail, dining, and<br/>recreation options</b> |  | <b>71.1%</b>                | <b>342</b>                |
| More weekend and evening events                        |   | 30.6%                       | 147                       |
| Stronger nightlife (clubs, cultural<br>venues, etc.)   |   | 20.4%                       | 98                        |
|  | Other (please specify)   |                             | 66                        |
|  |  | <b>answered question</b>    | <b>481</b>                |
|  |  | <b>skipped question</b>     | <b>93</b>                 |



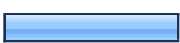


**22. I feel the city of Owosso should play a strong role in economic development, including acquiring properties and redeveloping old industrial sites.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Extremely agree</b>     |  | <b>33.3%</b>                | <b>185</b>                |
| Moderately agree           |  | 28.5%                       | 158                       |
| Slightly agree             |  | 14.6%                       | 81                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 7.0%                        | 39                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 3.2%                        | 18                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 2.7%                        | 15                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 6.7%                        | 37                        |
| Don't know                 |  | 4.0%                        | 22                        |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                             | <b>555</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                             | <b>19</b>                 |









### 23. Which, if any, is the most serious problem in the city of Owosso as a whole?

|  |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Vacant lots  |  | 6.4%                | 28                |
| Poorly maintained infrastructure<br>such as streets, parks, storm<br>sewer, etc. |  | 28.6%               | 126               |
| <b>Condition of houses</b>   |  | <b>40.2%</b>        | <b>177</b>        |
| Crime/vandalism  |  | 16.6%               | 73                |
| None   |  | 8.2%                | 36                |
|  | Other (please specify)  |                     | 133               |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                     | <b>440</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                     | <b>134</b>        |









### 24. Which, if any, is the most serious problem in your neighborhood?

|  |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Vacant lots  |  | 4.1%                | 19                |
| Poorly maintained infrastructure<br>such as streets, parks, storm<br>sewer, etc. |  | 24.4%               | 114               |
| Condition of houses  |  | 25.9%               | 121               |
| Crime/vandalism  |  | 9.8%                | 46                |
| <b>None</b>  |  | <b>35.9%</b>        | <b>168</b>        |
|  | Other (please specify)  |                     | 92                |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                     | <b>468</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                     | <b>106</b>        |

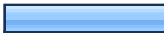







**25. Owosso should continue to improve the city as a place where bikers and pedestrians can more safely access the community and recreate by providing bike lanes, trails, and enforcement of sidewalk up-keep.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Extremely agree</b>     |  | <b>44.3%</b>                | <b>248</b>                |
| Moderately agree           |  | 26.1%                       | 146                       |
| Slightly agree             |  | 9.5%                        | 53                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 9.8%                        | 55                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 2.1%                        | 12                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 4.1%                        | 23                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 3.9%                        | 22                        |
| Don't know                 |  | 0.2%                        | 1                         |
|                            |   | <b>answered question</b>    | <b>560</b>                |
|                            |   | <b>skipped question</b>     | <b>14</b>                 |








**26. I am in support of more stringent enforcement of blight, nuisance, and building codes in the city.**

|                            |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 44.0%            | 248            |
| Moderately agree           |  | 23.2%            | 131            |
| Slightly agree             |  | 12.4%            | 70             |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 8.5%             | 48             |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 3.5%             | 20             |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 2.1%             | 12             |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 3.2%             | 18             |
| Don't know                 |  | 3.0%             | 17             |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                  | <b>564</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                  | <b>10</b>      |

**27. In attracting and regulating new commercial and large scale development in the city, I think the design and material standards for such development should be:**









|                          |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Extremely high           |  | 23.6%                       | 130                       |
| <b>Moderately high</b>   |  | <b>38.3%</b>                | <b>211</b>                |
| Slightly high            |  | 15.1%                       | 83                        |
| Neither high nor low     |  | 12.9%                       | 71                        |
| Slightly low             |  | 1.1%                        | 6                         |
| Moderately low           |  | 0.7%                        | 4                         |
| Extremely low            |  | 0.9%                        | 5                         |
| Don't know               |  | 7.4%                        | 41                        |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                             | <b>551</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                             | <b>23</b>                 |

**28. What services do you feel could best be delivered by a regional authority or through consolidation of existing local governments (select two)?**









|                                |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Recreation</b>              |  | <b>31.9%</b>                | <b>161</b>                |
| Police protection              |  | 28.2%                       | 142                       |
| Fire protection                |  | 21.2%                       | 107                       |
| Ambulance service              |  | 11.9%                       | 60                        |
| Building, planning, and zoning |  | 28.4%                       | 143                       |
| Water/wastewater               |  | 23.2%                       | 117                       |
| None                           |  | 21.8%                       | 110                       |
|                                | Other (please specify)  |                             | 38                        |
| <b>answered question</b>       |   |                             | <b>504</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>        |   |                             | <b>70</b>                 |











## 29. What do you consider to be Owosso's most distinct or important asset?

|                             |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Shiawassee River            |  | 17.6%               | 91                |
| <b>Memorial Healthcare</b>  |  | <b>23.4%</b>        | <b>121</b>        |
| Baker College               |  | 22.4%               | 116               |
| Downtown businesses         |  | 9.7%                | 50                |
| Arts and culture            |  | 2.7%                | 14                |
| Local schools               |  | 7.5%                | 39                |
| Steam Railroading Institute |  | 7.5%                | 39                |
| Curwood Castle              |  | 9.3%                | 48                |
|                             | Other (please specify)  |                     | 48                |
| <b>answered question</b>    |   |                     | <b>518</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>     |   |                     | <b>56</b>         |









**30. What areas or amenities would you most like to see re-developed? (Select up to two.)**

|  |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Downtown   |  | 27.1%               | 145               |
| Riverfront   |  | 24.7%               | 132               |
| Brownfield sites (abandoned, underused or potentially contaminated facilities) |  | 40.4%               | 216               |
| Housing  |  | 12.5%               | 67                |
| M-21 corridor  |  | 9.9%                | 53                |
| M-52 corridor  |  | 5.4%                | 29                |
| M-71 corridor  |  | 5.8%                | 31                |
| <b>Westown</b>   |  | <b>44.3%</b>        | <b>237</b>        |
|  | Other (please specify)  |                     | 40                |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                     | <b>535</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                     | <b>39</b>         |









**31. I think the City of Owosso should be better integrated with Baker College, creating more of a 'college town' environment.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 19.5%                       | 109                       |
| <b>Moderately agree</b>    |  | <b>22.9%</b>                | <b>128</b>                |
| Slightly agree             |  | 16.4%                       | 92                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 12.9%                       | 72                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 8.4%                        | 47                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 3.8%                        | 21                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 14.3%                       | 80                        |
| Don't know                 |  | 2.0%                        | 11                        |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                             | <b>560</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                             | <b>14</b>                 |









**32. I think the city should attempt to attract visitors and travelers to the community and sell itself as a high quality destination for business and tourism.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Extremely agree</b>     |  | <b>35.9%</b>                | <b>199</b>                |
| Moderately agree           |  | 28.0%                       | 155                       |
| Slightly agree             |  | 15.9%                       | 88                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 9.7%                        | 54                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 3.1%                        | 17                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 2.3%                        | 13                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 3.4%                        | 19                        |
| Don't know                 |  | 1.6%                        | 9                         |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                             | <b>554</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                             | <b>20</b>                 |







**33. I would be in favor of citywide trash pickup by one or more companies under contract with the city, provided this results in lower household costs and fewer large trucks on the streets.**

|                            |   | Response<br>Percent | Response<br>Count |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Extremely agree            |  | 38.2%               | 214               |
| Moderately agree           |  | 19.6%               | 110               |
| Slightly agree             |  | 10.9%               | 61                |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 7.9%                | 44                |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 2.0%                | 11                |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 3.9%                | 22                |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 15.0%               | 84                |
| Don't know                 |  | 2.5%                | 14                |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                     | <b>560</b>        |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                     | <b>14</b>         |




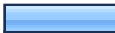


**34. I would be in favor of citywide recycling and/or yard waste collection on a bi-weekly basis provided by one or more companies under contract with the city.**

|                            |   | <b>Response<br/>Percent</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Extremely agree</b>     |  | <b>43.5%</b>                | <b>243</b>                |
| Moderately agree           |  | 21.5%                       | 120                       |
| Slightly agree             |  | 9.7%                        | 54                        |
| Neither agree nor disagree |  | 8.8%                        | 49                        |
| Slightly disagree          |  | 3.2%                        | 18                        |
| Moderately disagree        |  | 2.5%                        | 14                        |
| Extremely disagree         |  | 8.8%                        | 49                        |
| Don't know                 |  | 2.0%                        | 11                        |
| <b>answered question</b>   |   |                             | <b>558</b>                |
| <b>skipped question</b>    |   |                             | <b>16</b>                 |

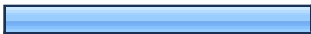





### 35. In order to achieve my vision of Owosso, I would be in favor of:

|   |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| Contributing significantly more financial resources |  | 1.8%             | 10             |
| Contributing slightly more financial resources      |  | 33.0%            | 183            |
| <b>Not changing my financial contribution</b>       |  | <b>40.7%</b>     | <b>226</b>     |
| Contributing slightly less financial resources      |  | 8.6%             | 48             |
| Contributing significantly less financial resources |  | 9.4%             | 52             |
| Not applicable                                      |  | 6.5%             | 36             |
| <b>answered question</b>                            |   |                  | <b>555</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>                             |   |                  | <b>19</b>      |

### 36. How well do you think the City of Owosso communicates with its citizens?

|                          |   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Very well                |  | 5.3%             | 30             |
| <b>Well</b>              |  | <b>35.4%</b>     | <b>199</b>     |
| Neither well nor poorly  |  | 30.6%            | 172            |
| Poorly                   |  | 16.4%            | 92             |
| Very poorly              |  | 8.2%             | 46             |
| Don't know               |  | 4.1%             | 23             |
| <b>answered question</b> |   |                  | <b>562</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |   |                  | <b>12</b>      |

**37. Which method would you most prefer the city use to inform the public of city services?**

|                        |   | Response Percent         | Response Count |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|----------------|
| Newsletter             |  | 46.2%                    | 259            |
| Webpage                |  | 10.9%                    | 61             |
| Social networking site |  | 4.3%                     | 24             |
| Newspaper notices      |  | 25.0%                    | 140            |
| Email                  |  | 9.3%                     | 52             |
| Don't know             |  | 4.5%                     | 25             |
|                        |   | <b>answered question</b> | <b>561</b>     |
|                        |   | <b>skipped question</b>  | <b>13</b>      |

**38. What is the first word that comes to mind when thinking of the city of Owosso?**

|  |  | Response Count           |
|--|--|--------------------------|
|  |  | 467                      |
|  |  | <b>answered question</b> |
|  |  | <b>467</b>               |
|  |  | <b>skipped question</b>  |
|  |  | <b>107</b>               |

**39. If you would like to become involved in this or other community activities, please place your email address below. Enter email here (optional)**

|  |  | Response Count           |
|--|--|--------------------------|
|  |  | 75                       |
|  |  | <b>answered question</b> |
|  |  | <b>75</b>                |
|  |  | <b>skipped question</b>  |
|  |  | <b>499</b>               |