City of Caro MICHIGAN

City of Caro

2023-2043 Master Plan

Tuscola County Michigan

City of Caro Master Plan

Adoption Date

Approved by City Council

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Chapter 1. Planning Process

A joint plan covering the Village of Caro and Almer and Indianfields Townships was first prepared in 1980 and then updated in 1997. That plan was used as the basis for a village-only master plan adopted in 2005. In 2014, the City of Caro adopted its first plan after re-organizing as a city in 2009. This plan is an update of that 2014 plan.

The City of Caro determined that an update to its Master Plan was necessary during the summer of 2021, recognizing that the previous plan was out of date, and that several significant developments within the community during recent years made an update necessary.

The Master Plan process began with a kick-off meeting in September 2021, with public engagement events and chapter updates occurring on a monthly basis through August 2022, at which point in the time the Planning Commission finalized a draft plan for approval by City Council to be distributed for formal review. The overall planning process is summarized in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1: Master Plan Update Schedule

Month, Year	Activities
September, 2021	• Kick-Off Meeting

October, 2021	• Chapter Updates:
	  ○ Community Description
	  ○ Infrastructure
	  ○ Parks and Recreation
	• Meeting with Downtown Development Authority

November & December, 2021	• Analysis: Housing Inventory

January, 2022	• Chapter Updates:
	  ○ Downtown Development
	  ○ Rezoning and Annexation
	  ○ Transportation
	  ○ Infrastructure
	• Community Survey Distributed

February, 2022	• Chapter Updates:
	  ○ Housing
	  ○ Non-motorized Transportation
	• Analysis: Visioning Session Results
	• Community Visioning Session

March, 2022	• Analysis: Community Survey Results • Chapter Update: Review previous plan goals and objectives
April, 2022	• Chapter Update: Goals & Objectives

May, 2022	• Chapter Updates:
	  ○ Review previous plan Future Land Use Plan
	  ○ Implementation Plan

June, 2022	• Chapter Update: Future Land Use Plan
July, 2022	• Master Plan Open Houses
September, 2022	• Draft Plan Approved by Planning Commission for City Council Review
October, 2022	• City Council Approval for Distribution and Review
January, 2023	• Planning Commission Adoption by Resolution
February, 2023	• City Council Approval

Chapter 2. Community Description

POPULATION

A community's population characteristics are an important consideration in determining its land use needs. These characteristics include age, sex, household size, race, and population growth. A study of a community's population characteristics provides a rational basis for projecting future land use changes and community needs.

Population Change

Table 2-1: Population Growth 1950 to 2020 shows population change in the City of Caro, Almer and Indianfields Townships, and Tuscola County from 1950 to 2020. Generally speaking, population growth was consistent in Caro and the adjacent townships from 1950 to 1980 and, since 1980, populations have declined or remained fairly stable. Notably, Tuscola County and each of the surrounding townships have lost population since 2000, while Caro's population has increased slightly during the same time period (see Figure 2-1).

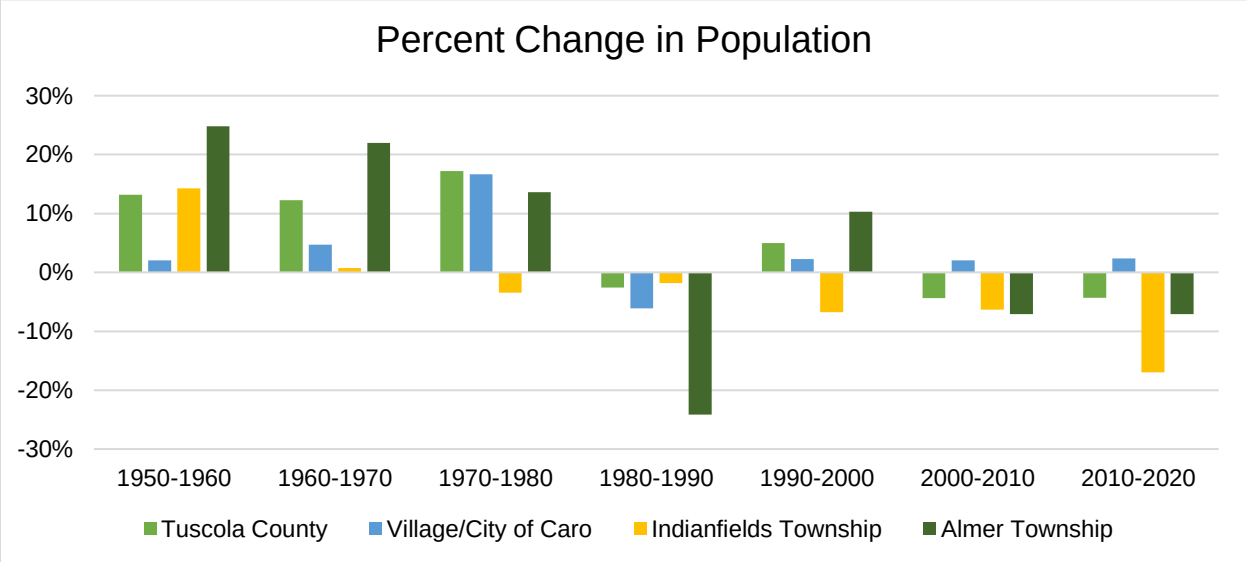
It is important to note that until Caro's change in status from a village to a city in 2010, residents were also counted as residents of their respective townships. With the change to city status, residents are no longer counted as residents of the townships as well. To account for this change, township population 1950 to 2000 has been adjusted in Table 2-1 to reflect only those persons living outside the village.

Table 2-1: Population Growth 1950 to 2020

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Tuscola County	38,258	43,305	48,603	56,961	55,498	58,266	55,729	53,323
Village/City of Caro	3,464	3,534	3,701	4,317	4,054	4,145	4,229	4,328
Indianfields Township	2,943	3,363	3,387	3,271	3,211	2,994	2,805	2,329
Almer Township	1,573	1,963	2,394	2,720	2,063	2,276	2,115	1,965

Source: U.S. Census, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020

Figure 2-1: Change in Population 1950 - 2020



Age

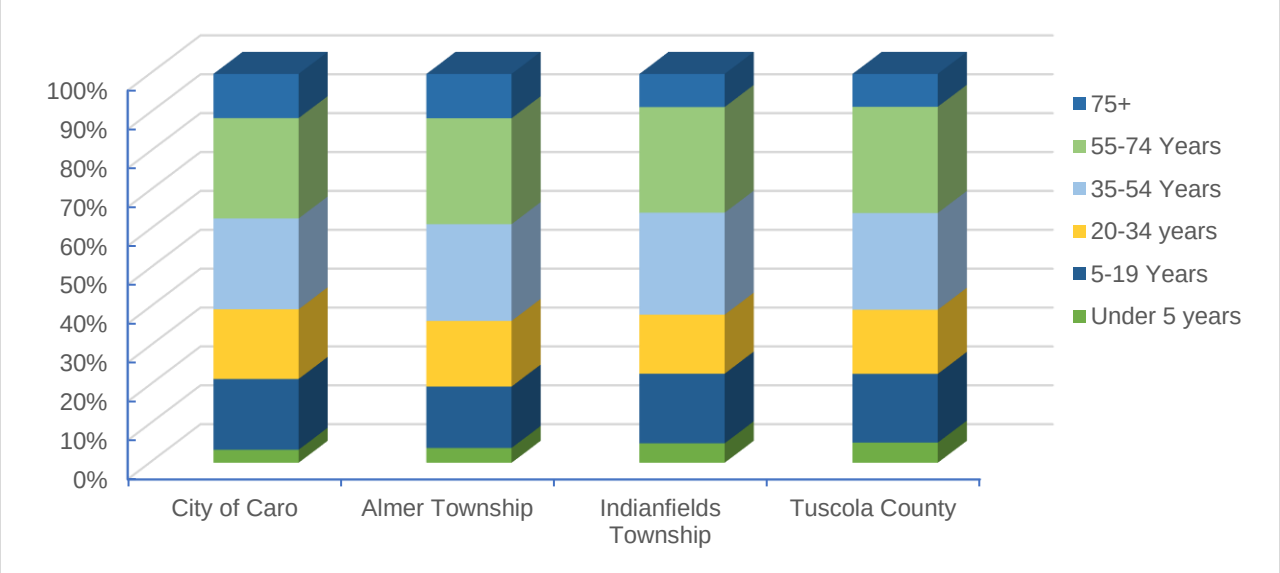
Table 2-2 compares age groups for the City of Caro with Almer Township and Indianfields Township, as well as Tuscola County as a whole. Overall, the distribution of age between each area is extremely similar, with between 61 percent and 64 percent of the population over the age of 35, this is slightly more than in the State of Michigan and nation, where 56 percent and 54 percent of the population, respectively, is over the age of 35.

Table 2-2 : Age, 2015-2019[1]

	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Population*	4,054	100%	2,097	100%	2,539	100%	52,939	100%
Under 5 Years	136	3%	80	4%	127	5%	2,744	5%
5–19 Years	738	18%	331	16%	455	18%	9,360	18%
20–34 Years	726	18%	354	17%	385	15%	8,725	16%
35-54 Years	947	23%	522	25%	666	26%	13,182	25%
55-74 Years	1,046	26%	571	27%	690	27%	14,455	27%
75 + Years	461	11%	239	11%	216	9%	4,473	8%
Median Age	45.5		46.1		44.8		44.6	

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 2-2: Age Distribution, 2015-2019



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

[1] Full details from the 2020 U.S. Census have not been released as of September 2021, as a result, there is some inconsistency between detailed data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey and the Decennial Census.

Median Age

Table 2-3 shows that the median age of the population has increased steadily in Caro since 1980. The median age in the city, as well as most of the surrounding areas is approximately 5 years older than the State of Michigan as a whole. The on-going "aging" of the population is a nationwide trend that has a variety of effects on communities, particularly related to increasing demands on senior services and housing in the community. While demand for new housing units is likely to continue, school services are likely to see decreasing demand.

Table 2-3: Median Age

Year	Village/City of Caro	Almer Township	Indianfields Township	Tuscola County	State of Michigan
1980	30.8	31.5	29.7	28.1	28.8
1990	33.7	37.7	33.7	33	32.6
2000	40.6	36.8	37.4	37	35.5
2010	39.6	45.3	40.7	41.7	38.9
2015-2019	45.5	46.1	44.8	44.6	39.7

Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Household Size

Household size has been decreasing since the turn of the twentieth century. Household size is linked to the median age of the population. As the population ages, children move out to form their own households. The result of this is that while total population has remained fairly steady over the past several decades, the number of households has increased. For example, a household made up of two parents and three children over time becomes four households, made up of one household of the same set of parents and three households of the individual children. A variety of factors influence decreasing household size, including changing preferences for having children later in life, longer life expectancies, and other factors. The result is that the composition of households in most communities is much different in 2022 than it was when most housing stock was built.

Table 2-4 shows the average number of persons per household for the City of Caro from 1960 through the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. The average household size in Caro (2.08 persons) is less than all other jurisdictions in the Table.

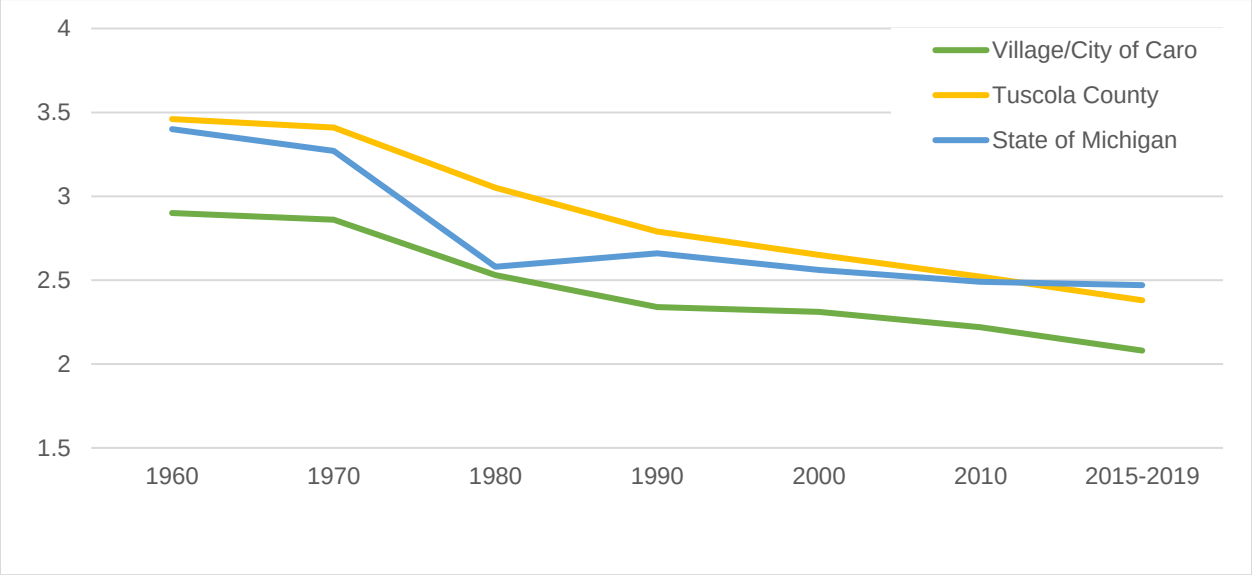
With an average household of two people in Caro, more housing units are now required to serve the same population. This change drives demand for housing that often has different characteristics than housing built for larger families in the 1960s and 1970s.

Table 2-4: Persons Per Household 1960 to 2015-2019

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015-2019
Village/City of Caro	2.90	2.86	2.53	2.34	2.31	2.22	2.08
Almer Township	3.47	3.33	2.89	2.58	2.54	2.30	2.11
Indianfields Township	3.13	3.02	2.68	2.47	2.39	2.34	2.49
Tuscola County	3.46	3.41	3.05	2.79	2.65	2.52	2.38
State of Michigan	3.4	3.27	2.58	2.66	2.56	2.49	2.47

Source: U.S. Census, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 2-3: Persons Per Household 1960 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

Gender

Table 2-5 shows the breakdown of the population by gender in 2010. There is a slightly higher proportion of the population in Caro that is female, but is not out of the ordinary.

Table 2-5: Gender, 2020

	Males	Females
City of Caro	45.98%	54.02%
Indianfields Township	50.02%	49.98%
Almer Township	50.31%	49.69%
Tuscola County	50.30%	49.70%
State of Michigan	49.22%	50.78%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

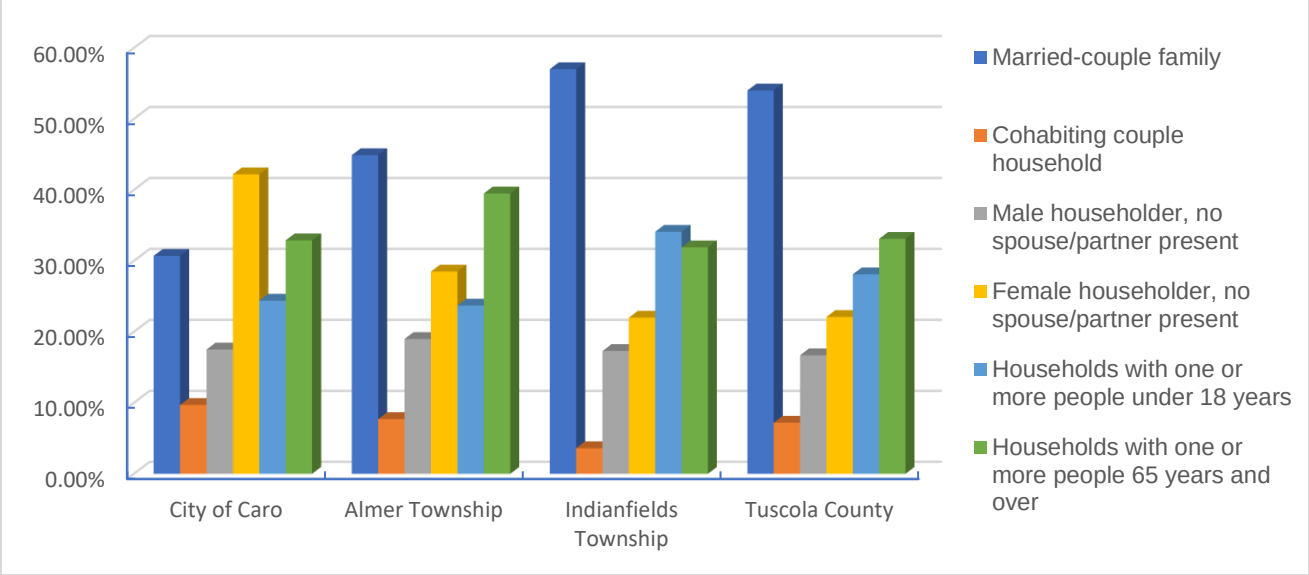
Household Composition

The term "household composition" is used to describe the general structure of households. Table 2-6 shows the City of Caro has a significantly smaller share of its households (30.7%) made up of married couple families than both Indianfields Township (57.0%) and Almer Township (44.9%). The primary driver of this difference is the large number of female householders (primarily characterized as single parent households) in Caro. Female householders account for 42.2 percent of households in Caro, compared to 28.5 and 22.0 percent in Almer and Indianfields Townships, respectively. This may be a result of the availability of apartment dwellings in the city, which provide safe, affordable housing for single women and their families.

Table 2-6: Household Composition								
	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total households	1,812		927		908		21,777	
Married-couple family	556	30.7%	416	44.9%	518	57.0%	11,753	54.0%
Cohabiting couple household	175	9.7%	71	7.7%	33	3.6%	1,564	7.2%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	317	17.5%	176	19.0%	157	17.3%	3,644	16.7%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	764	42.2%	264	28.5%	200	22.0%	4,816	22.1%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	442	24.4%	220	23.7%	310	34.1%	6,130	28.1%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	597	32.9%	366	39.5%	290	31.9%	7,205	33.1%
Average family size	2.64		2.76		2.9		2.82	

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 2-4: Composition of Households



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Race

Table 2-7 shows the population of the City of Caro is fairly racially homogeneous, with 86.7 percent of its population identifying as white alone. The same can be said for Indianfields Township (89.6%), Almer Township (91.2%), and Tuscola County (91.2%). In the State of Michigan as a whole, 72.4 percent of the population identified as white alone for the 2020 Census.

Table 2-7: Race								
	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	4,328		1,965		2,492		53,323	
Hispanic or Latino	282	6.5%	59	3.0%	73	2.9%	1,808	3.4%
Not Hispanic or Latino:	4,046	93.5%	1,906	97.0%	2,419	97.1%	51,515	96.6%
Population of one race:	3,855	89.1%	1,822	92.7%	2,272	91.2%	49,486	92.8%
White alone	3,751	86.7%	1,792	91.2%	2,232	89.6%	48,611	91.2%
Black or African American alone	49	1.1%	13	0.7%	20	0.8%	402	0.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	17	0.4%	2	0.1%	13	0.5%	174	0.3%
Asian alone	34	0.8%	7	0.4%	5	0.2%	155	0.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	4	0.1%	8	0.4%	2	0.1%	132	0.2%
Population of two or more races:	191	4.4%	84	4.3%	147	5.9%	2,029	3.8%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

INCOME AND OCCUPATION

Table 2-8 shows the median household income in the City of Caro is $34,167. This was significantly lower than Almer Township ($54,148), Indianfields Township ($48,782), and Tuscola County as a whole ($49,988). Median income for Michigan as a whole is nearly $23,000 greater than in the City of Caro.

Table 2-8: Median Household Income in 2019 Dollars				
City of Caro	Almer Township	Indianfields Township	Tuscola County	State of Michigan
$34,167	$54,148	$48,782	$49,988	$57,144

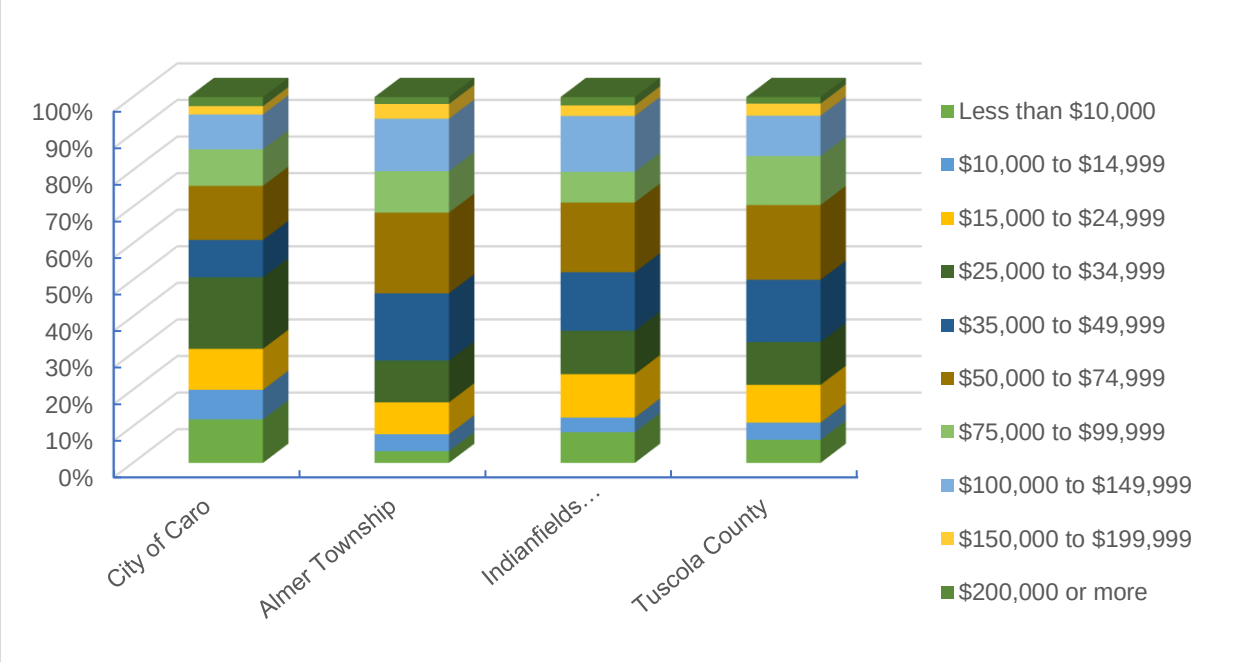
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

The federal poverty level for 2021 for a four-person household is $26,500. Table 2-9 shows income levels for households in the City of Caro, Indianfields Township, Almer Township, and Tuscola County according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Just over 50 percent of Caro's households earn less than $35,000 per year; this is significantly more than in Almer Township (27.9%), Indianfields Township (36.2%), and Tuscola County (33.0%).

Table 2-9: Household Income Distribution								
	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Households	1,812		927		908		21,777	
Less than $10,000	215	11.9%	30	3.2%	76	8.4%	1,376	6.3%
$10,000-$14,999	146	8.1%	43	4.6%	36	4.0%	1,019	4.7%
$15,000-$24,999	203	11.2%	81	8.7%	108	11.9%	2,243	10.3%
$25,000-$34,999	355	19.6%	106	11.4%	108	11.9%	2,542	11.7%
$35,000-$49,999	184	10.2%	170	18.3%	145	16.0%	3,712	17.0%
$50,000-$74,999	269	14.8%	204	22.0%	173	19.1%	4,445	20.4%
$75,000-$99,999	181	10.0%	105	11.3%	76	8.4%	2,923	13.4%
$100,000-$149,999	172	9.5%	133	14.3%	139	15.3%	2,396	11.0%
$150,000-$199,999	41	2.3%	37	4.0%	26	2.9%	720	3.3%
$200,000+	46	2.5%	18	1.9%	21	2.3%	401	1.8%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 2-5: Income



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 2-10 shows the number of households with earnings and the sources of those earnings. The categories are not exclusive, so a household may have earnings from social security and a retirement income such as a pension or 401K. A significant number of households have earnings from sources other than jobs.

Table 2-10: Income Types	
City of Caro	
Total Households	1,812
With earnings	1,178
With social security income	775
With retirement income	408
With supplemental social security income	213
With public assistance income	98
With Food Stamps / SNAP benefits	501

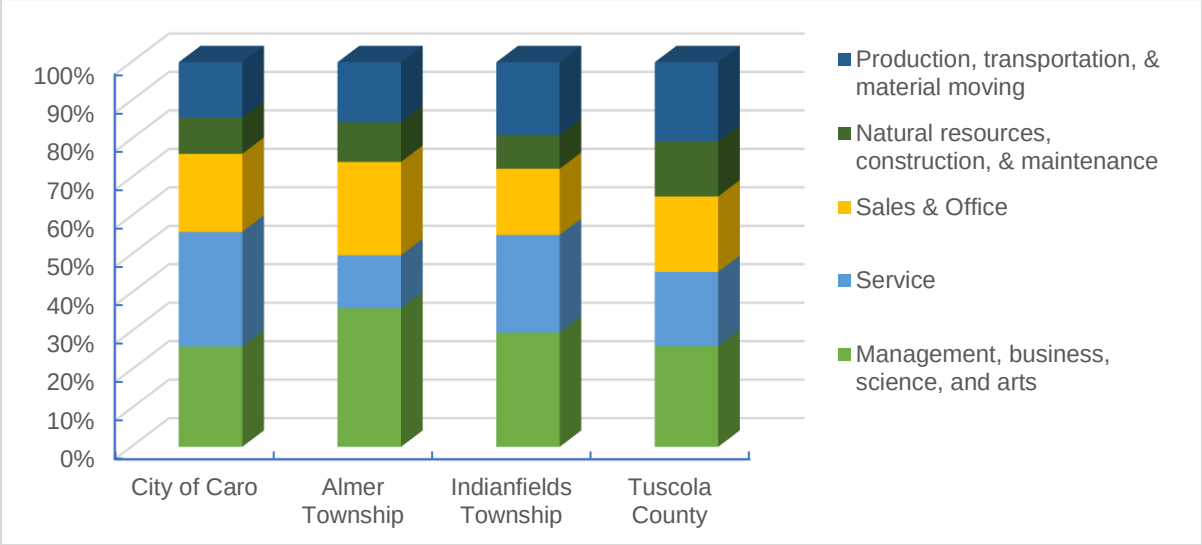
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 2-11 and Figure 2-6 show occupations for workers aged 16 years and older who live in the City of Caro. The most common source of employment in the city is the service industry, which employs 29.8 percent of the population. In comparison, only 13.8 percent of Almer Township workers and 25.4 percent of Indianfields Township workers were employed in the service industry. Generally speaking, service industry jobs are lower paying than managerial/professional jobs. This high proportion of service industry employment in the city contributes to the relatively low median household income.

Table 2-11: Occupations								
Occupation	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Management, business, science, and arts	432	26.1%	315	36.0%	317	29.7%	6,007	26.2%
Service	493	29.8%	121	13.8%	271	25.4%	4,422	19.3%
Sales & Office	336	20.3%	213	24.3%	183	17.2%	4,490	19.6%
Natural resources, construction, & maintenance	156	9.4%	90	10.3%	94	8.8%	3,301	14.4%
Production, transportation, & material moving	238	14.4%	137	15.6%	201	18.9%	4,702	20.5%
Total	1,655	100.0%	876	100.0%	1,066	100.0%	22,922	100.0%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 2-6: Occupations 2015-2019

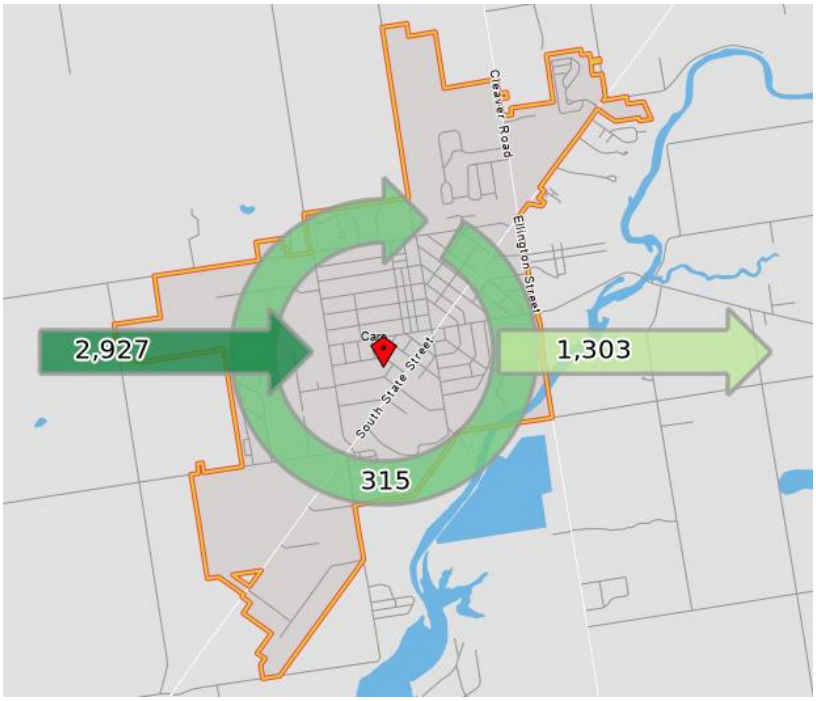


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

WORKER INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

Most people that work in Caro do not live in Caro, and most people that live in Caro work in other places. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2018 there were a total of 3,242 people employed in Caro, of those, only 315 were Caro residents, while 2,927 commuted from another community. Meanwhile, of the 1,618 workers who live in Caro, 1,303 commuted somewhere else for work.

Figure 2-7: Worker Inflow and Outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Survey

As Table 2-12 shows, the largest portion of Caro residents work in Tuscola County, with 43.3 percent of workers employed in the County. Saginaw County is the next most-likely destination with 10.6 percent of Caro residents employed, followed by Oakland (5.7%) and Huron (5.4%) counties. Tuscola County is also the most common source of workers in Caro, with 51.7 percent of workers in the city coming from the county, followed by Huron (6.9%), Bay (5.7%), and Saginaw (4.8%) counties.

Table 2-12: Resident and Worker Origin/Destination

Where Residents Work			Where Workers Live		
County	Workers	% of Total	County	Workers	% of Total
Tuscola County	700	43.3%	**Tuscola County**	1,675	51.7%
Saginaw County	171	10.6%	**Huron County**	225	6.9%
Oakland County	93	5.7%	**Bay County**	184	5.7%
Huron County	88	5.4%	**Saginaw County**	156	4.8%
Genesee County	72	4.4%	**Sanilac County**	134	4.1%
Macomb County	63	3.9%	**Lapeer County**	94	2.9%
Lapeer County	55	3.4%	**Genesee County**	92	2.8%
Wayne County	55	3.4%	**St. Clair County**	82	2.5%
Bay County	54	3.3%	**Oakland County**	63	1.9%
Sanilac County	53	3.3%	**Midland County**	56	1.7%
Other Counties	214	13.2%	**Other Counties**	481	14.8%
Total	**1,618**		**Total**	**3,242**	

SCHOOLS

The City of Caro is the center of the Caro Community School District, which covers a large portion of Tuscola County. Within the City of Caro, the district has two elementary schools (Macomb and Schall), a Middle School and High School, and an Alternative High School. According to the Michigan Department of Education, the district had a total of 1,484 students for the 2020-2021 school year, of which 57.7 percent were considered economically disadvantaged.

Figure 2-8: 2021 High School Graduation

Source: Caro Community Schools

In addition to the presence of traditional K-12 schools and the Alternative High School, the Tuscola County Intermediate School District (ISD) and the Tuscola County Technology Center are located just north of the city. The Technology Center and ISD provide a range of programs and resources for the nine school districts located in Tuscola County, including Special Education, Career and Technical Education, and Instructional Services. The ISD and local school districts are also a major source of employment opportunities for local residents.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

There are no colleges or universities located in Caro, but there are both community colleges and 4-year institutions located within less than an hour's drive. With the availability of virtual programs, proximity to colleges and universities is less critical than it once was. The following colleges and universities are within an hour's drive time of Caro:

- Central Michigan University College of Medicine Education (Saginaw)
- Delta College (Saginaw)
- Saginaw Valley State University (Saginaw)
- St. Clair Community College (Peck)

OTHER PUBLIC AMENITIES

McLaren Caro Regional Hospital is a vital amenity for the community and surrounding area. The hospital provides a full-service emergency department as well as intensive care, cardiology, cancer care, and other essential services for health and wellbeing. The presence of a hospital and associated services and infrastructure is critical to allowing residents to age in place.

The **Caro City Hall** is located at the center of the city and provides meeting rooms and resources to serve the community. The city has a full-time city manager, police chief, and fire chief/zoning administrator.

As the county seat, the **Tuscola County Sherriff's Department and County Court House** are both located within the city and within the downtown. This provides residents with easy access to a range of services and provides another major employer located in the city's downtown.

The **Tuscola County Medical Care Facility**, located at the extreme northern portion of Caro, adjacent to the Tuscola County Health Department provides a range of services for the community and surrounding region, including skilled nursing, 24-hour rehabilitation and memory care.

The City of Caro is also home to a strong park and recreation system, which is detailed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3. Housing

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing is a basic necessity and is one of the principal uses of land in the City of Caro. The provision of adequate, affordable housing is an important public policy. Provided in this section is information from the Census Bureau about general housing characteristics and a housing inventory more closely evaluating the quality of the housing stock. The housing inventory information comes from a manual count and analysis conducted by ROWE staff, while the American Community Survey is a statistically valid sampling of the community conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Housing Age

The age of housing affects both its quality and price. This is not to imply that older homes are always worth less than newer homes, or that neighborhoods made up of older homes cannot be as aesthetically pleasing as newer neighborhoods. Generally speaking, older housing is less costly and more likely to be converted into multi-family dwellings.

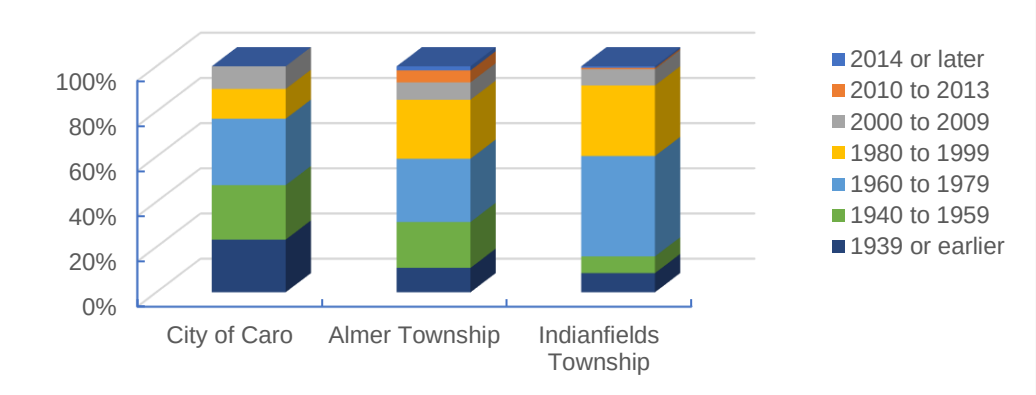
Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1 show 23.3 percent of the housing stock in the City of Caro was built in 1939 or earlier. This is a much higher proportion than both Almer Township (10.8%) and Indianfields Township (8.5%). Only 23.2 percent of the housing stock in the city was built after 1980, compared to 40.9 percent in Almer and 39.8 percent in Indianfields Township.

Table 3-1: Year Structure Built, Occupied Housing Units

	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
2014 or later	0	0.0%	17	1.8%	6	0.7%
2010 to 2013	0	0.0%	49	5.3%	5	0.6%
2000 to 2009	182	10.0%	71	7.7%	65	7.2%
1980 to 1999	239	13.2%	242	26.1%	284	31.3%
1960 to 1979	532	29.4%	260	28.0%	404	44.5%
1940 to 1959	437	24.1%	188	20.3%	67	7.4%
1939 or earlier	422	23.3%	100	10.8%	77	8.5%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 3-1: Year Structure Built



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

This high proportion of pre-1960 housing stock in the city compared with the relatively low proportion in the townships is due to a nationwide trend of suburbanization. This trend resulted in a large proportion of married family households moving to more rural suburban areas within commuting distance of urban centers.

Housing Types

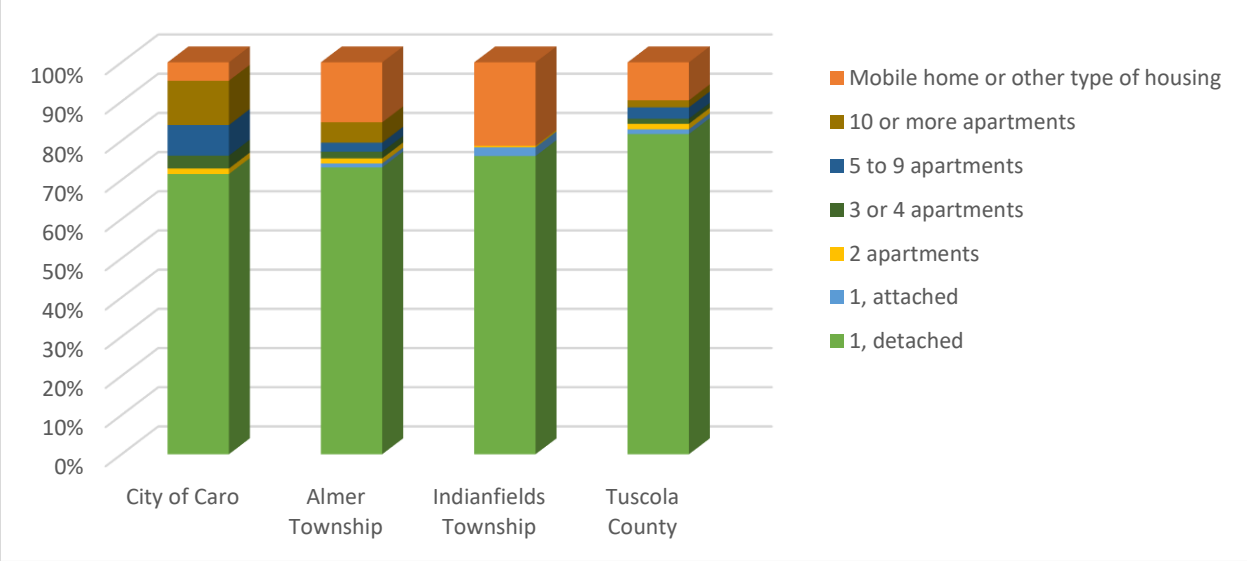
Table 3-2 shows 23.8 percent of all housing units in the City of Caro are multi-family units according to the American Community Survey. This figure is significantly higher than both Almer Township (10.5%) and Indianfields Township (0.4%). This is common for the city center to provide for a more diverse range of housing because it can accommodate housing density with providing public utility services. Both Almer and Indianfields Townships have significantly greater proportions of mobile homes than the City of Caro. Generally, mobile home units have relatively low value in comparison to other units.

Table 3-2: Housing Unit Type

Units in Structure:	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
1, detached	1,295	71.5%	679	73.2%	691	76.1%	17,808	81.8%
1, attached	0	0.0%	9	1.0%	20	2.2%	263	1.2%
2 apartments	26	1.4%	12	1.3%	4	0.4%	299	1.4%
3 or 4 apartments	60	3.3%	16	1.7%	0	0.0%	287	1.3%
5 to 9 apartments	141	7.8%	21	2.3%	0	0.0%	625	2.9%
10 or more apartments	204	11.3%	48	5.2%	0	0.0%	390	1.8%
Mobile home or other type of housing	86	4.7%	142	15.3%	193	21.3%	2,105	9.7%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Figure 3-2: Housing Types



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Housing Value

Housing value is the result of many factors, including age of housing, type of housing, neighborhood quality, and determinants such as employment opportunities, quality of education system, crime rates, and wider national trends. Housing values also have a direct effect on property taxes, which in turn impacts revenue captured by the City of Caro.

Table 3-3 shows the median value of owner-occupied housing in the City of Caro is $77,800. This is significantly lower than in Almer Township ($93,700), Indianfields Township ($102,900), and Tuscola County as a whole ($104,000).

Table 3-3: Housing Value

Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	City of Caro		Almer Township		Indianfields Township		Tuscola County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than $50,000	269	23.9%	136	17.4%	176	22.8%	2,677	14.9%
$50,000 to $99,999	543	48.3%	299	38.2%	199	25.7%	5,883	32.8%
$100,000 to $149,999	207	18.4%	159	20.3%	204	26.4%	4,274	23.8%
$150,000 to $199,999	54	4.8%	68	8.7%	79	10.2%	2,775	15.5%
$200,000 to $299,999	33	2.9%	100	12.8%	98	12.7%	1,616	9.0%
$300,000 to $499,999	19	1.7%	20	2.6%	10	1.3%	521	2.9%
$500,000 to $999,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	0.9%	118	0.7%
$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	86	0.5%
Median (dollars)	$77,800		$93,700		$102,900		$104,000	

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Housing Tenure

Table 3-4 shows only 62.1 percent of the housing units in the City of Caro were owner-occupied according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. This proportion is lower than both Almer Township (84.4%) and Indianfields Township (85.1%). Conversely, 37.9 percent of Caro residents lived in renter-occupied units, compared to 15.6 percent in Almer Township and 14.9 percent in Indianfields Township. Again, this difference can be explained by the significant proportion of multi-unit residential dwellings in Caro.

Table 3-4: Tenure

	Occupied Housing Units	Owner-Occupied	% Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	% Renter-Occupied
City of Caro	1,812	1,125	62.1%	687	37.9%
Almer Township	927	782	84.4%	145	15.6%
Indianfields Township	908	773	85.1%	135	14.9%
Tuscola County	21,777	17,950	82.4%	3,827	17.6%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

State Equalized Value

The Michigan Department of Treasury publishes annual reports on state equalized value - the valuation local governments utilize to assess property taxes - for each county in the state annually. Table 3-5 provides a summary of total state equalized value for the City of Caro, surrounding townships, and Tuscola County as a whole. Since 2010, the total state equalized value within the City of Caro has declined by 8 percent, compared to Tuscola County as a whole, where equalized value has increased by 56 percent over the same time period. This is particularly problematic

when considering that Caro is the only jurisdiction of the three that did not lose population over the same time period. **In other words, the City of Caro is tasked with serving an increasing population with declining resources.**

Table 3-5: State Equalized Value				
	2010	**2015**	**2020**	**% Change 2010-2020**
City of Caro	$116,063,573	$96,084,352	$106,662,873	-8%
Almer Township	$71,875,752	$98,808,050	$109,873,500	53%
Indianfields Township	$71,469,600	$68,595,100	$75,935,000	6%
Tuscola County	$1,829,463,162	$2,430,874,614	$2,853,165,206	56%

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury State Equalization e-filing System

Table 3-6 provides additional detail for the City of Caro regarding the change in value of different types of property. Real property is real estate, the value of buildings and structures, while personal property is the value of equipment and other investments on commercial and industrial properties that are also taxed. A law adopted by the Michigan Legislature phases out taxes on personal property by 2024.

Between 2010 and 2020, in addition to loss of personal property due to changes in state legislation, the value of real commercial property in the city declined by 14 percent, real industrial property increased by 37 percent, and residential personal property increased by 5 percent. The decline in the value of commercial property is a trend that appears likely to continue due to reduced demand for commercial office space following the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 3-6: Change in Value by Property Classification				
Property Classification	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**	**% Change 2010-2020**
Real Property				
Commercial	$36,263,300	$29,651,185	$31,183,800	-14.01%
Industrial	$8,313,800	$6,078,350	$11,389,000	36.99%
Residential	$52,276,100	$42,993,000	$55,005,300	5.22%
Subtotal Real Property	$96,853,200	$78,722,535	$97,578,100	0.75%
Personal Property				
Commercial	$5,621,373	$3,446,485	$3,145,280	-44.05%
Industrial	$11,755,500	$11,622,683	$3,096,737	-73.66%
Utility	$1,833,500	$2,292,649	$2,842,756	55.05%
Subtotal Personal Property	$19,210,373	$17,361,817	$9,084,773	-52.71%
Total	**$116,063,573**	**$96,084,352**	**$106,662,873**	**-8.10%**

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury State Equalization e-filing System

HOUSING INVENTORY

As part of the 2022 Master Plan, ROWE completed a housing inventory, rating the status of dwellings within the City of Caro. The housing inventory took place between October 2021 and February 2022, and buildings and lots based on a range of criteria. Each criterion was given a score between 1 and 5, with 1 being an extremely poor or blighted condition, and 5 being an excellent condition that reflected regular maintenance and investment in the property. Following are the characteristics scored for each parcel identified as residential in the existing land use inventory in Chapter 8.

Structure:

- Roof
- Exterior and Siding
- Porch
- Windows and Doors
- Foundation

Lot:

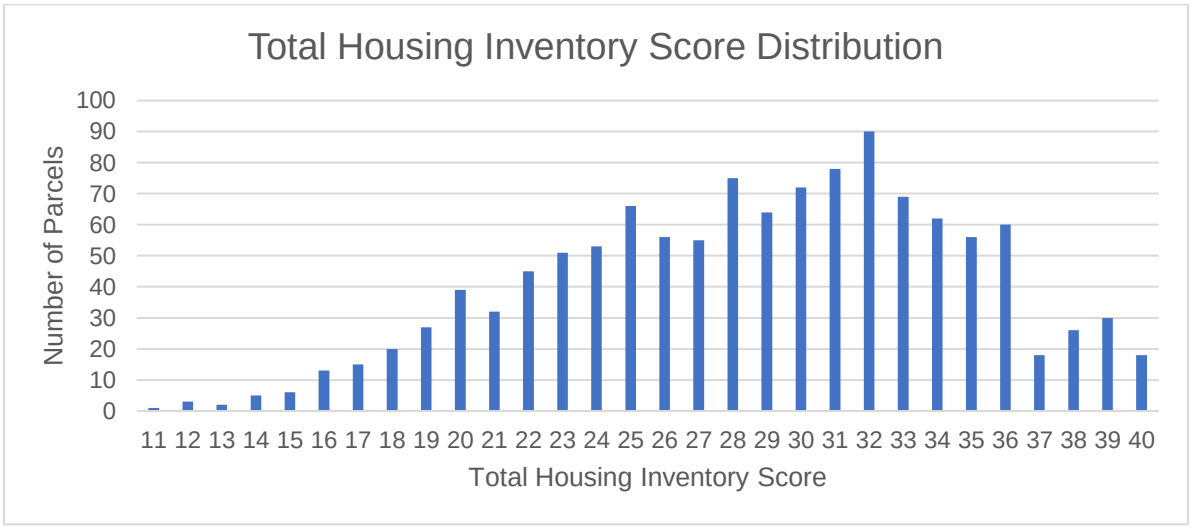
- Driveway
- Landscaping
- Accessory Structures

Figure 3-3: Multi-Family Housing

Each property that was inventoried received a final score, with the lowest score being 11, and the highest being 40. Figure 3-4 provides a summary of the distribution of housing inventory scores across the entire city. Overall, 579 (48%) of the 1,207 properties inventoried received a score of 30 or higher, generally indicating that the properties were in good condition.

In addition to general signs of deteriorating housing like poor condition or peeling paint, common issues that caused lower scores were the presence of a gravel driveways instead of a paved driveway and the absence of gutters and downspouts on many homes.

Figure 3-4: Housing Inventory Score



The following series of maps provides an overview of housing quality throughout the City of Caro. In general, areas with newer housing stock on the western and northern edges of the city exhibit signs of reinvestment and consistent maintenance, while older areas of the city, particularly those in the southern and eastern portions of the city have experienced decline, and in some cases are displaying blight.

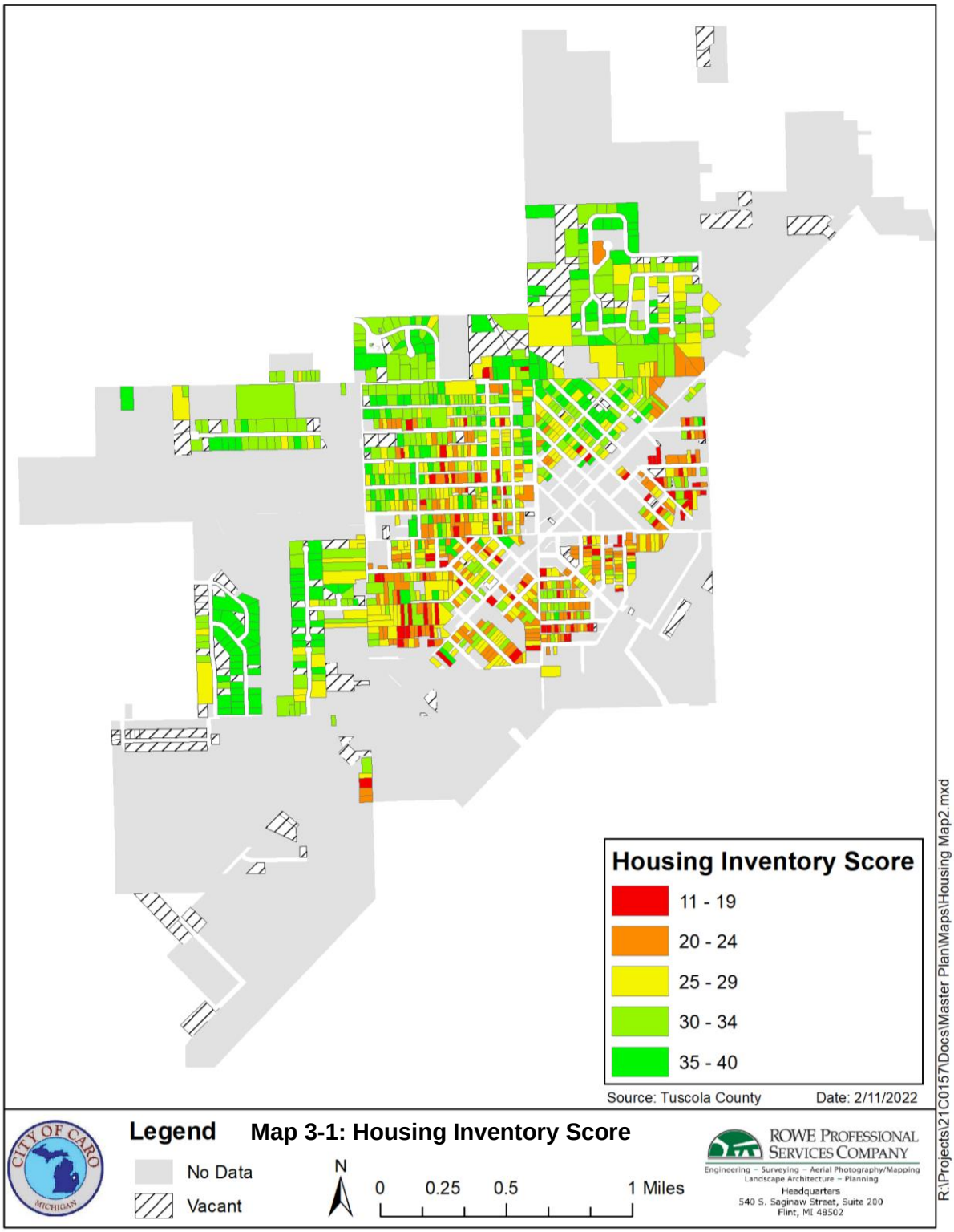
Figure 3-5: Historic Home near Downtown Caro

Despite the declining quality of housing stock in some areas, the City of Caro has low residential vacancy rates, with only 4.8 percent of housing units vacant and not currently listed for sale or rent according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. This is consistent with the rate for Tuscola County as a whole (4.6%), which is a positive indicator, because often urban centers experience much higher vacancy rates than surrounding suburban and rural areas.

Caro's neighborhoods, particularly those to the west of downtown between Almer and Hooper Streets and to the north between Almer and State Streets have a mix of housing types and stock, including historic single-family homes, duplexes, and some small multi-family structures with fewer than ten units. These neighborhoods, given proximity to downtown Caro and schools have strong potential to provide for people at a range of life stages.

Figure 3-6: Newer Home in a Subdivision

The following series of maps provide the total housing inventory score for each of the parcels evaluated for the housing inventory. In total, 1,207 properties were evaluated for the housing inventory, representing approximately 84 percent of all residential properties in the city identified by the Caro Assessing Department.


Housing Inventory Score
11 - 19
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
35 - 40
Source: Tuscola County
Date: 2/11/2022
Legend
No Data
Vacant
Map 3-1: Housing Inventory Score
N
0
0.25
0.5
1 Miles
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
Engineering – Surveying – Aerial Photography/Mapping
Landscape Architecture – Planning
Headquarters
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
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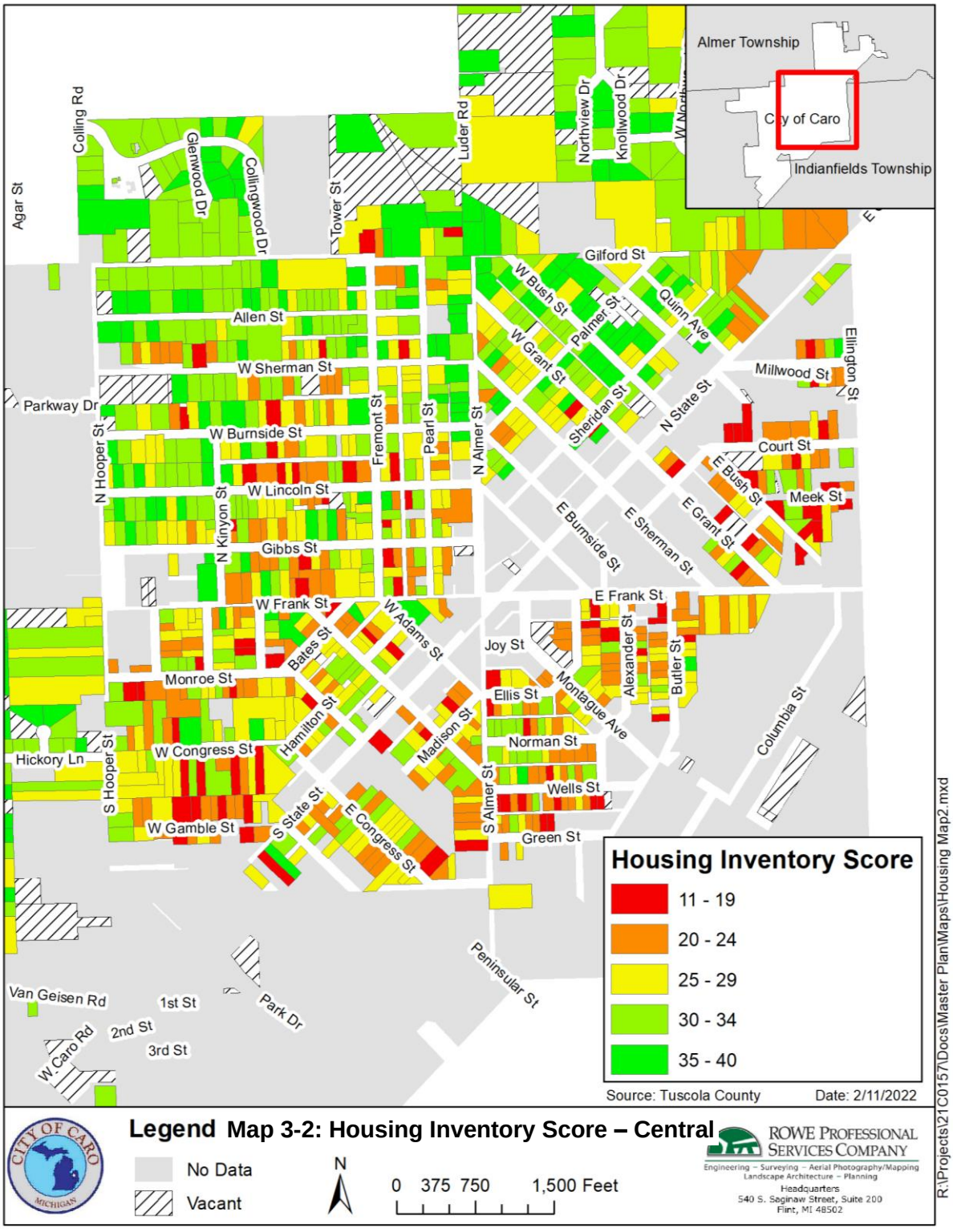
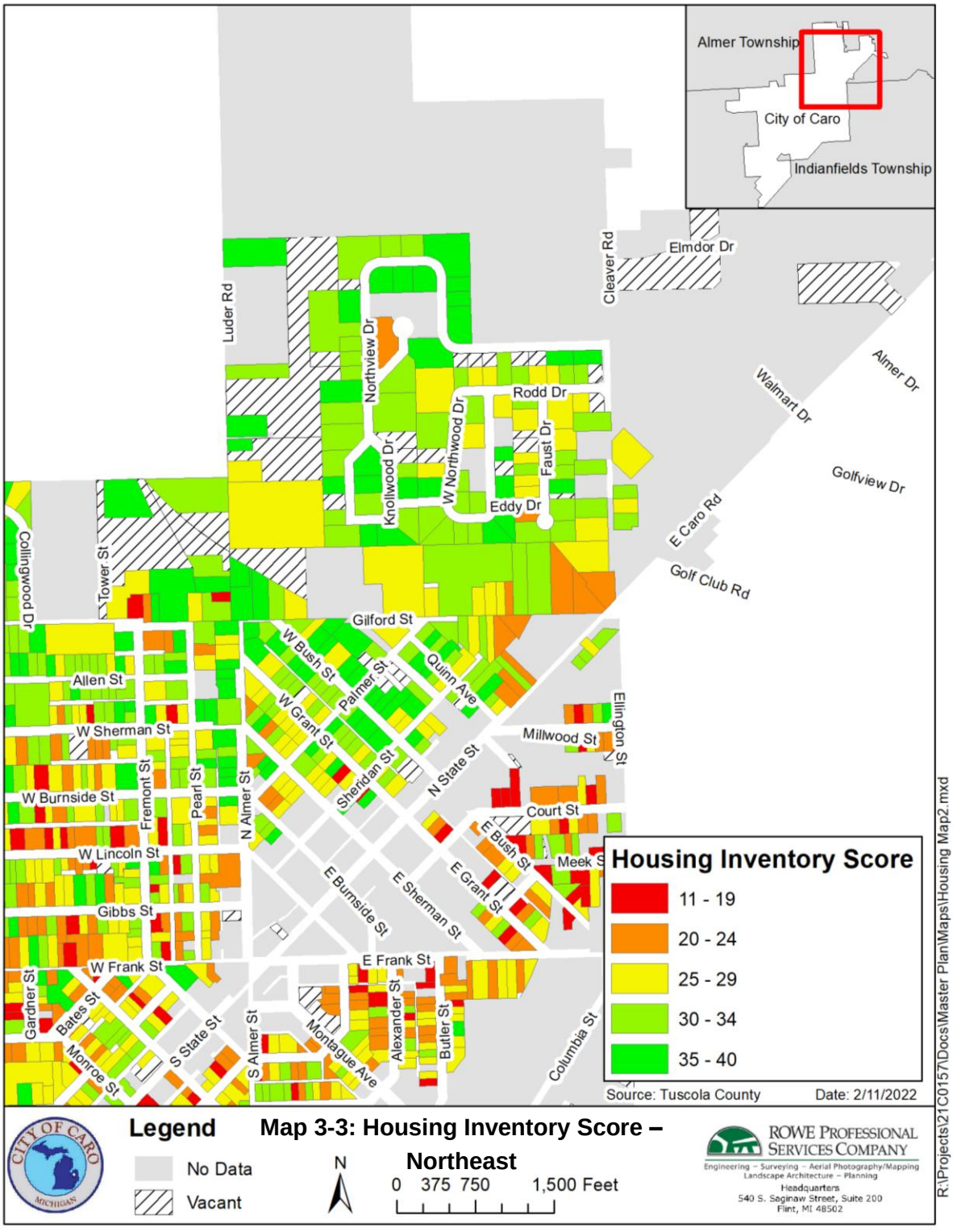

Almer Township
City of Caro
Indianfields Township
Housing Inventory Score
11 - 19
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
35 - 40
Source: Tuscola County
Date: 2/11/2022
Legend
Map 3-2: Housing Inventory Score – Central
No Data
Vacant
N
0 375 750 1,500 Feet
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
Engineering – Surveying – Aerial Photography/Mapping
Landscape Architecture – Planning
Headquarters
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
R:\Projects\21C0157\Docs\Master Plan\Maps\Housing Map2.mxd
Colling Rd
Glenwood Dr
Collingwood Dr
Agar St
Tower St
Luder Rd
Northview Dr
Knollwood Dr
Gilford St
W Bush St
Palmer St
Quinn Ave
Allen St
W Sherman St
W Grant St
Sheridan St
N State St
Millwood St
Ellington St
Parkway Dr
N Hooper St
W Burnside St
Fremont St
Pearl St
N Almer St
Court St
E Bush St
Meek St
W Lincoln St
N Kinyon St
E Burnside St
E Sherman St
E Grant St
Gibbs St
W Frank St
E Frank St
W Adams St
Bates St
Joy St
Alexander St
Butler St
Monroe St
Ellis St
Montague Ave
Columbia St
Hamilton St
Madison St
Norman St
Hickory Ln
S Hooper St
W Congress St
Wells St
S Almer St
S State St
E Congress St
W Gamble St
Green St
Peninsular St
Van Geisen Rd
1st St
Park Dr
2nd St
3rd St
W Caro Rd


Almer Township
City of Caro
Indianfields Township
Luder Rd
Cleaver Rd
Elmdor Dr
Northview Dr
Rodd Dr
W Northwood Dr
Knollwood Dr
Faust Dr
Eddy Dr
Walmart Dr
Almer Dr
Golfview Dr
E Caro Rd
Golf Club Rd
Collingwood Dr
Tower St
Gilford St
W Bush St
Palmer St
Quinn Ave
Allen St
W Grant St
Millwood St
Ellington St
W Sherman St
Sheridan St
N State St
Fremont St
Pearl St
N Almer St
W Burnside St
Court St
E Bush St
Meek St
W Lincoln St
E Burnside St
E Sherman St
E Grant St
Gibbs St
E Frank St
W Frank St
Gardner St
Bates St
Alexander St
Butler St
Columbia St
S State St
S Almer St
Montague Ave
Monroe St
Housing Inventory Score
11 - 19
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
35 - 40
Source: Tuscola County
Date: 2/11/2022
Legend
No Data
Vacant
N
0 375 750 1,500 Feet
Map 3-3: Housing Inventory Score – Northeast
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
Engineering – Surveying – Aerial Photography/Mapping
Landscape Architecture – Planning
Headquarters
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
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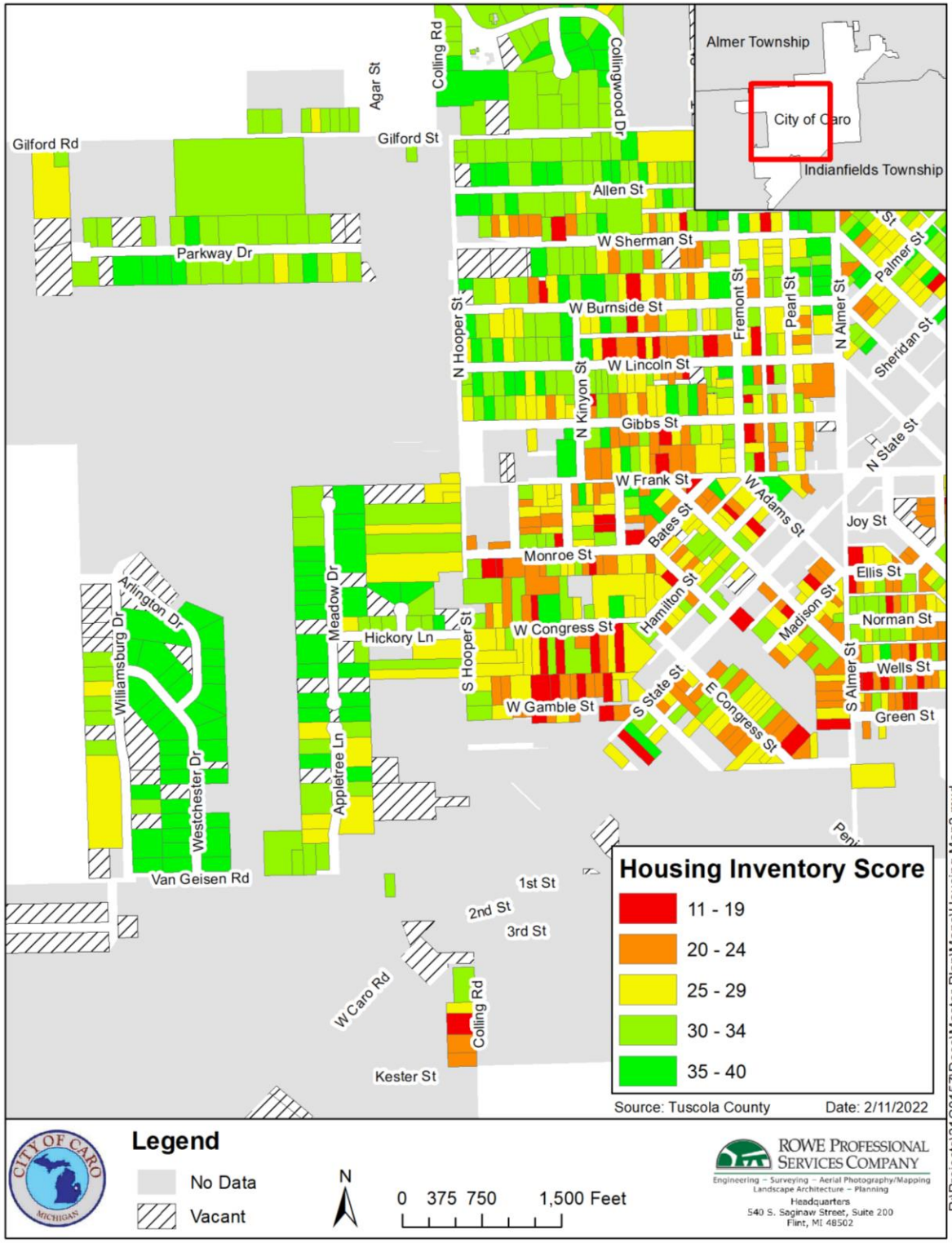
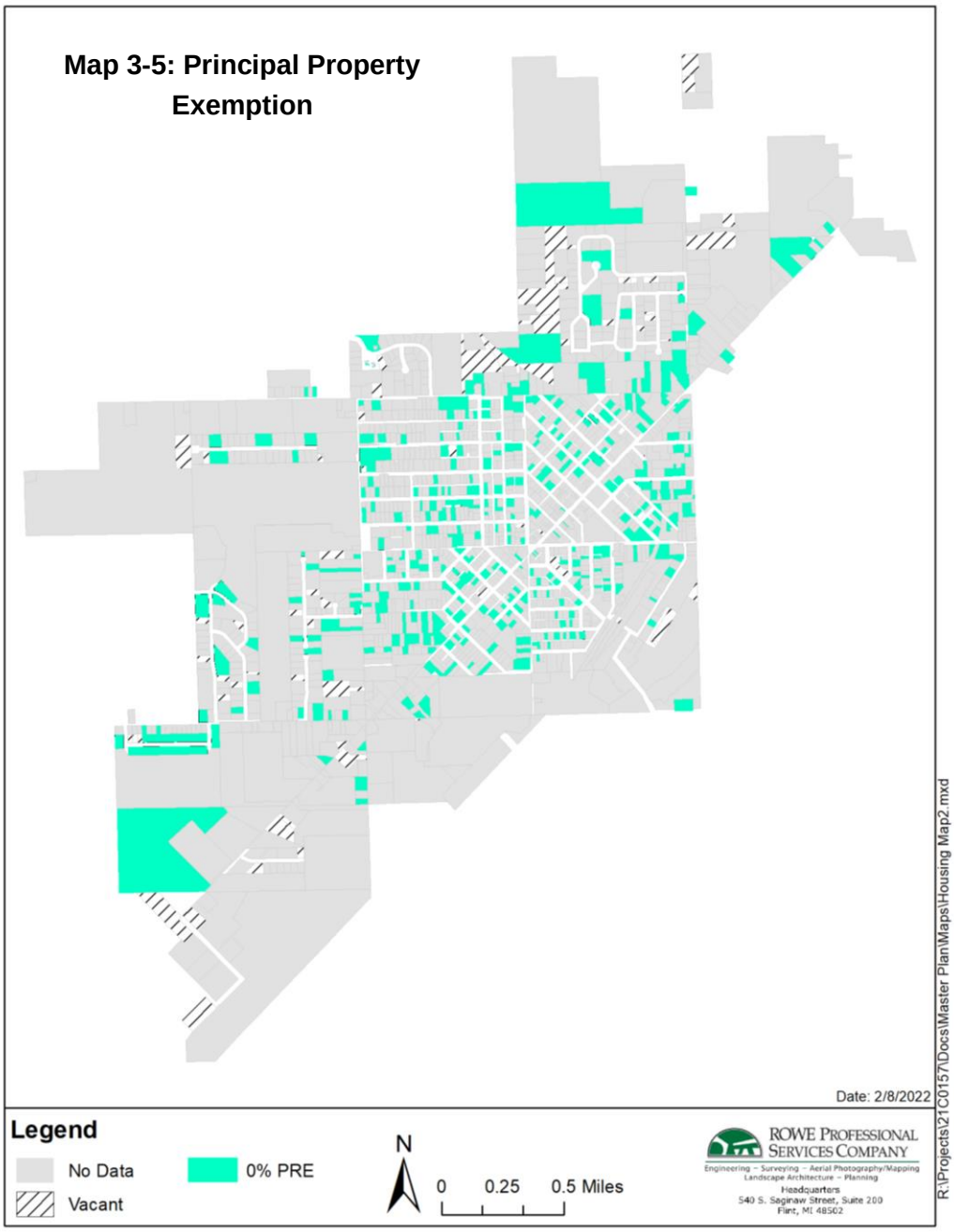
Map 3-4: Housing Inventory Score – Southwest



In addition to evaluating the relative quality of housing stock within the city, the housing inventory also evaluated the type of housing stock based on available data. According to City of Caro assessing records, in 2021 there were 470 of 1,435 residential properties (33%) that did not claim a Principal Residence Exemption for property tax purposes. While some of these properties may be second homes, or have other reasons for not claiming the exemption, this information provides a reasonable method for identifying renter-occupied units. This does not include several large multi-family properties, or mixed-use commercial properties. When these omissions are considered, the overall proportion is reasonable compared U.S. Census Bureau estimate in Table 3-4. Map 3-5 illustrates the location of these properties throughout the City of Caro, as the map shows, they are fairly evenly distributed.



HOUSING CONCLUSIONS

Caro provides a critical source of housing choice for the county and broader region. Compared to surrounding townships, Caro provides significantly higher proportions of attainable rental housing and housing choices beyond single-family residential. With continued declines anticipated in the number of people per household, for Caro to maintain its current population and attract new residents, it is critical to encourage homeowners and landlords to maintain existing housing stock where feasible, and encourage the development of new housing units that provide housing choices for families and residents with a variety of preferences. Further, the presence of major medical facilities, availability of infrastructure, and existing multi-family housing provides a competitive advantage for construction of new senior housing and related development.

Chapter 4. Parks and Recreation

The City of Caro's Parks and Recreation Plan for 2017 to 2022 has been a key director of community improvements. It is intended to guide Caro officials in their work on all future recreational and parks projects within the community. It is also a strategic document that articulates specific goals for various agencies and organizations that may fund local recreational and park improvement projects. It was developed in accordance with the guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and makes the city eligible for funding through the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund program.

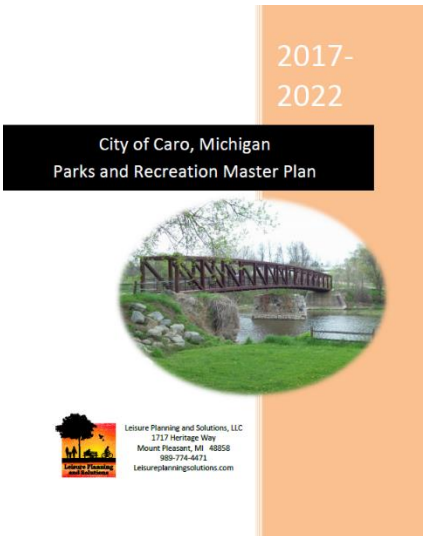


Figure 4-1: City of Caro Parks and Rec Plan

The plan includes an inventory of all the city parks. The inventory was completed by updating the inventory from the previous parks and recreation plan; each site was visited and evaluated by staff. It includes priority improvements for each park. Provided in Map 4-1 shows the location of all the City of Caro parks.

Neighborhood Parks

- ***Williamsburg Park***
  - Priorities:
    - Replace park sign to reflect new uniform signage

- ***Colonial Park***
  - Priorities:
    - Replace park sign to reflect new uniform signage

- ***Atwood Park***
  - Facilities: Gazebo, Benches
  - Priorities:
    - Maintain facilities/amenities on site
    - Add handicap accessible picnic tables
    - Replace existing guardrails on east side of park

- ***Northwood Height Park***
  - Size: 5 Acres
  - Service Area: Residential Neighborhood
  - Accessibility: 2
  - Facilities: Ball Diamond, Soccer goals, Playground Equipment, Picnic Area
  - Priorities:
    - Replace park sign to reflect uniform signage
    - Maintain facilities/amenities on site
    - Add park benches and more picnic tables
    - Replace/Restore existing baseball/softball diamond and backstop

Noble Boulder Garden

This small park is located near the intersection of E. Burnside Street and E. Frank Street. This garden area includes a variety of greenspace and parking lot area. There is a sidewalk located along E. Frank Street that goes along the park.

Memorial Gardens

This small park is located near the intersection of Ellington Street (M-24) and N. State Street (M-81). This small garden area features greenspace and benches. There is a sidewalk that is located along N. State Street.

Community Parks

- ***Bieth Parks***
  - Facilities: Tennis courts, basketball courts, shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits, ball diamond, playground equipment, pavilion, ice rink, splashpad, picnic areas, park benches, restrooms, recreation/arts building. Location is also the site of the Tuscola County Fair.
  - Priorities:
    - Add park signage to reflect uniform signage
    - Maintain facilities/amenities on site
    - Add parking near pavilion
    - New playground equipment
    - Replace/Renovate basketball courts
    - Add more picnic tables
    - Replace/Remove restrooms

- ***Chippewa Landing Park***
  - Facilities: Boat launch, fishing dock, pavilions, picnic tables/areas, playground equipment, sledding hill, pond with fountain, park benches, linear walking trial with pedestrian bridge and access to wildlife habitat.
  - Priorities:
    - Add parking
    - Add/Replace playground equipment
    - Add park signage to reflect new uniform signage
    - Develop handicapped accessible canoe landing as part of Cass River Greenway Water Trail
    - Improve/Enlarge restrooms

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

There are five major goals within the City of Caro Parks and Recreation Master Plan that include several objectives; these goals and objectives are shown below.

1. **Promote active, healthy lifestyles.**
   a. Add new park features that encourage physical activity for all ages.
   b. Create a network of safe trails, paths, and sidewalk connecting city parks, township parks, schools, the library, and other public spaces with the downtown.
   c. Create additional opportunities for quiet, contemplative park use.
2. **Contribute to building a connected community.**
   a. Continue to support local festivals, fairs, and events that provide opportunities for community members to be engaged in their community and to interact with neighbors and visitors.
   b. Expand opportunities for community members to participate in sports and tournaments that build teamwork and cooperation.
   c. Create opportunities for community members to volunteer to serve their community and neighbors.
3. **Contribute to a positive image, pride, and sense of community.**
   a. Maintain parks at a level that increases community pride.
   b. Exercise good stewardship of the park resources.
   c. Offer recreation programs and activities that make memories for residents.

d. Create an environment that attracts new businesses and residents.

4. **Provide access to recreation opportunities for all citizens.**
   a. Assure that all park resources are physically accessible to residents of all ages and ability.

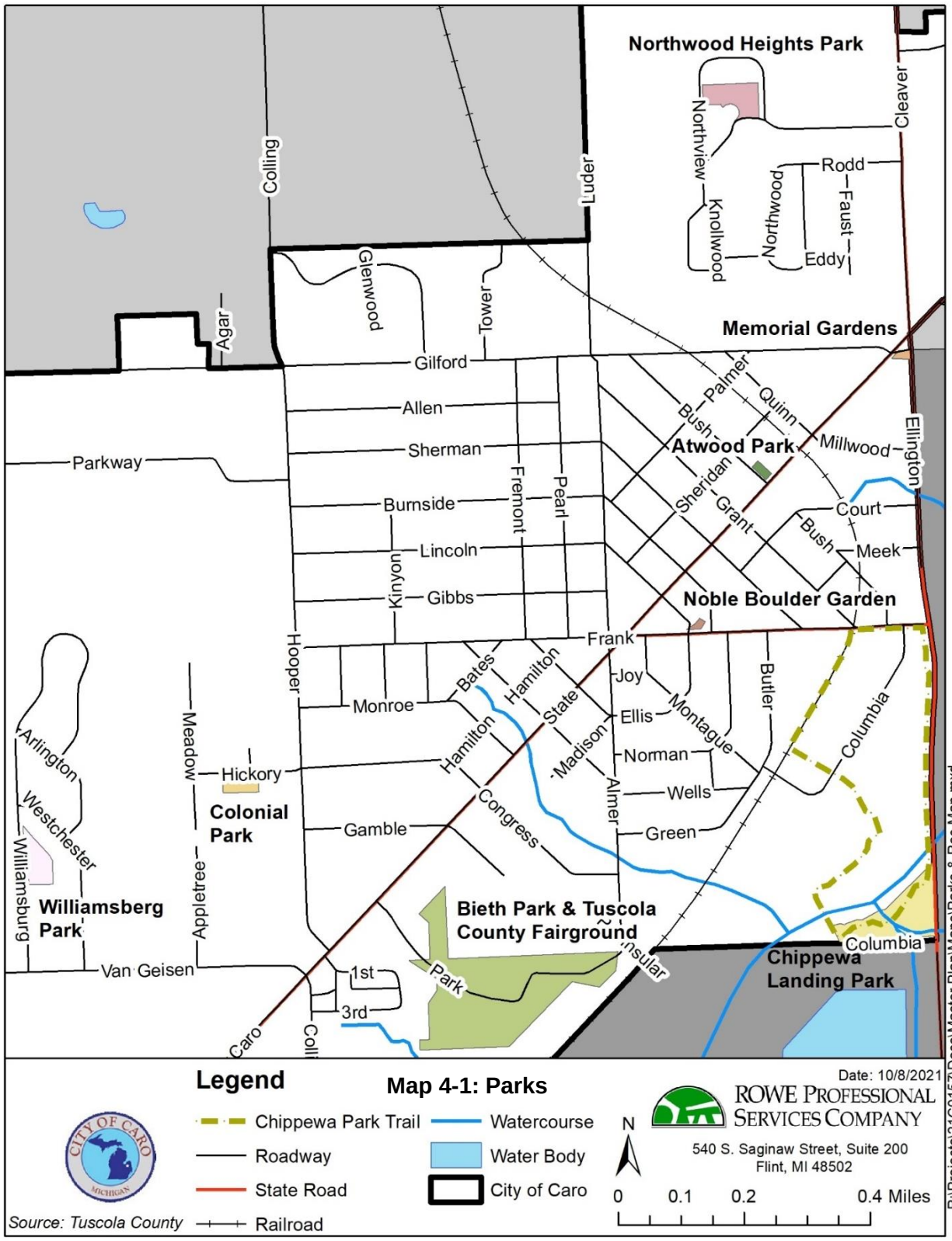
5. **Administration and operations.**
   a. Implement administrative policies and procedures that encourage planning, financing, marketing, and maintenance of park resources.

The City of Caro Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan recognizes improvements to the existing parks and recreation facilities should occur and has put an action plan specific to each facility in the area in place. Caro parks and recreation facilities are included in this action plan.

A summary of the top priorities for the community can be condensed into these seven statements:

1. Assure all future park improvements meet ADA guidelines or are planned following universal access guidelines.
2. Develop a park maintenance plan for each park based on use.
3. Organize community groups to explore development and use of existing and future properties.
4. Create accessible pathways, picnic areas, and features at all parks.
5. Explore a partnership with the library to plan, promote, and conduct recreational programs within the community.
6. Create snowmobile and ATV access into city to access food, shops, and gas.
7. Upgrade existing restroom facilities that no longer uphold quality standards.

These seven statements are more thoroughly incorporated in the 2017 City of Caro Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan.


Northwood Heights Park
Memorial Gardens
Atwood Park
Noble Boulder Garden
Colonial Park
Williamsberg Park
Bieth Park & Tuscola County Fairground
Chippewa Landing Park
Cleaver
Colling
Luder
Glenwood
Tower
Agar
Northview
Knollwood
Northwood
Rodd
Faust
Eddy
Gilford
Allen
Sherman
Burnside
Lincoln
Gibbs
Parkway
Fremont
Pearl
Kinyon
Hooper
Monroe
Frank
Bates
Hamilton
Joy
Ellis
Montague
Butler
Columbia
Norman
Wells
Green
Almer
Madison
State
Hickory
Meadow
Gamble
Congress
Arlington
Westchester
Williamsburg
Appletree
Van Geisen
1st
3rd
Park
Caro
Insular
Palmer
Quinn
Bush
Millwood
Ellington
Sheridan
Grant
Court
Meek
Legend
Chippewa Park Trail
Roadway
State Road
Railroad
Watercourse
Water Body
City of Caro
Map 4-1: Parks
Source: Tuscola County
Date: 10/8/2021
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
N
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Chapter 5. Downtown Development

INTRODUCTION

The City of Caro has a large and vibrant downtown for a city of its size. The downtown extends generally from the Caro City Hall just south of the intersection of Frank and N. State Streets, northeast along N. State Street for over ¾ of a mile to the intersection with M-24. Retail, commercial, mixed uses, and parking areas extend for one or two blocks on either side of N. State Street as well.

CARO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The City of Caro has an active Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the boundaries of which are illustrated in Figure 5-1 on the next page. DDAs are created by cities to capture a portion of property tax revenue from the downtown district and re-invest that revenue in improvements within the district boundary. Key recent projects by the Caro DDA include development of State Street Square, Atwood Park, and regular maintenance and improvement projects within the DDA district.

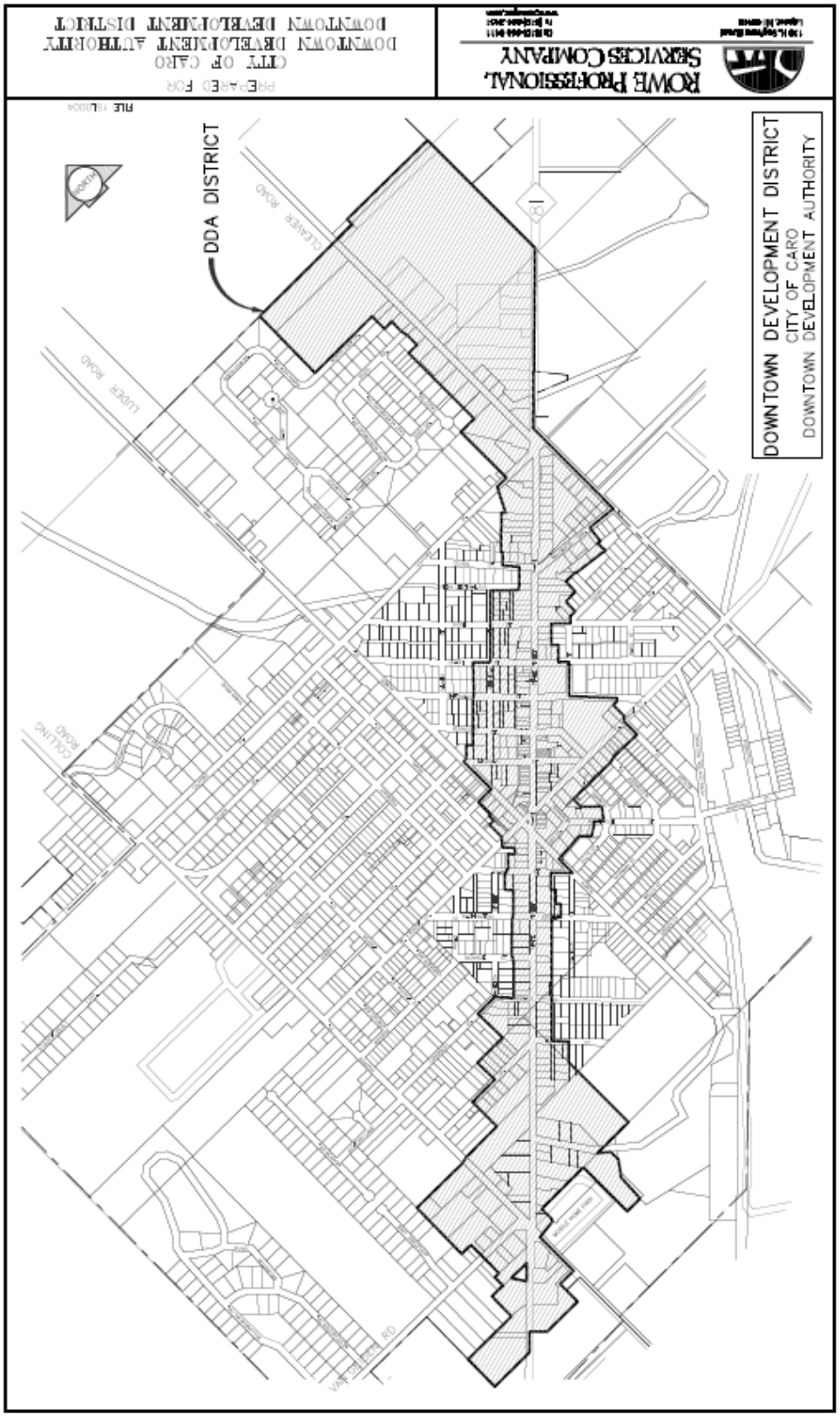
DDAs are required to adopt a Development Plan to guide their work over a given timeframe, the Caro DDA adopted the current version of its Development Plan in 2015.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Caro Downtown includes a diverse mix of commercial and institutional uses, including retail stores, restaurants, offices, and professional services, along with county and municipal services. Key nodes of activity include the Strand Theater, the Caro Farmer's Market, the Tuscola County Courthouse, and Caro City Hall.

Just outside of N. State Street, Downtown Caro is surrounded by relatively stable residential neighborhoods; while the majority of homes are single-family, many homes have been converted to duplexes or multi-family housing, along with a few small apartment buildings to the west.

Figure 5-1: DDA Boundary



ASSETS

Caro's Downtown is home to significant assets that support the community's vision for future development, and continued revitalization and investment in downtown businesses, buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure. Primary assets identified in the downtown include (in no particular order):

1. Locally-owned businesses and new bed and breakfasts.
2. Parks and recreational areas, especially the splash pad.
3. Farmer's market.
4. Historic buildings and traditional small-town character.
5. County courthouse and related Tuscola County facilities.

CHALLENGES

While Caro's Downtown is strong and has a variety of assets with potential to continue to foster economic development for the community, it does face significant challenges. Key challenges facing the downtown include (in no particular order):

1. **Vacant storefronts and under-utilized apartment spaces** on the second floor of buildings.
2. **A lack of nightlife** and activities for residents as well as events that attract people from surrounding communities.
3. **Challenges to walkability and pedestrian safety**, including providing for barrier-free access due to the age of buildings and the status of State Street as a state highway.
4. **Prohibitive cost of redevelopment** of downtown buildings relative to the market rate for rent.
5. **Deferred maintenance** and generally poor appearance of building facades.

STRATEGIES

Based on Downtown Caro's existing conditions, as well as assets and challenges, the following goals were identified for development of Downtown Caro.

1. **Increase the overall vibrancy and activity in Downtown Caro** and attract more people and prospective customers to downtown to support local businesses. This includes working with the Chamber of Commerce and other partner organizations to increase the number of events and festivals hosted in Downtown Caro annually.
2. **Improve the perception of Downtown Caro** among residents, business owners, and potential visitors in the region. This could include new marketing or branding campaigns, as well as events and programs.
3. **Focus on opportunities to collaborate** with Tuscola County, as well as other units of government to attract new businesses and activity to the Downtown.
4. **Explore policy changes to encourage revitalization** and provide additional resources, while avoiding additional restrictions or requirements of business owners. This would include exploring more flexible zoning standards, as well as a Commercial Historic District designation.

5. **Enhance the overall safety and ease of getting around** as a pedestrian, including potentially adding crosswalks to allow people to cross the street between intersections.
6. **Develop programs and incentives to reduce the barriers to revitalization** of downtown buildings with historic character. These could include grant and incentive programs as well as resources potentially provided through the DDA or the Economic Development Corporation.
7. **Provide resources to property owners and businesses** to help them stay and thrive in downtown.
8. **Consider adopting new regulations** to encourage property owners to maintain building facades and design standards that are consistent with the rest of downtown.

Chapter 6. Infrastructure

SEWER SYSTEM

The city owns and operates its own wastewater treatment plant. The service area includes parts of Almer and Indianfields Townships as well as the Caro Regional Center.

The original Caro Area Wastewater Treatment Plant was completed in 1957. The original plant was a trickling filter, but in 1986 was replaced by a bio-disc secondary treatment system. That system has since been replaced by a concentric ring oxidation ditch in 2008. No significant updates have been done since 2008, and many working components within the plant are now 35 years old. A complete inspection of the plant's working components, and a plan for refurbishment where needed, is recommended.

The plant design flow since 1986 has remained at 1.2 million gallons per day (MGD) with a peak hour flow of 3.04 MGD. The plant's approximate average annual flow is 0.635 MGD. This level of demand has been consistent for several years and is not anticipated to change for the foreseeable future. Only a small number of city residents are not currently connected to the sewer system.

The plant could theoretically handle an additional 0.565 MGD. Since the plant treats about 100 gallons per day for each person within the service area, it can be assumed that the facility could handle additional development equivalent to 5,650 persons in the service area, but inflow and infiltration (I&I) issues during wet weather conditions need to be addressed first. Cleaning and televising of sewers has been done on an intermittent basis. The City has cleaned and inspected about 20 percent of its system in the last ten years, and needs to continue in this direction to ensure that particularly leaky sewers, or any festering structural problems, are located and addressed.

The system contains a total of 11 lift stations. All but two of the lift stations have been updated, and those are anticipated to be completed within two years. Sewage collected from the service area is treated at the plant to meet current effluent quality requirements prior to discharge into the Cass River.

WATER SYSTEM

The existing water system in the City of Caro has been in use since 1899. A Water Reliability Study was prepared in 2019 that evaluated the water system's current conditions and recommendations for ensuring adequate capacity over the next 20 years. Approximately 947,000 gallons of water are used on an average day. The city's distribution system consists of approximately 36 miles of pipelines, six supply wells, one treatment plant, and one 750,000-gallon elevated storage tank. All but a small number of buildings within the city are connected to the water system. A 2-mile extension of new water main was installed in 2021 to bring water service to the Caro Regional Center. Once fully connected, the Caro Center is anticipated to add a demand of 15,000 gallons per day, which will not be a strain on the current system.

Current Conditions

1. Supply

   Water is supplied by a total of six wells. The firm capacity of these wells is sufficient to meet the city's current and estimated 5-year and 20-year maximum day demands. No additional wells are recommended based on current and projected water usage.

2. Water Quality

   The city owns and operates a water treatment plant (WTP), the primary function of which is to reduce arsenic levels to be in compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards at two of the six wells. Arsenic is below allowable levels at the other four wells. The city's water is considered hard and no softening treatment is provided. Hardness has no known health impact, but results in films and deposits on laundry, plumbing fixtures, and dishes.

3. Storage

   One elevated storage tank provides storage of water. The storage volume of 750,000 gallons is not sufficient for existing and anticipated future 20-year demands. The tank was most recently inspected in 2012 and is generally in good condition.

4. Distribution System

   A computer model of the city's water system has been developed. The model provides the ability to simulate and evaluate a variety of demand conditions. Analysis indicates that existing peak hour demand pressures in the city range from 35 to 85 psi, just meeting the minimum recommended pressure of 35 psi during peak hour demands.

   The city has completed several projects to improve the distribution system within the last ten years, including W. Frank Street, S. Almer Street, Joy Street, two blocks of Lincoln Street, and the extension of main to the Caro Regional Center.

5. Fire Protection

   The computer model has been used to simulate the large demands necessary for firefighting. The model indicated that the city's water distribution system does provide recommended fire demands in the city with three wells running. Areas that do not are primarily due to the prevalence of dead-end water mains, large elevation variations, and high demands for fire flows due to the type of land use.

Recommendations

1. Storage

   Continue to perform regular inspections and maintenance on the existing storage tank to ensure long-term service to the community. Per Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) standards, the system should have storage for one full day of average demand. The storage in the system falls short of this amount by almost 21 percent. The city should focus on plans to install a second storage tank to address this deficiency. The planning process to add a second tank has been started, preferably on the high end of the system, in the area of the north end of the M-24 corridor.

2. Distribution System and Fire Protection

   It is recommended that the city implement distribution improvement projects that reduce the need for maintenance and improve the available fire flow. Improved fire flow can be accomplished by eliminating mains under 6 inches in diameter and eliminating dead end mains. Other improvement recommendations focus on areas that are experiencing frequent breaks. Recommended improvements may be implemented systematically over time as funds become available. At the time of the last water reliability study (2018), the report recommended a total of 9,200 feet of new main be installed as a high priority (within 5 years, valued at approximately $1,660,000 (in 2018 dollars). A substantial amount of this work has been recently completed. In addition, a total of 25,700 feet of additional water main replacement is also recommended as a secondary priority (within 20 years), valued at $5,770,000 (in 2018 dollars). None of this work has been accomplished to date.

3. System Maintenance

   It is recommended that the city implement a valve turning program where each valve is inspected and operated annually, or on a schedule that works with available manpower. A valve turning program has the benefit of identifying valves in need of repair or replacement and extending the life of existing valves.

4. Water Treatment Plant Maintenance

   The water treatment plant was fully inspected two years ago. At that time, the plant components were generally found to be in good condition. Filter media was considered good at that time but will need to be considered for replacement in the future. Several valves and miscellaneous items have been replaced as needed.

Chapter 7. Transportation

The City of Caro has a variety of different modes of transportation available to residents, patrons, or business to get people and goods from one place to another. Provided in this chapter is a summary of the current condition and recommended improvements for some of these features.

ROADWAYS

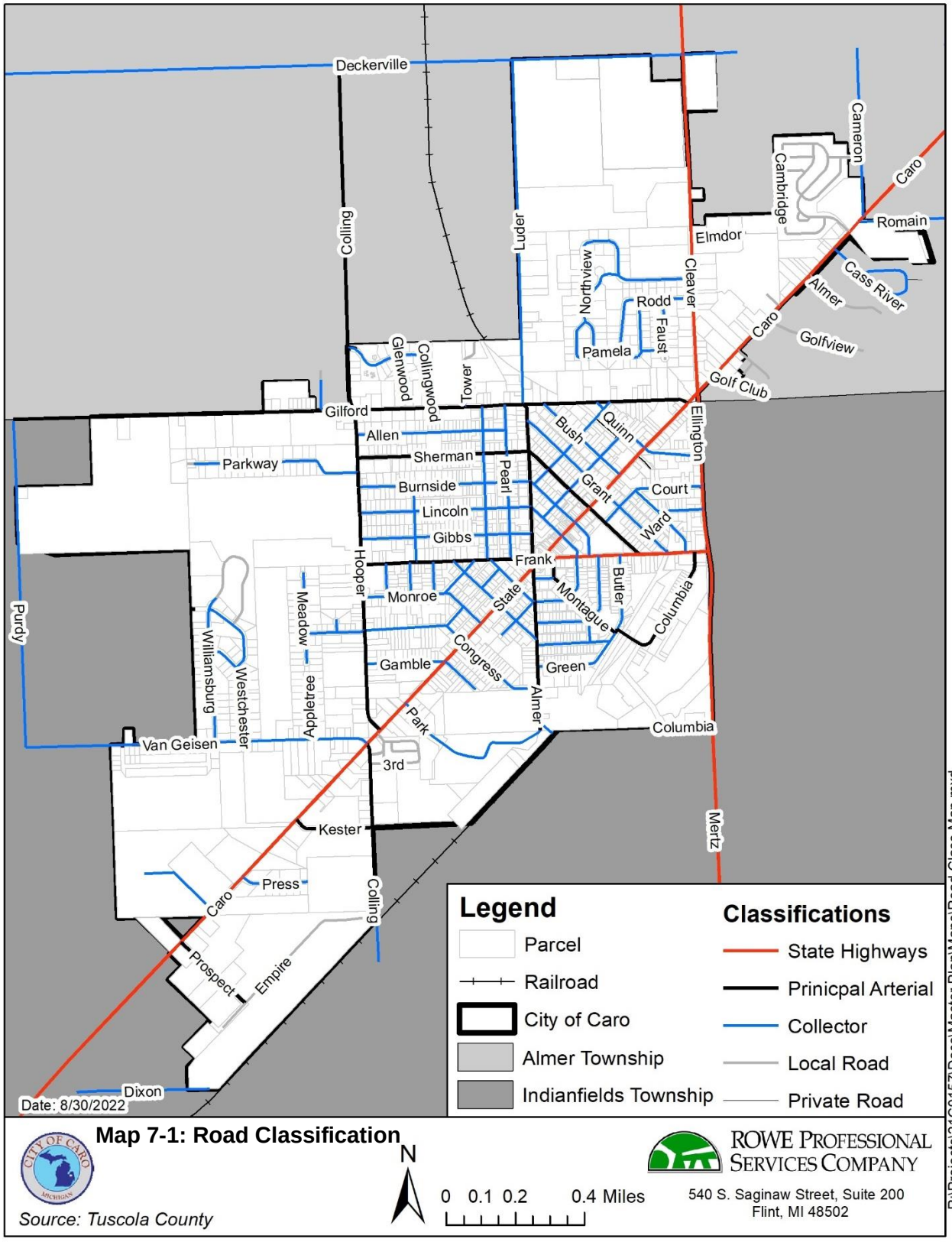
Current Condition

As part of the evaluation of the roadway system, we will discuss street classification which explains jurisdiction and intended hierarchy of roadways, Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) rankings of the roadway, and traffic counts. Based on this information, we will provide recommendations on how to improve the roadways in the City of Caro.

Street Classification

The City of Caro has jurisdiction over many of the roads located within its jurisdiction with the exception of Caro/State Road (M-81) and Clever/Ellington Road (M-24). There are otherwise five categories for roads: state highways, principal arterial, collector, local, and private roads. A ***state highway*** is under the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) jurisdiction. A ***principal arterial*** typically is characterized as long-distance travel, through-traffic movement is the top of the road hierarchy system and generates significant traffic. A ***collector*** is similar to a principal arterial roadway but caters to shorter distance trips and generates less traffic. ***Local roads*** are known to provide more access to properties and funnel traffic from residential or rural areas to arterial roadways. Lastly, ***private roads*** are not under the city's jurisdiction, but typically a collection of the owners connect to the roadway and provide direct access to these properties.

The majority of the roadways in the City of Caro are considered a collector roadway. Provided is Map 7-1 that shows the different road classifications in the city.



Map 7-1: Road Classification

ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502

PASER

The PASER system was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center, to visually rank roadway condition. The rank is broken down into three general categories: routine maintenance, capital prevention maintenance, and structural improvement, and ranked 10 (Good) to 1 (Poor).

Good 10 – 8
Routine Maintenance
Little to no maintenance needed with no or starting to form cracks

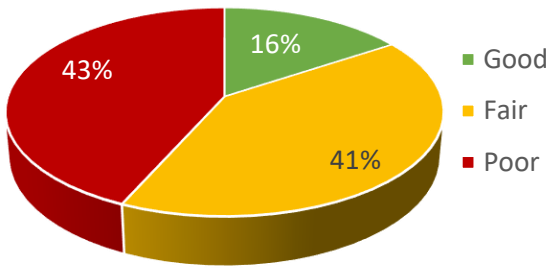
Fair 7-5
Capital Prevention Maintenance
Cracks are connected and potholes have formed

Poor 4-1
Structural Improvement
There is cracking in the wheel path, with patches in poor condition, rutting, and signs of distress

For the City of Caro, PASER ranks are not available for all roadways, but is provided for many of the major arterial roadways. The data used in this analysis was provided by the Tuscola County Road Commission between the years of 2019 and 2018.

Map 7-2 shows the PASER rankings for the various streets in the City of Caro. The percentage of roadways per classification are shown below in Figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1: PASER Ranking*

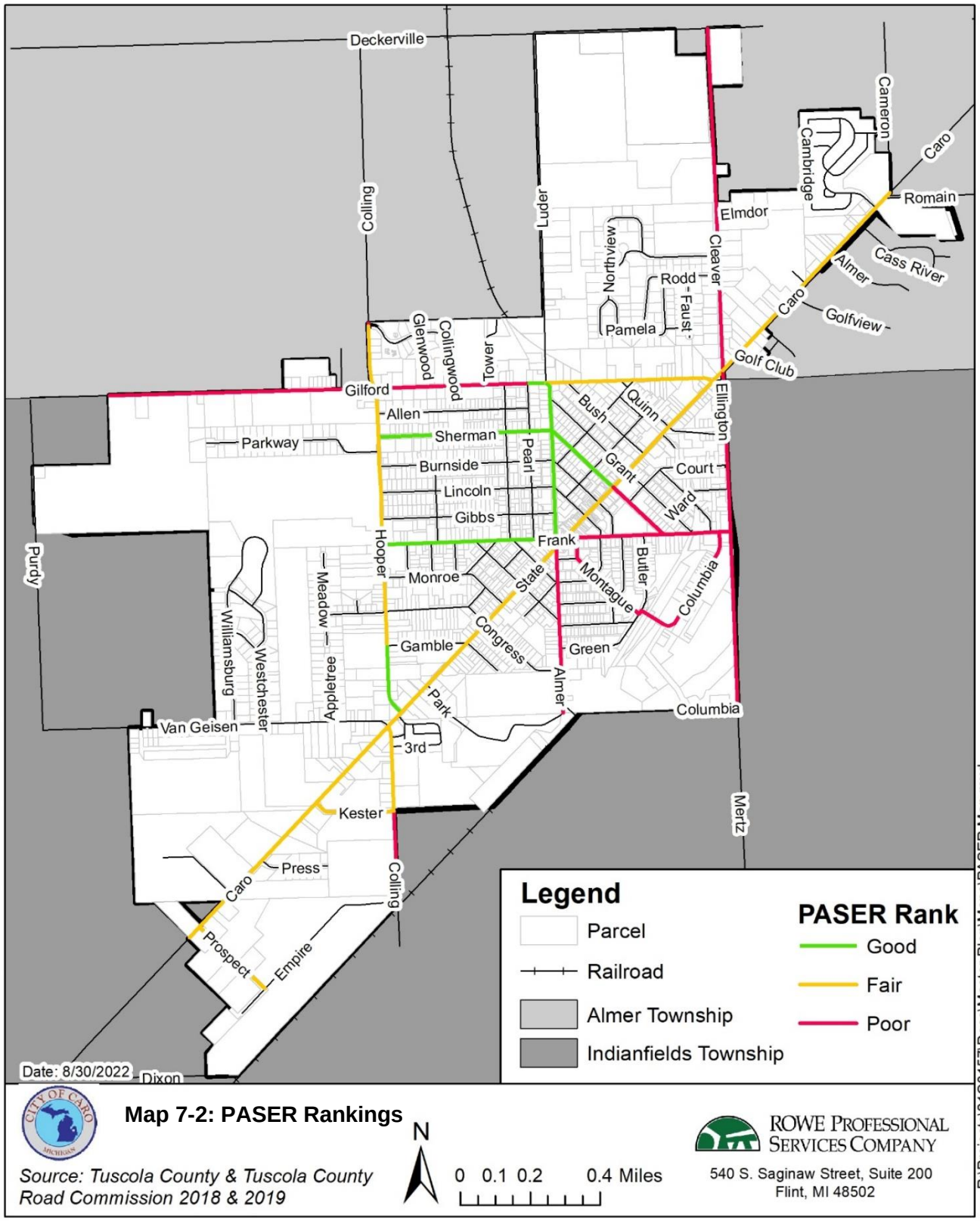


**PASER rankings do not reflect recent road paving projects completed in 2021.*

The majority (43 percent) of the ranked roadways in the City of Caro were considered poor needing structural improvements or reconstruction. Some of these roadways include Cleaver Road, Ellington Road, portions of Gilford Road, Columbia Road, Montague Street, portion of Almer Street, and portions of Frank Street.

The next largest category was fair showing some signs of distress which require prevention maintenance to slow the deterioration of the roadway. The streets with this ranking include Caro Road, majority of Hooper Road, portion of Gilford Road, Prospect Road, Kester Road, and a portion of Colling Road.

The good category is the smallest at 16 percent requiring little to no maintenance. These streets include portion of Hooper Street, portion of Frank Street, Sherman Street, and portion of Almer Street.


Deckerville
Colling
Luder
Cameron
Cambridge
Caro
Romain
Elmdor
Cleaver
Northview
Rodd
Faust
Pamela
Cass River
Almer
Golfview
Golf Club
Glenwood
Collingwood
Tower
Gilford
Allen
Sherman
Burnside
Lincoln
Gibbs
Parkway
Pearl
Bush
Quinn
Ellington
Grant
Court
Ward
Frank
Hooper
Monroe
State
Montague
Butler
Columbia
Purdy
Meadow
Williamsburg
Westchester
Appletree
Gamble
Congress
Green
Park
Van Geisen
3rd
Columbia
Kester
Mertz
Press
Caro
Colling
Prospect
Empire
Dixon
Date: 8/30/2022
Legend
Parcel
Railroad
Almer Township
Indianfields Township
PASER Rank
Good
Fair
Poor
Map 7-2: PASER Rankings
Source: Tuscola County & Tuscola County Road Commission 2018 & 2019
N
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles
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Flint, MI 48502
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Traffic Counts

Information from MDOT and the Tuscola County Road Commission regarding the traffic counts in 2018 to 2019 for the City of Caro is provided below. Not all the roadways in the City of Caro have traffic count information available. Information regarding the traffic counts is provided in Map 7-3.

The two types of traffic count information that is provided are Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), which is an estimated mean daily traffic volume, and Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic (CAADT), which is an estimated mean daily commercial traffic volume.

In review of the segments provided in the City of Caro, the most traffic moves along Caro Road (M-81) averaging between 7,520 to 15,996 AADT. The second major roadway is Ellington Road (M-24) ranging between 5,462 to 9,570 AADT. Many of the roadway segments follow the road hierarchy discussed in the roadway current condition section.

In review of the CAADT traffic, Caro and Ellington Roads are the top two most travelled areas with other minor arterial or local roads having minimum commercial traffic. Caro Road ranges from 834 to 1,316 CAADT while Ellington Road ranges from 382 to 527.

Traffic Pattern Analysis

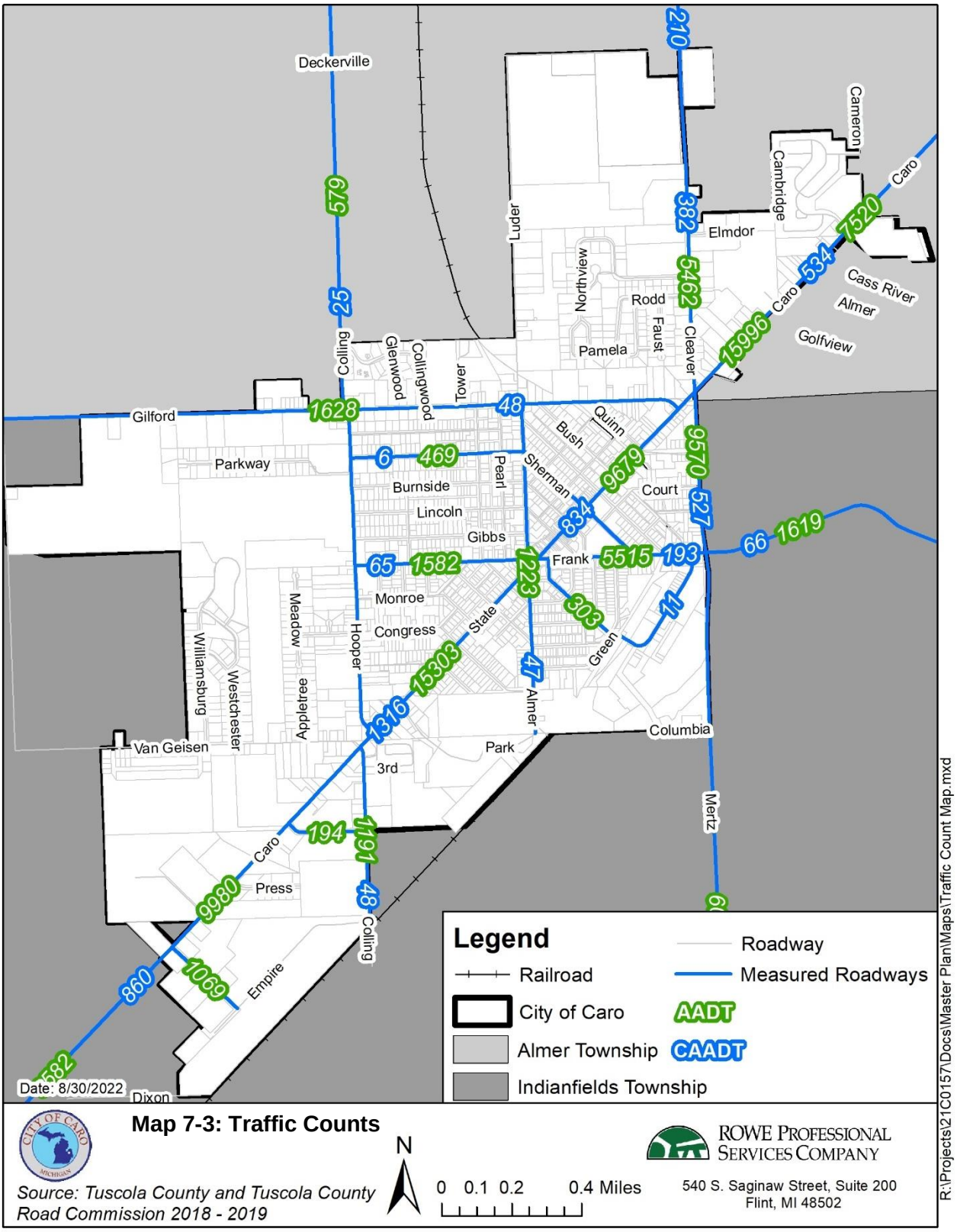
Upon consideration of the vehicle traffic volumes displayed in Map 7-3: Traffic Counts, several interesting observations about traffic patterns in the City of Caro can be made. These are summarized below:

- Sherman Street displays an unusually high volume of vehicle traffic (AADT of 469) given the low-density residential character of the roadway.
- Prospect Avenue immediately south of Caro Road (M-81) displays an unusually high volume of vehicle traffic (AADT of 1,069). A traffic signal warrant study may be useful at this location to help alleviate potential peak hour delays (if present).
- S. Colling Road immediately south of Caro Road (M-81) displays an unusually high volume of vehicle traffic (AADT of 1,191) given the limited developed lands abutting S. Colling Road, Empire Road, and Dixon Road to the south. The primary sources of this vehicle traffic are likely the industrial land uses in this region.
- Ellington Street/M-24 have the characteristics of minor arterial roads; these roadways are funneling traffic to and from the east via Caro Road (M-81), which has the characteristics of a principal arterial road. However, most commercial vehicles traveling on these roadways appear to be originating from and destined to the southeast via Caro Road (M-81). This is reasonable, as these commercial vehicles likely require access to the Interstate freeway network.
- The primary user of Kester Street is commercial vehicles. The focus of this roadway is to provide a cut through for industrial traffic rather than taking other public roadways.

Recommendations

In view of the above observations, several opportunities for improved road infrastructure utilization are present. These are summarized below:

- Erect signage discouraging cut-through traffic from using Sherman Street. Frank Street is a parallel collector road that is better suited for additional non-local traffic volumes.
- Conduct a signal warrant study at Caro Road (M-81) and Prospect Avenue.
- The intersection of Caro Road (M-81) and S. Colling Road is skewed, making permissible turning movements at this location difficult and/or dangerous. Future intersection reconstruction could be considered.
- Ensure appropriate turning radii for commercial vehicles at the intersection of M-81 and Ellington Street/M-24.


Deckerville
Luder
Cameron
Cambridge
Caro
Elmdor
Northview
Rodd
Faust
Cleaver
Pamela
Cass River
Almer
Golfview
Collins
Glenwood
Collingwood
Tower
Gilford
Parkway
Quinn
Bush
Pearl
Sherman
Court
Burnside
Lincoln
Gibbs
Frank
Monroe
Congress
State
Green
Meadow
Hooper
Williamsburg
Westchester
Appletree
Van Geisen
Almer
Columbia
Park
3rd
Mertz
Caro
Press
Colling
Empire
Dixon
Date: 8/30/2022
679
52
210
382
5462
534
7520
15996
1628
48
6
469
9679
9570
527
834
1582
65
1223
5515
193
66
1619
303
11
15303
47
1316
194
1191
9980
1069
860
582
Legend
Railroad
City of Caro
Almer Township
Indianfields Township
Roadway
Measured Roadways
AADT
CAADT
Map 7-3: Traffic Counts
Source: Tuscola County and Tuscola County Road Commission 2018 - 2019
N
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
R:\Projects\21C0157\Docs\Master Plan\Maps\Traffic Count Map.mxd

RAILROAD

The Huron and Eastern Railway runs through the township. The railroad enters the city running parallel to Caro Road and takes a northwest path before crossing Ellington Road (shown in Map 7-1). The particular railroad line that goes through the city runs north to Colling Township and south to the Village of Millington with a junction at the City of Vassar.

AIRPORT

The City of Caro is in close proximity to the Tuscola Area Airport located in Indianfields Township (southwest from the city). The airport is a publicly-owned facility that has accommodated single and multiple engine airplanes, jet airplanes, and helicopters. The airport has four different runways that vary in material and specs to accommodate different aircraft.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Non-motorized transportation is focused on non-automotive transportation, primarily including cyclists and pedestrians. Compared with motorized transportation, this mode of transportation is more vulnerable to the elements and impacts from various motorized transportation modes. The intent of this section is to provide an inventory of non-motorized transportation assets in Caro and identify opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation in the city.

Figure 7-2: Residential Intersection in Caro

Current Conditions

Caro was incorporated back in 1871 and developed from a village to a city. Caro is currently a relatively pedestrian friendly city with several existing sidewalks, a trail, and cross walks. In their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Caro continues to actively maintain and increase the number of sidewalks in the community. The majority of the sidewalks stem from the downtown area into the surrounding residential areas and along major roadways.

Sidewalks

One of the most common methods to accommodate non-motorized transportation is the installation of sidewalks. Provided in Map 7-4 is the location of existing sidewalks and trails in Caro. Sidewalks are prevalent along the main corridors (M-24 and M-81) and the residential area between Gilford, Hooper, and Butler/Green Roads. There are also some sidewalks along Williamsburg near multi-family housing in the area.

While many of the roadways in this area have sidewalks on both sides, there are incomplete sidewalk segments a long Allen, Grant, Bush, Almer, Pearl, Fremont, Atwood, Lincoln, and Sherman. Not all the residential roadways have sidewalks on both sides like Monroe, Pearl, and Almer. This inventory does not include sidewalk condition, but the city has a maintenance plan

through their CIP to make repairs and replacements as needed. Below are some key observations regarding sidewalks.

- Continuous sidewalks are located on both the north and south sides of M-81 from Van Geisen Road/S. Colling Road to Ellington Street/M-24.
- Continuous sidewalk is located on the north side of M-81 from Ellington Street/M-24 to the eastern city limit. On the south side of this section, sidewalk is only located adjacent to 1042 Caro Road (Advance Auto Parts).
- Continuous sidewalks are located on both the north and south sides of Frank Street from the western terminus to Ellington Street/M-24.
- Sidewalks are not present or otherwise discontinuous on Ellington Street/M-24 from Caro Road (M-81) to Frank Street.

Trail

The Chippewa Park Trail is located on the southwest side of the city that forms a loop. At the intersection of Frank and Grant Roads, there are connecting sidewalks to the trailway. There are otherwise no additional connections to the larger sidewalk network. Connecting recreational assets to existing sidewalks and other non-motorized infrastructure is critical to providing access.

Crosswalks

In many of Caro's residential areas, there are sidewalk entrances at intersections, but no crosswalks that clearly mark where vehicles should stop and where pedestrians should cross. In addition, there are some areas where sidewalks intersect with the railroad and there does not appear to be any clear pedestrian crossing for these intersections other than motor vehicle warning signs.

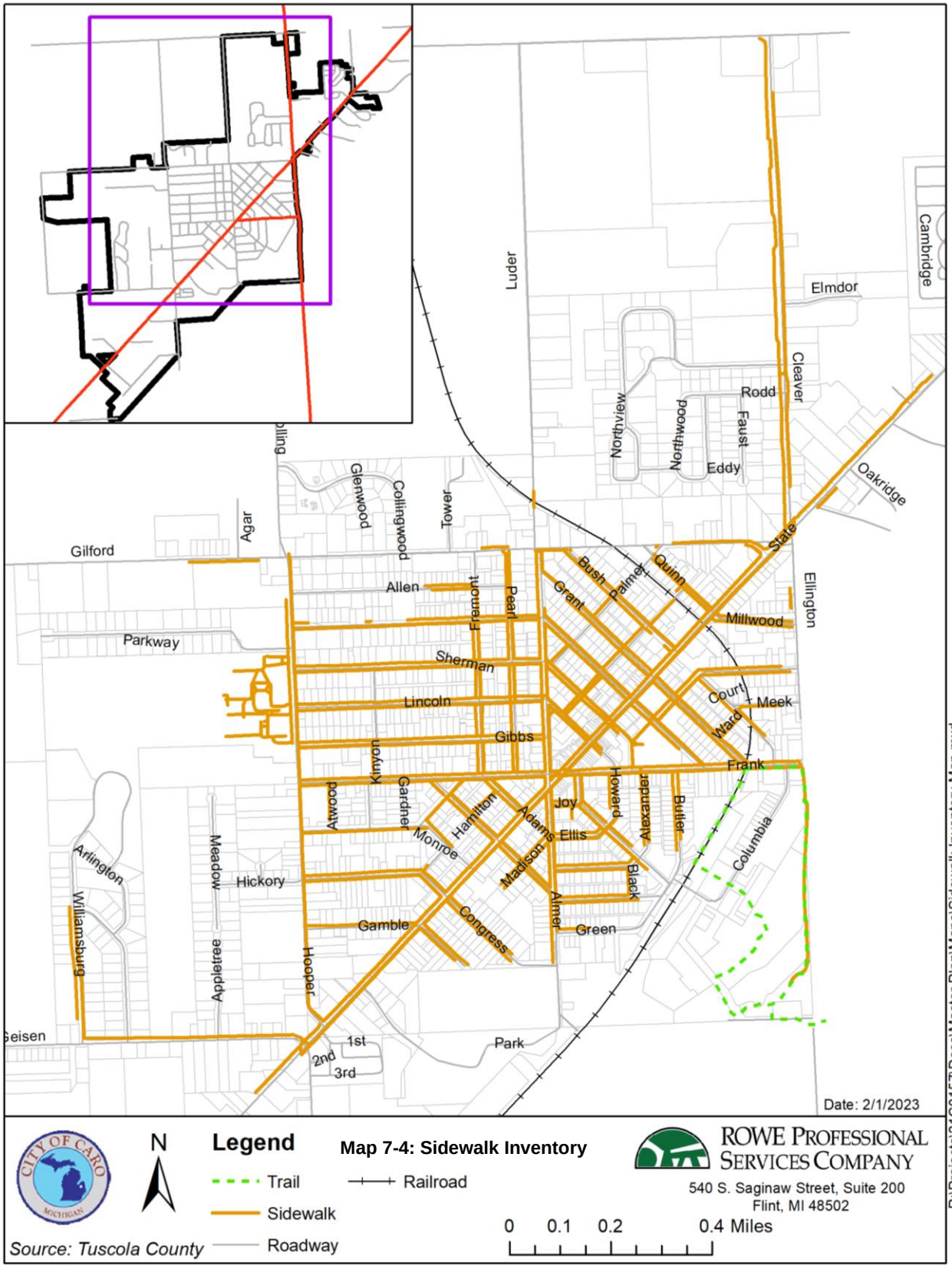
Focusing on the downtown area, the 1-mile stretch from Ellington (M-24) to Washington Road along Caro Road (M-81) does have clearly marked crosswalks, but they are spaced far apart, as shown on Map 7-4.

Figure 7-3 Railroad Crossing on Gilford Road

Cycling/Biking

In the city, there are some bike sharrows or widened shoulders that could accommodate biking facilities. Bike lanes are typically located next to roadways where they have shared or separated lanes to help promote easy cycling travel. Depending on their level of comfort, some of the cyclists prefer to be in the roadway rather than on sidewalks due to the segment on the sidewalks (bumps impact the ride), and potential conflicts with pedestrians. If bike lanes are of interest, areas are listed below that have the potential to accommodate bike lanes with minimal physical improvements.

- Wide shoulders appropriate for use by cyclists are present on M-81 from the southwest city limit to Van Geisen Road/S. Colling Road.
- Wide shoulders appropriate for use by cyclists are present on M-81 from W. Grant Street to W. Gilford Road.
- Wide shoulders appropriate for use by cyclists are present on M-81 from 1042 Caro Road (Advance Auto Parts) to the eastern city limit.


Luder
Cambridge
Elmdor
Cleaver
Rodd
Faust
Eddy
Northview
Northwood
Oakridge
State
Ellington
Millwood
Quinn
Bush
Palmer
Grant
Pearl
Tower
Glenwood
Collingwood
Agar
Gilford
Allen
Parkway
Sherman
Lincoln
Gibbs
Frank
Court
Meek
Ward
Millard
Howard
Alexander
Butler
Columbia
Joy
Ellis
Adams
Madison
Hamilton
Monroe
Gardner
Kilgore
Atwood
Black
Almer
Green
Congress
Gamble
Hickory
Meadow
Arlington
Williamsburg
Appletree
Hooper
Park
1st
2nd
3rd
Seisen
Date: 2/1/2023
N
Legend
Trail
Sidewalk
Roadway
Railroad
Map 7-4: Sidewalk Inventory
Source: Tuscola County
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles
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Flint, MI 48502
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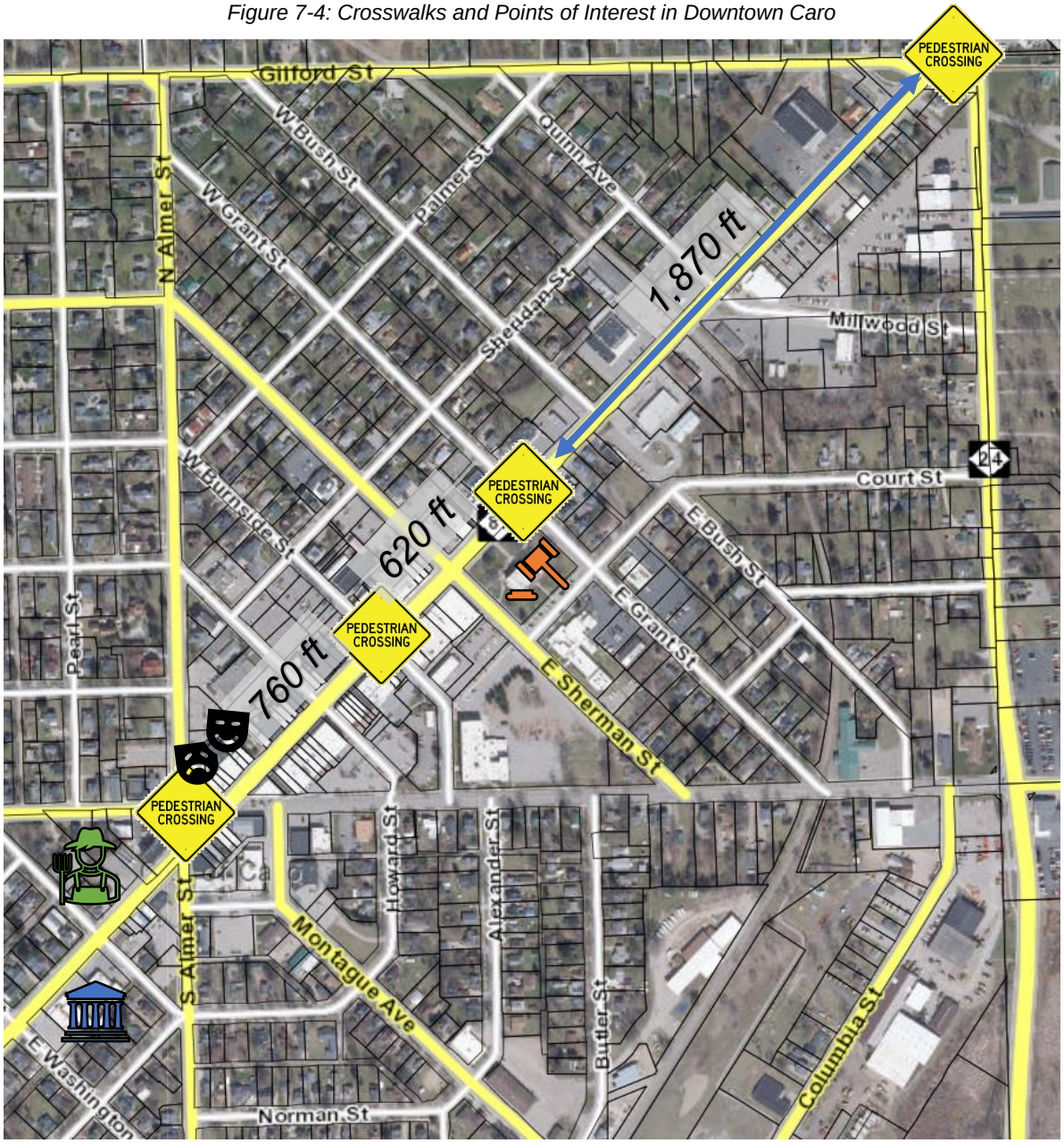
Recommendations

Based on the inventory of the existing pedestrian and biking facilities in Caro, provided are some recommendations and concept pictures to further evaluate their feasibility.

Downtown Crossings

In many traditional downtown areas, communities employ a variety of strategies to make downtown more pedestrian friendly. As is the case for many Michigan communities, Caro's downtown area is under MDOT jurisdiction as a state roadway. While this can present challenges for implementing more pedestrian friendly designs, other communities have found success implementing these improvements in cooperation with MDOT. In the recommendation section, examples of recent MDOT projects in traditional downtowns that helped to prioritize pedestrian maneuverability while continuing to move traffic are provided.

Figure 7-4: Crosswalks and Points of Interest in Downtown Caro



Consider when discussing with MDOT when construction or improvements to this corridor are in the planning stages the following items to incorporate in their redevelopment:

Distinct Pedestrian Cross Walks

One way to signal to vehicle traffic is to change the color or material of crosswalks to better show a change visually. This also helps pedestrians to know where their pathway is. Many communities use bricks or brighter colors to achieve this.

Brick pedestrian crosswalk (City of Lapeer MI)

Brick pedestrian crosswalk (City of Rochester MI – Along M-150)

Pedestrian Islands and Pedestrian/Vehicle Scale Warning Signs

At some intersections in the downtown like M-81 and Lincoln, there is not a traffic light to allow for easy pedestrian travel across the roadway. Pedestrian islands like the one shown below with eye level signage warning vehicles and pedestrians of a crossing can help address this issue.

Sign and pedestrian island (Village of Oxford, MI - Along M-24)

In view of the above observations, several opportunities for improved road infrastructure utilization are present. These are summarized below:

- Consider continuous bike facilities (sharrows, bike racks, bike lanes) along M-81 along the entire stretch through the City of Caro. On sections where the roadway is too narrow to consider wide shoulders for cyclist use, consider multi-use trail facilities and/or sharrows (especially through business district segments where speeds are lower and cyclists can safety travel in mixed traffic between wide shoulder sections).
- Consider constructing sidewalks and/or bike lanes on one or both sides of Ellington Street/M-24 from Caro Road (M-81) to Frank Street to provide greater pedestrian connectivity along and between arterial roads and collector roads.
- Consider constructing sidewalks along Allen and Gilford streets to provide stronger pedestrian access within existing neighborhoods.
- Ensure continuous pedestrian crossings and walkways are on both sides of M-81 along the entire stretch through the City of Caro.

Chapter 8. Existing Land Use

The purpose of analyzing existing is to set a baseline for land uses within an area. This baseline allows communities to evaluate change over time, while proactively identifying potential impacts of policy changes on specific neighborhoods. Additionally, evaluating existing land use identifies uses that do not conform existing zoning ordinance standards. As part of the 2021 City of Caro Master Plan update, ROWE Professional Services Company utilized a combination of aerial interpretation, assessing data, and onsite visits to verify the use of properties.

EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

Following are descriptions of each of the existing land use categories. Map 8-1 displays the geographic location of the various existing land use classifications.

Agriculture

These properties are utilized for farming, primarily growing field crops on large parcels in the extreme southern and northern portions of the city.

Single-Family

These properties include single-family and two-family homes. This also includes bed and breakfast uses, which are primarily located near downtown Caro.

Multiple-Family

These properties provide more than two dwelling units on a single parcel. This includes multiple units in a single building, three or more single-dwelling units on one parcel, and senior living facilities.

Mobile Home Park

These are specific facilities with manufactured housing typically on one parcel in a community setting.

Commercial

These are uses such as restaurants, retail, drive-throughs, auto-repair shops, hair salons, business offices, and other uses associated with commerce. These are typically uses with higher vehicle and pedestrian traffic where goods and/or services are exchanged.

Industrial

These are more intense operations involved in the processing of raw or semi-finished materials into a semi-finished or finished product. Industrial uses have the potential for off-site impacts like noise, order, and vibration, along with truck traffic.

Public/Quasi-Public

These are religious institutions, hospital related uses, and government institutions. This category also includes government property like parks, offices, utility facilities, and parking lot areas.

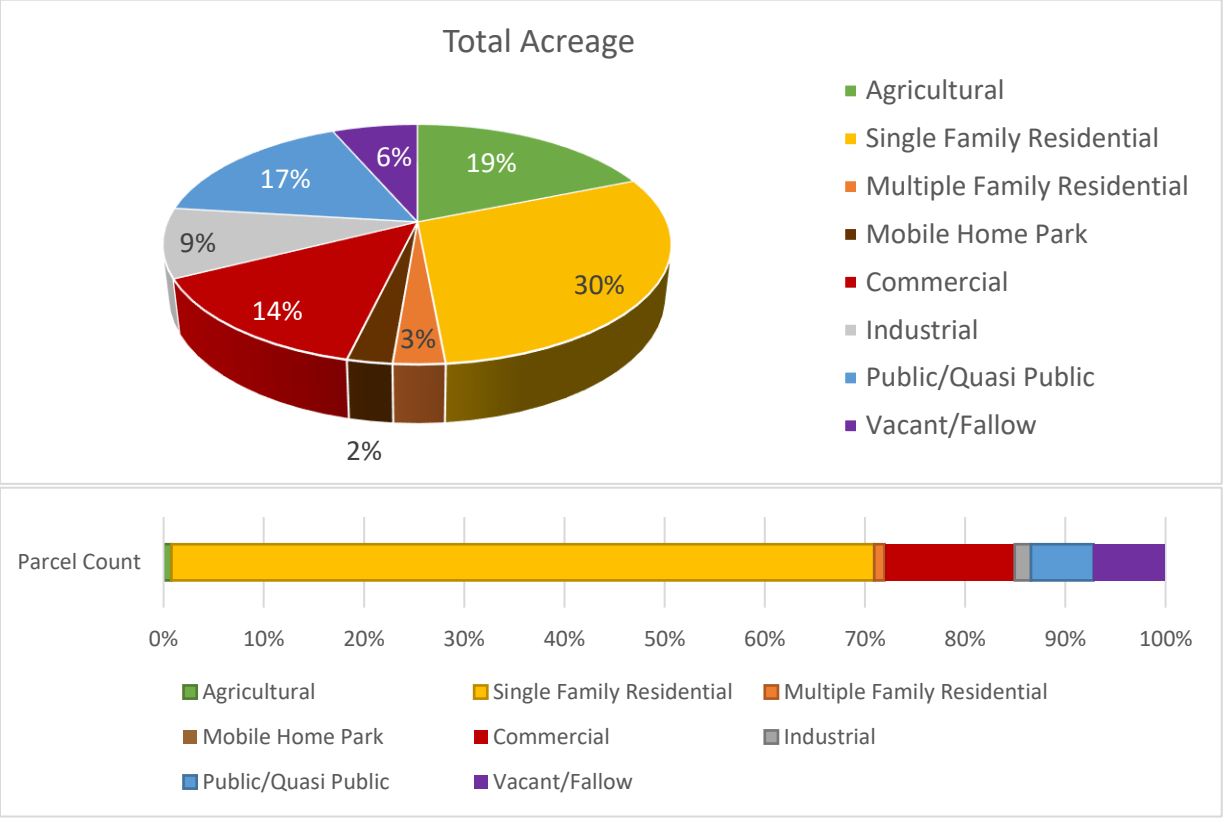
Vacant/Fallow

These properties do not have a specific use on site. These can be forest-covered areas or mowed grass areas. These do not include properties with an established use that are for lease but currently unoccupied.

2021 INVENTORY ANALYSIS

As a proportion of total land area, the predominate land use observed in the City of Caro is single-family residential. There are several clusters of single-family residential in the city surrounding the downtown area along M-81 to the north and south in addition to the edges of the city where newer homes have been built. The second largest land use in terms of area is agricultural. This is due to some farmland located primary on the north and southwest sides of the city that have not faced development pressure. The third largest land use is public/quasi-public. The prevalence of public/quasi-public properties is primarily due to the City of Caro's position as the county seat and the presence of many administrative and service buildings within the city, including the county courthouse and intermediate school district facilities. The majority of the individual parcels is single-family residential. The second largest parcel count is commercial property. The third largest parcel count is vacant/fallow land.

Figure 8-1: Existing Land Use Analysis, 2021

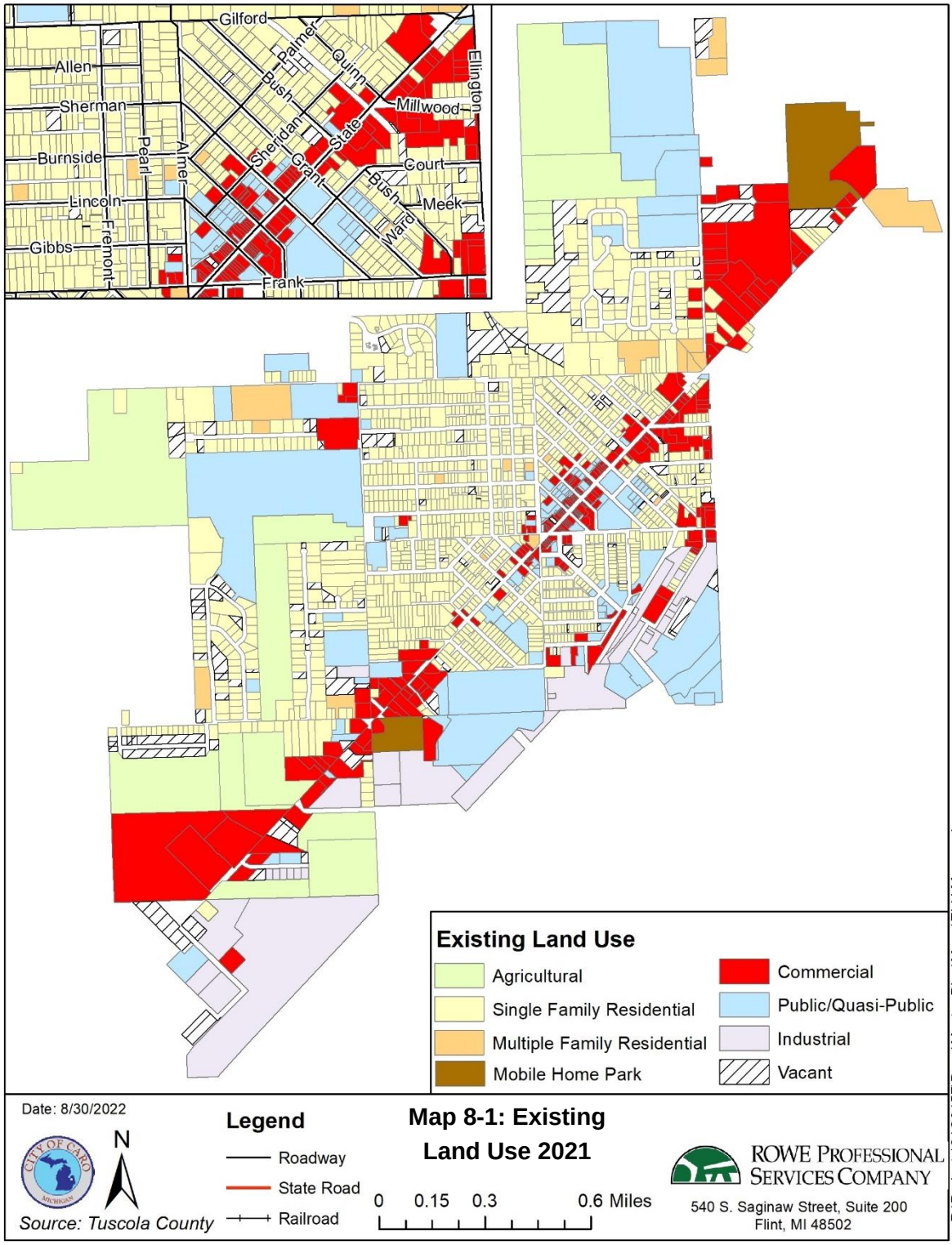


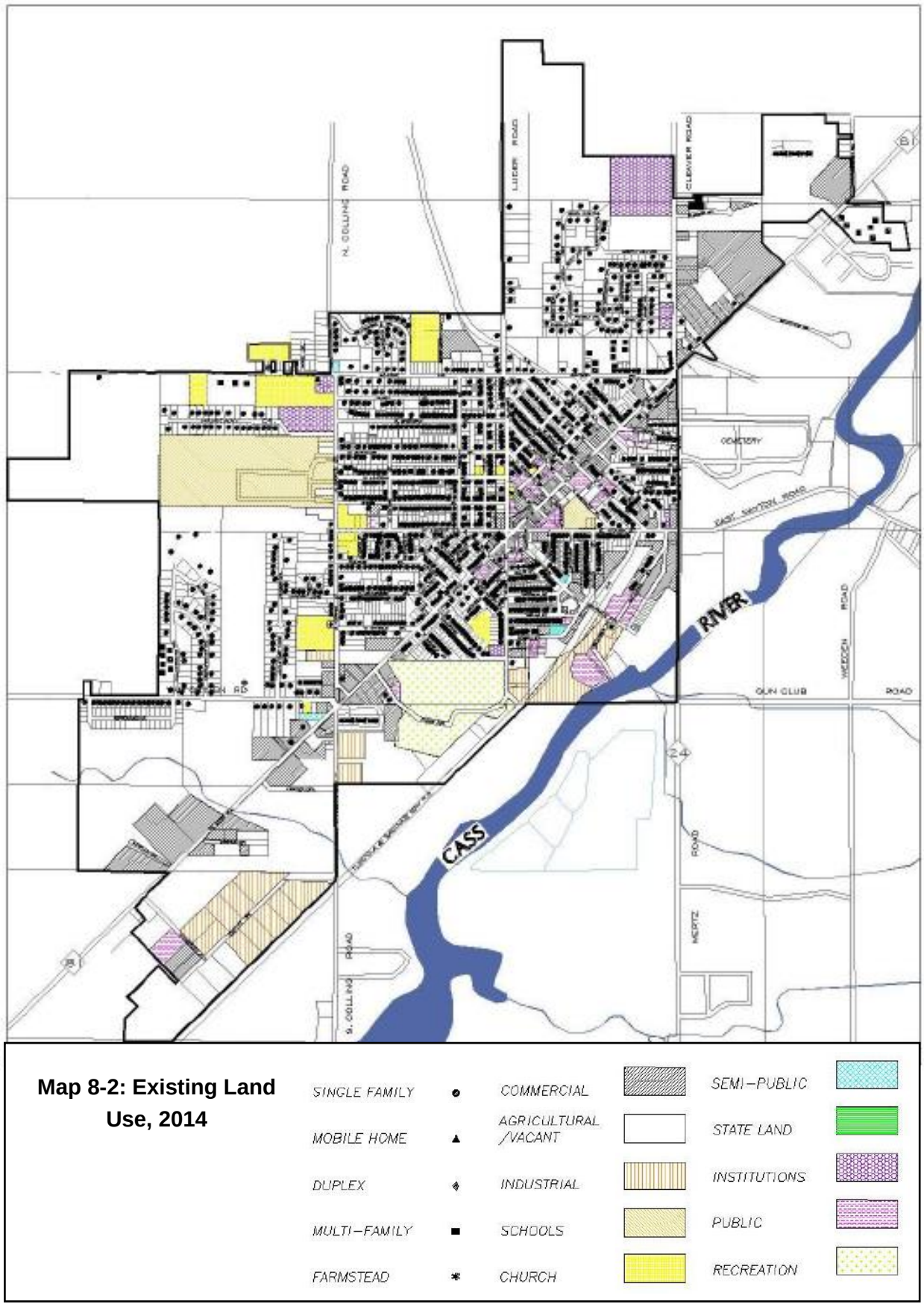
2014 COMPARISON TO 2021 ANALYSIS

This section compares the 2021 existing land use inventory to the previous master plan's 2014 existing land use inventory. The 2014 existing land use inventory from the previous master plan is shown as Map 8-2. In comparing the two maps, it is clear the city has continued to develop and increase the intensity of uses. Primary developments include the addition of public/quasi-public uses along M-24 for Tuscola County, commercial development along M-81 (south and north portions of the corridor), additional mobile home and multiple family uses on the northeast side of the city, and minor industrial growth along the river.

LOOKING FORWARD

The City of Caro is not yet "built-out", meaning that there are still large areas of land with access to public utilities that present opportunities for future growth. In addition, there are areas of the city in existing neighborhoods with vacant or underutilized land that present opportunities for new development within walking distance of city amenities. There are many opportunities to support future development that provides new economic base for the city, consistent with the goals of this plan. However, new developed should focus on areas with access to existing infrastructure, including roads, water, and sewer to limit costs of expansion and additional maintenance in the future.


Gilford
Allen
Sherman
Burnside
Lincoln
Gibbs
Palmer
Quinn
Bush
Millwood
Ellington
Pearl
Elmer
Sheridan
Grant
State
Court
Bush
Meek
Ivard
Fremont
Frank
Existing Land Use
Agricultural
Single Family Residential
Multiple Family Residential
Mobile Home Park
Commercial
Public/Quasi-Public
Industrial
Vacant
Date: 8/30/2022
N
Legend
Roadway
State Road
Railroad
Source: Tuscola County
Map 8-1: Existing Land Use 2021
0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles
ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY
540 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
R:\Projects\21C0157\Docs\Master Plan\Maps\ELU Map.mxd



Map 8-2: Existing Land Use, 2014

Chapter 9. Rezoning and Annexations

REZONINGS

A rezoning occurs when the City of Caro, either through initiation by the Planning Commission or City Council, or through petition from a private party, alters the zoning classification of a parcel or group of parcels. Rezonings should generally be consistent with the future land use plan and/or other stated goals of the city's master plan. Map 9-1 illustrates the location of rezonings and annexations within the City of Caro since adoption of the previous Master Plan in 2013. There has been a total of eight rezonings since 2013.

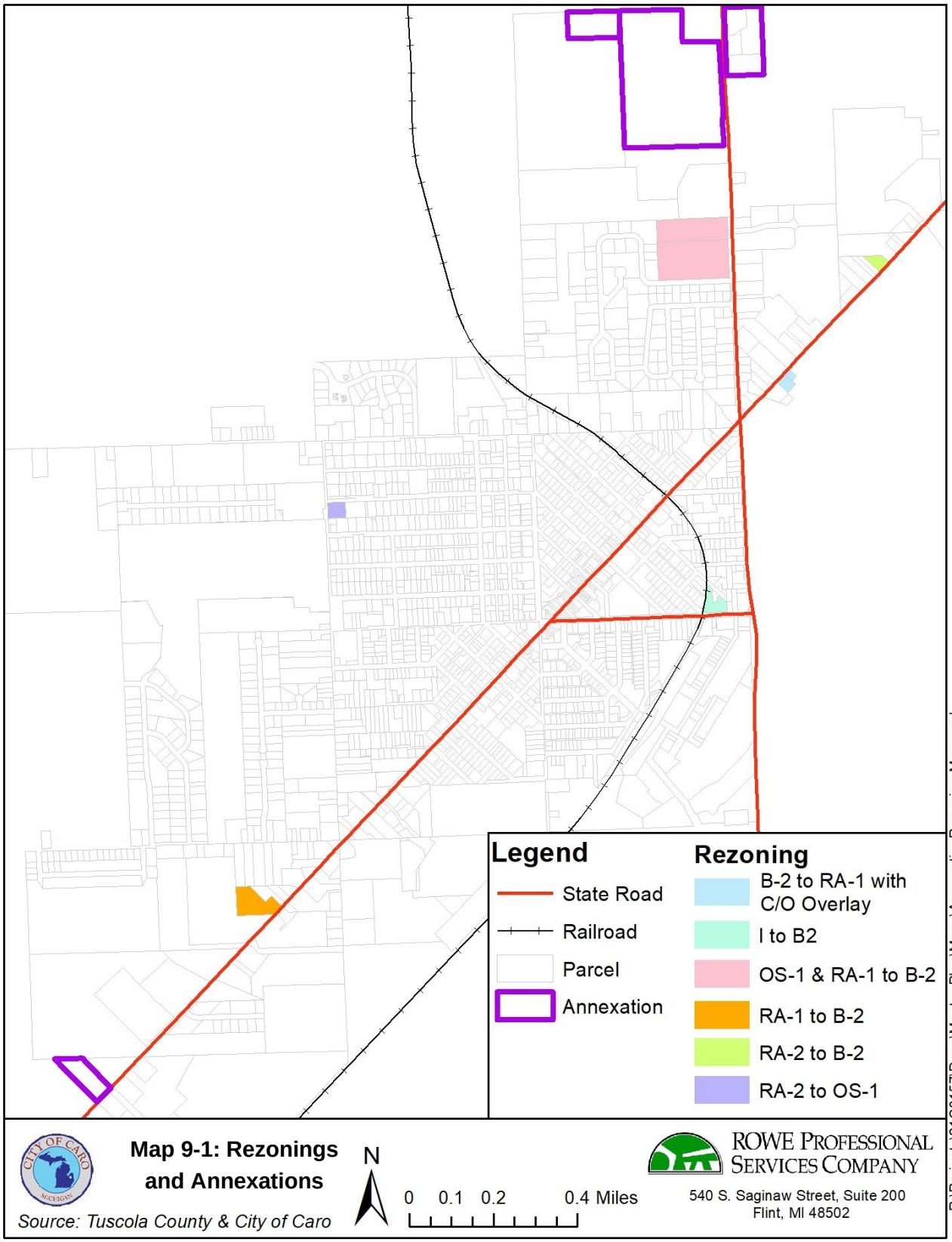
Table 9-1: Rezonings

Year	*Previous Zoning District*	*New Zoning District*	*Analysis*
2013	OS-1 Office Service	B-2 General Business	Transitional area between residential and commercial future land use categories adjacent to annexation of Tuscola ISD property
2013	RA-1 One-Family Residential	B-2 General Business	
2016	RA-2 One-Family Residential	OS-1 Office Service	Vacant property across the street from Caro High School in a transitional area with residential
2016	I Industrial	B-2 General Business	Conditional rezoning that was not acted upon
2018	RA-1 One-Family Residential	B-2 General Business	Transitional area on state street between large lot residential/ agricultural and general commercial
2021	B-2 General Business	RA-1 with C/O Overlay	Properties along a commercial corridor on the edge of the city
2021	B-2 General Business	RA-1 with C/O Overlay	
2021	RA-2 One-Family Residential	B-2 General Business	

ANNEXATION

There has been a total of three annexations since 2013. Annexations occur when the City of Caro expands its boundaries to include parcels that were formerly located in surrounding townships. One annexation occurred through a 425 Agreement, which allows the city and township to share tax revenue for the parcel for a set period of time before the parcel is fully incorporated into the city. A 425 Agreement is a mutual agreement between two municipalities to conditionally transfer land.

Year	*Site*	*Jurisdiction it came from*	*Analysis*
2018	W. Caro Rd.	Indianfields Township	This continues the city's boundary along M-81.
2019	Tuscola ISD	Almer Township	This continues property to the north along M-24 which would grant access to Deckerville Rd.
2020	Heritage Hill (425 Agreement)	Almer Township	This continues property to the north along M-24 which would grant access to Deckerville Rd.



Map 9-1: Rezonings and Annexations

Source: Tuscola County & City of Caro

Chapter 10. Public Input

During the City of Caro Master Plan update process, there was a concerted effort by the Planning Commission and the consulting team to engage the public in driving the plan, with a particular emphasis on the plan's goals and objectives. During the planning process, there were three formal opportunities for public input, which are described below, and each Planning Commission meeting during which elements of the plan were reviewed was noticed and open to the public.

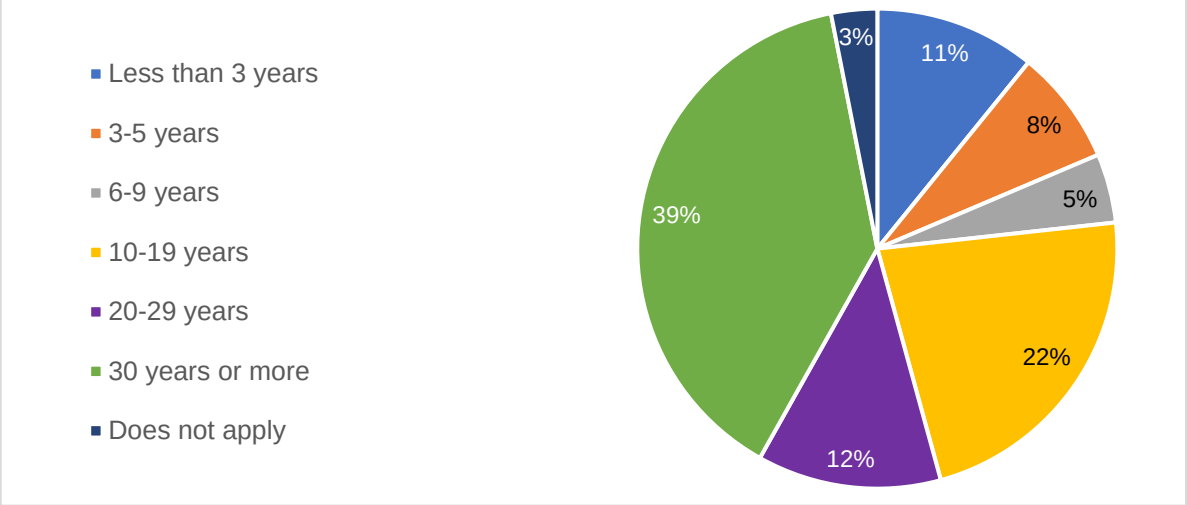
COMMUNITY SURVEY

The City of Caro conducted a community survey from January 3, through February 7, 2022. The survey was available online as well as in paper format at City Hall, at the local library, and other key community sites. Paper surveys were also available to participants of the visioning session conducted on February 1, 2022 that had not already completed it online. Overall, a total of 129 responses were collected for the survey, 117 of which were via the web-based version, while 12 were on paper surveys. A copy of the paper survey is provided in Appendix B.

Survey Respondents

Of the 129 people that responded to the survey, 80 (62%) were city residents. The next most common connection to Caro was from people that live in Tuscola County (19%), followed by people that work in the city (9%), and those that own a business or frequently visit the city (5% each). Respondents were asked to select just one option for this question, so many residents who are also business owners may have selected "resident" rather than "business owner". Respondents who live, work, or own a business in the city were asked how long they have been affiliated with Caro. The most common response was 30 or more years (39%). See Figure 10-1.

Figure 10-1: How long have you lived, worked, or owned a business in or near Caro?



Survey respondents tended to be older than Caro's overall population, with 55 percent of respondents classifying themselves as between the ages of 40 and 64. The next most common response was between the ages of 30 and 39 with 23 percent of responses, followed by 65 or older (19%), 20-29 (2%), and 12-19 (1%).

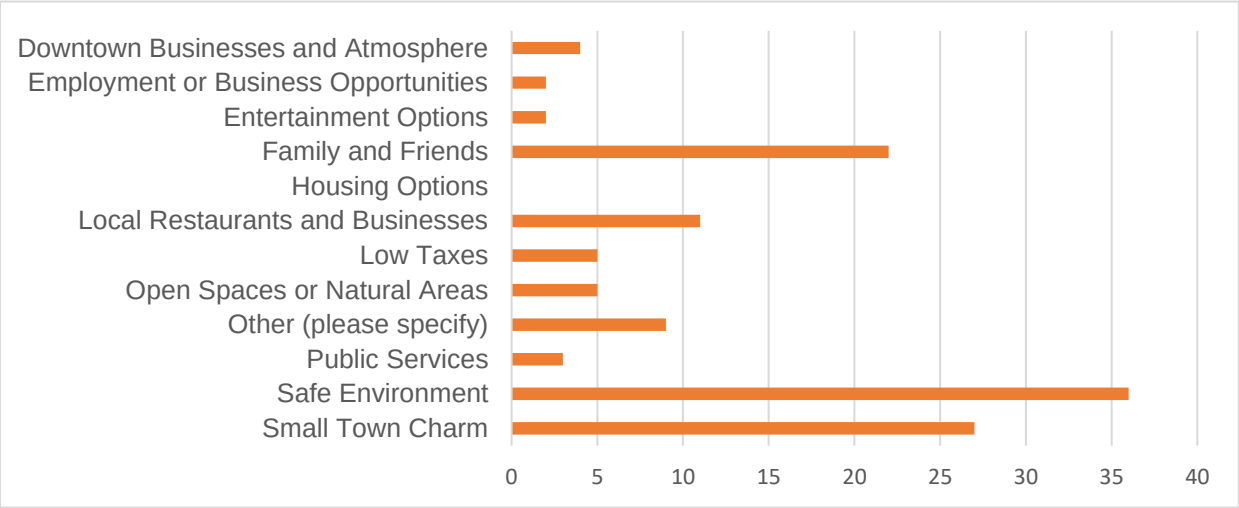
A total of 20 respondents identified as owning a business in Caro; of those 20 respondents, the most common amount of time to have owned a business was 10-19 years, with 35 percent of respondents selecting this option. The next most common selection was more than 30 years (25%), followed by less than 3 years (20%), 3-5 years (15%), and 20-29 years (5%).

Survey Results

Figure 10-2 summarizes key results and insights from the survey conducted as part of the Master Plan process. Full survey results are available in Appendix B.

When asked what they value most about Caro, 36 respondents (29%) identified the safe environment, followed by small town charm with 27 respondents (21%), and family and friends with 22 respondents (17%).

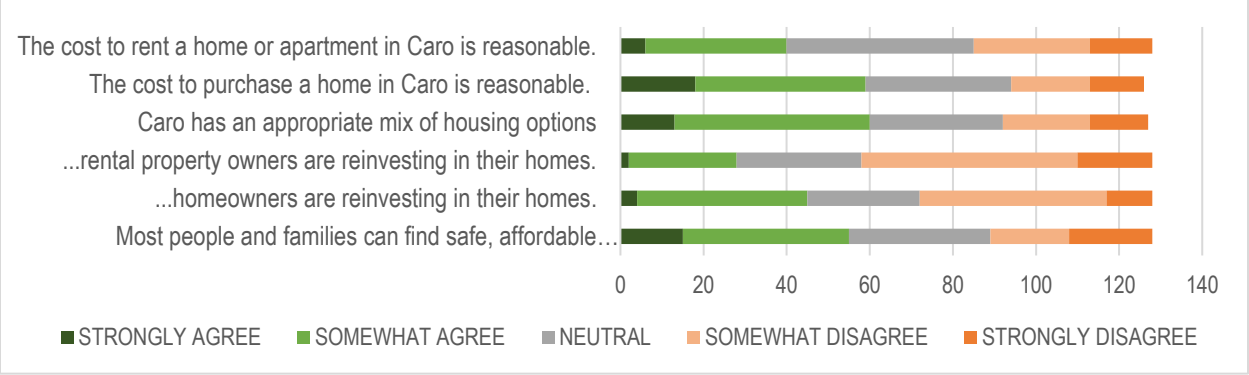
Figure 10-2: What do you value the most about, living, working, or visiting Caro?



Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements with whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, were neutral, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with a series of statements related to Housing, Economy, Environment, and Transportation. The results to these questions are provided in Figure 10-3 through Figure 10-6.

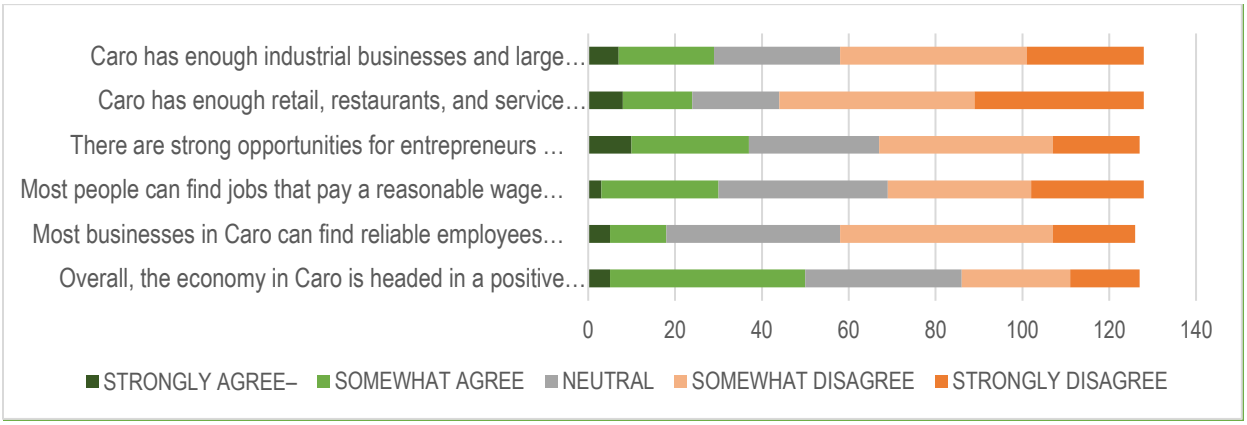
Related to housing, the statement that received the lowest percentage of “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” responses was “Houses in Caro are well-maintained and rental property owners are reinvesting in their homes”, with just 28 respondents (22%) selecting a positive response. The statement that received the most support was “Caro has an appropriate mix of housing options” with 60 respondents (47%) selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”. See Figure 10-3.

Figure 10-3: Housing



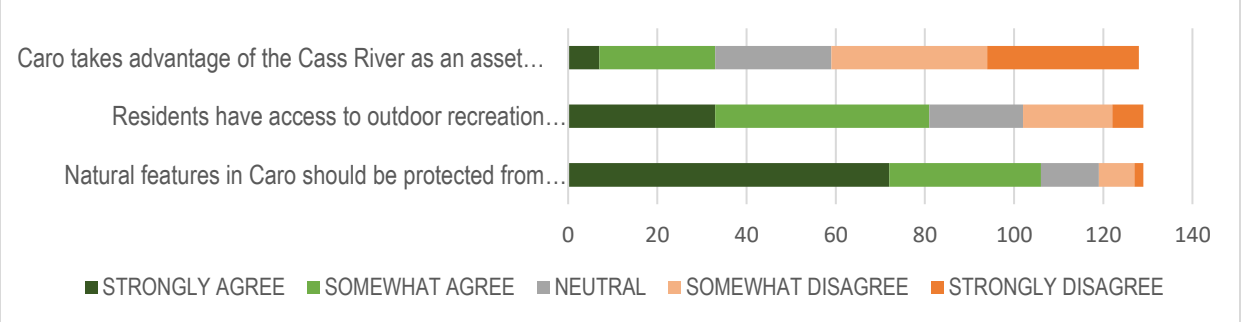
Respondents were also asked a series of questions related to the economy in Caro. Overall, the response to these questions was more negative than the response to questions about housing. The question with the fewest "Agree" responses was "Most businesses in Caro can find reliable employees in a reasonable amount of time" with just 18 respondents (14%) answering "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree". Respondents also responded negatively to statements regarding the amount of retail, restaurants, and services businesses, as well as the number of industrial businesses and large employers in the city. See Figure 10-4.

Figure 10-4: Economy



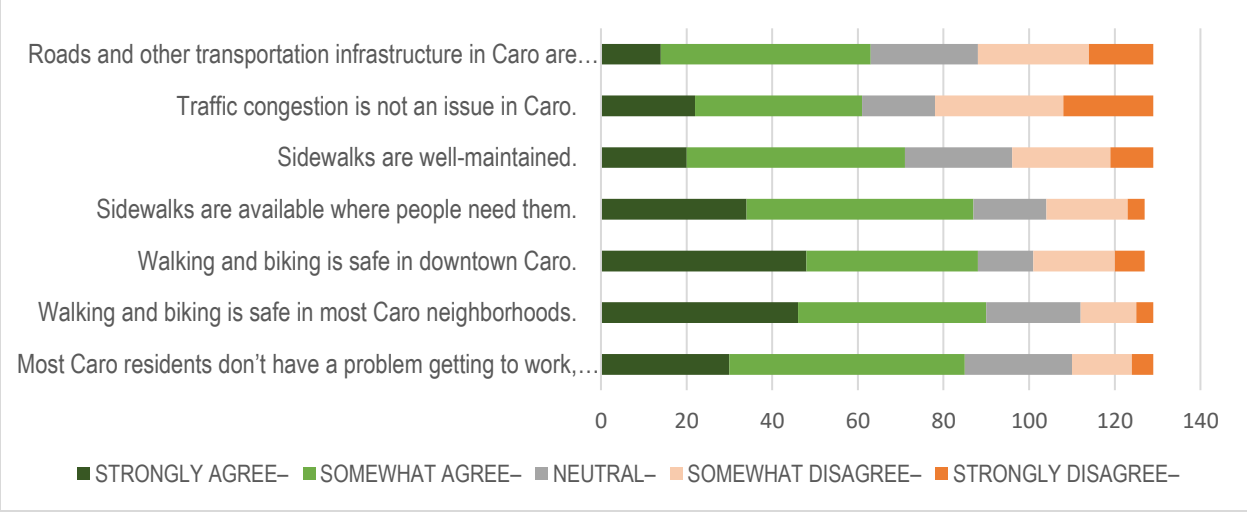
Responses to questions related to the natural envrionment in the city were much more positive, with 82 percent of respondents agreeing with the statement that "Natural features in Caro should be protected from development (wetlands, parks, farmland, forests, rivers, and streams, etc.)". Survey respondents also identified the Cass River as an under-utilized asset in the community, with only 26 percent of respondents agreeing with the statement that "Caro takes advantage of the Cass River as an asset for the community." See Figure 10-5.

Figure 10-5: Environment



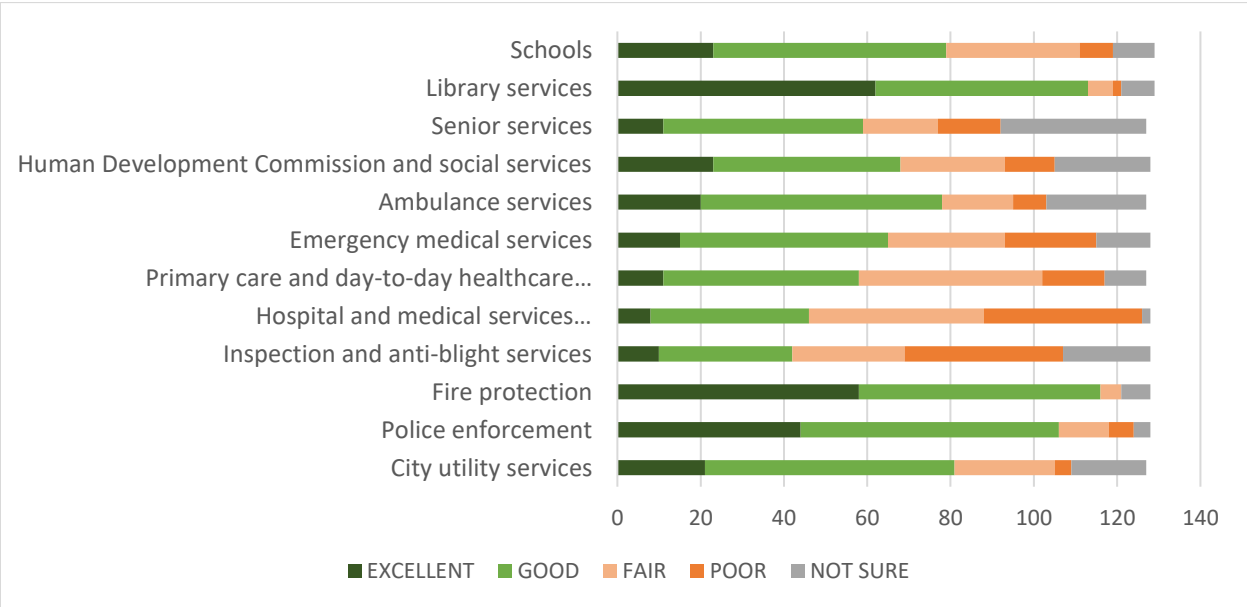
Transportation statements received postive responses overall, with more than 65 percent of respondents agreeing with statements about residents being able to access jobs, work, school, or other critical appointments; the safety of walking and biking in Caro neighborhoods; the safety of walking and biking in downtown; and the availability of sidewalks. Statements regarding the maintenance of roadway infrastructure and traffic congestion received less support, with under 50 percent of respondents agreeing. The survey also asked whether respondents would support the addition of a regular dedicated bus route, to which 55 percent answered "Yes". However, less than 20 percent of respondents reported being users of public transportation. See Figure 10-6.

Figure 10-6: Transportation



Following the series of questions where respondents were asked to respond to a statement, two more questions were asked in which respondents were asked to rate a series of options, the first gave the option to rate a seires of public services on a scale from "Excellent" to "Poor". The services receiving the highest percentage of "Excellent" or "Good" ratings were fire protection (91%), library services (88%), and police enforcement (83%). The servcies recieveing the fewest "Exellent" or "Good" ratings were inspection and anti-blight services (33%); hospital and medical services, including specialists; and primary care and day-to-day healthcare services (46%). See Figure 10-7.

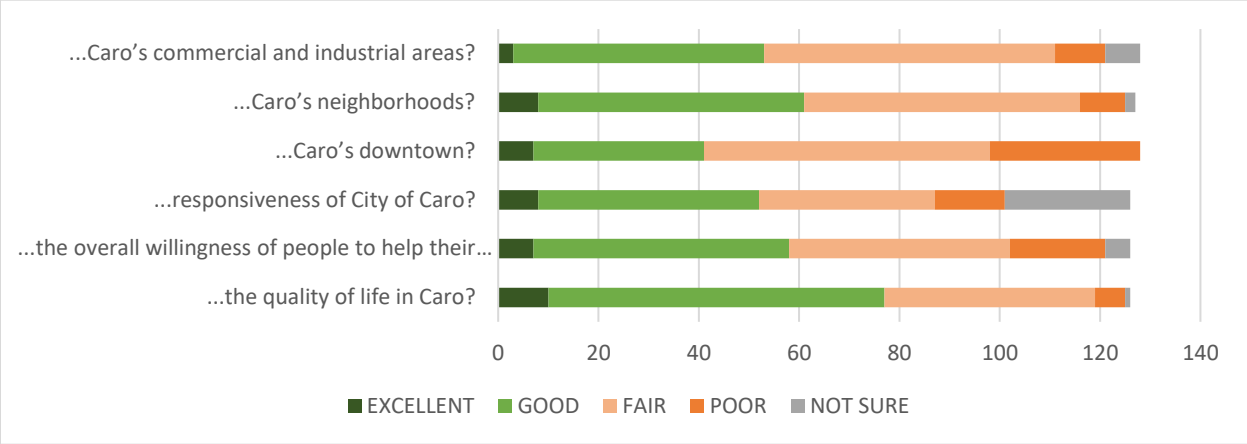
Figure 10-7: Public Services



When asked to provide a reason for giving a "Fair" or Poor" rating related to public services, the most common comments related to blight and blight enforcement, healthcare services, and other social and educational services needing improvement.

The final set of questions in the survey related to perception of the Caro community. Respondents were asked how they would rate a series of critical components of community perception. The item that got the most positive response, which is arguably the most improtant is the overall quality of life in Caro, with 61 percent of respondents rating it as “Excellent” or “Good”. The item on the list that received the most negative response was Caro’s Downtown, with just 32 percent of respondents rating it as “Excellent” or “Good”. See Figure 10-8.

Figure 10-8: Community Perception



When asked to provide an explantaion for giving a community perception item a “Fair” or “Poor” rating, the most common responses related to a blight, vacant storefronts in the downtown, and a lack of economic opportunity in the city that creates blight and disinvestment.

Additional Responses

The Community Survey also asked respondents to provide general answers to several questions. One of the most answered questions, with 102 responses was “Are there specific types of businesses or economic activities you would like to see more of in Caro?”. Answers to the question varied, but the overall theme was businesses and activities related to entertainment, activities for youth, and alternatives to Walmart. The Word Cloud in Figure 10-9 provides a summary of the most commonly used words in this response.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked for any other comments; of the 53 responses to this question, the most commonly identified items were safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with physical disabilities; a need for a more positive and forward-thinking approach to the city’s development; and the addition of new businesses, entertainment options, and employment opportunities to the city.

Figure 10-9: Businesses and Activities Desired in Caro

VISIONING SESSION

On February 1, 2022, the City of Caro held a public visioning session in the Biehl Park/Fairgrounds Midway Hall. The City of Caro advertised the session via public postings, social media, and the local newspaper. Overall attendance was strong, with a total of 27 people signing in. Approximately ¾ of participants identified as Caro residents, while the remainder were business owners or other stakeholders in the city.

Figure 10-10: Visioning Session

During the visioning session, participants conducted an analysis of Caro's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) and identified goals and objectives for the city to strive toward during the Master Plan process.

The SWOT Analysis focused on Caro's strengths and weaknesses today relative to other communities, while consideration of opportunities and threats focused on recent trends or outside factors that may affect the city in the future.

Figure 10-11: SWOT Analysis Graphic

SWOT ANALYSIS			
TODAY		FUTURE	
Strengths What does Caro do well today, especially compared to other places?	Weaknesses Where does Caro struggle today, especially when compared to other communities?	Opportunities What trends could improve the community?	Threats What trends may present new challenges?

SWOT Analysis

Table 10-1 summarizes the results of the SWOT Analysis conducted during the visioning session. During the visioning session, the attendees were divided into four groups who each conducted their own analysis and shared.

Table 10-1 includes the items identified by each group during the visioning session, with minor changes to wording and some clarification to reflect items that were identified by multiple tables.

Figure 10-12: SWOT Analysis

Table 10-1: SWOT Analysis Summary

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Small town atmosphere • Fairgrounds/Bieth Park • Business growth • Thumbody express • Low cost of living • Low crime rate • Active service clubs • County courthouse and status as county seat • Police, fire, and public services • Caro Center • Friendly people • Strong school system • Restaurants • Farmers' Market • Industry and employment opportunities	• Lack of activities for youth • Lack of access to childcare • Empty storefronts • Blight and lack of capacity for enforcement • Lack of activities for seniors • Lack of communication with residents from city • Housing shortages • Lack of housing options for people with criminal histories or bad credit • Few transportation options for people without a car • Lack of shopping opportunities, particularly in downtown • Many people struggling with homelessness • Chippewa Landing • Zoning regulations are inflexible/outdated • Amount of adult foster care
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Marketing for agriculture and commodities businesses • More active business attraction • Communication opportunities with residents • Empty spaces in Caro for development • Commitment and positive attitude of residents • River, boat launch, and recreational assets • The addition of new community facilities, including recycling • Beautification and blight elimination • Housing services for returning citizens, homeless, and other people in need • Underutilized State and public land	• Apathy/entitlement among many residents • Graduates and families leaving the community • Empty storefronts/vacancy • COVID-19 pandemic • Homelessness going unaddressed • Divisive political discourse • Lack of mental health services • Amount of adult foster care

Goals and Objectives

Following the SWOT Analysis, each group proceeded to identify goals and objectives for the community to work toward as part of the Master Plan. Participants were encouraged to focus on identifying concepts and overarching priorities, rather than focusing too heavily on implementation at this stage of the process.

Each group filled out a worksheet and presented their results to the group. Following the presentations, participants were each given two stickers to "vote" for the goal or objective they felt was most important. The goals or objectives receiving at least one vote are listed below.

- Attract and maintain businesses, and be business friendly (x2)
  - Make it easy for businesses to start in Caro (x2)
  - Provide for more flexible zoning standards for businesses (x3)
- Populate downtown buildings (x6)
- Economic Stability & Growth (x5)
- Drive change/get stuff done (x5)
  - Collaborate with community organizations
  - Engage residents/service clubs
  - Build new partnerships
- Expand river opportunities (x3)
  - Boat launches, fishing tournament, races, etc.
  - Include services clubs and volunteers
  - Fix the dam
- Create a community center (x3)
- Re-development fairground area (x3)
- More active EDC (x2)
- Beautify the city by adding trees/landscaping to buffer industrial (x2)
- Family-Friendly Community (x2)
- Utilize Farmers Market & Pavilion (x1)
- Increase/advertise tax incentives (x1)
- Maintain Public Services (x1)
- Continue to add parks and recreation assets (x1)
- Construct new housing (x1)

Based on the goals and objectives identified during the visioning session by each group, as well as notes and discussion with each group, ROWE developed a summary of the goals and objectives identified during the meeting that was distributed to all attendees that provided an email address for their feedback. These goals and objectives were then blended with other information to form the goals and objectives in Chapter 11.

Visioning Session Goals and Objective Summary

Goal: Make Caro a Regional Destination: Caro's status as the largest city within Michigan's Thumb region with a traditional small town with historic buildings, parks, and natural assets like the Cass River, as well as regional assets like county buildings and a hospital provides opportunities for the city to continue to develop assets and events that attract people to the city.

> **Objective:** Take advantage of Caro's natural assets, like the Cass River, by investing in new recreational opportunities and holding events or festivals that attract people to the city and highlight the city's unique assets.
>
> **Objective:** Populate buildings in the downtown with businesses that attract people to the city seven days a week.

Objective: Continue to redevelop and invest in the fairgrounds and the Farmers Market to host more festivals and events throughout the year.

Goal: Maintain Caro's Status as a Great Place to Live: During the Master Plan process, Caro residents have continually identified with Caro's family-friendly nature and small-town atmosphere that make the community a great place to raise a family.

Objective: Invest in beautification and safety improvements to streets and other public spaces to buffer against industrial uses and to encourage all residents to take advantage of public assets.

Objective: Continue to invest in parks and recreation assets in the community that serve the entire population, from children to seniors. This should include exploring the opportunity to add a new community center to serve residents.

Objective: Maintain strong public services and ensure that residents have access to high-quality transportation, medical care, public safety, and other essential services.

Objective: Encourage the addition of a variety of new housing choices in the city that provide for people throughout various life stages. This includes new single-family homes, as well as attached condominium developments and high-quality multi-family housing with access to downtown, parks, schools, and other community assets. These new housing opportunities can be marketed to people currently working in the city, but who commute long distances.

Goal: Make Caro a Great Place to do Business: Caro serves as an employment center for Tuscola County and the broader region, but more employment opportunities and small businesses are needed to help the community realize its vision for the future.

Objective: Make it really easy to start a new business in Caro by clarifying permitting and approval processes and identifying available space for lease or purchase, particularly in the downtown.

Objective: Review existing City of Caro policies and ordinances, especially zoning, and make revisions that encourage existing businesses to invest in the community and incentivize new businesses to locate in the city.

Objective: Become more active in pursuing new businesses and providing incentives, including tax incentives, to prospective businesses considering the city. This will require an active and engaged Economic Development Corporation working with city staff.

Goal: Focus on Making Change, not Just "Planning": Since the last Master Plan revision in 2016, Caro has been very successful in completing major projects that have improved the community, including the new Farmers' Market and fairgrounds improvements. With this new Master Plan, the community is focused on continuing to accomplish projects that move the community toward its vision.

Objective: Develop strong partnerships with community organizations, nonprofit organizations, service clubs, and private businesses and institutions that have capacity and resources to work with the city to implement high-priority projects.

Objective: Encourage residents, particularly those that have not been active with the city in the past, to participate in community projects and take leadership roles on commissions, boards, and committees.

Objective: Regularly track progress toward Master Plan Objectives via Annual Reports from the Planning Commission to the City Council and other boards and commissions like the Parks and Recreation Commission and Downtown Development Authority.

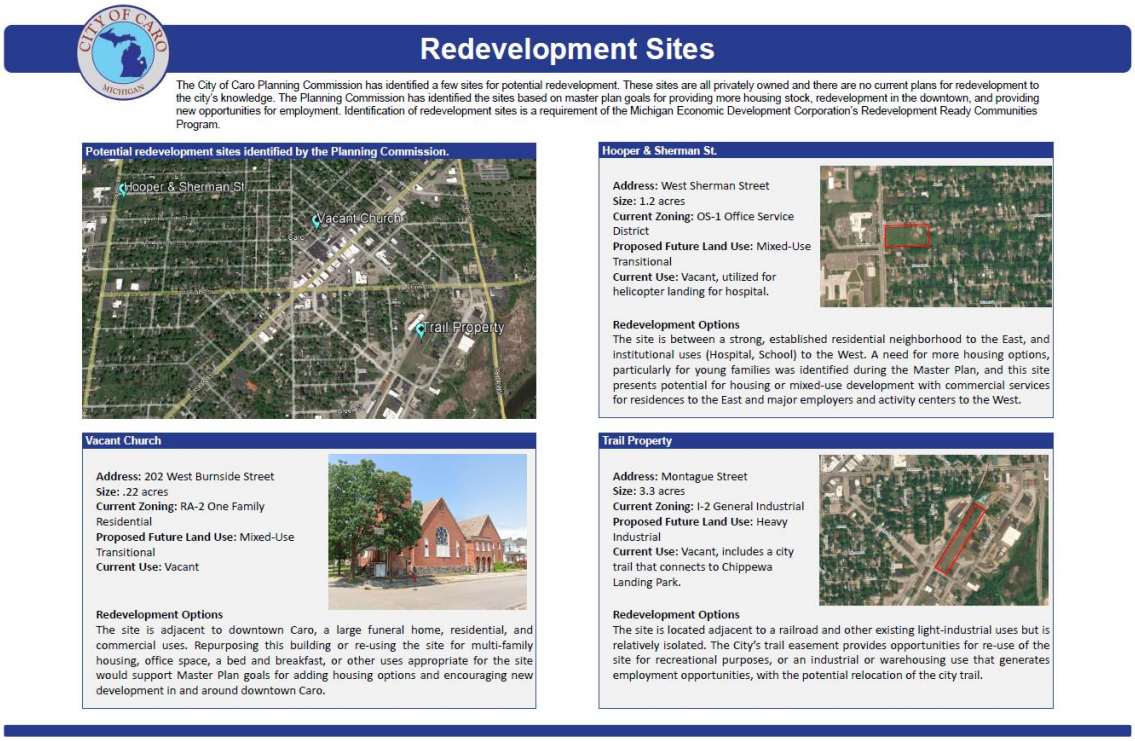
Objective: Regularly keep track of and seek funding for priority projects through the State of Michigan and other potential funders.

OPEN HOUSES

As a final element of public input, open houses were held on July 26th and July 30th to provide an opportunity for Caro residents and stakeholders to provide their feedback on plan goals and objectives, as well as other key elements like the Future Land Use plan. Two open house sessions were held at the Caro Farmer's Market, on each on July 26th and July 30th, and another session was held at City Hall in place of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

During the open house, residents were able to review the concepts presented, speak with members of the planning team, and complete short comment cards or fill out a longer survey to provide feedback on each element presented. Figure 10-13 is an example of one of the open house boards. During the open houses, participants could complete short comment cards, fill out a paper survey, or use a QR code and link provided on the comment card to take the longer survey online at their convenience. The survey link and open house boards were also posted on the City of Caro's website and social media pages.

Figure 10-13: Sample Open House Board



Open House Feedback

During the open houses at the Caro Farmers Market, over 30 residents stopped to review the boards and discuss the project with the planning team, but relatively few people were interested in completing the survey or comment cards. During the session at City Hall, five members of the public attended, along with several planning commissioners. While feedback and participation was not as robust as anticipated, a few clear themes emerged from the feedback provided, and minor changes were made to the Future Land Use Map based on input from property owners. Clear themes that emerged from the open houses were:

1. **Housing:** Several of the housing strategies received strong support, but there was less support for exploring a rental licensing ordinance and engaging youth to address blight in the community.
2. **Downtown Development:** There was universal support for creating a calendar of events, and a universal lack of support for exploring additional improvements to Almer Street to connect downtown and the fairgrounds. This goal was amended as a result. Other downtown development strategies were generally supported.
3. **Economic Development:** Strategies related to economic development received a mixed response. There was little support for creating a local healthcare industry working group, but stronger support for creating an agricultural industry working group. There was universal support for identifying sites in the city suitable for redevelopment.
4. **Redevelopment Sites:** Three redevelopment sites identified by the planning commission were presented to residents for their feedback regarding how significant the impact of redevelopment would be on the city. Respondents overwhelmingly identified the vacant church property (202 W. Burnside) as the most high-impact redevelopment project.

Complete results from the Open House surveys received a provided in Appendix B.

Chapter 11. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

This section is intended to guide the City of Caro's decisions concerning future development of the community. The items identified in this section were informed by public engagement activities detailed in Chapter 10, as well as community characteristics, infrastructure, and housing trends described in the previous chapters. To develop this chapter, the Caro Planning Commission reviewed results from public engagement activities against goals from previous master plans and other policy documents and filtered them to identify those items that were most important. **The overarching desire of the Planning Commission in establishing these goals, objectives, and strategies is to establish a clear and measurable roadmap for making positive change in Caro.**

A **goal** is a destination that has been established by community input. It is the vision of the desired future state. Master Plan goals provide a basis for policy decisions by the Planning Commission and other relevant bodies and officials.

An **objective** is a mile marker along the pathway toward achieving a goal. Objectives provide the community with clear measurements to track progress toward a goal, and also the opportunity to adjust course when objectives may not be as attainable as originally envisioned.

A **strategy** is a proposed action to achieve one or more objectives. Strategies should be specific, time bound, and have a clear mechanism for accountability. The Implementation Plan in Chapter 13 identifies the highest-priority strategies to be undertaken before the next Master Plan update in five years. *Note some strategies apply to multiple goals, and so they are repeated below*.

Although the approach toward attaining a goal may change over time, the goal itself should be relatively constant unless the community agrees on a "change in direction". The following goals are in no particular order of importance.

GOAL 1: ENHANCE HOUSING STOCK AND PROVIDE MORE HOUSING CHOICES

Over 75 percent of Caro's housing stock was built prior to 1980. While this provides for many beautiful historic homes and opportunities for rehabilitation, people seeking newer housing stock, particularly with access to downtown amenities, do not have that option in Caro. Further, housing stock in the southeast quadrant of the city is blighted and many homes are in disrepair. For Caro to continue to maintain its population and quality of life, housing options must improve.

Objective 1.1: Incentivize and encourage the development of new higher-density housing options in close proximity to Caro's Downtown.

> **Strategy:** Create a list of sites available for redevelopment that is regularly updated and promoted to local realtors, developers, business owners, and residents.
>
> **Strategy:** Review Caro's zoning code to ensure that zoning districts in areas within easy walking distance of Downtown Caro provide simple review and application processes for new housing development.
>
> **Strategy:** Proactively identify state grants and programs that can address funding gaps for potential housing developers.

Objective 1.2: Encourage development of new housing in existing neighborhoods and in close proximity to areas with existing infrastructure.

> **Strategy:** Create a list of sites available for redevelopment that is regularly updated and promoted to realtors, local developers, business owners, and residents.

Strategy: Proactively identify state grants and programs that can address funding gaps infrastructure improvements and extension of utilities.

Objective 1.3: Provide incentives to encourage existing property owners to maintain and improve their properties, while also taking a more proactive approach to ordinance enforcement.

Strategy: Prioritize enforcement of the city's blight ordinance by taking a more proactive approach to forcing compliance by repeat violators.

Strategy: Explore establishment of a rental licensing ordinance and associated enforcement to address substandard rental properties.

Strategy: Evaluate the feasibility of programs to engage local youth to address blight and maintenance needs in the community.

Strategy: Pursue new partnerships with organizations like the Human Development Commission and Lapeer-Tuscola Habitat for Humanity to help homeowners and landlords make improvements to their properties.

Objective 1.4: Strategically invest limited city resources in neighborhoods and infrastructure that has the potential to encourage new housing development.

Strategy: Identify priority neighborhoods and areas for investment in public improvements like sidewalks, road maintenance, and recreational facilities where public investments are likely to encourage private investments by property owners.

Strategy: Proactively identify state grants and programs that can address funding gaps infrastructure improvements.

Strategy: Continue to invest resources in maintenance and upgrades to parks and recreational facilities throughout the city through a regularly maintained Parks and Recreational Master Plan.

Strategy: Maintain the city's Capital Improvement Plan.

GOAL 2: ENHANCE CARO'S DOWNTOWN AND MAKE THE AREA A REGIONAL DESTINATION

Caro has a downtown with great "bones". The Strand Theater is being redeveloped through support from a broad coalition of partners, the Farmer's Market is active during summer months, and the downtown has four blocks of traditional two-story buildings with high-quality architecture and opportunities for redevelopment and investment. However, based on public input and discussions with the Downtown Development Authority, there is a strong sense Downtown Caro has too many vacant storefronts and underutilized buildings, and residents desire more options for dining, shopping, and entertainment.

Objective 2.1: Increase the number of events, festivals, and activities that attract people to Caro, particularly downtown.

Strategy: Create a calendar of existing events and activities and add at least one new event or activity annually in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and other local business and service organizations.

Strategy: Attract people attending the Tuscola County Fair to Downtown Caro, see the restaurants and businesses there, and consider returning more frequently.

Objective 2.2: Make a clear case for property owners and businesses to invest in Downtown Caro.

Strategy: Determine whether conducting a market study to identify potential business opportunities would be helpful, and then pursue funds to conduct the study if so.

Strategy: Explore the benefits of adopting regulations or design guidelines to encourage rehabilitation of downtown building facades, and if appropriate, amend the zoning ordinance.

Strategy: Working with the Downtown Development Authority, provide practical incentives that help businesses and property owners in downtown improve their building facades and make other improvements.

Strategy: Review the zoning ordinance to identify any provisions that discourage development and investment in downtown and make amendments as necessary.

Strategy: Achieve Redevelopment Ready Community certification with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Objective 2.3: Create stronger connections between Downtown Caro, the County Fairgrounds, and the Cass River.

Strategy: Explore options to provide a more direct connection between the fairgrounds and downtown Caro through additional signage, programming, and alternative transportation options during major events. Once options are identified, pursue or prioritize funding for improvements.

Strategy: Examine options to create new access to the Cass River in the area around the fairgrounds.

Strategy: Enhance the pathway that connects Downtown Caro to the pedestrian bridge that links to Chippewa Landing Park through additional signage, landscaping, and other potential improvements.

GOAL 3: INCREASE WAGES AND DISPOSABLE INCOME

There is a general sense that a reason for vacancy in Downtown Caro is that the community lacks the disposable income to support the businesses and entertainment options the community desires. While the unemployment rate in the county is slightly higher than the state as a whole, the prevailing sense is that the issue is not a lack of employment opportunities, but rather lack of opportunities that pay a living wage or greater. To address this issue, Caro needs to provide better economic opportunities for its residents.

Objective 3.1: Focus on development of industries for which Caro has a competitive advantage in the region, particularly in healthcare and agricultural processing facilities.

Strategy: Create a local healthcare industry working group composed of healthcare business leaders and executives, city officials, workforce development representatives, and others as appropriate to identify opportunities to attract new healthcare opportunities to Caro and the surrounding area.

Strategy: Create a local agricultural processing working group composed of farmers, business leaders and executives, city officials, workforce development representatives, and others as appropriate to identify opportunities to attract new agricultural processing opportunities to Caro and the surrounding area.

Strategy: Identify sites in the City of Caro suitable for development, particularly related to priority industries, and identify resources and incentives that encourage new businesses to locate there.

Objective 3.2: Encourage entrepreneurship in Caro by making the process of opening a business as streamlined as possible.

Strategy: Review existing city and county permitting requirements and identify opportunities to shorten the process and reduce costs for new businesses.

Strategy: Achieve Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Strategy: Increase awareness of resources available to entrepreneurs considering starting a business in Caro, including technical assistance through Delta College, funding resources through the Economic Development Corporation, and training and support services offered by the Tuscola Intermediate School District.

Chapter 12. Future Land Use Plan

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AND LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

Locational Criteria

The future land use map for the City of Caro provides for medium-density, low-density multi-family and mobile home park residential development, downtown and general commercial development, light and heavy industrial development and recreational and mixed-use transitional areas. These land use classifications, their purpose, and locational criteria are outlined below.

Low-Density Residential

The purpose of the low-density residential classification is to provide for residential development in areas where single-family residential uses are the principle use and other incompatible uses are excluded or regulated. Development is generally located in post-1950 subdivisions and areas of vacant land on the edge of the city appropriate for low-density residential subdivisions. Development in low-density residential neighborhoods should not be incompatible with the established neighborhoods. Lot sizes in this district will be no smaller than 12,000 square feet.

The locational criteria for low-density residential areas include:

- Areas presently developed as subdivisions, or at an average density of approximately three units per acre.
- Areas adjacent to existing low density residential areas.
- Areas properly buffered from existing or proposed commercial or industrial areas.

Medium-Density Residential

The purpose of the medium-density residential classification is to provide for residential development in areas where residential uses typified by single-family residential development, along with higher density residential developments like duplexes or small apartment buildings with less than four units are the principal use. Medium-density residential areas are primarily identified in existing residential areas of the city developed prior to 1950. Development in these areas should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of use, scale, and design and prioritize maintaining and enhancing the character of strong existing neighborhoods to the northwest of downtown Caro, and enhancing neighborhoods southeast of downtown Caro. Lot size will vary, with any new lots being at least 7,200 square feet, but existing lots permitted as small as 5,000 square feet.

The locational criteria for medium-density residential areas include:

- Areas presently developed as medium-density residential neighborhoods, or at an average density of eight units per acre.
- Areas adjacent to existing medium-density residential areas.
- Areas properly buffered from existing or proposed commercial or industrial areas.
- Areas with pedestrian access to downtown Caro, parks, and other amenities.

High-Density Residential

The purpose of the high-density residential classification is to provide for residential development at a higher density than single-family residential neighborhoods. These developments will provide a wider range of housing opportunities to city residents, including single-income households or households living on fixed incomes. The plan shows existing multi-family residential developments on the edges of the city and a large area south of Van Greisen Road for future development.

The locational criteria for high density residential areas include:

- Areas adjacent to existing high-density residential areas.
- Areas adequately buffered or with effective transitions and connections to single-family residential neighborhoods.
- Areas with access to transportation facilities or within walking distance of such facilities

Mobile Home Residential

The purpose of the mobile home residential classification is to provide for alternative residential development at a higher density than single-family residential neighborhoods. These mobile home park developments will provide a wider range of housing opportunities to city residents, including young families or retired households. The future land use map identifies an existing and proposed mobile home park.

The locational criteria for mobile home residential areas include:

- Areas adjacent to existing mobile home residential areas.
- Areas adjacent to high-density residential areas.
- Areas adequately buffered from single-family residential neighborhoods.
- Areas located with access to state highways or major arterials.

Downtown Commercial

The purpose of the downtown commercial classification is to provide for a mix of uses in Caro's established downtown district that will strengthen the downtown's position as a viable commercial center. This will occur with the establishment of a wide range of commercial retail and service businesses that will provide needed products and services to the Caro area and Tuscola County as a whole. The pedestrian-oriented nature of this area will be maintained by the large number of both on- and off-street public and private parking spaces adjacent to downtown businesses and the aesthetic quality of the downtown streetscape. It is the intent to maintain the historic downtown character whenever possible through the utilization or adaptive reuse of existing structures. New development should be compatible with existing historic architecture. Residential uses above commercial uses are encouraged in the downtown area to expand the range of housing opportunities and increase the economic base of the downtown.

The locational criteria for downtown commercial areas include:

- Areas within the established Caro DDA boundaries.
- Areas within one block of M–81.
- Areas adjacent to established commercial or service uses.

General Commercial

The purpose of the general commercial classification is to provide locations for uses which either generate significant automobile traffic or require parking, storage, or building space not otherwise available in the downtown area. It is intended that general commercial development will occur as infill between established commercial uses rather than increasing the total length of commercial linear development. Development in this district is intended to strengthen Caro's role as the commercial/service center of Tuscola County by providing needed goods and services. General Commercial areas are shown along M-81 and portions of M-24 on the edges of the city.

The locational criteria for general commercial areas include:

- Areas fronting state highway M-81 or M-24.
- Areas not in Caro's downtown district.
- Areas adjacent to established general commercial uses.

- Areas adequately buffered from incompatible uses such as single-family residential.
- Areas with access to water and sewer services.

Mixed-Use Transition Areas

The purpose of the mixed-use transition classification is to provide locations which have a mix of less intense service establishments and residential uses, including office, small retail, small health care clinics and other personal services, apartments, multi-family housing with fewer than 10 units, and other uses that are compatible with the surrounding context and character of the neighborhood. These areas therefore maintain the pedestrian nature of the area around the downtown and provide a logical transition between the commercial downtown and adjacent medium density residential neighborhoods. These areas will increase the employment opportunities and services available to Caro residents, while also providing options for higher-density residential uses with easy access to downtown and other essential services. The area mapped Mixed-Use Transition on the Future Land Use Map surrounds the central business district and extends down M-81.

The locational criteria for office and personal service areas include:

- Areas located within one block of M-81.
- Areas located adjacent to medium-density single-family residential neighborhoods and general commercial or downtown commercial classifications

Light Industrial

The purpose of the light industrial classification is to provide locations for wholesale activities, warehouses, and industrial opportunities, thereby expanding the economic base of the city and the employment opportunities available to Caro residents. It is the intent that industrial activities will be located in the Caro Industrial Park given its location and the availability of large lots, sewer, water, and all-weather roads. Secondary priority is to reuse any vacant or under used industrial sites in the city. Should the industrial park reach full capacity in the future, and other existing and appropriate sites do not exist, appropriate locations for the industrial uses could be selected on a case-by-case basis using the locational criteria established below.

The locational criteria for light industrial areas include:

- Areas located in the Caro Industrial Park.
- Areas with access to all-weather roads.
- Areas with access to water and sewer services.
- Areas adjacent to existing industrial uses.
- Areas separated from incompatible land uses such as single-family residential development.

Heavy Industrial

The purpose of the heavy industrial classification is to provide locations for more intense industrial development that have more associated external effects, such as manufacturing, assembly, and fabrication activities. These uses will expand the economic base of the city and the employment opportunities available to Caro residents. It is the intent that industrial activities will be located in the Caro Industrial Park given its location and the availability of large lots, sewer, water, and all-weather roads. Secondary priority is to reuse any vacant or under used industrial sites in the city. Should the park reach full capacity in the future, and other existing and appropriate sites do not exist, appropriate locations for the industrial uses could be selected on a case-by-case basis using the locational criteria established below.

The locational criteria for heavy industrial areas include:

- Areas located in the Caro Industrial Park.
- Areas with access to all-weather roads.
- Areas with access to water and sewer services.
- Areas adjacent to existing industrial uses.
- Areas separated from incompatible land uses such as single-family residential or downtown commercial development.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Figure 12-1, the Future Land Use Map, represents a general arrangement of the proposed land uses as identified by their locational criteria. It is not intended to be the zoning map. In determining the appropriateness of a zoning change, the plan's goals, policies, and locational criteria should be reviewed in addition to the Future Land Use Map.

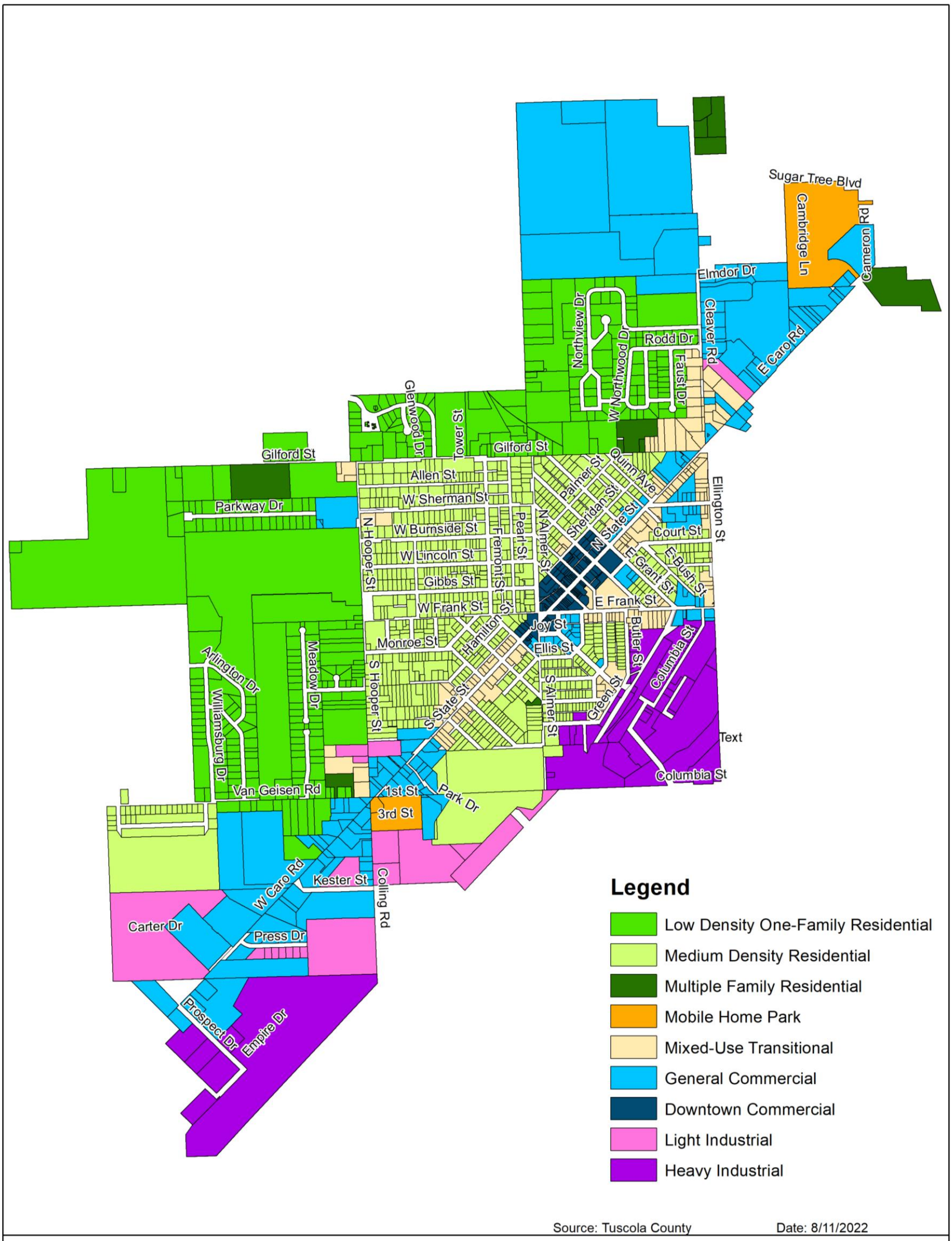


Figure 12-1: Future Land Use Map

REDEVELOPMENT SITES AND PROCESS

Consistent with Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practices, the City of Caro Planning Commission reviewed the goals and objectives, future land use map, and downtown development goals to identify prospective sites within the city for redevelopment. While the City of Caro does not have ownership or an interest in any of these sites, they are each sites that present opportunities for redevelopment, particularly for uses consistent with the primary goals of the master plan for developing new housing options and providing for additional employment opportunities within the city.

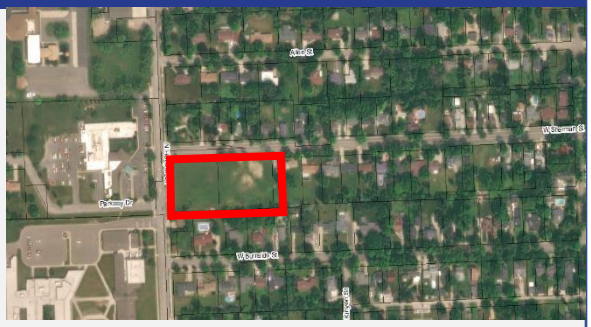
Following creation of the Master Plan, city staff will keep a list of available redevelopment sites and provide support for potential applicants in working through the development review process. One of the strategies identified it the implementation plan—reviewing and updating the city's zoning ordinance—will be critical to providing more flexibility and options for development in the city. Additionally, the city is committed to continuously finding ways to simplify the permitting and review process as part of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.

Site 1: Vacant Church

Address: 202 West Burnside Street
Size: .22 acres
Current Zoning: RA-2 One Family Residential
Proposed Future Land Use: Mixed-Use Transitional
Current Use: Vacant

Redevelopment Options:
The site is adjacent to downtown Caro, a large funeral home, residential, and commercial uses. Repurposing this building or re-using the site for multi-family housing, office space, a bed and breakfast, or other uses appropriate for the site would support Master Plan goals for adding housing options and encouraging new development in and around downtown Caro.

Site 2: Hooper and Sherman Street



Address: West Sherman Street
Size: 1.2 acres
Current Zoning: OS-1 Office Space District
Proposed Future Land Use: Mixed-Use Transitional
Current Use: Vacant, utilized for helicopter landing by hospital.

Redevelopment Options:
The site is between a strong, established residential neighborhood to the east, and institutional uses (hospital, school) to the west. A need for more housing options, particularly for young families was identified during the Master Plan, and this site presents potential for housing or mixed-use development with commercial services for residences to the east and major employers and activity centers to the west.

Site 3: Trail Property

Address: Montague Street
Size: 3.3 acres
Current Zoning: I-2 General Industrial
Proposed Future Land Use: Heavy Industrial
Current Use: Vacant, includes a city trail that connects to Chippewa Landing Park.

Redevelopment Options:
The site is located adjacent to a railroad and other existing light-industrial uses but is relatively isolated. The city's trail easement provides opportunities for re-use of the site for recreational purposes, or an industrial or warehousing use that generates employment opportunities, with the potential relocation of the city trail.

Chapter 13. Implementation Plan

ZONING PLAN

The purpose of an implementation plan is to ensure that the goals, policies and plans of the City of Caro Master Plan are implemented and the plan is kept current and maintained. It does this by the use of tools provided to the city by state laws. This implementation plan will outline the tools the City Planning Commission feels would be appropriate in implementing this plan.

One of the preeminent tools used by communities to reach the goals of their land use plan is zoning. Zoning is a regulatory power given by the state to local municipalities through the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The act authorizes the local units to establish zoning ordinances controlling the use of property and the height, bulk, and location of buildings on that property. In order for an ordinance to be effective in implementing a master plan, it must be tailored to that plan. It follows that, when a plan is updated, the local zoning ordinance should also be updated to take into account those changes. This section will review proposed components of the city's current zoning ordinance that could assist the city in meeting its stated objectives.

Zoning District Uses versus Land Use Classifications

There are significantly fewer future land use classifications in the master plan than zoning districts in the current city zoning ordinance. The primary change has been eliminating the use of "overlay" zones in the future land use map. The correlation between the proposed future land use classifications in the proposed land use plan and the current district classifications in the proposed zoning ordinance is as follows:

Table 20 – COMPARISON OF ZONING DISTRICTS AND FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Zoning Districts	Future Land Use Classification
RA-1 Single-Family Residential	Low-Density – Single-Family
RA-1 w/ Office Overlay Only	Mixed Use Transition
RA-1 w/ Comm./Office Overlay	General Commercial
RA-2 Single-Family	Medium-Density Residential
RA-2 w/ Office Overlay Only	Mixed Use Transition
RA-2 w/ Comm./Office Overlay	General Commercial
RB Two-Family Residential	Medium-Density Residential
RB w/ Office Overlay Only	Mixed Use Transition
RC Multiple-Family Residential	Multiple Family
RC w/ Office Overlay Only	Mixed Use Transition
RD Mobile Home Residential	Mobile Home
OS-1 Office Service	Mixed Use Transition
B-1 Community Business	General Commercial
B-2 General Business	Downtown Commercial
I-1 Light Industrial	Light Industrial
I-2 General Industrial	General Industrial
P-1 Vehicular Parking	No Future Land Use Designation

Overlay Districts

The purpose of the overlay districts is to permit existing residential uses to continue by right while encouraging the areas to transition to non-residential uses. There are six overlay districts in total. One of the proposed changes to the text of the zoning ordinance is to remove the overlay districts and to merge them into fewer districts to simplify the development review process.

- The RA-1 with Office Overlay Only is areas with existing single-family consistent with RA-1 density that is proposed to be converted to an office district consistent with the OS-1 Office Service District.
- The RA-1 with Commercial/Office Overlay is areas with existing single-family consistent with RA-1 density that is proposed to be converted to a commercial district that also allows office uses consistent with the B-1 Community Business District.
- RA-2 with Office Overlay Only is areas with existing single-family consistent with RA-2 density that is proposed to be converted to an office district consistent with the OS-1 Office Service District.
- RA-2 with Commercial/Office Overlay is areas with existing single-family consistent with RA-1 density that is proposed to be converted to a commercial district that also allows office uses consistent with the B-1 Community Business District.
- RB with Office Overlay Only is areas with existing residential uses and densities consistent with the RB zoning district is proposed to be converted to a commercial district that also allows office uses consistent with the B-1 Community Business District.
- RC with Office Overlay Only is areas with existing residential uses and densities consistent with the RC zoning district is proposed to be converted to a commercial district that also allows office uses consistent with the B-1 Community Business District.

Proposed Text Changes

The following recommended changes to the zoning ordinance are drawn from the master plan goals and objectives:

1. Provide additional areas for residential development (especially for alternate housing types) in areas which are already residentially developed by amending the zoning ordinance to allow for a wider range of housing types while ensuring aesthetic compatibility with existing residences.
2. Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of quality older homes by increasing flexibility in the treatment of legal nonconforming structures.
3. Enhance the aesthetic quality of commercial establishments in the Caro area by the establishment of commercial development design standards.
4. Enhance the aesthetic qualify of residential neighborhoods by adopting simple design standards for duplexes and rental properties, including standards for parking and property maintenance.
5. Enhance the Cass River as an asset for the community by promoting improved public access. Add a standard to the site plan review requirements that redevelopment of areas adjacent to the Cass River should provide enhanced views of the river.
6. Reduce the number of zoning districts by eliminating overlay districts and expanding allowable uses within the existing non-overlay districts.
7. Create a mixed-use zoning district to provide for a range of uses as a transition between intense commercial areas, downtown, and residential neighborhoods.

OTHER ORDINANCES

Besides the zoning ordinance, state law has provided local communities with authority to adopt other special ordinances that can be used to enforce the goals and policies of a land use plan.

Subdivision Control Ordinance

Although the State's Subdivision Control Act requires the developer of a subdivision to submit a proposed plat before a city for review and approval, it also authorizes a city if it wishes, to prepare a subdivision control ordinance. This ordinance may include stricter standards for subdivision design as long as they do not conflict with the provisions of the state act. It permits the community to establish design standards that conform to the land use plan and are therefore more effective in enforcing the plan.

One of the problems with a local subdivision control ordinance is it is often too technical in nature for a local community to administer without support from consultants who can review the engineering standards to determine compliance. Another problem is the extensive local review lengthens the review process and encourages developers to develop site condominiums under the authority of the Condominium Act.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

A master plan can include a capital improvement plan for the development or acquisition of improvements or capital pieces of equipment and for their maintenance. Annual update of that plan and its use in the city's annual budgeting process is essential if it is to remain an effective tool in implementing the plan.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Planning Commission annual report is a critical tool to tracking progress toward Master Plan goals and the Strategic Implementation Plan. Each year, the Planning Commission should include a review of actions and accomplishments related to the plan and identify priorities for the upcoming year.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In order to implement the key goals and objectives of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission has prioritized several strategies for action over the next five years (Table 13-1). These strategies should become part of the Planning Commission's Annual Report to the help inform the City Council of progress toward Master Plan goals, as well as challenges. The Planning Commission should track the completion status of strategies on this list as part of the preparation of their annual report even if they are not a responsible party, and regularly update this plan as needed prior to the next 5-year review.

Table 13-1: Strategic Implementation Plan			
Strategy	**Responsible Party**	**Completion Year**	**Funding Source(s)**
1. Proactively identify state grants and programs that can address funding gaps for potential housing developers.	City Staff, Planning Commission	Ongoing	General Fund
2. Continue to invest resources in maintenance and upgrades to parks and recreational facilities throughout the city through a regularly maintained Parks and Recreational Master Plan.	City Council, Parks & Recreation Commission	Ongoing	General Fund
3. Prioritize enforcement of the city's blight ordinance.	City Council, Mayor	2022	General Fund, Fines
4. Create a local healthcare industry working group composed of healthcare business leaders and executives, city officials, workforce development representatives, and others as appropriate to identify opportunities to attract new healthcare opportunities to Caro and the surrounding area.	Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, City Staff	2022	N/A
5. Create a local agricultural processing working group composed of farmers, business leaders and executives, city officials, workforce development representatives, and others as appropriate to identify opportunities to attract new agricultural processing opportunities to Caro and the surrounding area.	Tuscola County EDC, Chamber of Commerce, City Staff	2022	N/A
6. Review and update the zoning ordinance and zoning map consistent with Master Plan recommendations.	Planning Commission, City Council	2023	Redevelopment Ready Communities
7. Create a list of sites available for redevelopment that is regularly updated and promoted to local realtors, developers, business owners, and residents.	City Staff, Planning Commission	2023	General Fund
8. Identify priority neighborhoods and areas for investment in public improvements like sidewalks, road maintenance, and recreational facilities.	Planning Commission, City Council, City Staff	2023	General Fund
9. Create a calendar of existing events and activities, and add at least one new event or activity annually in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and other local business and service organizations.	City Staff, Chamber of Commerce	2023	General Fund

Table 13-1: Strategic Implementation Plan			
Strategy	**Responsible Party**	**Completion Year**	**Funding Source(s)**
10. Determine whether conducting a market study to identify potential business opportunities would be helpful, and then pursue funds to conduct the study if so.	DDA, City Staff	2024	Redevelopment Ready Communities
11. Achieve Redevelopment Ready Community certification with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.	City Staff, Planning Commission	2025	Redevelopment Ready Communities
12. Explore establishment of a rental licensing ordinance and associated enforcement to address substandard rental properties.	City Council, City Staff	2025	General Fund, Licensing Fees
13. Five-year review of Master Plan	Planning Commission	2027	N/A

Appendix A: Community Survey

Community Survey

1. **What is your connection to Caro? (Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ I live within the city.
   - ☐ I work within the city.
   - ☐ I own a business within the city.
   - ☐ I frequently visit the city.
   - ☐ I live outside the city but within Tuscola County.
2. **How long have you lived, worked, or owned a business in or near Caro?**
   - ☐ Less than 3 years
   - ☐ 3-5 years
   - ☐ 6-9 years
   - ☐ 10-19 years
   - ☐ 20-29 years
   - ☐ 30 years or more
   - ☐ Does not apply
3. **If you have a business in Caro, how long have you been here?**
   - ☐ Less than 3 years
   - ☐ 3-5 years
   - ☐ 6-9 years
   - ☐ 10-19 years
   - ☐ 20-29 years
   - ☐ 30 years or more
   - ☐ Does not apply
4. **What is your age?**
   - ☐ Under 12 years old
   - ☐ 12-19 years old
   - ☐ 20-29 years old
   - ☐ 30-39 years old
   - ☐ 40-64 years old
   - ☐ 65 or older
5. **What do you value the most about living, working, or visiting Caro? (Select all that apply)**
   - ☐ Housing Options
   - ☐ Safe Environment
   - ☐ Public Services
   - ☐ Employment or Business Opportunities
   - ☐ Low Taxes
   - ☐ Entertainment Options
   - ☐ Small Town Charm
   - ☐ Local Restaurants and Businesses
   - ☐ Downtown Businesses and Atmosphere
   - ☐ Family and Friends
   - ☐ Open Spaces or Natural Areas
   - ☐ Other:_____

6. Housing	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most people and families can find safe, affordable housing that meets their needs in Caro.					
Houses in Caro are well-maintained and homeowners are reinvesting in their homes.					
Houses in Caro are well-maintained and rental property owners are reinvesting in their homes.					
Caro has an appropriate mix of housing options (single-family, apartments, senior housing, etc.).					
The cost to purchase a home in Caro is reasonable.					
The cost to rent a home or apartment in Caro is reasonable.					

7. Economy	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, the economy in Caro is headed in a positive direction.					
Most businesses in Caro can find reliable employees in a reasonable amount of time.					
Most people that live in Caro can find jobs that pay them a reasonable wage without a long commute.					
There are strong opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to start in Caro.					
Caro has enough retail, restaurants, and service businesses to meet the community's needs.					
Caro has enough industrial businesses and large employers to meet the community's needs.					

8. Are there specific types of businesses or economic activities you would like to see more of in Caro?

_____

_____

9. Environment	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Natural features in Caro should be protected from development (wetlands, parks, farmland, forests, rivers and streams, etc.).					
Residents in Caro have adequate access to outdoor recreation opportunities and natural areas (hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, etc.).					
Caro takes advantage of the Cass River as an asset for the community.					

10. Transportation	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most Caro residents don't have a problem getting to work, school, the grocery store, or medical appointments.					
Walking and biking is safe in most Caro neighborhoods.					
Walking and biking is safe in downtown Caro.					
Sidewalks are available where people need them.					
Sidewalks are well-maintained.					
Traffic congestion is not an issue in Caro.					
Roads and other transportation infrastructure in Caro are well-maintained.					

11. Would you support the addition of a regular, dedicated bus route in Caro?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

12. Do you use public transportation services available from Thumbody Express?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If you answered "No" to the previous question, why don't you use the service?

_____

_____

14. How would you rate the following community services?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
City utility services					
Police enforcement					
Fire protection					
Inspection and anti-bight services					
Hospital and medical services, including specialists					
Primary care and day-to-day healthcare services					
Emergency medical services					
Ambulance service					
Human Development Commission and social services					
Senior services					
Library services					
Schools					

15. If you answered "Fair" or "Poor" for any of the above options in Question 14, please briefly describe why below:

_____

_____

16. Perception	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
How would you rate the quality of life in Caro?					
How would you rate the overall willingness of people to help their neighborhoods and their community?					
How would you rate the responsiveness of City of Caro?					
How would you rate Caro's downtown?					
How would you rate Caro's neighborhoods?					
How would you rate Caro's commercial and industrial areas?					

17. If you answered "Fair" or "Poor", for any of the above options, please briefly describe why below:

_____

_____

18. Please provide any other comments:

_____

_____

_____

All surveys should be returned to Caro City Hall, 317 S. State Street, Caro, MI 48723 by Monday, February 7th.

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Appendix B: Open House Survey

The City of Caro conducted three Open Houses are various events including the City of Caro Farmers Markets as well as an Open House at the City Hall to encourage feedback from the community based on the draft Master Plan. There were six boards at the Open Houses which included a board regarding the Future Land Use Map, Housing Goals, Downtown Development Goals, Economic Development Goals, a board identifying three redevelopment sites within the City of Caro and a board indicating possible Zoning Ordinance changes. Along with the in-person events, the boards and associated survey were posted on the City of Caro website and Facebook page. In total, there were five of responses received. The survey included eight questions; a summary of those questions is below.

Question 1: Please identify if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the Future Land Use classification and the general location of land uses in the city.

Land Use Classification	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Low-Density Residential	33.33%	66.67%			3
Medium-Density Residential		100%			3
High-Density Residential		100%			3
Mobile Home Residential		100%			3
Mixed-Use Transitional	33.33%	66.67%			3
General Commercial	66.67%	33.33%			3
Downtown Commercial	66.67%	33.33%			3
Light Industrial	33.33%	66.67%			3
Heavy Industrial	66.67%	33.33%			3

Question 2: Please list any changes you would like to see made to the Future Land Use Map.

None

Question 3: Please identify which housing strategies you think are most important for the City of Caro to pursue, and which you link are less important.

Strategies	Most Important	Least Important	Not Sure	Total Responses
Create a list of sites available for redevelopment.	60%	40%		5
Prioritize enforcement of the city's blight ordinance.	80%	20%		5

Strategies	Most Important	Least Important	Not Sure	Total Responses
Proactively identify state grants and programs.	80%	20%		5
Maintain the city's Capital Improvement Plan.	80%	20%		5
Explore establishment of a rental licensing ordinance.	40%	40%	20%	5
Evaluate the feasibility of programs to engage local youth to address blight.	20%	60%	20%	5
Pursue new partnerships.	50%	50%		4
Identify priority neighborhoods.		100%		3
Continue to invest resources in maintenance and upgrades to parks and recreational facilities.	80%	20%		5

Question 4: Please identify which downtown development strategies you think are most important for the City of Caro to pursue, and which you think are less important.

Strategies	Most Important	Least Important	Not Sure	Total Responses
Create a calendar of existing events and activities.	100%			3
Determine whether conducting a market study to identify potential business opportunities would be helpful.	50%	50%		4
Achieve Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification.	50%	50%		4
Review the zoning ordinance.	50%	50%		4
Explore options to further improve Almer Street to provide a connection between downtown and the fairgrounds.		100%		4
Examine options to create new access to Cass River.	33.33%	66.67%		3
Enhance the pathway that connects Downtown Caro to the pedestrian bridge that links to Chippewa Landing Park.	75%	25%		4

Question 5: Please identify which economic development strategies you think are most important for the City of Caro to pursue, and which you think are less important.

Strategies	Most Important	Least Important	Not Sure	Total Responses
Create a local healthcare industry working group.	25%	75%		4
Create a local agricultural processing working group.	75%	25%		4
Identifying sites in the City of Caro suitable for development.	100%			4
Review existing city and county permitting requirements.	40%	60%		5
Achieve Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification.	80%	20%		5
Increase awareness of resources available to entrepreneurs.	80%	20%		5

Question 6: Please rate the positive impact of redevelopment on the City of Caro for each of the three potential redevelopment sites identified by the Planning Commission.

Sites	High	Medium	Low	Total Responses
Vacant Church	100%			5
Hooper and Sherman Street		25%	75%	4
Trail Property	60%	20%	20%	5

Question 7: Please identify other site you would like to see redeveloped in the City of Caro (please include street names if there is no specific addresses)

State, Almer, Adams, under-utilized and block on State next to The Strand.

Question 8: Please identify any other topics or concerns you would like to be addressed in the Master Plan.

Remind Council to follow charter and stop interfering with Manager. Let them manage.

As seen in the above noted survey, a majority of responses either strongly agree or agree with the descriptions and locations of the Future Land Use classifications. Regarding question three, the strategies that received 80 percent of responses identifying them as the most important strategies were prioritizing enforcement of the city's blight ordinance, proactively identify state grants and programs, maintain the City's Capital Improvement Plan, and continue to invest resources in maintenance and upgrades to parks and recreational facilities. Regarding question four, the strategy that received a hundred percent of responses as the most important strategy was to create a calendar of existing events and activities. The next most important strategy was enhance the pathway that connects Downtown Caro to the pedestrian bridge that links to Chippewa Landing Park. Regarding question five, the top strategy that received 100 percent of responses as the most important was to identify sites in the City of Caro suitable for development. The next most important strategies being achieving the Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification and to increase awareness of resources available to entrepreneurs. Regarding

question six, 100 percent of responses indicated that the vacant church was the top redevelopment site identified by the Planning Commission that should be redeveloped.

At the Open Houses there was also a condensed Community Attitude Survey. This survey received six responses. The summary of the responses is below.

Question 1: Out of all the boards, what do you like? What do you dislike?

The proposed zoning ordinance changes

Housing but the streets need names

Question 2: What kind of changes would you like to see to the strategies or goals listed?

Goal 2: Enhance Caro's Downtown and Make the …

Keep our hospital open, we need our ER

Frank Street updates

Parking behind Theater

Outdoor skating rink

Community garden – food plot

Compost sites

Question 3: Any further comments or concerns you would like to be addressed in the Master Plan?

This is good situation for Caro's future Development and Strategic development

Need to keep McLaren Caro Regional Hospital open.

Tear down old police station

Benches placed downtowns for senior/disabled to rest on.

Appendix C: Notices and Resolutions

[INSERT MASTER PLAN NOTICES AND RESOLUTIONS]