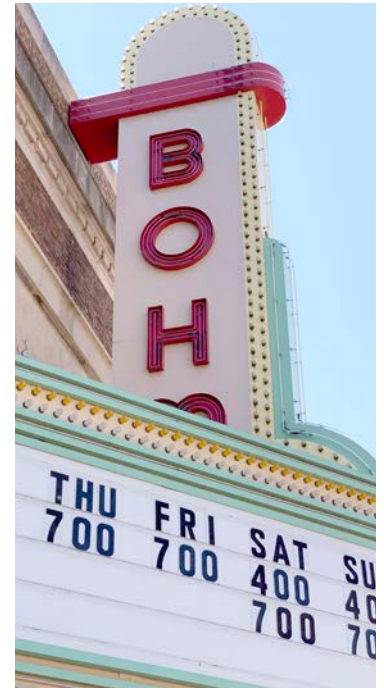




# THE CITY OF **ALBION**

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



SEPTEMBER 2022

**RESOLUTION #2022-33**

TO APPROVE THE CITY OF ALBION COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

**WHEREAS**, the City of Albion Planning Commission has prepared a proposed comprehensive plan for the City of Albion, to update and replace its previous community comprehensive plan, meeting all statutory requirements set forth in the MPEA; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Albion City Council authorized the distribution of the proposed City of Albion Community Comprehensive Plan to the general public and the various entities listed in the MPEA, for review and comment purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed City of Albion Community Comprehensive Plan was made available to the various entities and the general public as required by the MPEA; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held by the City of Albion Planning Commission on July 19, 2022 pursuant to notice as required by the MPEA; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Albion Planning Commission finds that the proposed City of Albion Community Comprehensive Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the land use and development goals and strategies of the City of Albion;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Albion Planning Commission hereby resolves to approve the proposed City of Albion Community Comprehensive Plan as submitted for the public hearing, including all the text, charts, tables, maps, and descriptive and other matter therein intended by the Planning Commission to form the complete Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Classification Map.

Motion by Planning Commission Member Snyder and supported by Planning Commission Member Belle to approve the foregoing resolution.

I hereby certify that the resolution adopted on September 20, 2022, in a regular session of the Albion Planning Commission, and this is a true copy of the resolution.

Ayes            6  
Nays            0  
Absent         3

  
Jill Domingo, Clerk

September 20, 2022



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## CITY COUNCIL

Victoria Snyder, Mayor  
Donivan Williams, Precinct 1  
Lenn Reid, Precinct 2  
Nora Jackson, Precinct 3  
Marcola Lawler, Precinct 4  
Vivian Davis, Precinct 5  
Andrew French, Precinct 6  
Linda LaNoue, Precinct 5 (former)  
Shane Williamson, Precinct 6 (former)

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Victoria Snyder, Mayor  
Lenn Reid, Council Member\*  
Sharon Ponds  
Joseph Verbeke  
George Strander\*  
Albert Amos  
Mark Lelle\*  
Tom Pitt\*  
Scott Kipp

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Lenn Reid, Council Member  
Linda LaNoue, Former Council Member  
Haley Snyder, City Manager  
Ian Arnold, Director of Planning & Building  
Amy Deprez, Albion Economic Development Corporation  
George Strander  
Mark Lelle  
Tom Pitt

\*Planning Commission members on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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# BACKGROUND



Image Source: City of Albion

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Albion's Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that guides the City in future decision making concerning land-use planning and social, economic, and environmental development. It studies the City's history, evaluates present conditions, and gathers public input to provide a framework for future growth and development. Essentially a policy document, the comprehensive plan inventories Albion's strengths and assets, as well as recognizes opportunities for growth and improvement, and provides a direct link between community preferences and policy. It also identifies the community's vision, defines holistic goals that help achieve that vision, and steers the City towards a sustainable future.

## ALBION'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2022 UPDATE

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) requires a municipality to review its Comprehensive Plan every five years for relevance. Consistent with the requirements of the Act, in 2021 the City of Albion initiated a process to update its 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

This 2022 update to the Comprehensive Plan aims to develop a succinct policy document which captures the current realities and future vision of the City and includes the following:

- » An analysis of latest demographic data describing the changes that have taken place in Albion over the past five years.
- » A summary of emerging trends within the City and the region.
- » A demographic dashboard that ties data to planning outcomes and action plan strategies.
- » A collection of maps and spatial analyses for each element of the plan.
- » A discussion of future land use categories and how they tie into community goals.
- » An overview of specific goals with actions tied to metrics, time frames, responsible parties, and potential resources.

- » A list of priority redevelopment sites.
- » A graphic representation of data and planning concepts.

Another key component of this Comprehensive Plan update is community engagement. The process involved several community engagement methods including a community survey, youth engagement with college students, a stakeholder survey, and a community visioning session, which all helped to gain perspective on the needs and preferences of all of Albion's citizenry. The input gained from these methods lays the foundation for this plan and has been documented and synthesized throughout the Plan. This updated Comprehensive Plan was adopted following a 63-day review and comment period and a public hearing.

## Relationship to the Zoning Ordinance

The Comprehensive Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that provide the details and exacting specifications of how and where development will occur, and it is regulated by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006). The MZEA requires a direct relationship between these two documents: the Comprehensive Plan supports the Zoning Ordinance, and the Zoning Ordinance implements the Comprehensive Plan. Only when the two documents are in sync can they serve as effective planning tools.

## Data Sources

The demographic information in this Plan came from the following sources, in this preferred order:

- » **2020, 2010, 2000, and 1990 US Decennial Censuses.** The decennial censuses are the most accurate source of demographic information in the United States, though the information is limited. Mandated by the United States Constitution, the aim of the decennial census is to count 100% of the US population. Because the decennial census has been operating since 1790, it offers a valuable reference point to illustrate how populations have changed over time. While the decennial census has been



administered for over 200 years, the questions have shifted to reflect cultural changes. For example, one's history of rebellion against the United States is no longer a question on the form. Information collected in the most recent counts includes information about age, sex, race, the relationship between household members, and household tenure.

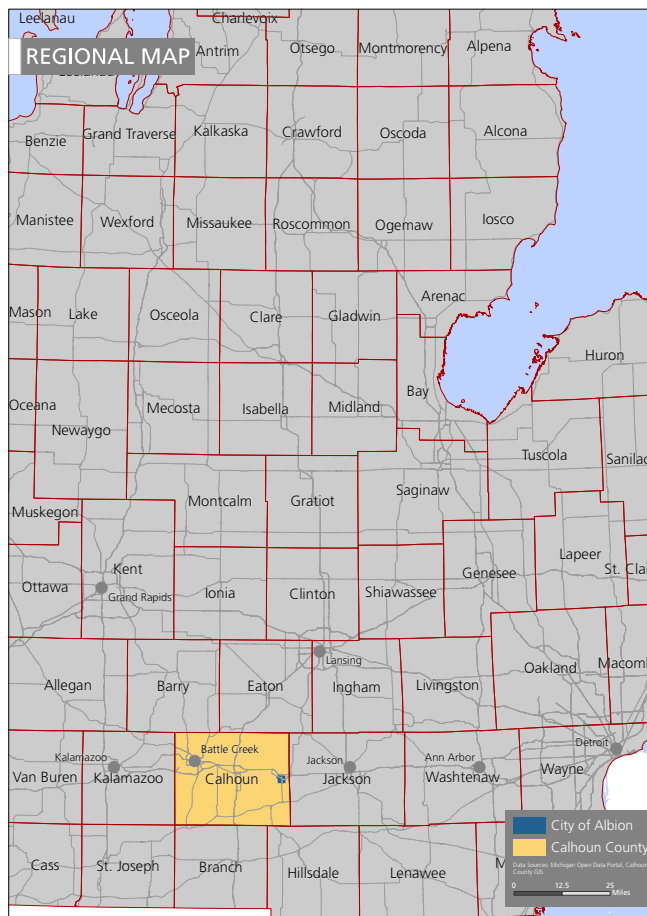
- » **American Community Survey.** The American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the “long-form” Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a continual basis. Including these questions in the decennial census would be more resource-intensive and could reduce the response rate for the more critical decennial census. The ACS is not a complete survey of the United States but a sample. A random selection of households receives the ACS every year, and the Census Bureau uses the responses to create estimates for the rest of the population.

Because the ACS is a sample, smaller communities require multiple years of sampling to create accurate estimates. Communities with fewer than 20,000 people must be sampled over 60 months to create estimates, and these estimates are referred to as 5-year estimates. This plan will use ACS 5-year estimates, as Albion's population is under 20,000 people.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY

The Potawatomi (“People of the Place of the Fire”) were the original inhabitants of the land that Albion occupies today. The recorded history of present-day Albion began in 1821 with the Treaty of Chicago, where 55 Potawatomi chiefs signed the treaty that granted their land to the United States.<sup>1</sup> Albion's first settlers arrived in 1833. These visionaries formed a land development company called the Albion Company—from which the City draws its name. In 1835, Methodist settlers established Albion College, a private college that has emerged as a major employer and economic driver. In 1855, Albion was incorporated as a village, and as a city in 1885.

Map 1: Regional Map



## Location

The City of Albion, which is 4.5 square miles, is located along the I-94 corridor in the eastern portion of Calhoun County. The City is bordered largely by Sheridan Township to the north and Albion Township to the south. The City of Marshall, county seat of Calhoun County, lies approximately 12 miles west of Albion.

Throughout its history, Albion's location and access to transportation networks have been strategic assets that propelled its growth. Albion was founded at the forks of the Kalamazoo River—the confluence of the river's north and south branches. During its early period as an agrarian economy, the river provided power for various mills that located on or near “the Forks.” Through the 19th and 20th centuries, the City's steel facilities and foundries transported goods and products along the Chicago Road and two railroads. In 1844, the arrival of the Michigan Central Road brought with it an influx of industry and population. Another railroad, the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, was completed in 1872. In the mid-20th century, transportation was expedited by two major interstate highways – I-94 and I-69.



*Downtown Albion.*  
Source: City of Albion

Albion is within a short driving distance of several regional and major metropolitan centers within Michigan and the Great Lakes area. Via the interstate highway system, Albion is only 15 miles from Jackson, 20 miles from Battle Creek, 40 miles from Lansing, 47 miles from Kalamazoo, and 53 miles from Ann Arbor. On a larger scale, it is 86 miles from Grand Rapids, 91 miles from Detroit, 93 miles from Fort Wayne, 98 miles from Toledo, 175 miles from Chicago, and 190 miles from Cleveland. In addition, Interstate 94 provides convenient access to international markets in Canada.

The City of Albion is positioned between three international airports: 43 miles south of the Capital Region International Airport in Lansing, 46 miles east of Kalamazoo-Battle Creek International Airport, and 77 miles west of Detroit Metropolitan International Airport.

### Economic History

Like many cities throughout the Midwest, Great Lakes, and northeastern regions of the United States, Albion suffered the effects of deindustrialization. The City's economy has fundamentally changed with shifts that have taken

place in domestic manufacturing and specifically in the automotive industry. Since 2001, Albion has lost nearly 1,000 jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, and retail. This economic shift has caused a reduction in real and personal property tax revenue and an increase in vacant or under-utilized industrial spaces.

While no single industry has replaced the jobs and taxes generated by the automotive suppliers, several sectors have emerged in Albion with the potential of bringing new vitality to the local/regional economy and community. These include small-to-medium sized manufacturing, craft production facilities, and alternative energy such as solar power. Furthermore, the existing industrial park is at capacity, and the City is currently in the process in designing a second industrial park to better allow for incoming industries.

Albion College is an anchor institution in the City. The College employs hundreds of faculty and staff, and there are roughly 1,500 students who attend Albion College. Having a higher-education facility within City boundaries is uncommon for a small municipality in rural Michigan, and both the City and the College are dependent on each other for success.

### SOURCE

1 History. The City of Albion. 2020. [https://www.cityofalbionmi.gov/residents/city\\_at\\_a\\_glance/history.php](https://www.cityofalbionmi.gov/residents/city_at_a_glance/history.php)



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# 2



A key element of this Comprehensive Plan Update was community engagement. The community engagement program was quite extensive and had four main components: a community survey, a youth input session, a stakeholder input survey, and a community visioning session. Each engagement method is summarized below; full results for each method are in the Appendix.



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Albion Comprehensive Plan Survey garnered a total of 116 respondents, and the City distributed the survey through a variety of methods (social media, posting on the City's website, announced at a Council meeting, included in an Albion College e-newsletter, and promoted through word of mouth). In terms of the demographics of survey respondents, the survey was well-represented in terms of age and households with children. It was less racially representative, though a significant number of respondents declined to indicate their race. Regarding housing tenure status, renters were clearly underrepresented. Responses to survey questions are dispersed through the Plan where relevant, and a full analysis of the survey results is in the Appendix.

## YOUTH INPUT

On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, the City invited Albion College students to participate in Comprehensive Plan engagement exercises. The program included a brief overview of comprehensive planning, a scenario planning group activity, a survey, and asset mapping. The scenario planning activity consisted of blocks that represented land use typologies. Students were asked to "design" a city which captured two different land use scenarios: 1) designing their "dream" city where they would like to live, and 2) redesigning their "dream" city based on a list of constraints. Results highlighted a preference for

mixed-use spaces in the center of the community with commercial corridors radiating outward. Other common themes included neighborhoods with denser housing and larger open spaces. The relationship between denser neighborhoods and more open/public space was a clear trend amongst the groups.

The youth survey asked about students' plans after graduation, and a total of 19 people completed the survey. Roughly 88% of students plan to leave the community after graduation to either pursue higher education or live in a different/bigger city. When asked what are the top characteristics of a community in which the students want to live, the top three results were housing options, higher paying jobs, and retail and entertainment variety. Students were also asked if they would ever consider returning to the community – 13% responded that they would and 40% were unsure. A full analysis of the youth survey results is in the Appendix.

Students also completed an asset mapping activity where they identified locations for "strengths," "weaknesses," and "opportunities" in Albion. Highlights included an indication that downtown Albion has many strengths and opportunities. There was also a strong indication that the students see the parks and recreation features of Albion as a strength. Interestingly, most of the weaknesses that students identified were around the Albion College Campus, indicating that perhaps students are more familiar with the areas around the College.



*The youth engagement session included asset mapping (left) and a scenario planning activity (right).*

**Table 1: List of Stakeholders**

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS	
Albion Economic Development Corporation	Albion Downtown Development Authority
Albion College	Albion Healthcare Alliance
Albion Housing Commission	Albion / Marshall Public Schools
Senior Millage Allocation Committee	Calhoun County Senior Services
AmeriCorps VISTA	Folks Senior Center
Local business owners	Local nonprofit organizations
Calhoun County Land Bank Authority	Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Southcentral Michigan Planning Council	Michigan Works!
Habitat for Humanity	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Michigan Department of Transportation	USDA Rural Development
Albion Community Foundation	Greater Albion Chamber of Commerce
Calhoun County Community Action	Local health services

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The City sent key stakeholders a survey which asked their opinions on the goals from the previous Comprehensive Plan. There was a total of 19 participants, and the list of stakeholders included a range of interests including: City, County, and State organizations/departments; education and health institutions; economic development organizations, and local business owners and nonprofits (full list in the table titled “List of Stakeholders”). Specifically, the survey asked participants if the goal should remain in the updated Comprehensive Plan, be changed, or be removed. The City used the results and input from this survey to update and modify the City’s goals.



*Community visioning session participants.*

## COMMUNITY VISIONING

The City held a community visioning session on Wednesday, February 16, 2022 that was open to the public. The program included a brief overview of the comprehensive planning process, visioning exercises, and asset mapping. The visioning exercises asked participants to work in small groups to answer the following questions: 1) what is one word or phrase that describes Albion now?; 2) what has Albion done well over the last five years?; and 3) ideally, what does Albion look like in ten years? After each question, every group shared their top three results with the entire group. At the end, participants voted on their “collective priorities” for the future of Albion, and the top choices were strongly geared toward the City’s youth. Participants also did the same asset mapping activity as the youth session, identifying “strengths,” “weaknesses,” and “opportunities” in Albion. Similar to the students, the participants of the visioning session identified downtown Albion as the area with the most strengths and opportunities. Parks and recreation areas were also a significant share of the strengths that participants identified. Identified weaknesses focused on the appearance and conditions of the City, including trash, homes in disrepair, and poor infrastructure conditions.





# COMMUNITY PROFILE

# 3

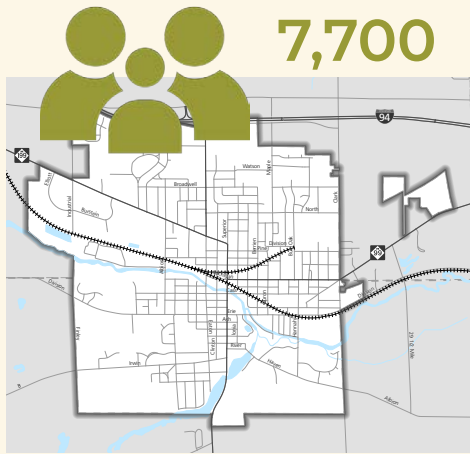


A thorough understanding of Albion's demographic and socioeconomic trends is imperative to identify growth and development challenges and the changing needs and preferences of the citizenry, which in turn aids decision-makers in an equitable planning process. The data presented in this section is sourced from the US Census and the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (years are noted in chart titles).



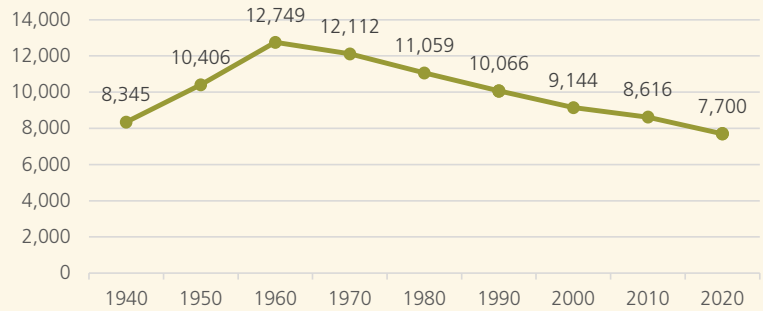
# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Figure 1: Population, 2020



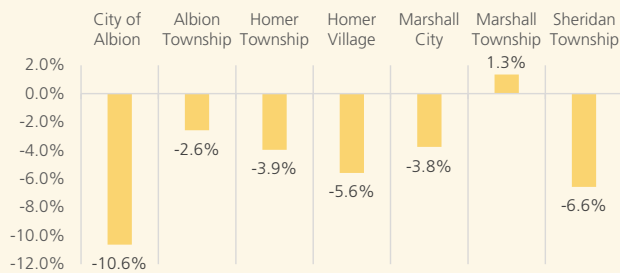
As of 2020, Albion has a total population of 7,700.

Figure 2: Population Trend, 1940-2020



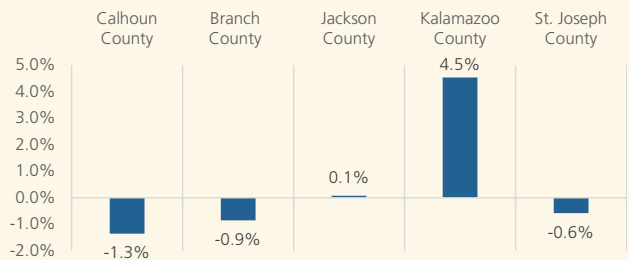
Since the 1960s, Albion has experienced a steady decline in population; between 2010 and 2020, the population dropped by 10.6%. However, ESRI Business Analyst projects that the City's population will rise to 8,136 persons by 2026, an increase of 5.6%.

Figure 3: Population Change: Albion & Surrounding Communities, 2010-2020



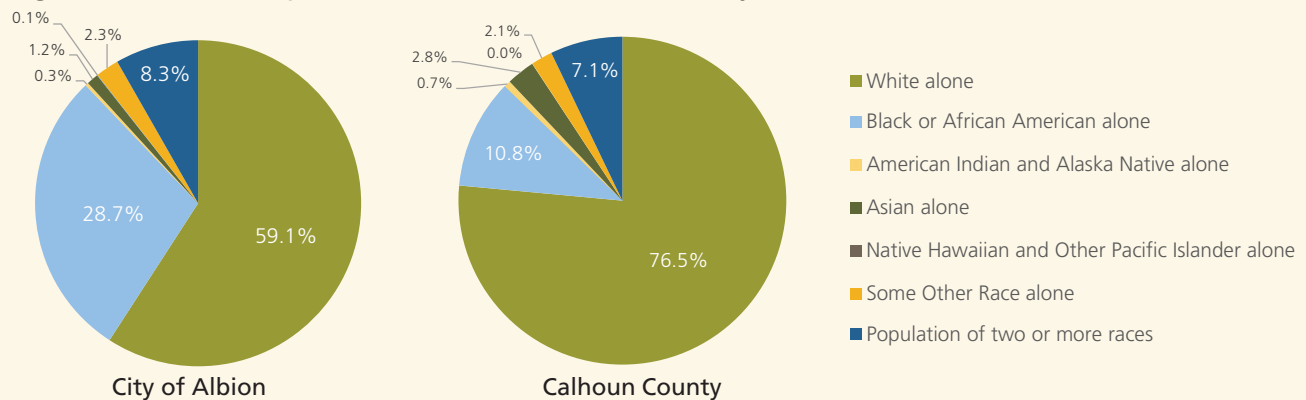
Almost all surrounding communities have faced population decline over the last decade, but Albion's rate is the highest at 10.6%.

Figure 4: Population Change: Calhoun County & Surrounding Counties, 2010-2020



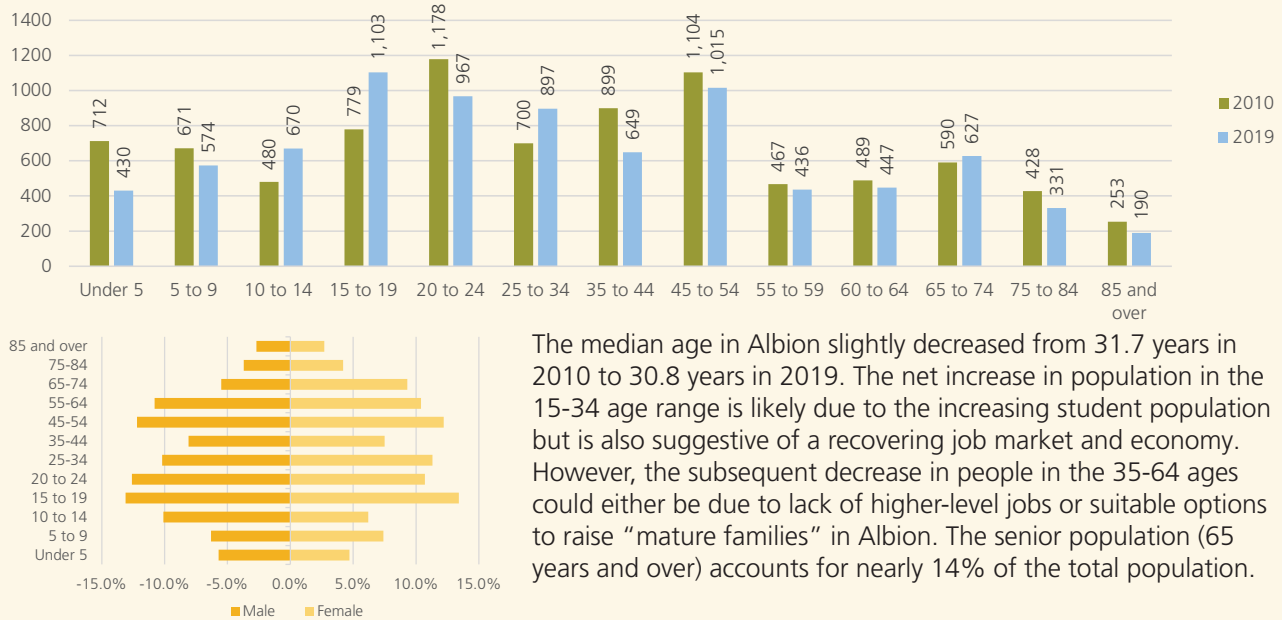
Calhoun County also experienced population decline over the last decade. The significantly higher population decline in Albion suggests outward migration to other neighboring cities and townships in the county.

Figure 5: Racial Composition Albion & Calhoun County, 2020



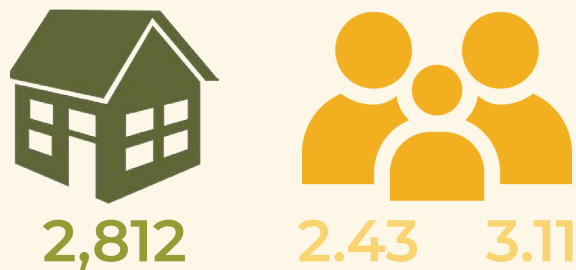
Over the last 20 years, the racial makeup of the City has remained consistent; as of the 2020, nearly 60% of Albion's current residents identify as White only. Albion's Black population is nearly 2.5 times that of the County. Nearly 8.5% of Albion residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, an increase from the 2010 ratio of 6% (Hispanic or Latino identification is a separate classification from race).

Figure 6: Age Distribution, 2019



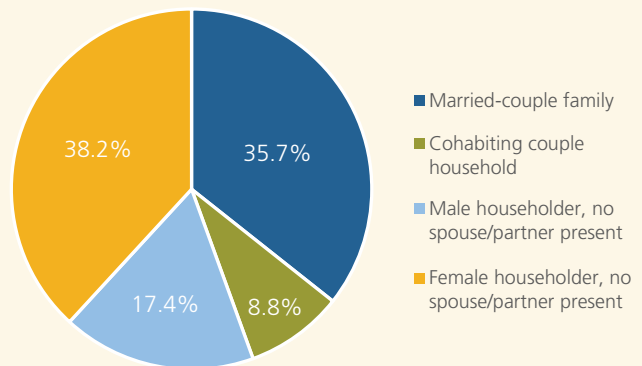
The median age in Albion slightly decreased from 31.7 years in 2010 to 30.8 years in 2019. The net increase in population in the 15-34 age range is likely due to the increasing student population but is also suggestive of a recovering job market and economy. However, the subsequent decrease in people in the 35-64 ages could either be due to lack of higher-level jobs or suitable options to raise “mature families” in Albion. The senior population (65 years and over) accounts for nearly 14% of the total population.

Figure 7: Households, 2019



In 2019, Albion had a total of 2,812 households, a 16.3% decrease from 2010. Deviating from the state-level trend, the average household size and family size grew from 2.32 and 2.98 in 2010 to 2.43 and 3.11 in 2019 respectively, indicating the need for family-friendly housing formats.

Figure 8: Households by Type, 2019



Nearly 39% of Albion’s households are female householders with no spouse/partner, a group which tends to live in higher poverty rates.

Figure 9: Education, 2019



About 89% of Albion’s population has a high school degree or higher; 18.2% has a bachelor’s degree or higher, and these people typically seek specialized job opportunities.

Figure 10: Veteran Status, 2019



5.6% of Albion’s civilian population 18 years and older has a veteran status.

Figure 11: Disability, 2019



Approximately 15% of Albion’s population has a disability; 32.5% adults over the age of 65 have a disability.

## Demographic Profile Summary

Key demographic trends and the resulting impact on planning and development are highlighted below:

- » Albion is experiencing population decline at a much higher rate than the surrounding communities and the county, signaling that people are migrating outwards likely due to better housing and economic opportunities or quality of life. Population has an impact on state revenue sharing, and as a result of 2020 Census results which showed a population decline, the City will receive reduced funding from the State.
- » The City is seeing a net growth of the student-age population (ages 15-34). Retaining the youth population while simultaneously addressing the needs of the aging baby boomer generation will be crucial to controlling population decline.
- » The growing households and family size in the City indicates that the City also needs to be viable for families, which may be achieved by providing suitable housing options, higher-level and higher-paying jobs, and improving other quality-of-life aspects in Albion.
- » Providing an array of housing formats at different levels of affordability will be imperative in equitably supporting the different demographics such as students, seniors, families, single-parent households, veterans, and persons with disabilities.

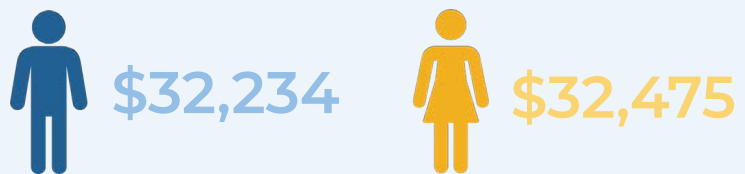
## SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

Figure 12: Median Income, 2019



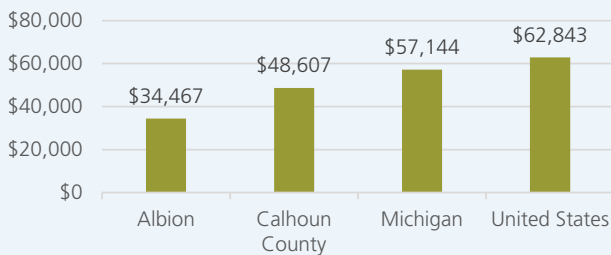
Albion's median income in 2019 was \$34,467.

Figure 13: Median Earnings, 2019



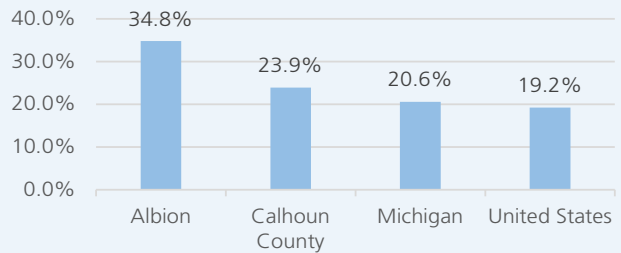
The median earnings for female full-time year-round workers is approximately \$240 higher than that of men.

Figure 14: Median Income in Albion & Surrounding Communities, 2019



In 2019, Albion's median household income was much lower than the national, state, and county values; this is not unexpected considering nearly 60% of the population is under the age of 24 or above 65.

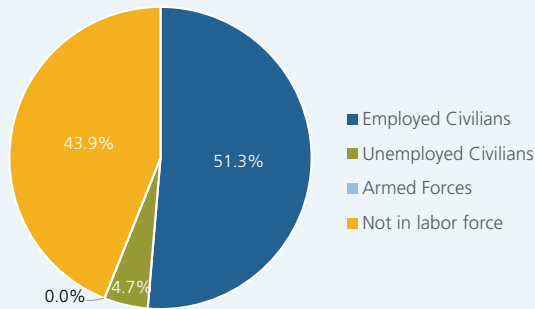
Figure 15: Households with Income Below \$25,000, 2019



Perhaps because a percentage of the workforce is not engaged, nearly 35% of Albion's households have an income below \$25,000.

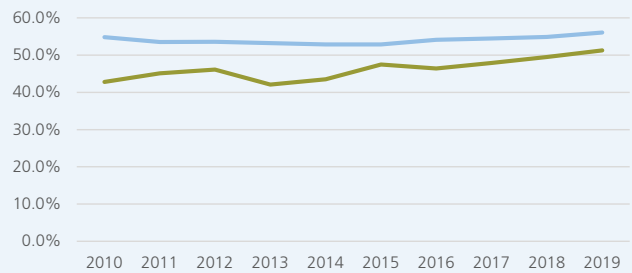


**Figure 16: Employment Status, 2019**



A little over half of Albion's population over 16 years of age are employed in the civilian labor force; the unemployment rate of the civilian labor force is 8.4%.

**Figure 17: Employment Change, 2019**



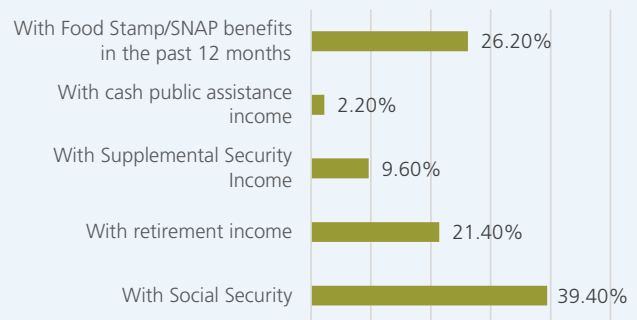
The overall civilian labor employment in Albion has experienced periods of highs and lows; however, the net increase since 2017 is promising.

**Figure 18: Commuting Patterns, 2019**



The existing workforce is very mobile; 501 people are employed and live in the City, 1,645 are employed in Albion but live outside, and 2,327 are employed outside Albion but live in Albion. The high number of residents with employment outside the City suggests a lack of diverse employment opportunities.

**Figure 19: Poverty, 2019**



The percentage of people living below the poverty level dropped from 32.7% in 2010 to 27.6% in 2019. About 40% of households receive social security income, and over a quarter of households receive food stamps/SNAP benefits.

## Socioeconomic Profile Summary

Key socioeconomic trends and the resulting impact on planning and development are highlighted below:

- » The net increase in employment since 2017 combined with reducing poverty rates point towards a recovering economy and job market. However, the low median income remains concerning as a large percentage of the workforce is not engaged.
- » Nearly 45% of Albion's population aged 16 years and over are not currently in the Civilian labor force; reengaging this population in the civilian labor force will be crucial in reducing the unemployment rate (currently at 8.5%), increasing the median income, and strengthening the overall economy of Albion.
- » Albion is transitioning from a manufacturing-based economy to a service- and consumer-based economy. With the City's support, the growing "education services, health care, and social assistance" and "arts, entertainment, & recreation, accommodation & food services" industries can create new job opportunities.



# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

# 4



*Image Source: City of Albion*

The City of Albion is collaborating with a diverse array of stakeholders to improve and expand the existing housing stock, redevelop and rebuild its neighborhoods, and create a more vibrant and equitable community. Local leaders and citizens alike recognize that a quality housing stock is a tremendous asset in attracting new residents and encouraging current residents to stay within the community.

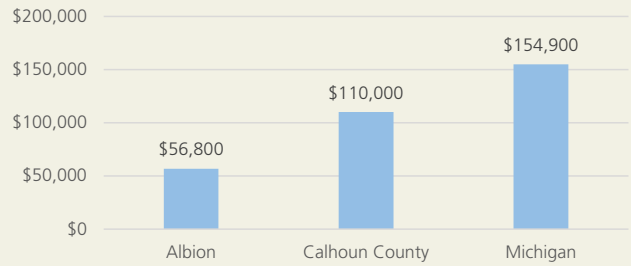
# HOUSING PROFILE

Figure 20: Housing Diversity, 2019



Albion would benefit from promoting housing diversity. In addition to single-family homes, an array of housing formats like small-lot homes, duplexes, triplexes, apartments, and mixed uses are required to support smaller households and low- to moderate-income households.

Figure 21: Median Housing Value, 2019



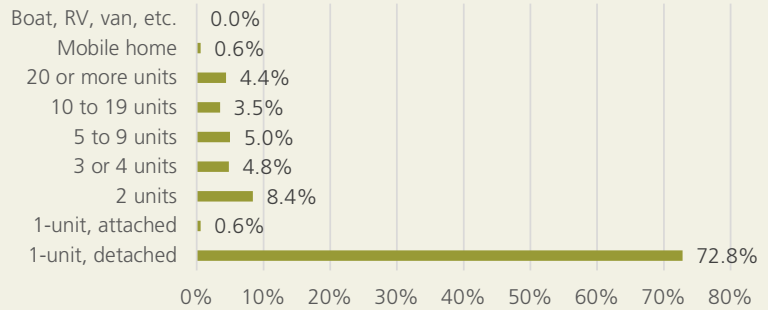
In 2019, the median housing value in Albion was \$56,800, which is significantly lower than that of the county and state.

Figure 22: Housing Units, 2019



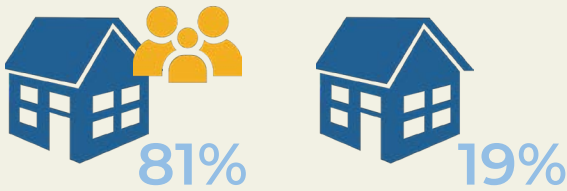
Albion had an estimated total of 3,473 housing units in 2019, as 15.5% decrease since 2010.

Figure 23: Housing Units by Type, 2019



Nearly 73% of housing units are single-family detached units.

Figure 24: Housing Occupancy Status, 2019



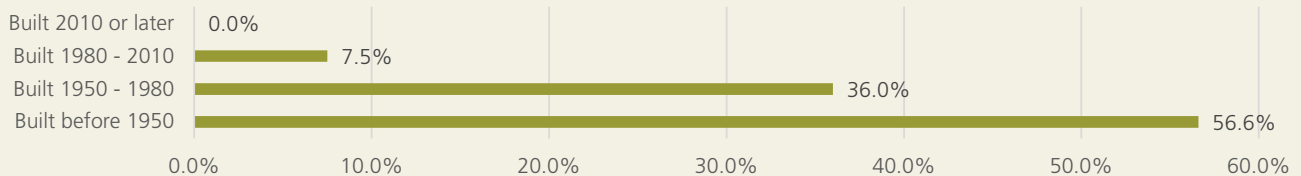
In 2019, 81% of homes were occupied while 19% were vacant.

Figure 25: Housing Tenure, 2019



Owner-occupied housing units account for the majority (58%) of occupied units, while the remaining 42% are occupied by renters.

Figure 26: Age of Housing, 2019

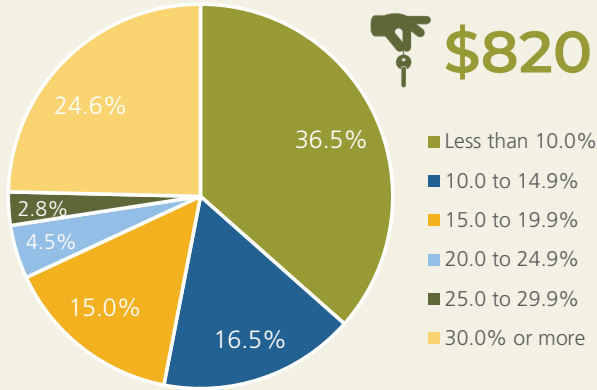


Albion has an aging housing stock; approximately 56% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1950, while only 7.5% of all units have been built since 1980.

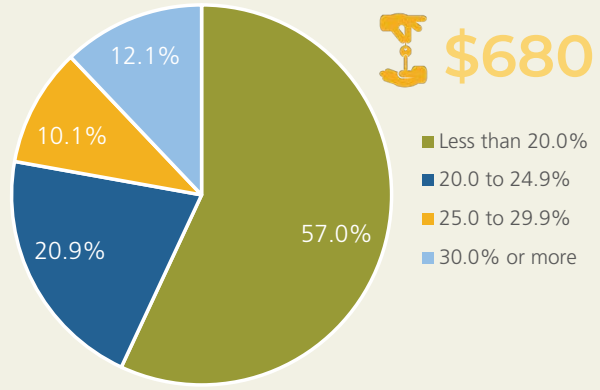
**Figure 27: Housing Costs, 2019**

Cost-burdened households are those who pay more than 30% of their income for housing. Percentages in the graphics below represent the percentage of total income that owners / renters spend on housing costs.

**Owners with a Mortgage**



**Renters**



Nearly 49% of owner-occupied units had a mortgage and their median “selected month owner costs” was \$820. About a quarter of owner-occupied units with a mortgage were housing cost burdened in 2019.

In 2019, the median gross rent was \$680 and about 12% of renter units experienced housing cost burden.

**35%** of survey respondents indicated a barrier to living in their preferred housing type.

**1/3** of survey respondents indicated that a different housing type, if available, would better meet their current housing needs.

Albion is a diverse community. Albion College, a premiere four-year residential college, attracts an influx of academic talent, both in terms of students as well as faculty and staff. At the other end of the age spectrum, Albion’s senior citizens are an integral part of the fabric of the community. Therefore, it is important that the City’s housing strategy range from the development of loft apartments to considering specific options expressly designed for seniors, including assisted living. As new housing products are developed, it will be important to consider issues of accessibility and accommodations of barrier-free design, to allow all persons, regardless of physical ability, weight, height, or age, equal access to facilities.

In 2015, the City conducted a target market analysis (TMA) produced by Zimmerman/Volk Associates. The analysis highlighted that there is demand for new housing units in and around downtown Albion.

There remains a wide range of housing options between single-dwelling units and multi-dwelling-unit apartment complexes that remain unexplored in Albion. “Missing Middle” housing is a term that refers to housing that is similar in size to single-family structures, but rather than a series of detached units on individual lots, the units are clustered on a single lot or buildings contain multiple units.<sup>1</sup> Missing Middle housing typologies (Duplex, Triplex, Quadplex, Bungalow Courts, Multiplex, Live/Work units) effortlessly integrate density, even into traditional single-family residential neighborhoods, and build housing diversity throughout the community (see the figure titled “Missing Middle Housing”). Gradually integrating density expands housing options and advances housing affordability for all income groups.

Accessory Dwelling units (ADUs) are another effective tool to diversify the existing housing stock and offer low impact increases to density. Colloquially referred to as “in-law units” or “granny flats,” they are smaller units located in



Figure 28: Missing Middle Housing



the rear lots of residential parcels, subordinate to the principal structure, that may be used to house family members or to be rented to a nonfamily member. ADUs offer a lower-cost way to add new units without disturbing the composition of existing neighborhoods. Considering that students, young adults, and seniors together constitute a large majority of Albion’s population, smaller units such as ADUs could address some of these groups’ housing needs.

A declining population over the past several decades has contributed to an increase in vacant buildings in the City. The apparent improvements to economic conditions in Albion present an opportunity to diversify housing options. Current and past efforts to diversify housing in Albion have included working in partnership with the Calhoun County Land Bank to demolish blighted residential structures and encourage infill housing development, and redeveloping abandoned industrial facilities into residential communities such as Sheldon Place Apartments.

Blight elimination was noted as a major concern by a number of participants in the Community Input Survey. Some people did acknowledge the work that the City is doing to address this problem. Others called for greater code enforcement.

### SHIFTING HOUSING PREFERENCES

- » Mixed Use, walkable urban neighborhoods
- » More singles or couples without children
- » Choose to rent rather than own
- » Enjoy living in downtown areas

**70%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed (47%) or agreed (23%) that the City would benefit from an ordinance insuring that rental properties are regularly inspected for safety.

**SOURCE**

1 Opticos Design. Missing Middle Housing. <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>



# PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

# 5



Source: City of Albion

Founded at the confluence of the north and south branches of the Kalamazoo River, the natural environment and the built environment in Albion have been symbiotic since the City's genesis. This section inventories and spatially examines significant natural, infrastructure, and cultural resources in Albion and sets a holistic framework to integrate the natural environment into the City's future land use.



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment consists of structures, networks, and spaces that have been substantially physically altered by human effort. While the importance of investing in the built environment cannot be overstated, it is equally important to ensure that natural resources are protected.

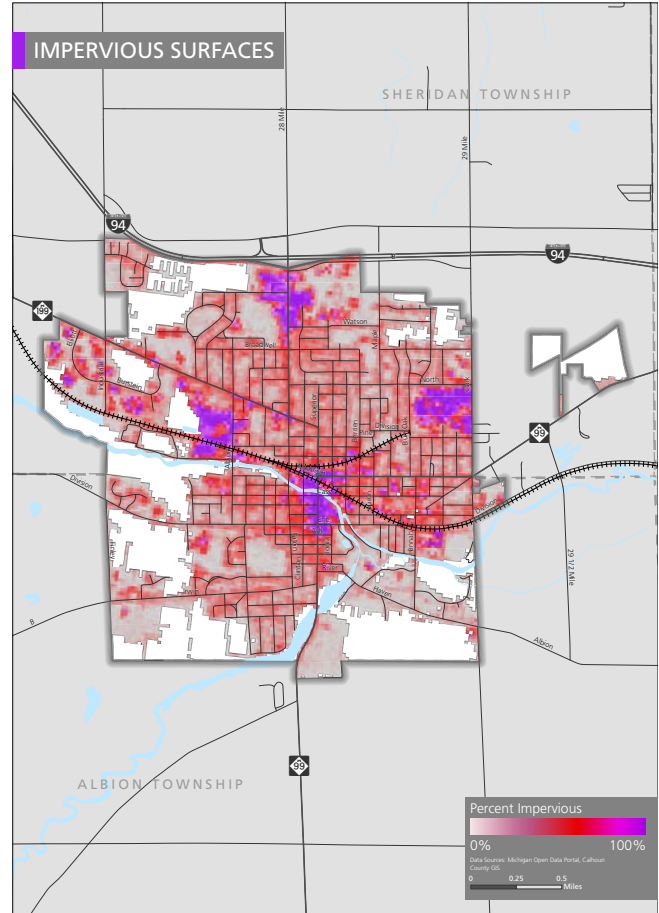
### Impervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces are constructed surfaces that obstruct the infiltration of water into the soil. The map titled “Impervious Surfaces” uses a percentage scale between 1 and 100, where 100% denotes “fully impervious,” to spatially represent areas of high impermeability in Albion. The areas with the highest degree of impervious surfaces (depicted in purple) are clustered along major transportation thoroughfares and the City’s railroad. The impervious pocket located in the northeast quadrant of the city, along Clark Street, captures the heavy industrial development. Most areas in Albion, however, are only moderately impervious. Thus, despite several areas of highly impervious surface, development around natural features (depicted in white) is relatively low, and hence the total percentage of impervious surface is also relatively low. The City’s highly impervious areas are important to understand because this characteristic increases stormwater runoff, putting pressure on stormwater and sewer system and potentially causing flooding and drinking water contamination.

### Capital Improvements

Like communities throughout the State, infrastructure in Albion is aging. Maintaining quality infrastructure is important to every aspect of community growth and development, ranging from sidewalk and road maintenance to facilitating the use of high-speed telecommunications and other technologies to maintaining underground water and sewer mains. Upgrading aging water and sewer infrastructure is a top priority for Albion. By 2023, the City must have a list of all lead and copper pipes for the State, all of which must be replaced by 2040. Additionally, the City will install a new water tower to provide better service to the east side of the City and to provide adequate storage capacity for future development.

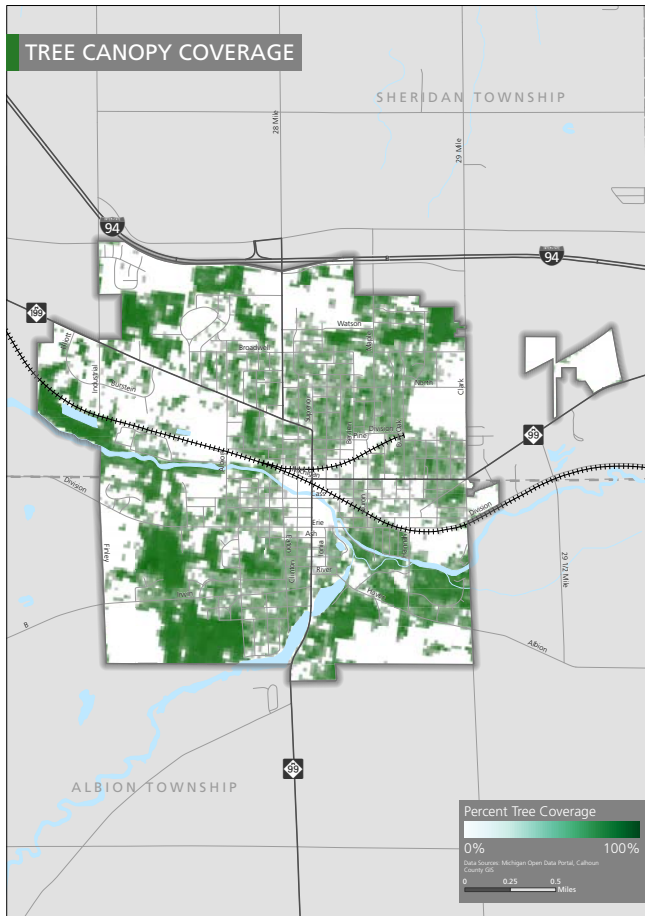
Map 2: Impervious Surfaces



### Redevelopment

Albion’s revitalization strategy focuses on directing developers toward available resources. The City provides all of the information available to assist in accomplishing a specific development and acts as an agent that connects a prospective developer to the many resources available for redevelopment projects. Sustainable redevelopment is the desired approach – development that meets the needs of the present while being mindful of and not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development ranges from reusing portions of existing structures, when possible, to minimizing impervious surfaces to reduce storm water handling/management and promoting green infrastructure as discussed in the following section.

## Map 2: Tree Canopy Coverage



- » Increased wildlife habitat,
- » Reduced ground and water temperatures,
- » Reduced energy costs, and
- » Visual barriers between conflicting land uses.

The “Tree Canopy Coverage” map shows the tree canopy for the City in 2016. Using remote sensing and satellite imagery, the federal government inventories the tree canopy for the contiguous United States every five years. The map uses a percentage scale between 1 and 100, where 100% denotes maximum tree canopy coverage (indicated in dark green). On one hand, areas with the highest tree canopy coverage coincide with parklands and or undeveloped/vacant land; on the other hand, when comparing the “Tree Canopy Coverage” map with the “Impervious Surfaces” map, it is evident that the areas with lowest percentage of tree canopy coverage correspond with the areas of high impervious surface or the extensively developed areas along major corridors, downtown, and industrial zones. The presence of trees or other green infrastructure methods near highly impervious areas can often mitigate many of the negative externalities of large swaths of paved areas by absorbing excessive runoff and filtering water.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is both a network of green space and natural areas, along with built techniques such as rain gardens and bio swales that preserve the function of the natural ecosystem. It is a system that protects water quality, functions as a filtering and drainage network at little to no cost, and provides recreational opportunities for citizens.

### Tree Canopy

Trees are the most prominent type of green infrastructure, providing not only aesthetic benefits, but health and environmental benefits including:

- » Reduced erosion and stormwater runoff,
- » Reduced air pollution,

The Albion Tree Committee is a local nonprofit that has a tree farm just outside of the City and provides trees for the City and for Albion residents. This is a valuable local resource, and it represents the existing importance of tree canopy coverage in Albion.

### Green Infrastructure Methods

Low impact development (LID) is a broad term for the set of practices that imitate natural processes to allow stormwater to infiltrate the ground as opposed to channeling it toward water bodies. The table titled “Green Infrastructure Methods” shows several examples of landscaping and low impact development standards that are appropriate in Albion.



**Table 2: Green Infrastructure Methods**

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Rainwater Harvesting	Systems that collect and store rainwater for later use.	
Rain Gardens	Shallow, vegetated gardens that collect and absorb runoff from streets, sidewalks, and roofs.	
Planter Boxes	Boxes along sidewalks, streets, or parking lots that collect and absorb rainwater; they can be designed with a notch to allow additional stormwater to flow in, as with rain gardens. These also serve as streetscaping elements.	
Bioswales	Linear and vegetated channels, typically adjacent to a road or parking lot, that slow, retain, and filter stormwater.	
Permeable Pavement	Pavement that absorbs, filters, and stores rainwater.	
Green Roofs	Vegetated roofs that absorb and filter rainwater.	
Tree Canopy	Trees reduce and slow stormwater flow.	

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

## PARKLAND AND NONMOTORIZED CONNECTIVITY

### Parkland

Albion’s riverfront and parks are important community assets that provide recreational opportunities and contribute to placemaking and the overall quality of life. The City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan prioritizes the following:

- » Providing adequate facilities for outdoor athletics and recreation;
- » Providing preservation and recreational uses of the Kalamazoo River and Albion River Trail;

- » Developing parks and programming;
- » Providing comprehensive and shared recreational programs and facilities for all ages;
- » Providing attractive entrances to the city with landscaping, welcome signs, and consistent branding; and
- » Promoting recreation programs and park facilities.<sup>1</sup>

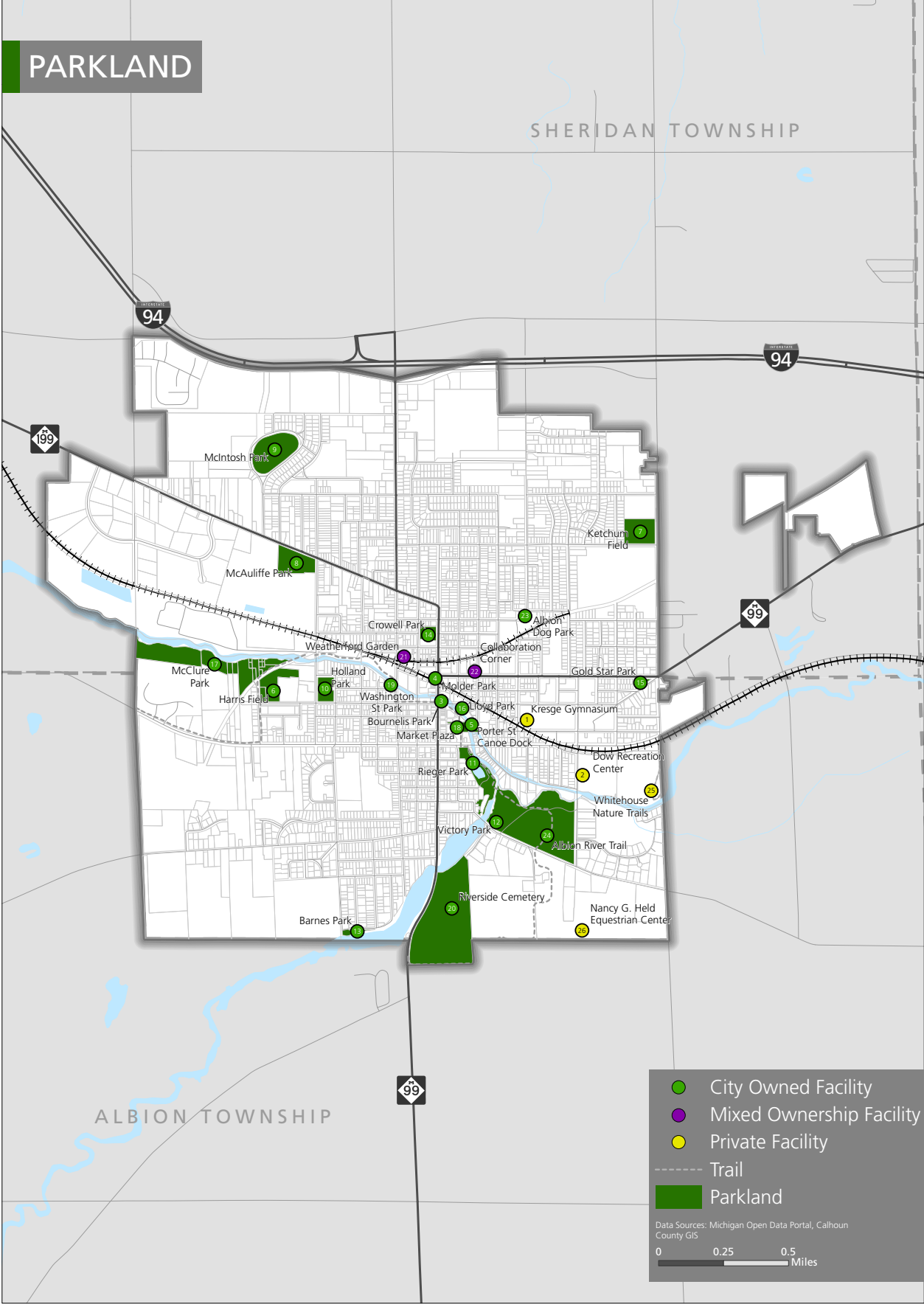
The map titled “Parkland” illustrates Albion’s parklands and nonmotorized trails and also provides information on parkland ownership. Correspondingly, the table titled “Parkland Inventory” lists and classifies the City’s parks,

**Table 3: Parkland Inventory**

#	NAME OF PARK	TYPE OF PARK	AMENITIES
3	Bournelis Park	Mini Park	Seating, fishing, river trail access
4	Molder Park	Mini Park	Seating
5	Porter Street Canoe Dock	Mini Park	Canoe launch
6	Harris Field	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Picnic tables, playground, grills, concession stand, restrooms
7	Ketchum Field	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Picnic tables, playground, concession stand, restrooms
8	McAuliffe Park	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Picnic table, grills, restrooms, ballfields, basketball court, playground, restrooms
9	McIntosh Park	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Picnic shelter, sandlot, ball field, playground, basketball court, restrooms, drinking fountain, playground, future splash pad
10	Holland park	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Intergenerational facilities: Picnic tables, seating, playground, children’s garden, basketball courts, restrooms, drinking fountain, fitness equipment, Little Free Library
11, 12	Victory Park / Rieger Park	Community Park	Warming shelter, bandshell, pavilions, playgrounds, disc golf, shuffleboard, baseball, pond, fishing, observation deck, basketball courts, bicycle racks, bleachers
13	Barnes Park	Special Use Park	Beach, river access, dock, picnic table
14	Crowell Park	Special Use Park	Water Tower, open space
15	Gold Star Park	Special Use Park	Memorial Park
16	Lloyd Park	Special Use Park	Seating, tables, performance deck, river access
17	McClure Park	Special Use Park/ Conservancy	River trail, historic bridge, river access
18	Stoffer Plaza / Market Place	Special Use Park	Farmer's Market pavilion, picnic benches
19	Washington Street Park	Special Use Park	River access, fishing, picnic tables, grills
20	Riverside Cemetery	Special Use Park	Fishing and migratory bird watching
	Albion Dog Park	Special Use Park (Unofficial)	Dog park
22	Collaboration Corner	Special Use Park (Mixed Ownership)	Seating, paths, Little Free Library
21	Weatherford Garden	Special Use Park (Mixed Ownership)	Seating
	Albion River Trail	Linear Park	Trails

Source: City of Albion Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026

Map 3: Parkland



## MDNR PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

**Mini Parks:** Address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.

**Neighborhood Park / Playground:** Serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood and provide both active and passive recreation.

**Community Park:** Serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks; these focus on meeting community-based recreation needs, and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

**Special Use Park:** Cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented towards a single-purpose use.

**Linear Park:** Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas with a focus on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.

including a short description of the amenities available at each park.

### Nonmotorized Connectivity

Nonmotorized trails are good for the health of residents and connect people regionally. The Albion River Trail, an important community asset, runs through Albion for three miles along the Kalamazoo River and serves as both a recreational and economic resource.

Albion is the central point of four regional and national trail systems: The Calhoun County Trailway that will eventually connect to trail systems and routes in Kalamazoo County to the west and to Jackson County to the east; the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail from South Haven to Port Huron; the Iron Belle Trail from Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula; and the approximately 4,800-mile-long North Country National Scenic Trail that stretches from Vermont to North Dakota. The City of Albion has been designated as a “Trail Town” by the North Country Trail Association. Trail towns have developed systems of trails and created a welcoming environment with amenities such as bicycle and kayak racks and picnic tables at access

points. Wayfinding signage and kiosks encourage trail users to visit and patronize downtown businesses and use local amenities.

Water trails also translate into regional economic growth. As one of the cities along the Kalamazoo River, Albion is thus located on the proposed Kalamazoo River water trail, a joint effort with the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, the Potawatomi Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council.

## WATER

### Watersheds

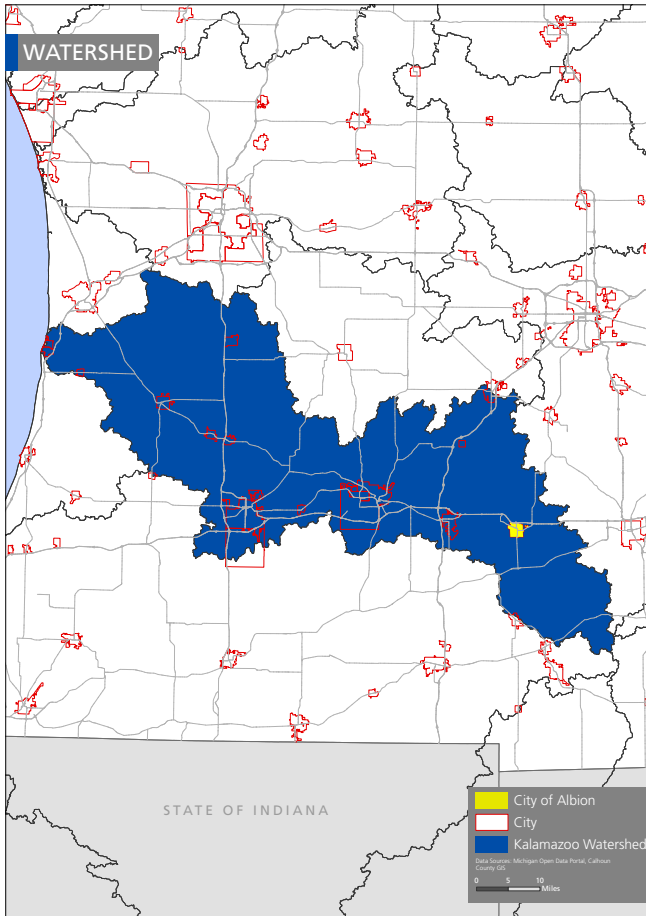
A watershed refers to a geographic area within which all stormwater and groundwater eventually flows via gravity to a large waterbody. Albion is a part of the Kalamazoo River Watershed, which empties into Lake Michigan. Since the watershed covers multiple political jurisdictions (see the map titled “Watershed”), a larger body known as the Kalamazoo Watershed Council (KRWC) manages the watershed. The KRWC and various stakeholders have developed several management plans and resources that serve as a road map to restoring and protecting the watershed and water quality of the streams and rivers.<sup>2</sup>

### Floodplain

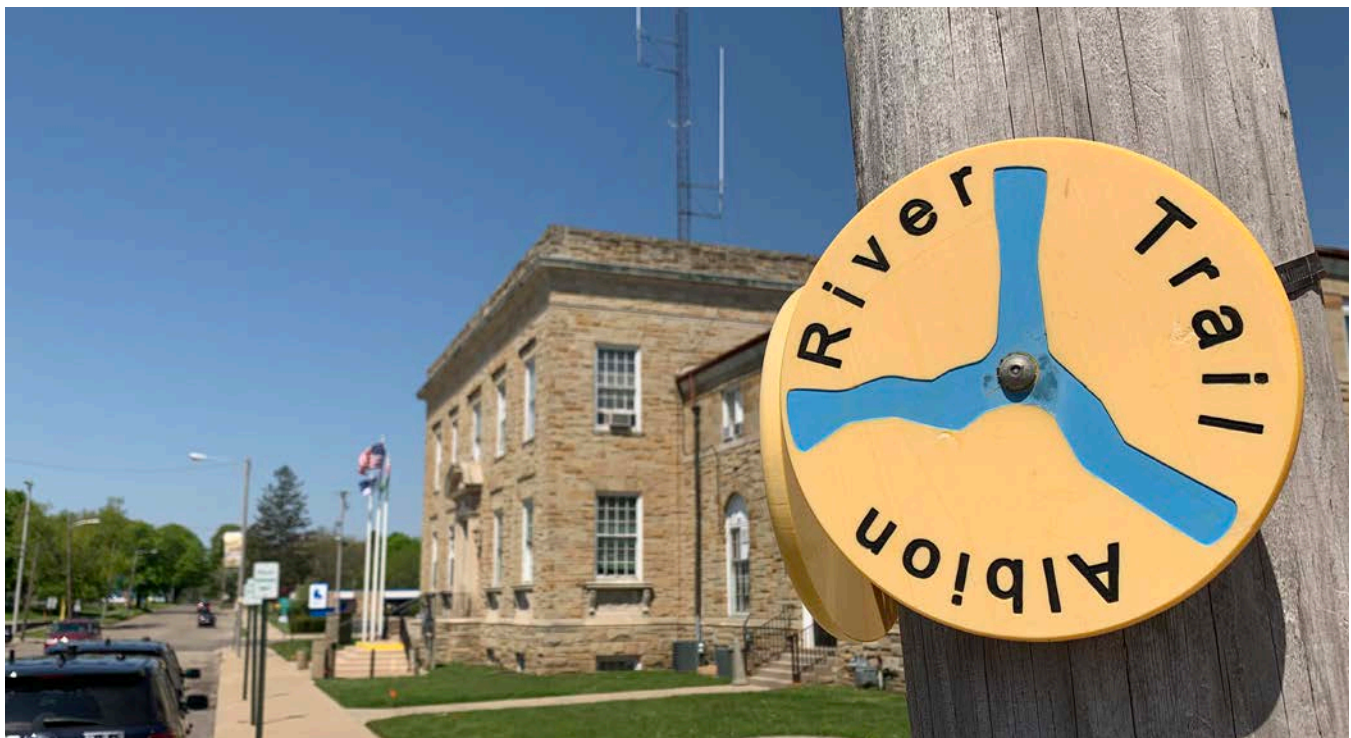
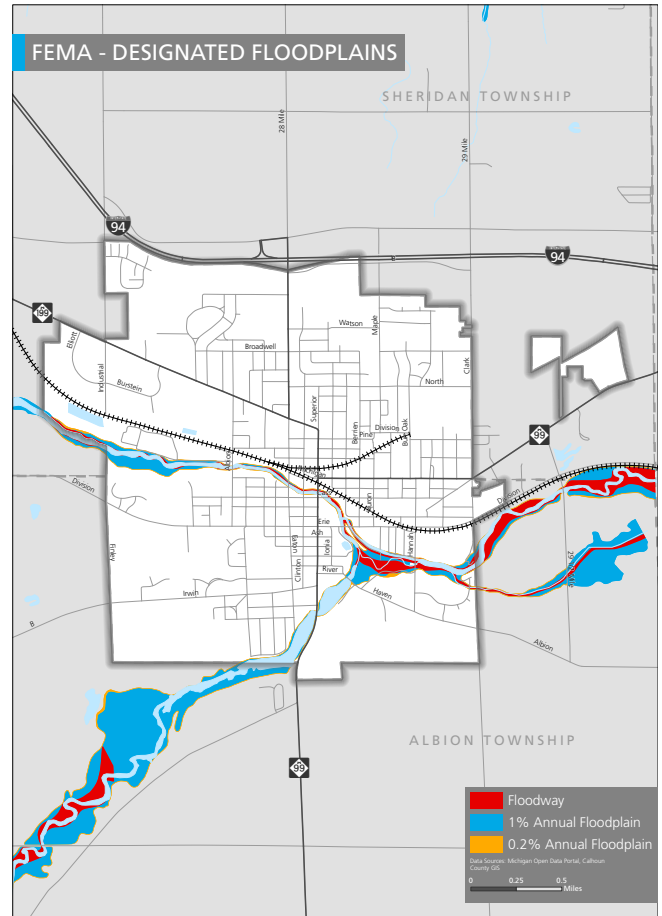
A floodplain is the land surrounding a river, stream, lake or drain that becomes regularly inundated by the overflow of water. The map titled “FEMA-Designated Floodplains” shows the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodplains in Albion. The area of the floodplain indicated in blue on the map represents a 1% chance of annual flooding, also known as the 100-year flood area. The area of the floodplain indicated in yellow represents a 0.2% chance of annual flooding, known as the 500-year flood area. Small portions of land along the river, in the northwest and southeast parts of the City, have a 1% chance of annual flooding. The term “floodway” refers to the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas where there is moving water during a flooding event.<sup>3</sup> Development is generally prohibited in the floodway. Small portions of land in the southeast part of the City adjacent to the river are in the floodway. It is important the understand



Map 4: Watershed



Map 5: FEMA-Designated Floodplains



Albion River Trail signage.  
Source: City of Albion

the location of flood-prone areas, especially in Albion where the river runs through the center of the City, as development in any portion of a floodplain can severely exacerbate flooding events. Additionally, Albion received a grant to conduct a feasibility study and review of the City’s dams, to be completed in 2022. The study will determine the viability of removing the five dams in the Kalamazoo River within City limits.

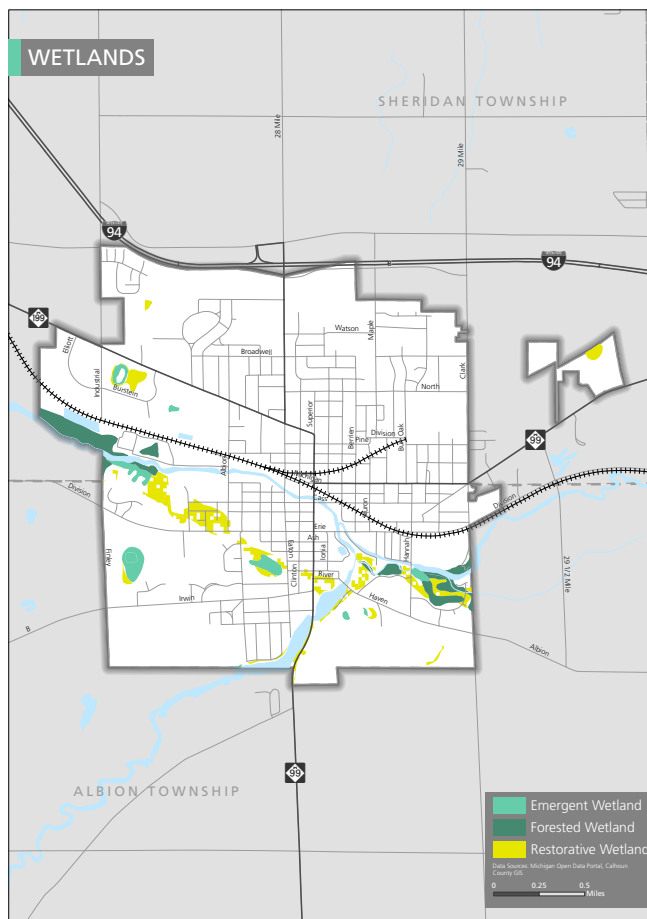
### Wetlands

Wetlands are saturated areas which include swamps, marshes, bogs, wet meadows, mud flats, and natural ponds. They are beneficial because they filter, store, and recharge groundwater; serve

as a buffer for flood control; nurture wildlife and biodiversity; purify water and produce oxygen; and often serve as recreational locations.

There are approximately 170 acres of wetlands in Albion, over 53% of which are existing wetlands. Restorative wetlands, wetlands that need intervention to become fully operational again, make up about 46% of the remaining wetlands. Development on wetlands—of area five acres and above—is strictly controlled by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Therefore, it is the City’s responsibility to protect and preserve wetlands under five acres.

Map 6: Wetlands



### TYPES OF WETLANDS

**Emergent:** Characterized by rooted herbaceous hydrophytes, like moss and lichen.

**Forested:** Characterized by woody plants taller than six feet and are usually farther way from water than emergent wetlands.

**Restorative:** Areas where wetlands may be fully or as closely restored to their existing conditions.

Source: EGLE

Table 4: Area of Wetlands

WETLAND TYPE	ACRES	PERCENT
Emergent	33.1	19.7%
Forested	57.2	34.0%
<b>Existing Total</b>	<b>90.3</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
Restorative	77.9	46.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>168.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: EGLE

### SOURCES

- 1 City of Albion Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2022-2026
- 2 Kalamazoo River Watershed Council. About. <https://kalamazooriver.org/about/>
- 3 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Glossary. <https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary>



# TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

# 6



Source: City of Albion

Transportation infrastructure is a fundamental component of planning that determines a community's land use patterns, mobility, and connectivity. Roads, sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, and public transit allow residents to move between home, work, places to socialize, and other everyday destinations. Moreover, regional connectivity via road, rail, air, or other modes, provides residents with new social and economic avenues. Since transportation networks have a profound impact on the everyday lives of people, advancing community-driven strategies to improve this infrastructure enables an equitable community. This chapter inventories Albion's existing infrastructure, discusses complete street enhancements along major corridors, and explores multi-modal transportation opportunities in the City.



## ROAD SYSTEM

The City of Albion has 56 miles of road within its boundary.<sup>1</sup> Albion's major throughfare, the I-94 business loop, is a 4.4-mile route that runs south from I-94 along Eaton Street, east along Austin Avenue (M-199), south via Superior Street (M-99) into downtown Albion, then east on Michigan Avenue (M-99). The direct connectivity of Albion's downtown and commercial center with an interstate is highly beneficial for the economic health of the City. These highways (Business I-94, M-99, and M-199) fall under the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) jurisdiction, giving the City limited influence over their design. Either Calhoun County or Albion's Department of Public Services manages the remainder of the roads in the City.

### Road Classifications and Traffic Volumes

The map "National Functional Classification" represents Albion's road system using the National Functional Classification (NFC)—a hierarchical system developed by the Federal Highway Administration in the 1960s, to determine the amount of federal funding to be allocated to each road type.

All of Albion's roads fall into one of the four NFC categories: principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, and local roads. The principal arterial road in Albion—along Michigan Avenue and N. Eaton Street—will receive higher funding due to the NFC hierarchy, followed by the minor arterials: Austin Avenue and Superior Street. Because MDOT manages these roads, the City has limited control over any infrastructure decisions. This is notable, as these roads pass through Albion's downtown, and any decisions made by MDOT regarding speed limits or road developments will directly impact pedestrian safety, walkability, and the overall character of the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Local roads, on the other hand, do not receive any federal funding; hence, the City is responsible for their upkeep through local funding.

MDOT also calculates the average number of vehicles that travel on roadways daily throughout the year, a figure termed "average annual daily traffic" or AADT, also shown on the "National Functional Classification" map. Mirroring the NFC hierarchy, N. Eaton Street carries the largest traffic volumes with a maximum daily average of 8,727. Superior Street, Austin Avenue, Erie Street, and Michigan Avenue are some of the other busiest roads in the City.

## NATIONAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

**Principal Arterial Roads:** Carry long-distance, through-travel traffic.

**Minor Arterial Roads:** Carry long-distance commercial traffic between cities.

**Major Collectors:** Serve local business districts and channel traffic toward arterials.

**Local Roads:** Promote access to adjoining properties.



*Superior Street that runs through downtown Albion is a primary arterial.*

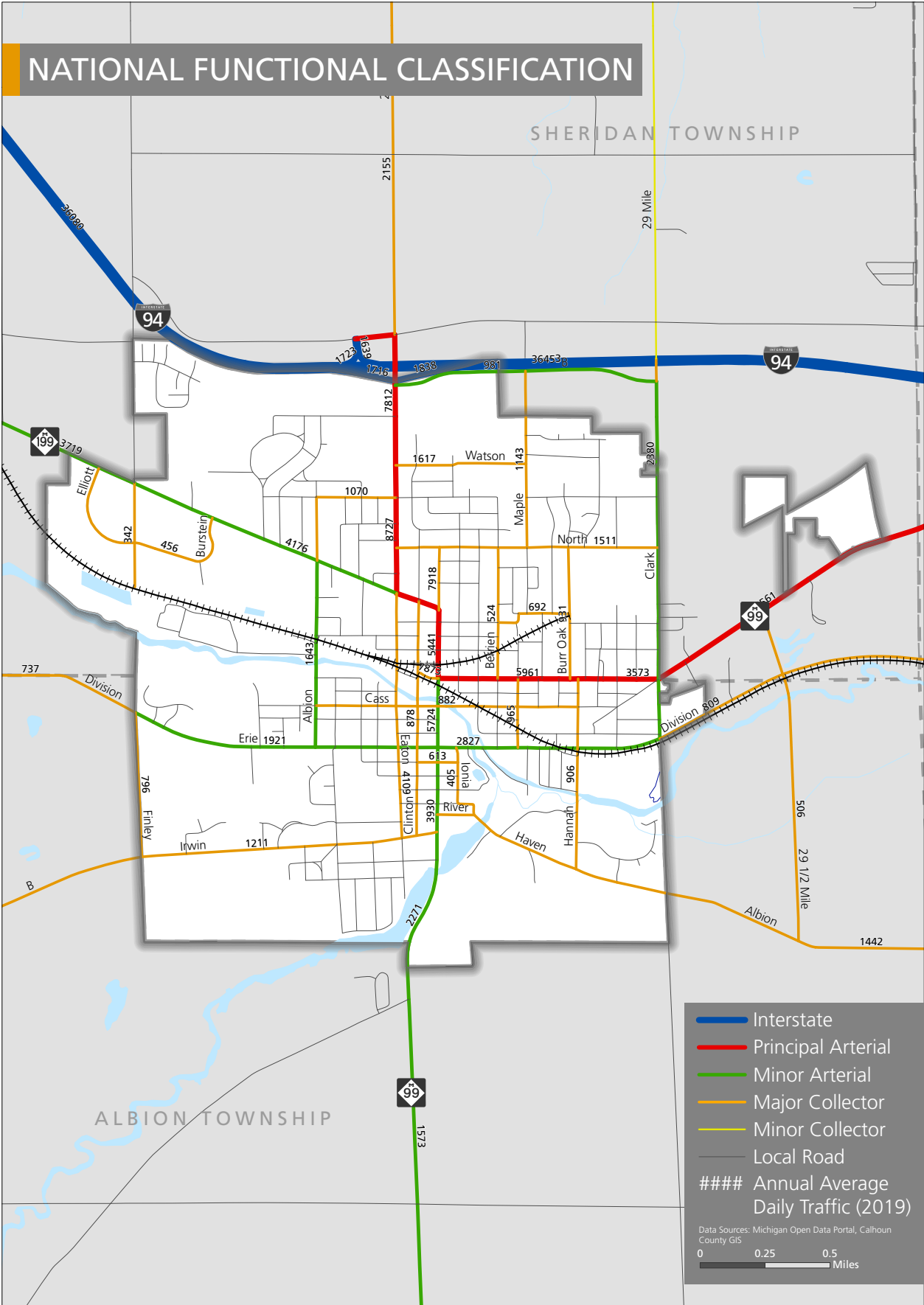
*Source: City of Albion*



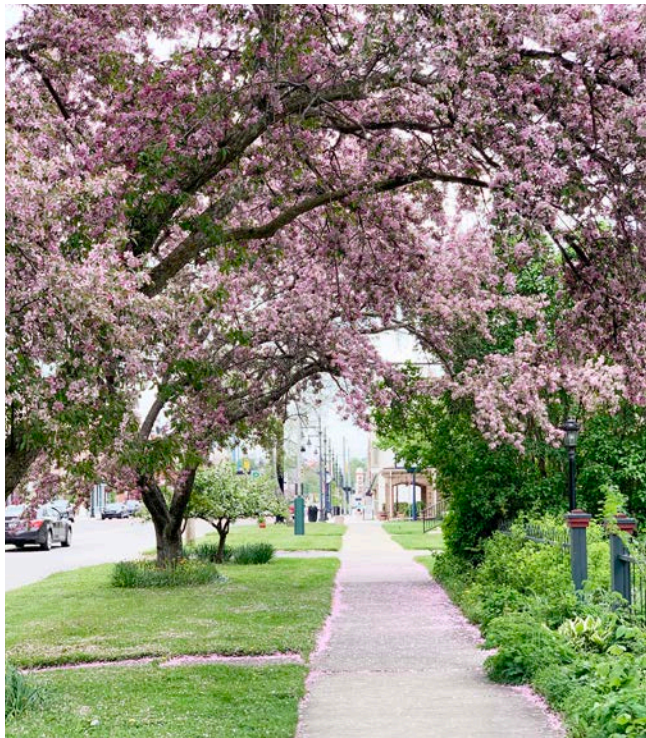
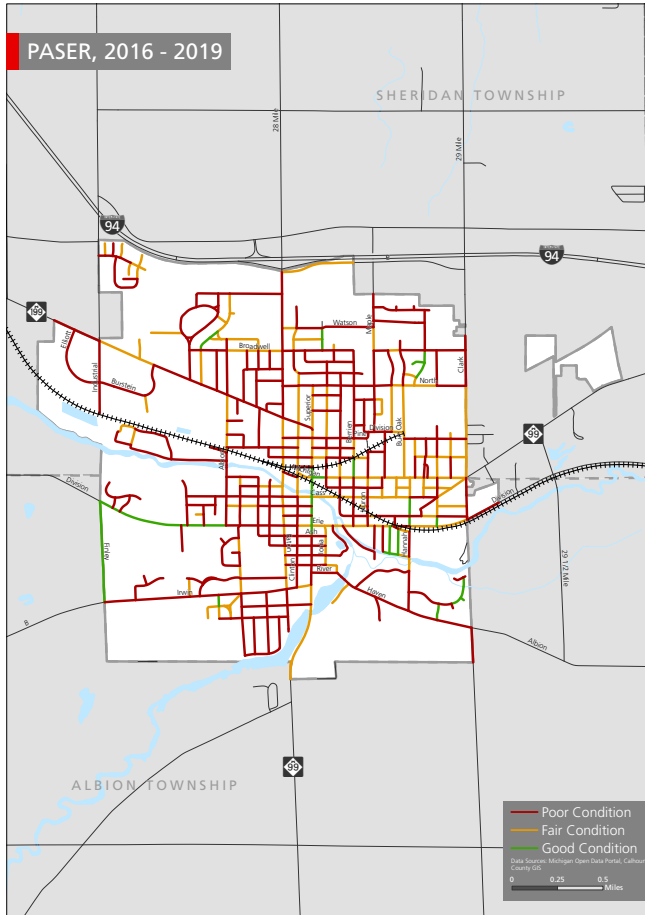
*Road signage at the intersection of Ash and Superior Streets.*

*Source: City of Albion*

Map 7: National Functional Classification



## Map 8: PASER, 2016-2019



Sidewalk along Superior Street.  
Source: City of Albion

## Road Condition

The quality of roads impacts mobility and safety, which in turn affects the overall quality of life for residents in a community. The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) conducts a visual survey called the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) to evaluate the conditions of roads. The surface conditions are rated on a scale of 1-10 and then categorized as good, fair, or poor; the map titled “PASER” presents the conditions of Albion’s roads using this scale.

The map clearly depicts that a vast majority of Albion’s roads are recorded to be in poor (indicated in red) or fair (indicated in yellow) condition; only a handful of road segments are in good condition (indicated in green). As shown in the table titled “PASER rating,” a little over 65% of all roads in Albion are in poor condition. While Michigan’s extreme weather exacerbates the regular wear and tear, deteriorating road conditions throughout cause several issues in daily commute and safety. Not depicted in the map are roads that the City has recently upgraded, including:

- » Irwin Avenue
- » North Street
- » N. Clark Street
- » 1st Street
- » 2nd Street
- » 3rd Street
- » Wild Street
- » Hartwell Street

The Michigan Department of Transportation has repair and maintenance scheduled in 2026 for North and South Superior, North Eaton, and Michigan Ave. Albion is also in the process of developing a Transportation Asset Management Plan, which will provide guidance for the use of funds generated by a proposed road millage. Continued coordination between MDOT and the City will allow these projects to complement each other.

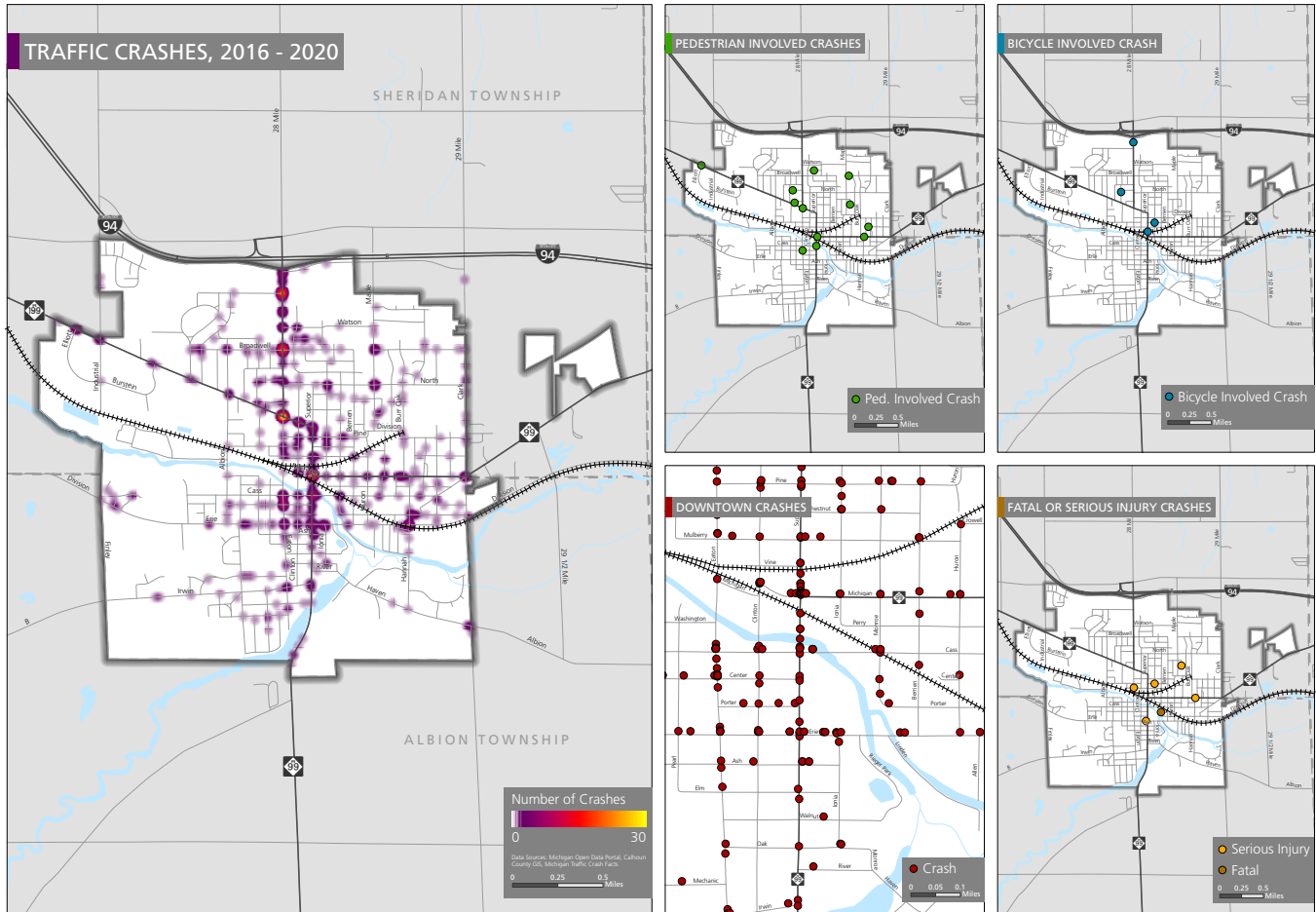
Table 5: PASER Rating

PASER RATING	MILES	PERCENT
Fair	15.2	27.3%
Good	3.3	5.9%
Poor	36.5	65.6%
No Rating	0.7	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: MDOT



## Map 9: Traffic Crashes, 2016-2020



### Troubled Intersections and Road Safety

Safety is undoubtedly the most essential element of road infrastructure which focuses on reducing the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. While accidents can unfortunately occur at any segment of a road, 31% of Michigan’s fatal auto accidents in 2019 occurred at intersections.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, identifying troubled intersections is an important first step to improving road safety in Albion. Using official crash data between 2016 and 2020 from the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) website, the series of “crash maps” spatially present roads and intersections in Albion with the highest number of crashes.

The four-way intersection between Austin Avenue and N. Eaton Street witnessed the highest number of vehicular crashes. Other troubled intersections include:

- » The junction where N. Eaton Street meets W. Broadwell Street and Bemer Street.
- » The railway crossing where N. Superior Street meets Michigan Avenue.

The maps also show a concentration of pedestrian and bicycle crashes at or near these two major troubled intersections: Austin Avenue and N. Eaton Street and N. Superior Street and Michigan Avenue. A high percentage of downtown crashes occurred between the railway tracks; however, the map also clearly indicates that crashes occurred fairly evenly throughout Albion’s downtown. Furthermore, all of the five serious injury crashes and the one fatal crash occurred along the railway track. MDOT offers a detailed guide to selecting locations and treatments for pedestrian crosswalks that should be used to formulate specific improvement recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Access to quality public transit at affordable rates and regular frequency enables mobility for residents of all age groups, income levels, and abilities. Calhoun County is currently conducting a county-wide public transit study; therefore, public transit options for county residents are likely to increase in the coming years.

Albion is located on Amtrak’s Detroit-to-Chicago route, and the company announced in May of

2021 that its accelerated service would extend eastward to Albion to complement existing accelerated service between Chicago and Kalamazoo. This service improvement ultimately intends to reduce the travel time between the two major cities by two hours, to about 4.5 hours, and may increase the number of travelers on the route overall. Communities along the route, including Albion, may find this an opportune time to consider improvements to their train station.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS IN ALBION

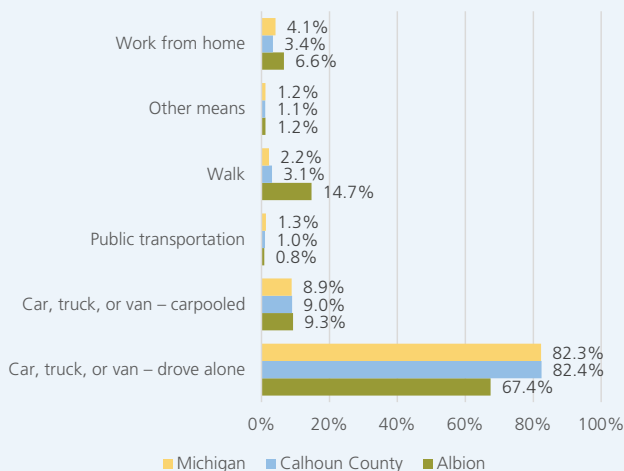
**Amtrak:** Albion is located along the Wolverine passenger route between Chicago and Detroit with everyday stops in the City.

**Albion-Marshall Connector:** The Albion-Marshall Connector serves a broad audience and provides intercity bus services between Albion and Marshall for a nominal fee.

**Community Action:** Community Action specializes in providing curb-to-curb services in Calhoun County for seniors aged 60 and over and disabled persons aged 18 and over. This service operates on a donation basis, and it helps its clientele with day-to-day transit needs.

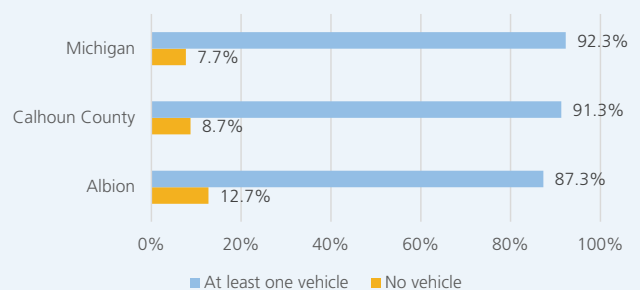
**Greyhound:** Albion has regular Greyhound schedules to several regional and interstate destinations accessible via the ticketing office or online.

Figure 29: Commute Modes, 2019



Approximately 67% of workers 16 years and over drove to work independently, and almost 15% walked to work; only a handful 0.8% of workers used public transportation, likely due to the lack of availability rather than choice. The mean travel time to work was approximately 20 minutes in Albion.

Figure 30: Vehicles Available, 2019



Albion residents have lower rates of automobile ownership than Calhoun County and the State; nearly 13% of occupied households did not own vehicles.

## COMPLETE STREETS

The Complete Streets ethos is rooted in inclusivity and equity with a simple objective that streets are for everyone: auto users, bikes, pedestrian, and public transit users alike. From simple additions or modifications to full-fledged infrastructure revamps, complete street elements may be scaled based on the needs and budget of each individual community.

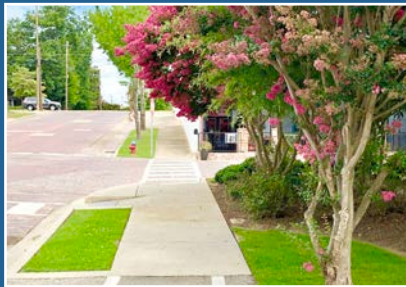
Albion's high percentage of commuters who walk to work—over five times higher than the state proportion—signals a need for safe, community-wide pedestrian access. Community engagement findings during the rebuilding of Superior Street revealed a strong preference against bicycle lanes which are unprotected from motorized traffic, suggesting that the traditional bicycle lane configuration needs adjustment in order to

succeed here, perhaps in the form of a separated shared-use path or constructed and protected two-way bicycle lanes. The Michigan Department of Transportation's 2019 Multi Modal Development and Delivery Guidebook (M2D2) contains recommended elements and appropriate contexts that may serve as a helpful reference as individual road projects offer opportunities to include Complete Streets elements.

### Enhancements along Major Corridors

The City of Albion has several important gateways and corridors leading into the City and connecting it to other communities. The City aims to improve the appearance of its gateways and its primary corridors: Superior Street, Austin Avenue, Eaton Street, and Michigan Avenue.

## COMPLETE STREET ELEMENTS



Sidewalks



Bicycle Lanes



Curb Extensions



Safe Crossing



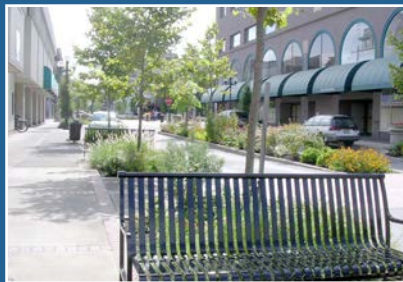
Wayfinding Signage



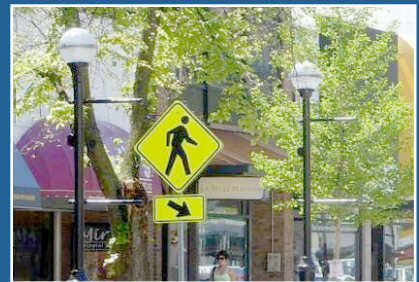
Street Landscaping



Green Infrastructure



Street Furniture



Street Lighting





## 1. SUPERIOR STREET CORRIDOR

The Superior Street corridor extends from Austin Avenue to the City's southern border. At the Michigan Avenue intersection, it turns into the M-99 state highway. The predominant land use along the corridor is either residential or commercial, with commercial concentrated in the downtown stretch between Vine Street on the north and Ash Street on the south.



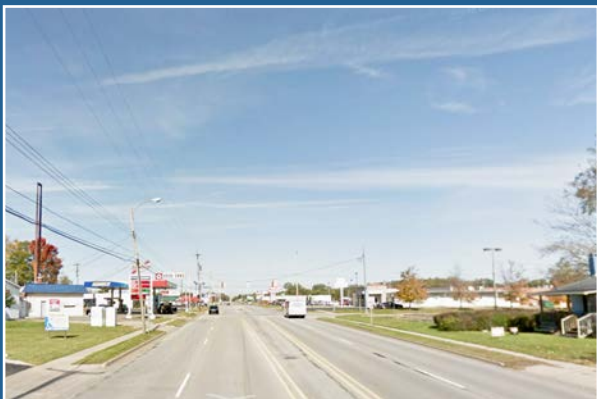
## 2. AUSTIN AVENUE CORRIDOR

The Austin Avenue corridor extends from Superior Street on the east to the western City border where it turns into the M-199 state highway. The predominant land uses along the corridor are either residential or commercial. This corridor also has a lot of vacant sites and/or open space.



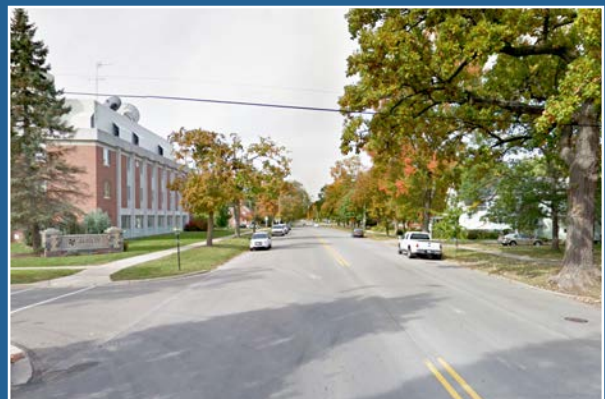
## 3. EATON STREET CORRIDOR

The Eaton Street corridor extends from the City's northern border where it intersects with I-94 to the intersection with Austin Avenue. It is also part of the I-94 business loop. The predominant land use along the corridor is commercial and the character is retail- and service-oriented, especially nearing the I-94 interchange.



## 4. MICHIGAN AVENUE CORRIDOR

The Michigan Avenue (M-99) corridor extends from Superior Street on the west to the City's eastern border. The predominant land uses along the corridor are either commercial or residential, being more residential on the eastern side of the corridor. The corridor also runs through the Albion College Campus.



**Table 6: Complete Street Enhancements Along Major Corridors**

COMPLETE STREET ELEMENT	1. SUPERIOR STREET		2. AUSTIN AVENUE		3. EATON STREET		4. MICHIGAN AVENUE	
	Present	Comments	Present	Comments	Present	Comments	Present	Comments
Sidewalks	✓	Certain segments in poor condition.	✓	Certain segments in poor condition.	✓	South of Watson only.	✓	None at Shell Station, Superior Street.
Bicycle Lanes & Parking		Buffer lanes		Buffer lanes		—		—
Curb Extensions		—		—		—		—
Safe Crossings	✓	Pedestrian signals downtown; no clear lines to indicate crosswalks. Neither pedestrian signal nor crosswalk indication present along the residential stretch.	✓	Pedestrian signals at major intersections; no clear lines to indicate crosswalks. Neither pedestrian signal nor crosswalk indication present along the residential stretch.	✓	Pedestrian signals at Austin and Watson intersections, crosswalks at both intersections have missing lines. Sidewalks, curbs, and crosswalks at Austin do not match up. Neither pedestrian signal nor crosswalk indication present along the residential stretch.	✓	Pedestrian signals at Superior, Ingham, and Clark intersections; crosswalk at Clark is missing lines; school crossing signs near Lombard and Ingham; flashing school speed limit sign at Bidwell; pedestrian crossing sign at Fitch.
Wayfinding Signage		—		—		Albion College		Business district
Landscaping	✓	—	✓	—		No street trees at businesses.	✓	Less as one progresses into the downtown.
Green Infrastructure	✓	Only green buffer zones between sidewalks and street.	✓	Only green buffer zones between sidewalks and street.		Only narrow (5') green buffer zone between sidewalk and street.		Green buffer zones between sidewalk and street.
Street Furniture		—		—		—		—
Street Lighting	✓	Street lighting downtown; lighting faces road, not sidewalk. Interspersed lights facing road from utility poles.	✓	Interspersed lights facing road from utility poles	✓	Interspersed lights facing road from utility poles.	✓	Interspersed lights facing road from utility poles.

**SOURCES**

- 1 Michigan Open Data Portal, All Roads (v17a), <https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/all-roads-v17a/explore?location=44.564300%2C-86.307700%2C7.26>
- 2 Michigan Traffic Crash Facts, 2019 General Facts, [https://publications.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/2019/Quick\\_Facts.pdf](https://publications.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/2019/Quick_Facts.pdf)
- 3 Michigan Department of Transportation. "Guidance for Installation of Pedestrian Crosswalks on Michigan State Trunkline Highways," March 2020.





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# 7

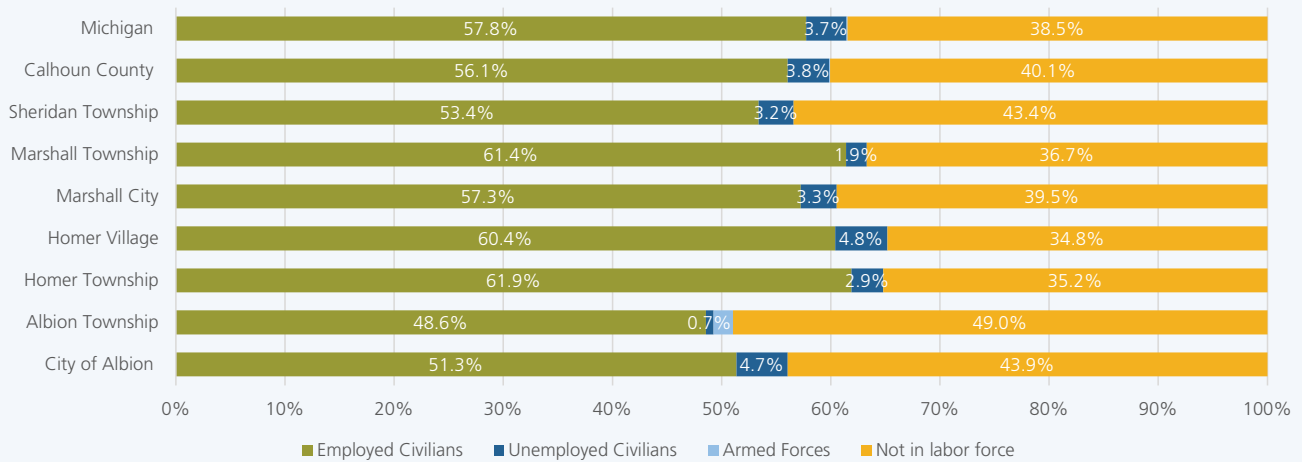


Source: City of Albion

Understanding broad economic trends in Albion, such as employment composition, educational attainment, and growing and shrinking sectors, will help the City determine short- and long-term economic development priorities to revitalize the local economy. The data presented in this section is sourced from either the U.S. Census or the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2019).

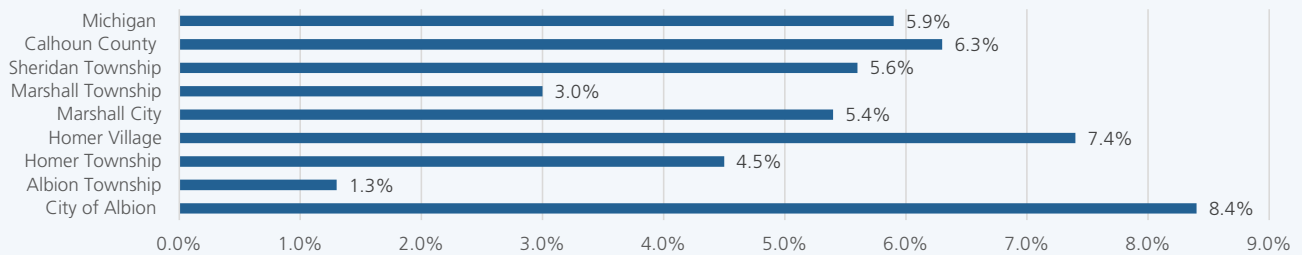
# ECONOMIC PROFILE

**Figure 31: Employment Status: Albion & Surrounding Communities, 2019**



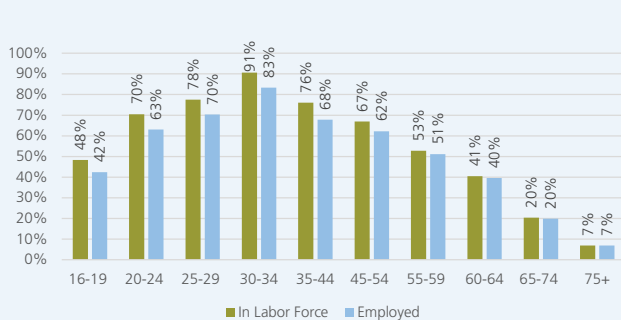
Only a little over half of Albion’s population over 16 years of age are employed in the civilian labor force, which is lower than that of the surrounding municipalities except Albion Township; due to macroeconomic changes, automation, decentralization, and relocation of manufacturing operations and jobs, laborers and youth have been the hardest hit by the overarching economic restructuring. Students and retirees are typical populations who are considered “not in the labor force,” which may help explain this higher number in Albion.

**Figure 32: Unemployment Rate: Albion & Surrounding Communities, 2019**



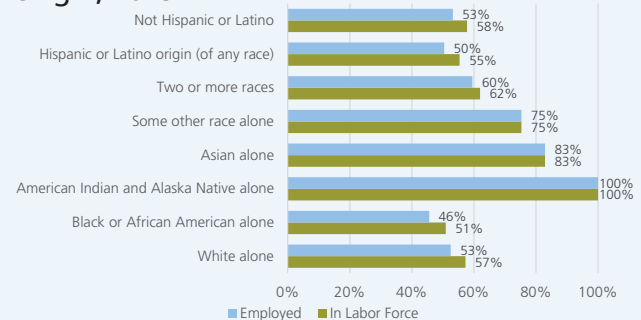
In 2019, the unemployment rate in Albion was estimated at 8.4%, higher than the surrounding communities, the County, and the State. The unemployment rate in Albion (8.4%) is higher than the percentage of unemployed civilians (4.7%) because the Census unemployment rate calculation does not include people not in the labor force such as retirees and students.

**Figure 33: Employment Status by Age, 2019**



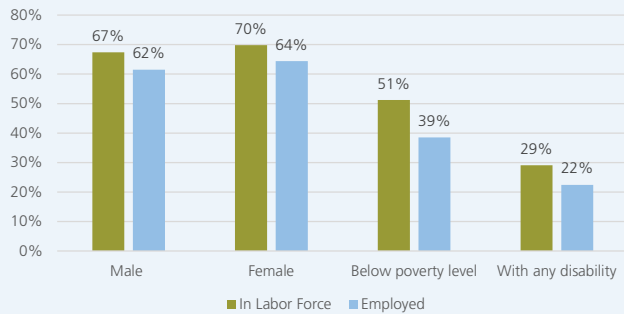
The moderate percentage of employed civilian population between 35-65 years indicates a lack of participation in the labor force.

**Figure 34: Employment Status by Race & Origin, 2019**



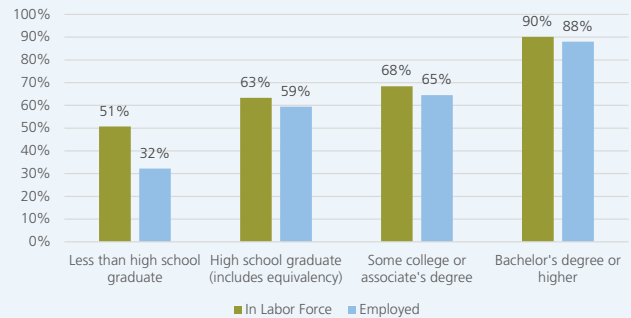
The employment status data only shows slight fluctuations among the different races, a positive sign that no race is disproportionately impacted by Albion’s job market.

**Figure 35: Employment Status by Disability, Poverty Level, & Gender, 2019**



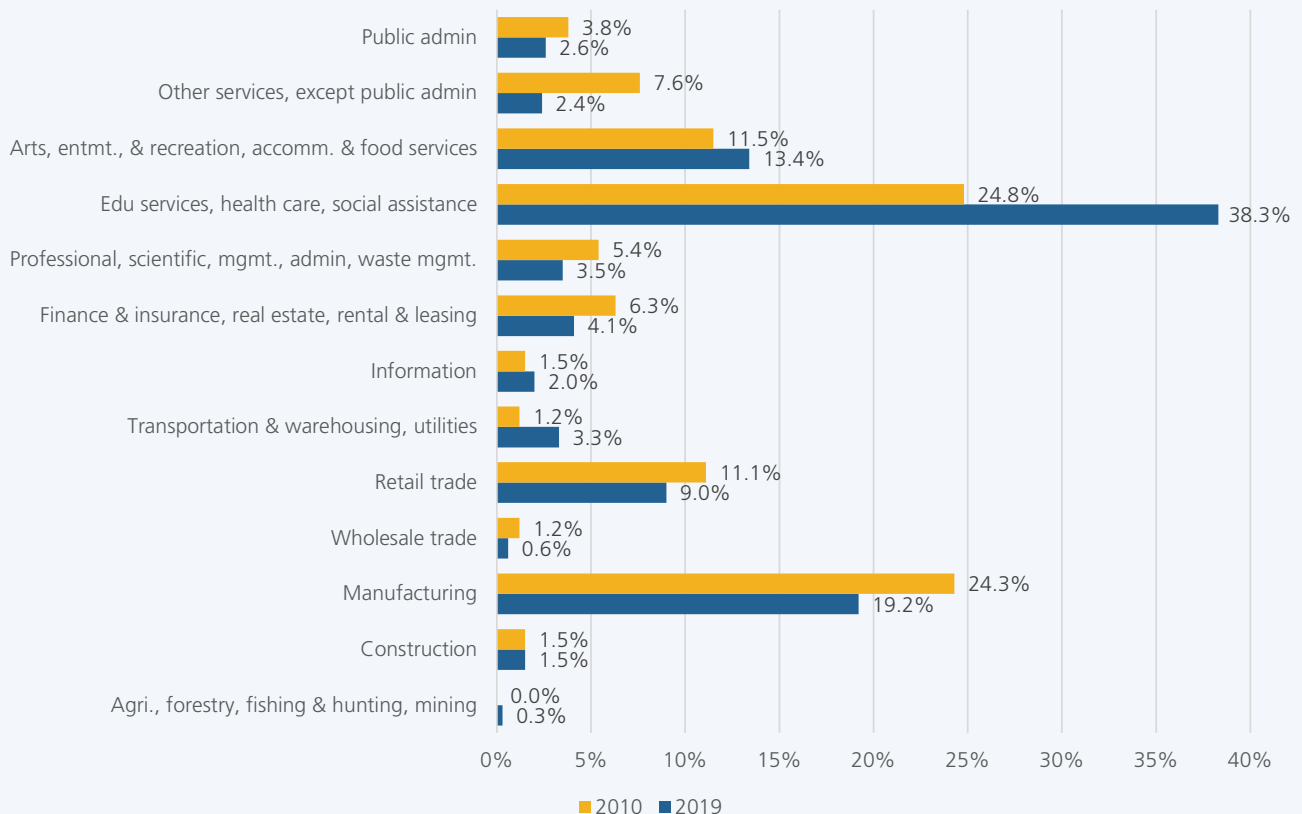
There is a high unemployment rate for persons below the poverty level and persons with a disability. This exacerbates economic difficulties and indicates a lack of opportunity to improve economic standing for these groups.

**Figure 36: Employment Status by Educational Attainment, 2019**



Higher educational levels directly correspond with lower unemployment rates in Albion.

**Figure 37: Employment by Industry, 2010-2019**



Albion is slowly transitioning away from a manufacturing economy—the industry shrunk by about 5% over the last decade; on the other hand, the “education services, health care, and social assistance” industry experienced the fastest growth, followed by the “transportation & warehousing, utilities” industry.



**Table 7: Employment by Industry – Albion & Surrounding Communities, 2019**

Industry	City of Albion	Albion Township	Homer Township	Homer Village	Marshall City	Marshall Township	Sheridan Township	Calhoun County	Michigan
Agri., forestry, fishing & hunting, mining	0.3%	11.7%	7.5%	5.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.8%	1.4%	1.2%
Construction	1.5%	3.4%	4.0%	4.5%	2.4%	3.3%	3.5%	4.1%	5.4%
Manufacturing	19.2%	17.2%	34.3%	32.1%	19.3%	12.6%	29.1%	22.5%	18.6%
Wholesale trade	0.6%	0.0%	1.2%	1.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	1.1%	2.4%
Retail trade	9.0%	5.2%	9.0%	5.8%	13.0%	10.6%	10.2%	11.9%	10.8%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	3.3%	4.5%	1.6%	1.9%	4.9%	6.2%	5.8%	4.3%	4.4%
Information	2.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%	0.9%	1.6%	2.3%	1.1%	1.4%
Finance & insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	4.1%	6.5%	3.4%	2.6%	3.3%	6.9%	2.5%	4.3%	5.4%
Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin, waste mgmt.	3.5%	9.9%	4.9%	8.5%	6.2%	10.2%	8.0%	7.2%	9.5%
Edu services, health care, social assistance	38.3%	25.5%	19.1%	23.3%	29.0%	28.6%	19.3%	22.8%	23.4%
Arts, entmt., & recreation, accomm. & food services	13.4%	7.4%	4.9%	6.6%	11.2%	3.9%	12.0%	10.3%	9.6%
Other services, except public admin	2.4%	3.8%	5.8%	3.4%	3.7%	8.2%	3.1%	4.6%	4.6%
Public admin	2.6%	3.8%	3.5%	4.3%	5.5%	5.1%	2.6%	4.4%	3.4%

Source: 2019 ACS Estimates

Regionally, Albion tops the “education services, health care, and social assistance” and the “Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” industries; Albion College’s strong presence in the community likely explains this trend. The City is also a strong competitor in the “retail trade” and “information” industries. The City falls behind in the agriculture, professional and management, and public administration sectors.

**Table 8: Workforce Qualification, 2019**

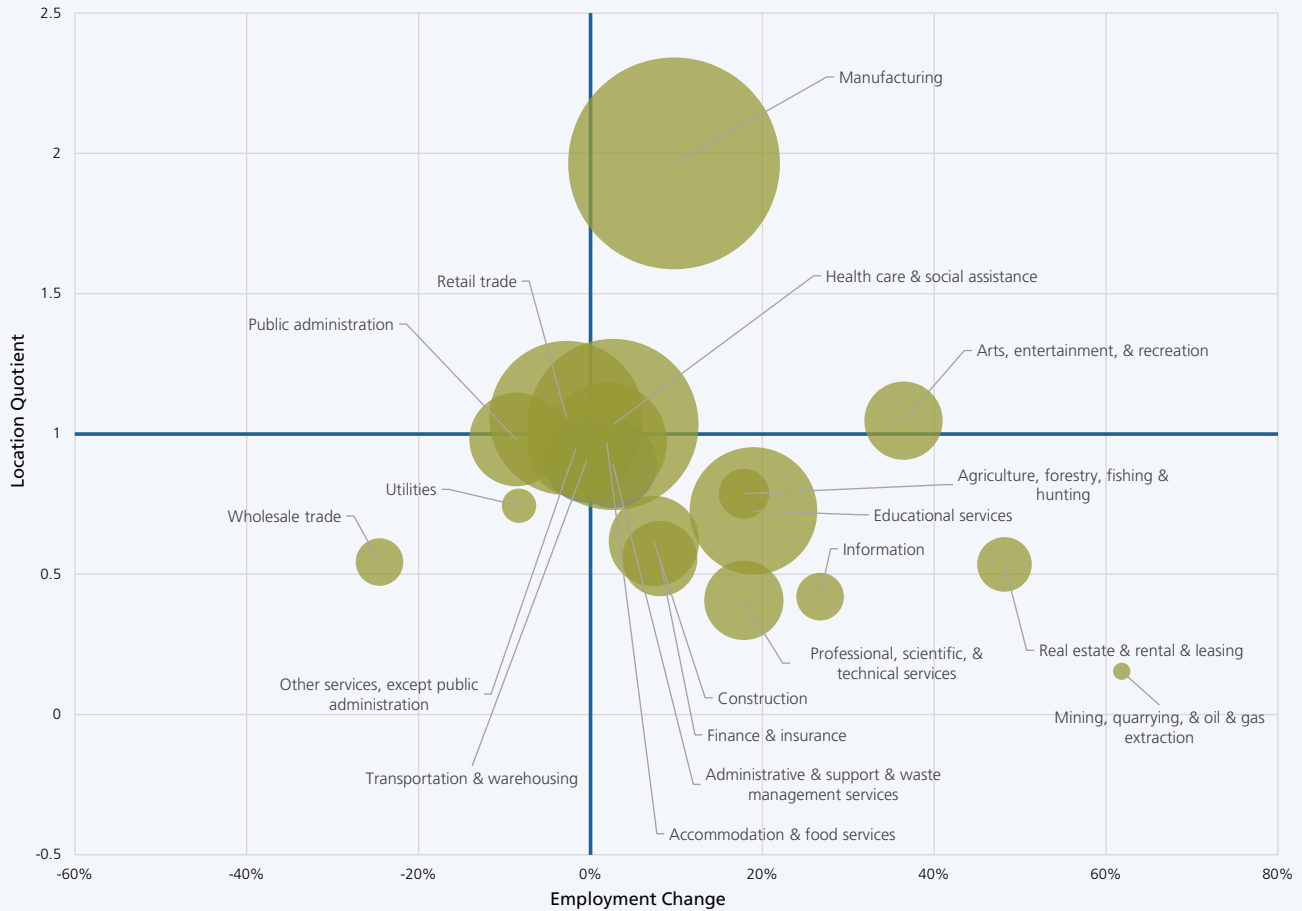
Industry	Less than High School Diploma	High School Diploma	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree (Master's / Doctoral / Professional)	Total
<b>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	21	133	161	134	150	598
Recommended Workers	8	46	116	194	231	595
Balance	+13	+87	+45	-60	-81	+3
<b>Service occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	67	222	142	33	8	472
Recommended Workers	61	182	242	111	28	623
Balance	+6	+41	-99	-79	-20	-151
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	31	224	168	51	12	487
Recommended Workers	20	133	208	128	33	523
Balance	+11	+91	-40	-77	-21	-36
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	68	157	56	6	1	289
Recommended Workers	11	22	17	4	1	54
Balance	+57	+135	+40	+3	0	+235
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	78	233	87	14	3	414
Recommended Workers	71	192	150	47	11	470
Balance	+7	+41	-62	-33	-8	-56
<b>Total</b>						
Estimated Workers	265	969	615	238	174	2260
Recommended Workers	171	575	732	484	304	2265
Balance	+94	+394	-116	-246	-130	-4

*Estimated workers: Number of current workers in each occupation based on 2019 ACS estimates.*

*Recommended workers: Recommended number of workers in each occupation based on national averages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), scaled to the size of Albion.*

As the educational attainment level increases, the number of workers fall below the national averages (indicated in red), except in the “natural resources, construction, and maintenance” occupation. There is a shortage of jobs for workers who have a college degree or higher, especially in service occupations; supporting highly skilled employees is critical as they are essential to the current and future economy in Albion.

Figure 38: Calhoun County Economic Trends by Industry, 2014-2019



The chart organizes Calhoun County's industries into four categories: emerging industries, declining industries, mature industries, and growth industries. While Albion has also witnessed tremendous growth and economic opportunity in the "education services, health care, and social assistance" and the "Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services" sectors, the City has only captured a small portion of the emerging industries in the County. Retail trade is a mature industry in the County, but as shown in Table 7, there is opportunity for Albion to expand in this sector.

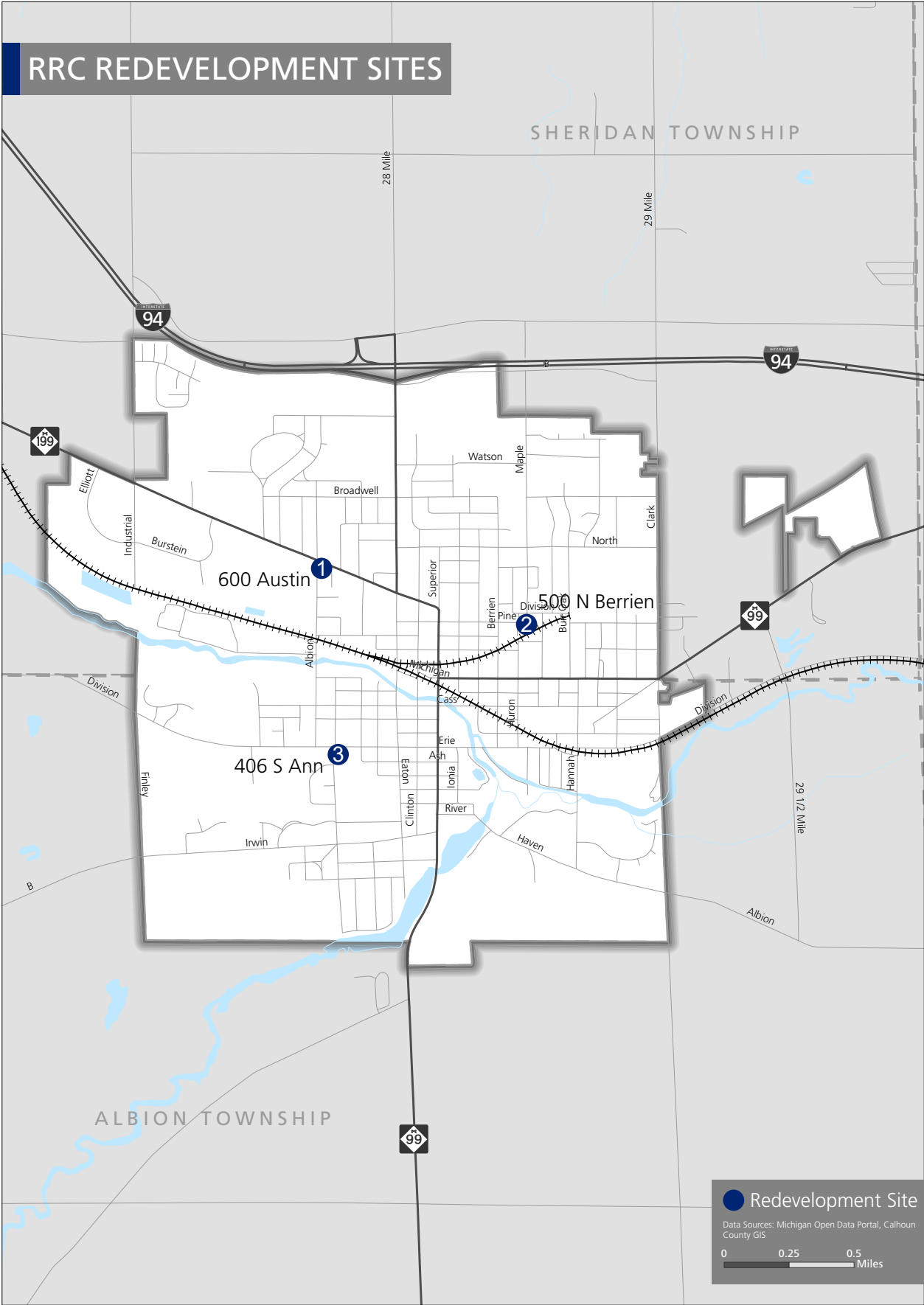
## REDEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) runs the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program, and the City of Albion is an RRC Certified® community. The certification acknowledges the City's efforts to be transparent, predictable, and efficient in the economic development process. To achieve

certification, the City aligned with the program's standards and best practices for planning, zoning, and economic development. One of the best practices is a routinely updated list of potential redevelopment sites that are underutilized and could better serve the community. The City of Albion has selected three priority redevelopment sites, summarized on the following pages.

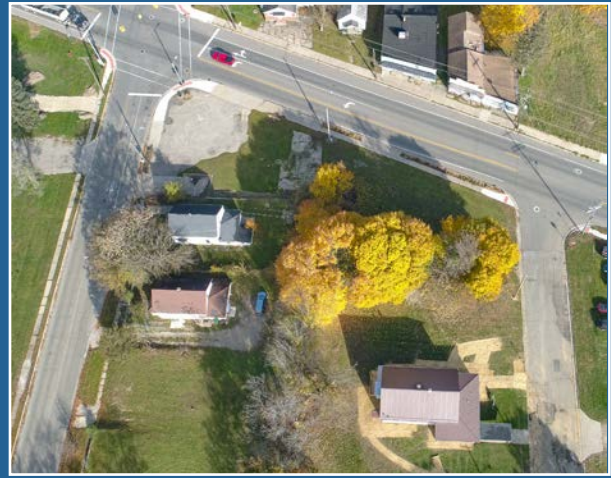


Map 11: RRC Redevelopment Sites



# 1

## AUSTIN 600 BLOCK



### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The 600 Austin Block site is well-suited for mixed-use and commercial development that could provide goods and services to residents of adjacent neighborhoods, Albion Industrial Park employees, travelers, and users of adjacent McAuliffe Park. 600 Austin Block was historically a commercial corridor populated with BIPOC owned businesses that made for an attractive gateway from the west into the City.

As commercial development moved towards the I-94 interchange, many businesses along Austin Ave closed. Infill development would fulfill the desire of citizens to bring back a sense of vibrancy and community once associated with this historically important commercial corridor.

### BASIC SITE INFORMATION

<b>ZONE</b>	Mixed Use
<b>SIZE</b>	19,253 sf
<b>UTILITIES</b>	Electric, gas, sewer, water
<b>FEATURES</b>	Build to suit
<b>OWNER</b>	Albion Brownfield Authority
<b>SALES PRICE</b>	Negotiate terms

### COMMUNITY VISION

Residents have expressed the idea that 600 Austin Block could be developed as a flexible community space with infrastructure that would allow it to support Food Truck rallies or small, seasonal Pop-up Businesses, particularly BIPOC-owned businesses.

# 2

## UNION STEEL BERRIEN



### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Union Steel Berrien includes two sites along an existing rail spur, just north of Michigan Avenue (M-99), and walking distance from downtown and the Albion College campus. Residential properties and small businesses on currently surround the parcels.

The Albion Economic Development Corporation is accepting proposals from firms with an interest in developing these parcels. The City Planning Commission and City Council hold the right to approve or deny specific building site developments based on codes and covenants. This location has ready information on the following: Target Market Analysis, some Environmental Reports, soil conditions, demographic data, natural features, and GIS information.

### BASIC SITE INFORMATION

<b>ZONE</b>	Residential; Mixed Use available
<b>SIZE</b>	9.94 acres
<b>UTILITIES</b>	Electric, gas, sewer, water
<b>FEATURES</b>	Build to suit
<b>OWNER</b>	Calhoun County Land Bank (parcel 1); Albion Brownfield Authority (parcel 2)
<b>SALES PRICE</b>	Negotiate terms

### COMMUNITY VISION

The City of Albion Economic Development Corporation is in the process of developing a Place Plan for the site. The property is well suited for residential development, and the Place Plan will outline types of residential development that would be appropriate for the site.



# 3

## DALRYMPLE SCHOOL



### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Dalrymple School site is a prime location connected to infrastructure that could be developed with a variety of housing types that the Albion community desires. The site is inside a well-established residential area within four blocks of downtown Albion, one-half mile away from highway M-99, and less than two miles from the Eaton Street commercial corridor and I-94 interchange, making it a desirable location for commuters. Holland Park, which includes a playground and picnic pavilion, is just three blocks north of the Dalrymple School site. Downtown Albion is vibrant and growing; the Albion River Trail runs alongside the Kalamazoo River; and Albion College northeast of downtown, offering educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for residents.

### BASIC SITE INFORMATION

ZONE	Residential
SIZE	10.93 acres
UTILITIES	Electric, gas, sewer, water
FEATURES	Build to suit
OWNER	City of Albion
SALES PRICE	Negotiate terms

### COMMUNITY VISION

The community’s vision for this infill site is based on the desire to see new housing development in already-established residential areas. Desired housing centers around “missing middle” housing that is attractive to residents of all ages who seek smaller homes on smaller lots that are easier to maintain. The community has overwhelmingly expressed the desire to see a variety of new single- and multi-family housing located in or adjacent to already established neighborhoods, and nearby to commercial areas, and social, arts and cultural and recreational amenities.



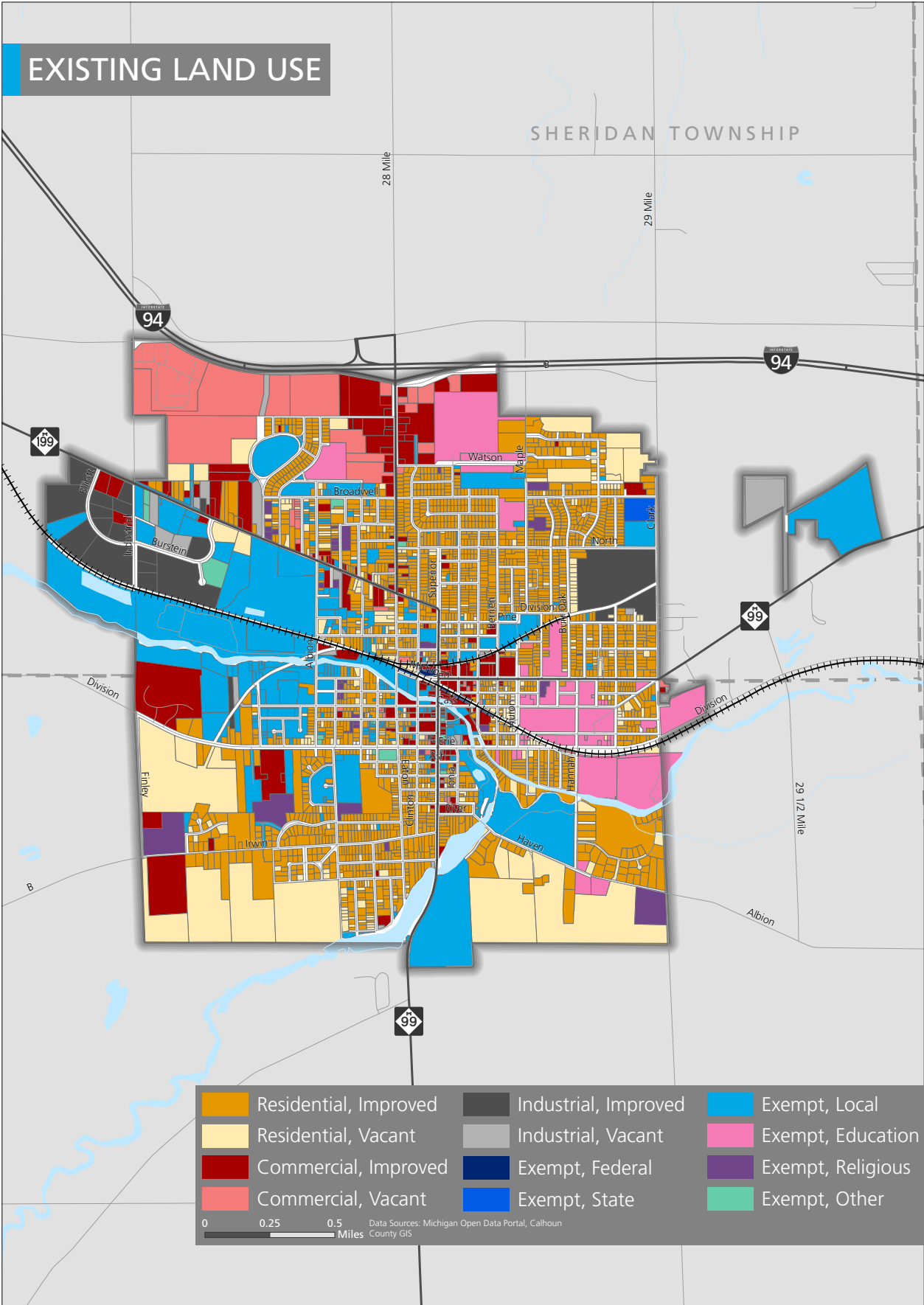
# LAND USE

# 8



Source: City of Albion

Map 12: Existing Land Use





**Table 9: Existing Land Use**

LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENT OF TOTAL
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>383.7</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
Improved	212.8	8.6%
Vacant	170.9	6.9%
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>175.6</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
Improved	136.3	5.5%
Vacant	39.3	1.6%
<b>Residential</b>	<b>1127.1</b>	<b>45.6%</b>
Improved	722.2	29.2%
Vacant	404.9	16.4%
<b>Exempt</b>	<b>787.2</b>	<b>31.8%</b>
Federal	0.9	0.0%
State	7.8	0.3%
Local	534.8	21.6%
Education	180.4	7.3%
Religious	51.5	2.1%
Other	11.9	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2473.7</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: City of Albion Assessor

## EXISTING LAND USE

The Existing Land Use map shows the relationships among the City’s fundamental land use categories. Because land is taxed based on how it is used, the map is based on information from Albion’s City Assessor. The “exempt” categories refer to land which is not taxed, usually due to ownership by local, state, or Federal government as well as religious exemptions. Any City-owned land is considered “local exempt,” which includes areas such as parks, City buildings, or City-owned redevelopment properties.

The land use pattern in Albion in many ways epitomizes a mature small American city. The river and the railroad are the features that defined its establishment, and they figure prominently in the City’s core. Dense commercial uses dominate the center of the City, threaded through by parkland offering access to the Kalamazoo River. It also contains some of the City’s major redevelopment potential in the form of once-industrial sites that no longer rely on the river and rail as transportation assets.

Residential development radiates outward from the core, beginning in a tight grid pattern, then a looser grid, and finally including suburban cul-de-sec development toward the edges. Industrial development has relocated from the center of town to the eastern and western outskirts. Albion College is a significant land use on the east side of the City that stretches northward from the river, straddles the southern rail branch, and crosses M-99.

In this context, “vacant” properties are those which do not have a structure on them—sometimes also referred to as “unimproved.” These are development and redevelopment opportunities, and Albion contains both. Along the northern and southern edges of the City are large parcels suitable for unified development. Throughout the City are residential and commercial properties which are already situated within a neighborhood context that can host individualized redevelopment.

## ZONING

In 2018, the City of Albion adopted a fully revised Zoning Code that significantly decreased the number of zoning districts. This generally has the effect of increasing development flexibility, since the constraints must be loose enough to accommodate a wide variety of site conditions and existing uses.

The new zoning map contains just eight districts (compared to the former 19 districts). The Residential categories demonstrate this flexibility clearly: the majority of the residential land in the City now accommodates multifamily development, even though most of it is already developed with single-family homes. Redevelopment of sites within this district can therefore proceed according to the specific context: where new multifamily is supported by the market, it may occur. Over time, this can lead to the creation of neighborhoods that have better income diversity than the standard practice of rigidly enforcing uniform lot and building sizes in a variety of highly specialized districts.

Albion's commercial zoning is similarly simplified. Where the commercial areas have a distinct and identifiable form, they are given their own districts:

the Central Business District of traditional "Main Street" development, and the suburban-style and auto-oriented commercial development that surrounds the I-94 interchange on the north side of the City. But where a traditional zoning district might try to establish several "business" categories to accommodate convenience shopping, office, and service uses that congregate around major arterials, Albion takes the approach of simply designating all arterial-fronting parcels as Mixed Use. This has a key advantage of reflecting how these arterials are actually used. For example, single-family homes are frequently converted to low-intensity businesses, which can now be done without a weighty rezoning process. Office uses, sometimes segregated into their own district, flourish in the presence of retail and restaurant amenities. Furthermore, because commercial and multifamily residential uses often share similar functional characteristics, they can now be sited at the place in the corridor where they make the most contextual sense.

The remaining three districts are generally characterized by large-scale development. Industrial districts are separated into two classes based on intensity, while the Campus Development District accommodates Albion College.



*Albion City Hall.*  
*Source: City of Albion*





## FUTURE LAND USE

A Future Land Use Map is a policy document that is used to inform zoning decisions. It is often more generalized than the zoning map.

The Albion Future Land Use Map focuses on use types, leaving intensity distinctions to the Zoning Ordinance. As a decision-making tool, this is in keeping with the maximum-flexibility approach demonstrated in the Zoning Ordinance. The Future Land Use Map is generally consulted as a guide for rezoning requests, to determine whether the proposed new zone is in keeping with the same desired future and area characteristics. (A rezoning which is not aligned with the adopted future land use map should be accompanied by a well-justified amendment to the Future Land Use Map via the statutory process in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.) The Future Land Use Map is also an important tool when the City considers amendments to the Zoning Ordinance as it helps ensure that any changes align with the City's desired future.

An exception to this singular focus on use rather than form is the designation of the Downtown on the Future Land Use Map. The downtown is a unique area that relies heavily on its form to achieve aims that support the district's uses: walkability, customer-sharing among businesses, and the creation of a cohesive sense of place that is the City's distinct identity. Where investment has already been made in buildings, streets, sidewalks, storefronts, and public spaces to achieve these goals, such investments should be protected by a policy that recognizes them and provides a procedural opportunity for the City to reserve sites with these characteristics for appropriate uses.

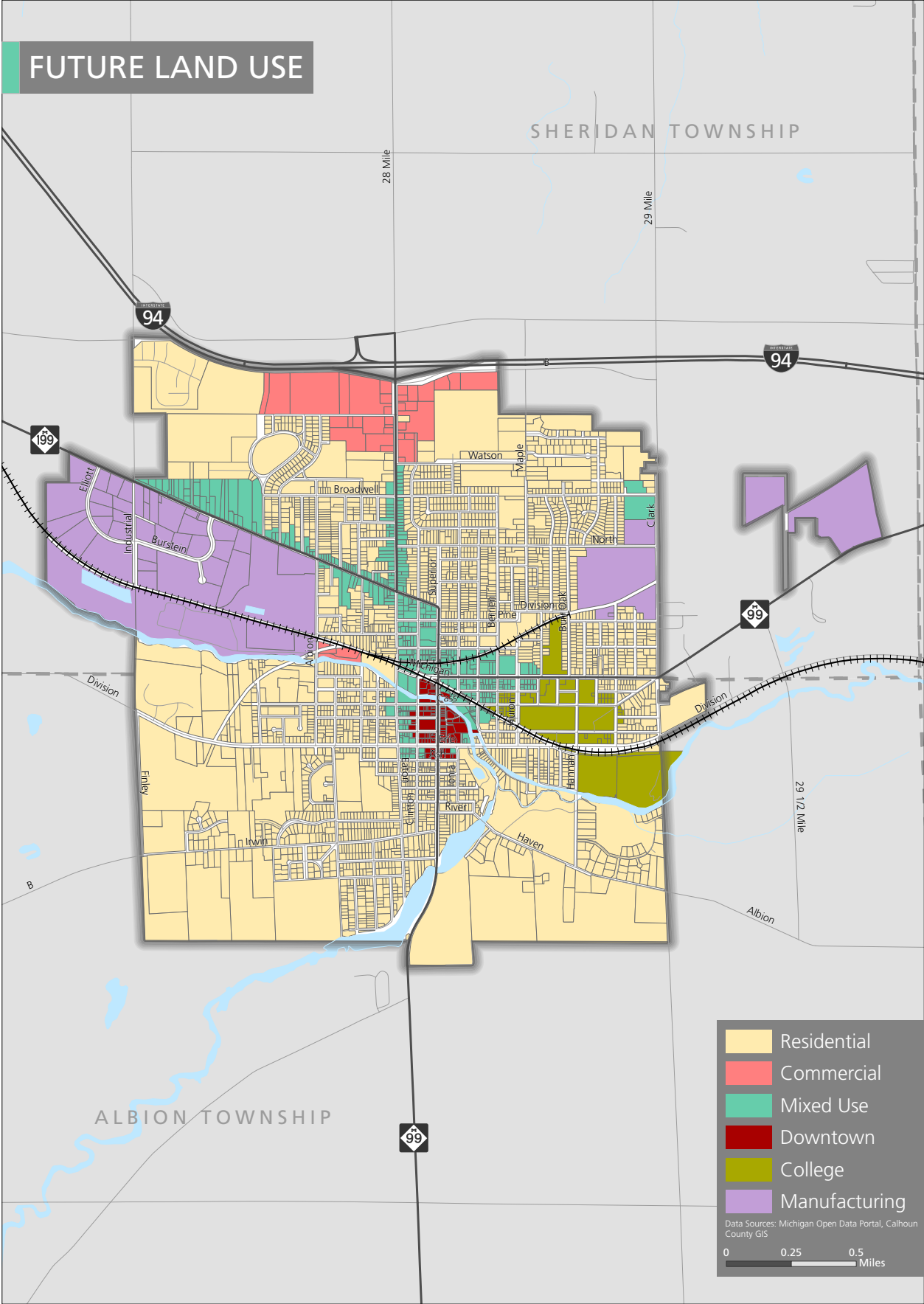
The Zoning Plan on the following page shows the relationship between the Future Land Use classifications and the districts in the Albion Zoning Ordinance. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires this section to note any changes that must be made to the Zoning Ordinance so that it is aligned with the Future Land Use Map; however, the Albion Zoning Ordinance was adopted so recently that it accurately reflects the policies in this document.



*Albion River Trail.*  
Source: City of Albion



Map 14: Future Land Use



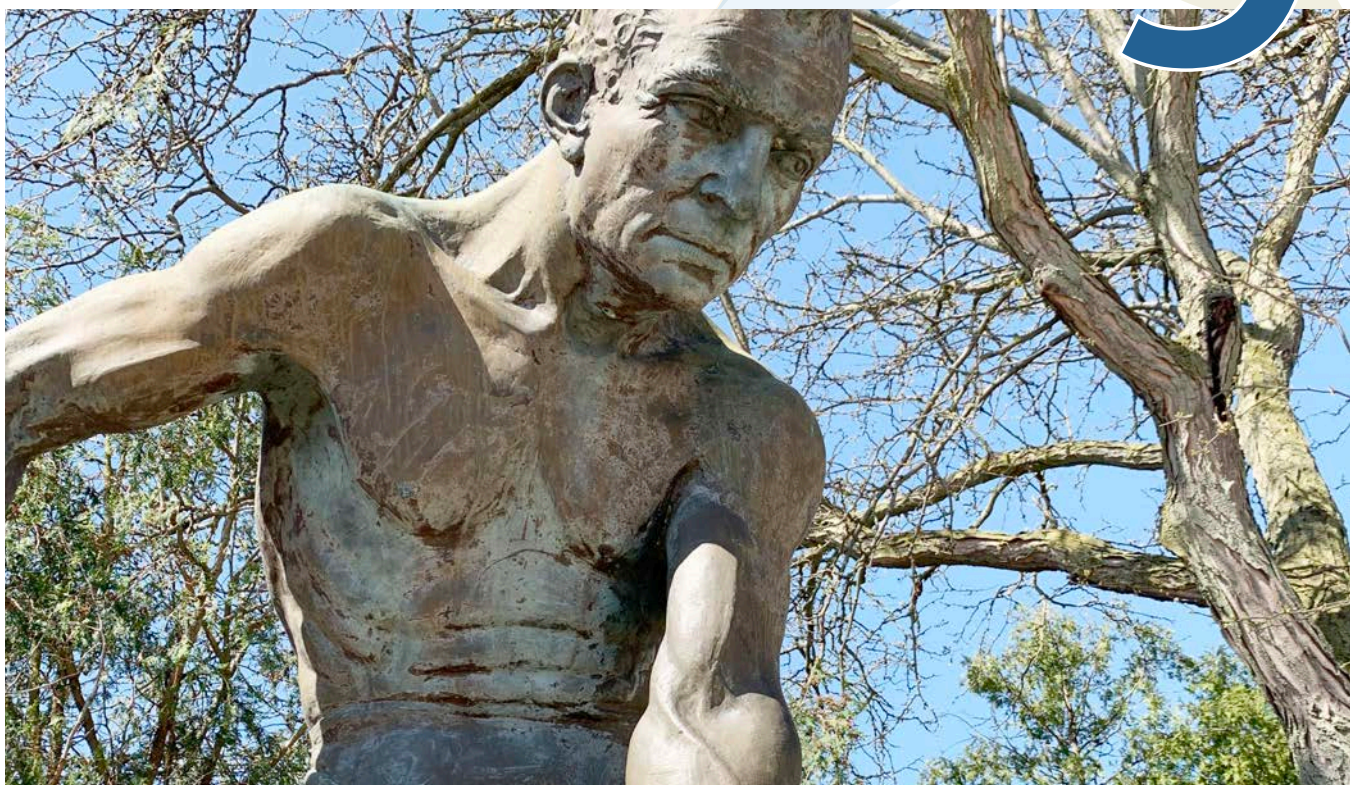
**Table 10: Zoning Plan**

FLU CATEGORY	CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICT(S)	INTENT
Residential	R-1 Single Family Residential R-2 Multiple Family Residential	This category is defined by the predominance of residential uses, and by the limitation of other uses to those which support, and do not compromise, the residential character of the area. These include community institutions (schools, churches), human care and social assistance services, professional offices, cultural uses, and wind energy systems. Low-to-medium density development in the R1 district is enforced by lot size, building coverage, dwelling size, and setback regulations. In the medium-to-high density R2 district, these regulations are scaled down to permit a compatible co-mingling of single-, two-family, and multiple-family dwelling units of similar residential characteristics.
Commercial	C General Commercial	This category is limited to retail business and services, especially those which are auto oriented, in areas that abut major thoroughfares. There are no limits on lot size or coverage.
Mixed Use	MU Mixed Use	This category accommodates the widest range of permitted uses: residential, office, retail and foodservice, entertainment, and service uses in addition to other compatible and supporting uses. Non-residential properties bear the responsibility of buffering and screening from residential uses; lot and structure specifications mirror those in the higher-density residential district.
Downtown	CBD Central Business	Downtown offers retail and office services which serve the needs of a consumer trade area that extends beyond the corporate boundaries of the City. It is characterized by vigorous pedestrian activity and a unified architectural scale, and it is intended to be the most intensely developed area of the City. This is enforced by several regulations which apply only to this area, including a minimum building height, a build-to line in place of a front setback, and the ability to defer parking requirements to municipal lots. Specific design regulations are intended to prioritize pedestrian convenience and prohibit auto orientation, encourage a continuous retail frontage, provide employment opportunities, fully utilize downtown buildings including all stories, balance auto access with congestion and parking concerns, and preserve the existing historic character.
Manufacturing	M1 Light Industrial M2 Heavy Industrial	This category is composed of land with characteristics or context that make it suitable for industrial development. It is divided into two zoning districts which are defined by their impacts on neighboring districts: permitted uses in the M-1 Light Industrial district are expected to fully contain their impacts within the district, whereas the M-2 district is designed to permit the normal operations of almost all industries while acknowledging that nearby nonindustrial development may be directly affected. This distinction is accomplished through the siting of the districts as a whole, as their site-specific dimensional regulations are consistent.
College	CDD Campus Development	The College category recognizes the unique aspects of campus development, including on-site residential and recreation opportunities, nearly exclusive nonmotorized transportation inside its boundaries, and unified development control. Regulation centers on ensuring that properties under the control of Albion College are well-integrated into the community fabric.



# IMPLEMENTATION

# 9

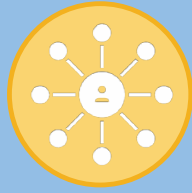


Source: City of Albion

Good planning uses data and preferences to shape a preferred course of action. In this section, findings from the previous sections and the community engagement series are used to build an Action Plan of strategies to advance Albion toward its goals over the planning horizon.

The Albion 2017 Comprehensive Plan laid out a series of goals and objectives which were used as the starting point for this formulation. These were reviewed for continued relevancy by a team of City stakeholders, and this team elected to remove two of the goals and fine-tune the wording of two others. The updated goals are presented below, along with supporting data and public input. The action items derived from this information include assignment of a responsible party, partners, and timelines to help organize and facilitate implementation.





# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## SUMMARY

- » Albion is experiencing population decline at a much higher rate than the surrounding communities and the county, signaling that people are migrating outwards.
- » Population has an impact on state revenue sharing: the City will receive reduced state funding as a result of the decline documented in the 2020 Census results.
- » The City is seeing a net growth of the student-age population (ages 15-34). Retaining the youth population while simultaneously addressing the needs of the aging baby boomer generation will be crucial to controlling population decline.
- » The growing household and family sizes in the City indicate that the City also needs to be viable for families, which may be achieved by providing suitable housing options, higher-level and higher-paying jobs, and improving other quality-of-life aspects in Albion.
- » Providing an array of housing formats at different levels of affordability will be imperative in equitably supporting the different demographics such as students, seniors, families, single-parent households, veterans, and persons with disabilities.
- » The net increase in employment since 2017, combined with reducing poverty rates, point towards a recovering economy and job market. However, the low median income remains concerning as a large percentage of the workforce is not engaged.
- » Nearly 45% of Albion's population aged 16 years of age and over are not currently in the labor force; reengaging this population will be crucial in reducing the unemployment rate (currently at 8.5%), increasing the median income, and strengthening the overall economy of Albion.
- » Albion is transitioning from a manufacturing-based economy to a service- and consumer-based economy. With the City's support, the growing "education services, health care, and social assistance" and "arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food services" industries can create new job opportunities.



Source: City of Albion

## COMMUNITY INPUT

- » A majority of survey respondents valued the presence of a diverse community as one of Albion's best characteristics.





**COMMUNITY GOAL 1: Build a capacity and a network of organizations and services to promote growth and meet the needs of residents who cannot afford basic services.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Update comprehensive community needs assessments and asset maps to prioritize assets and determine needs	Planning & Zoning	EDC, MDOT, Housing Commission, DHHS, CMH	1-2 years
(b) Strengthen Albion's workforce development network and connect Albion's talent base with employment resources and opportunities	EDC, Planning & Zoning	EDC, Michigan Works, Albion College Career and Internship Center	1-3 years
(c) Support healthcare access and wellness programming in Albion	Recreation	Healthcare providers, patient advocacy groups, transportation services, AmeriCorps VISTA, Oaklawn, Healthcare Alliance	1-3 years
(d) Develop a comprehensive resource guide to facilitate and improve access to community services	City Departments	Albion Housing Commission, Code Enforcement, Public Safety, USDA Rural Development	1-2 years

**COMMUNITY GOAL 2: Forge local, regional, and global partnerships that support the City of Albion - its people, its needs, and its opportunities.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Assess community needs, increase organizational capacity and expand access to education, health care, quality food, economic opportunity and the overall quality of life for all residents	City Departments	Local businesses, faith communities, and nonprofits; AmeriCorps; Albion Healthcare Alliance; Community Food Table; United Way; Albion College; Albion Community Foundation	1-3 years
(b) Develop a local food culture through increased access to healthy food and nutrition education that utilizes community resources	EDC	Local businesses, farms, and faith communities; Albion Community Gardens, farmers market; Sprout Urban Farms	1-5 years
(c) Strengthen and increase the number of strategic collaborations with global partners that bring international perspectives and attention to Albion	Elected officials; Administration	Albion Sister City Committee, Albion College, University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Gerstacker Institute, Sup de Vente	1- 5 years
(d) Expand and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy, working in collaboration with partner entities, to promote Albion as a desirable place in which to live, play, study, and invest	DDA	EDC, Chamber of Commerce	1-5 years



# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

## SUMMARY

- » Albion would benefit from housing diversity, especially “missing middle” housing.
- » The total number of housing units has decreased by 15% since 2010.
- » Approximately 56% of the housing stock was built before 1950.
- » Albion’s median housing value is affordable in comparison to surrounding communities.
- » A 2015 housing target market analysis highlighted demand for new housing units in and around downtown Albion.
- » Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) may be particularly suitable for the students, young adults, and seniors who, together, constitute a large proportion of Albion’s population.

## COMMUNITY INPUT



- » More survey respondents indicated that they would like to live in rowhouses/ townhouses, duplexes, or above a commercial use than currently live in those formats; some respondents indicated that lack of availability is a barrier.
- » Students selected “housing options” as one of the top characteristics of a community they would like to live in.
- » “Housing affordability” was cited by 30% of survey respondents as an asset to the community.
- » A majority of survey respondents (70%) agreed that the city would benefit from a rental housing ordinance



*Housing along the Kalamazoo River.*  
Source: City of Albion

## HOUSING GOAL 1: Strengthen and beautify Albion’s neighborhoods.

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Develop and implement neighborhood plans for each neighborhood in the City with substantial and equitable participation to eliminate blight, improve public safety and environmental health, ensure complete neighborhoods, and document local redevelopment preferences	Planning and Zoning	Neighborhood groups	1-10 years
(b) Identify neighborhood groups who can serve as ambassadors and champions for their respective areas	Planning and Zoning	Neighborhood groups	1-3 years
(c) Work with private and nonprofit housing developers and others to encourage infill forms of development and the redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, and brownfield sites	Planning and Zoning	Private and nonprofit housing developers; HUD; MSHDA; RRC	1-10 years
(d) Develop and implement a certification/ registration program for rental and vacant properties	Planning and Zoning	Code Enforcement &. Building Safety, Land Bank, elected officials	1-2 years
(e) Develop a rental inspection ordinance to ensure that rental properties are regularly inspected for safety.	Planning and Zoning	Code Enforcement &. Building Safety, Land Bank, elected officials	1-2 years

## HOUSING GOAL 2: Provide a diverse range of high-quality housing options for all income levels and life stages.

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Expand, diversify, and market housing options to meet the needs of residents of varying life stages, lifestyles and income levels (e.g. Senior/retirement living, College corridor neighborhood, downtown lofts, affordable and low income housing, etc.)	Planning and Zoning; EDC	Private and nonprofit housing developers; HUD; MSHDA; RRC	1-10 years
(b) Encourage all new commercial development in and around the downtown to include a residential element	Planning and Zoning; EDC		Ongoing



# PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

## SUMMARY

- » The Kalamazoo River is Albion's defining physical feature. The City was founded at the forks of the Kalamazoo River, which runs through the downtown and provides local and regional recreational opportunities.
- » A feasibility study to determine the viability of removing the five dams in the Kalamazoo River within City limits is scheduled to be completed in 2022.
- » The City must manage impacts which spill over from the river to the community at large. Development in any portion of a floodplain can exacerbate flooding events, as can the removal of wetlands.
- » Highly impervious areas increase stormwater runoff, putting pressure on stormwater and sewer system and potentially causing flooding and drinking water contamination.
- » The presence of trees or other green infrastructure methods near highly impervious areas can often mitigate many of their negative externalities by absorbing excessive runoff and filtering water.
- » Upgrading aging water and sewer infrastructure is a top priority for Albion, including installing a new water tower and replacing lead and copper lines.
- » Sustainable redevelopment, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, is the desired approach in Albion. This includes reusing portions of existing structures, minimizing impervious surfaces, using low impact development techniques, and promoting green infrastructure.
- » Albion's River Trail runs through Albion for three miles along the Kalamazoo River and serves as both a recreational and economic resource.
- » Albion is the central point of four regional and national trail systems, and has been designated as a "Trail Town," meaning it has created a welcoming environment with amenities such as bicycle and kayak racks and picnic tables at access points, and wayfinding signage and kiosks to encourage trail users to visit downtown businesses.
- » Albion is also on the proposed Kalamazoo River water trail, a joint effort with the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, the Potawatomi Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council.



## COMMUNITY INPUT



- » Recreation options, including the parks and the riverfront, were identified as some of Albion's best assets in the community survey.
- » Residents and students both identified recreational amenities as a community strength at their respective community meetings.
- » 85% of survey respondents felt that natural features are an asset to Albion.
- » Survey-takers expressed support for activities protecting and preserving water quality, open space, wetland, and tree canopy.

### PHYSICAL GOAL 1: Support networks and systems that promote healthy living.

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Provide preservation and recreational land uses along the Kalamazoo River and the Albion River Trail	Recreation Advisory Commission	Planning and Zoning, DDA, EDC	Ongoing
(b) Continue to provide wayfinding and amenities to serve and attract users of the four regional and national trail systems that converge in Albion	Recreation Advisory Commission	Planning and Zoning, DDA, EDC	Ongoing
(c) Continue to work with the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, and the Potawatomi Resource Conservation and Development Council to develop Albion as Water Trail destination	Recreation Advisory Commission, Planning and Zoning	DDA, EDC, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, and the Potawatomi Resource Conservation and Development Council	1-10 years
(d) Enhance safe walking and cycling routes for citizens through transportation, land use, and design decisions	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission, Administration, Public Safety, Recreation, Street Department	1-5 years



*Bridge across the Kalamazoo River.*  
Source: City of Albion

**PHYSICAL GOAL 2: Deliver high-quality municipal services that improve the quality of life in Albion.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Upgrade aging water and sewer infrastructure, including installing a new water tower	Public Services	Administration, Street Department,	1-5 years
(b) Replace all lead and copper water lines	Public Services	Administration, Water and Sewer	1-20 years
(c) Maintain the Capital Improvements Plan to enhance and maintain quality technological and physical infrastructure, including roads and sidewalks; parking; water, sewer, and storm sewer utilities, dam and millrace removal	Administration	Planning Commission	1 year
(d) Evaluate and implement appropriate fiber optic communications and other emerging technology infrastructure	Public Services	Elected officials; Administration	1-5 years
(e) Complete the feasibility study addressing the possibility of removing the City’s dams	Administration	MDNR; EGLE; consultant; Albion College	1 year
(f) Launch a community engagement process to disseminate the results of the dam removal feasibility study and to understand level of public support for its recommendations	Planning and Zoning	Administration, EGLE, consultant	1-2 years
(g) Consider developing site standards to limit impervious surface coverage in addition to building coverage	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission	1-3 years
(h) Require street trees as part of site design	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission	1-3 years
(i) Clearly permit the use of low-impact development techniques to meet landscaping requirements, especially in parking lots	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission	1-3 years
(j) Consider formal preservation or protection of local assets that provide ecosystem services, including water, trees, wetlands, and open spaces	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission	1-3 years



# TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

## SUMMARY

- » The direct connectivity of Albion's downtown and commercial center with an interstate is highly beneficial for the economic health of the City.
- » However, the City has limited influence over the design of these arterials.
- » A little over 65% of all roads in Albion are in poor condition.
- » Albion is developing a Transportation Asset Management Plan to provide guidance for the use of funds generated by a proposed road millage.
- » The four-way intersection between Austin Avenue and N. Eaton Street witnessed the highest number of vehicular crashes. Other troubled intersections included the junction where N. Eaton Street meets W. Broadwell Street and Bemer Street, and the railway crossing where N. Superior Street meets Michigan Avenue.
- » There was a concentration of pedestrian and bicycle crashes at or near two major intersections: Austin Avenue and N. Eaton Street and N. Superior Street and Michigan Avenue.
- » Albion is located on Amtrak's Detroit-to-Chicago route, which is experiencing upgraded accelerated service.
- » Albion has a high percentage of commuters who walk to work—over five times higher than the state proportion.

## COMMUNITY INPUT



- » Increased transportation options was the fourth-highest priority at the Albion visioning session.
- » Survey respondents prioritized pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure
- » Maintaining public infrastructure was the second-highest challenge named by survey respondents.
- » Community engagement findings during the rebuilding of Superior Street revealed a strong preference against bike lanes which are unprotected from motorized traffic.



Albion Train Station.  
Source: City of Albion

**TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1: Improve Albion’s transportation network to accommodate and promote various modes, including walking, biking, automobiles, passenger rail, and public transportation.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Develop a motorized public transportation plan	Street Department; Administration	Administration, Planning and Zoning, Calhoun County, Albion-Marshall Connector, MDOT, Street Department	1-5 years
(b) Develop a nonmotorized transportation plan that identifies priority multimodal routes and the improvements needed to achieve comfort for various user types using MDOT’s Multi Modal Development and Delivery Guidebook	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission, Administration, Public Safety, Street Department, Calhoun County Trailway Alliance, North Country Trail Association/Chief Noonday Chapter, and Friends of Albion Trails	1-10 years
(c) Encourage walking, biking and other recreation by strengthening Albion’s nonmotorized trail network within the city as well as its connections with the region’s nonmotorized network	Planning and Zoning, Administration, Street Department, Recreation Advisory Commission	Iron-Belle Trail, North Country Trail, Kalamazoo River Water Trail, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (Great Lake to Lake Trail), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Iron Belle Trail), Calhoun County Trailway Alliance, Friends of Albion Trails, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, Calhoun County Parks Department.	1-3 years
(d) Continue to work cooperatively with MDOT, AMTRAK and other regional transportation partners and authorities to coordinate and improve major streets and other public transit systems	Street Department, Administration	MDOT, AMTRAK and other regional transportation partners	1-10 years
(e) Engage with AMTRAK to learn about the expected impact of accelerated service; consider station improvements as needed	Planning and Zoning; Administration	AMTRAK	
(f) Use MDOT’s “Guide for Installation of Pedestrian Crosswalks on Michigan State Trunkline Highways” to review each of the City’s troubled intersections	Planning and Zoning	Street Department	1-3 years



**TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2: Focus planning and resources to enhance and transform the City’s major corridors (Superior Street, Austin Avenue, Eaton Street, Michigan Avenue).**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Develop a Corridor Improvement Plan that strengthens the visual and physical connections between the Downtown Commercial District, Albion College, the 1-94 Business Corridor, Austin Avenue, and the south entrance on M-99	Planning and Zoning	EDC	1-5 years
(b) Enhance the City's major gateways with appropriate landscaping, street-scaping, signage, and branding	Planning and Zoning	EDC	1-10 years
(c) Fill in gaps in sidewalk coverage on Eaton Street and Michigan Avenue	Planning and Zoning	Street Department, MDOT	5 years
(d) Use MDOT’s “Guide for Installation of Pedestrian Crosswalks on Michigan State Trunkline Highways” to improve each of the crossings in the corridors	Planning and Zoning	Street Department, MDOT	1-3 years
(e) Require street trees as part of site development standards specifically in these corridors	Planning and Zoning	Planning Commission	1-3 years
(f) Install lighting that is scaled and oriented toward the pedestrian	Planning and Zoning	EDC	1-10 years
(g) Add street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles where appropriate	Planning and Zoning	EDC	1-10 years
(h) Explore the possibility of establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority	Administration	Elected officials, Planning and Zoning	1-2 years
(i) Work with surrounding municipalities to extend/connect Albion's major corridors to the region (e.g. establishing an MLK corridor between Albion and Marshall, and complementing corridors with nonmotorized, regional trail systems)	Recreation Advisory Commission	Calhoun County Trailway Alliance, Calhoun County	1-5 years



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## SUMMARY

- » Albion has lower labor force participation than surrounding communities (51%).
- » There is a high unemployment rate for persons below the poverty level and persons with a disability.
- » Higher educational levels directly correspond with lower unemployment rates in Albion.
- » The number of workers in the manufacturing economy shrank by about 5% over the last decade.
- » “Education services, health care, and social assistance” experienced the fastest growth, followed by the “transportation & warehousing, utilities” industry.
- » Regionally, Albion has the most residents employed in the “education services, health care, and social assistance” and the “Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” industries; it is also a strong performer in the “retail trade” and “information” industries.
- » The City falls behind the region in the agriculture, professional and management, and public administration sectors.
- » There is a shortage of jobs for workers who have a college degree or higher, especially in service occupations.



*The Bohm Theatre.*  
*Source: City of Albion*

## COMMUNITY INPUT



- » Downtown investment and recruiting new businesses were two items most frequently cited by Albion visioning session participants as something the community has done well.
- » A youth-oriented community with activities and spaces was the top priority at the Albion visioning session.
- » Abating and redeveloping contaminated sites was the third-highest collective priority at Albion's visioning session. Several brownfield or contaminated sites were identified as both weaknesses and opportunities by Albion citizens.
- » Youth selected "high paying jobs" as one of the top characteristics of a community they would like to live in.
- » A majority of students (57%) felt their career goals could not be met in Albion. When asked type of career they were planning, the largest share of students selected professions: legal (29%) or management, business, and finance (24%).
- » The top three challenges named by survey respondents were all economic in nature (employment opportunities, a thriving downtown, and blighted structures).
- » Over three-fourths of survey respondents have noticed an improvement in the downtown over the last five years.
- » When asked to prioritize the top three elements of downtown for attention, survey respondents selected building facades, beautiful public spaces, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.
- » Survey respondents said that restaurants, events, and entertainment are the top features that draw them downtown currently.
- » Retail options were cited in the survey as the top opportunity to make the downtown more lively and vibrant.



*Downtown upper facades.*  
Source: City of Albion

**ECONOMIC GOAL 1: Retain and attract jobs to Albion by supporting business growth, development, and attraction.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Encourage broader participation with local stakeholders (public, private, nonprofit, educational institutions, civic, and business) in the formulation of Albion's economic diversification strategy	Administration	EDC; public, private, nonprofit, educational institutions, civic, and business	1-3 years
(b) Continue support for programs and initiatives that foster entrepreneurship (e.g. promote Albion business incubators and encourage entrepreneurship among all segments of the population, including minorities, women, youth)	EDC	DDA, Chamber of Commerce, local businesses	1-10 years
(c) Support local businesses with a proactive business retention and development strategy	EDC	DDA, Chamber of Commerce	1-3 years
(d) Encourage reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites	EDC	DDA, Chamber of Commerce	1-10 years

**ECONOMIC GOAL 2: Stabilize the downtown, enhance its historic character, and support its economic growth.**

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
(a) Find creative ways to increase the number of Downtown Development Authority (DDA) initiatives	Administration	DDA	1-3 years
(b) Analyze and evaluate the City's parking situation and create a plan for improving parking management and balancing parking space supply with demand	Planning and Zoning	Consultant	1-3 years
(c) Expand the downtown tax base and maintain a fiscally healthy balance between taxable and non-taxable properties	DDA	EDC	1-5 years
(d) Attract commercial development to the downtown that will serve the needs of the community and complement the existing mix of businesses (e.g. restaurants, retail, entertainment, etc.)	EDC	Chamber of Commerce, DDA	3-5 years
(e) Continue to create incentives and attractions for residents, college students and tourists to visit the downtown (e.g. Hotel, Bohm Theater, Kids 'N' Stuff, the Ludington Center)	EDC	Chamber of Commerce; Albion College; Planning and Zoning, DDA	1-5 years





# APPENDIX

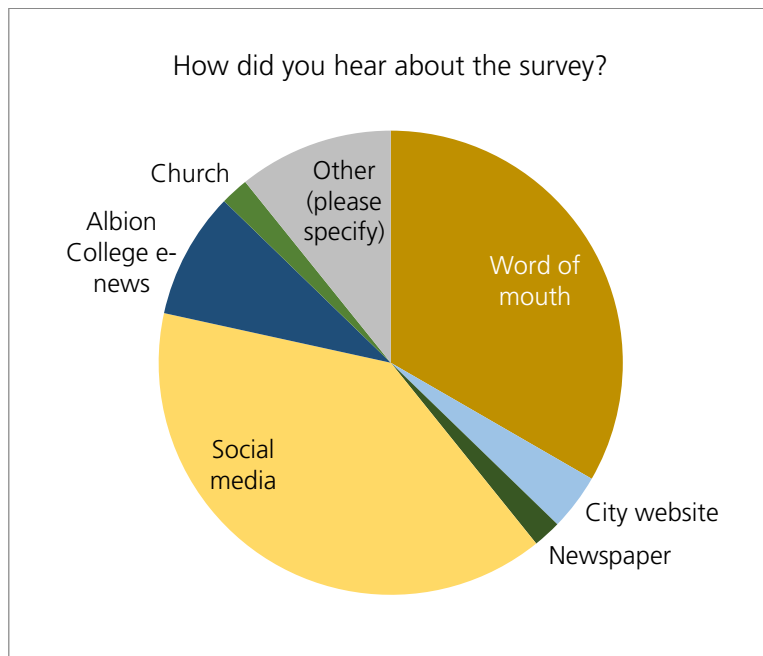
*The Appendices include all results from the community engagement efforts that were conducted as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. The results listed do not reflect the views of City Administration but is the raw data generated by participants.*

- A. Community Survey Results
- B. Youth Survey Results
- C. Youth Engagement Scenario Activity Results
- D. Community Visioning Results: Collective Priorities
- E. Youth Engagement Asset Mapping Results
- F. Community Visioning Asset Mapping Results

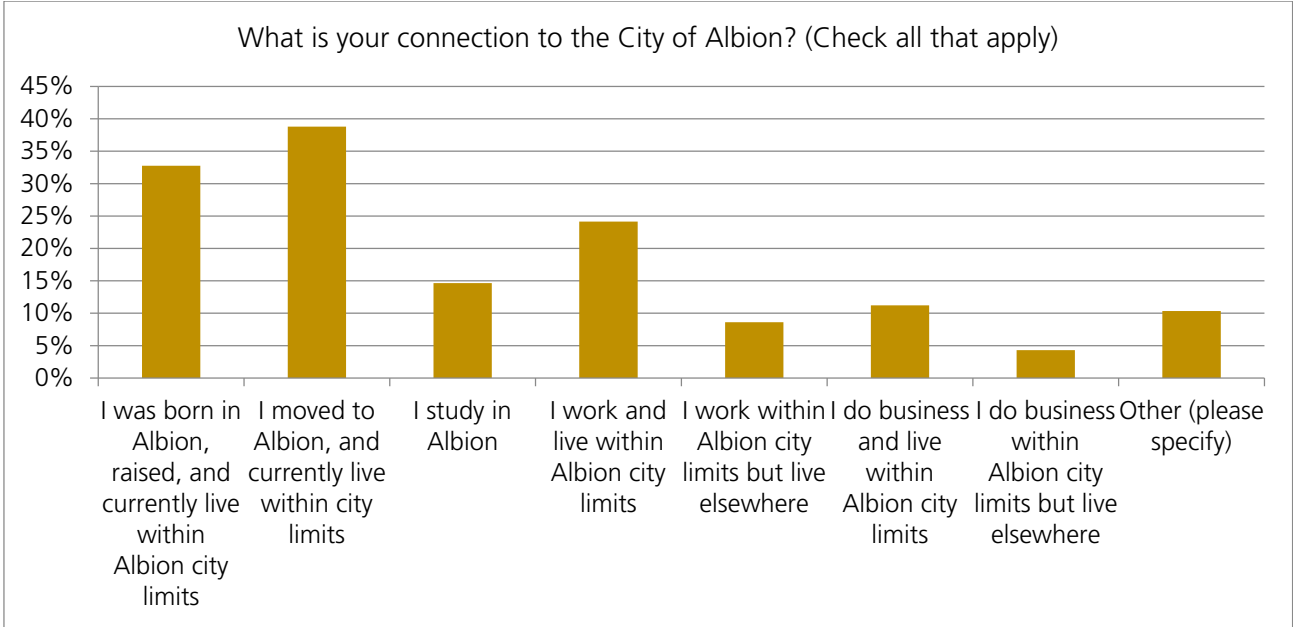
## Albion Comprehensive Plan Survey Summary

### Respondents

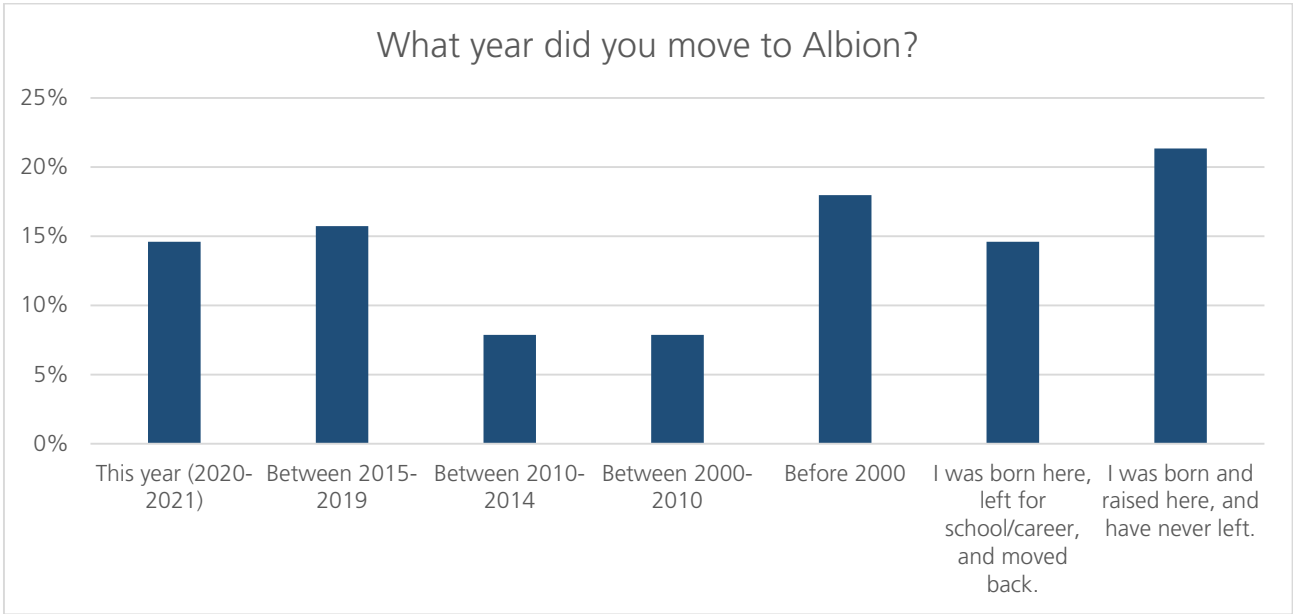
The Albion Comprehensive Plan Survey was distributed through a variety of methods, including social media, posting on the City’s website, announced at a Council meeting, included in an Albion College e-newsletter, and promoted through word of mouth. Among all these methods, a total of 116 people were reached.

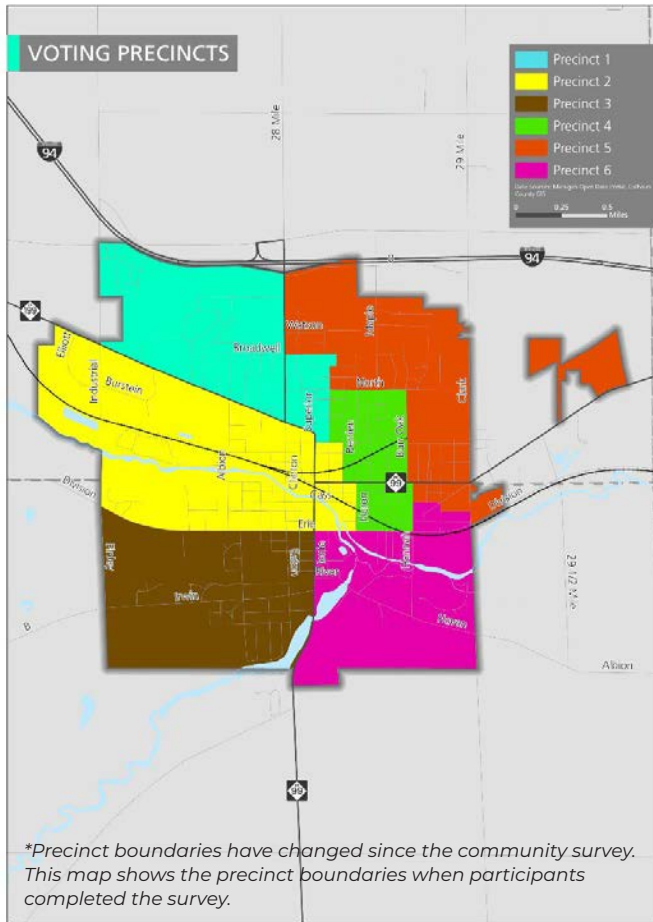


Survey respondents were asked what their connection was to the City of Albion and permitted to select all that apply (thus totals do not equal 100%). Most respondents indicated that they live within the City limits, and almost a quarter (25%) both live and work in the City. A smaller number work or do business in the City but live elsewhere (9% and 11% respectively), and 15% said they study in Albion.



Among those who live in the City, the largest portion of survey-takers have been here all their lives (21%), followed by those who have been residents for at least 20 years (18%). Comparable proportions were quite or relatively new to the city (15% arrived this year and 16% have been here 7 years or less), and a similar-sized group had returned to the City after a period away (15%).





When sorted by precinct, the largest number of responses was from Precinct 4 (21%), followed by Precinct 3 (18%). The lowest response rate was from Precinct 1 (5%), followed by a tie between Precincts 5 and 6 (12%). 20% of respondents live outside the City limits.

A few demographic questions were asked in order to gauge the representativeness of the survey; that is, how closely the characteristics of survey-takers match the characteristics of the City as a whole. Respondents' answers are compared to American Community Survey (2019) data below. Overall, the survey was well-represented in terms of age and households with children. It was less racially representative, though a significant number of respondents declined to indicate their race. With regard to housing tenure status, renters were clearly underrepresented.

There was an underrepresentation of Black/African American respondents and Hispanic/Latino respondents by 17 and six percentage points respectively. White respondents were overrepresented compared to American Community Survey (ACS) data by five

percentage points. However, more than one in five respondents declined to identify their race—a margin that could significantly affect the skew of the results. These tallies do not add up to 100% because respondents were permitted to select more than one response.

How would you identify yourself?		
Answer Choices	Responses	ACS
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	0%
Asian	1%	1%
Black or African American	12%	29%
Hispanic / Latino	3%	9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%
White	64%	59%
Prefer not to say or skipped question	22%	
Other (please specify)	2%	

The highest proportion of survey respondents reported their age at 45-55 years old (26%), and the age ranges bracketing that segment had the next-highest response (17% and 14%). There was significant representation from ages 18-24, which is somewhat of an anomaly in comparable surveys. One obvious



difference from the ACS data is that 28% of Albion residents are children, none of whom took the survey. However, the data from the next chart shows that 30% of the people who did respond have children in their households, and their responses are presumed to have those children’s interest in mind. More than one in ten survey-takers declined to give their age.

<b>What age group do you fall into?</b>		
Answer Choices	Responses	ACS
Under 18	0%	28%
18-24	14%	17%
25-34	8%	11%
35-44	17%	8%
45-54	26%	12%
55-64	14%	11%
65+	9%	9%
Unknown	12%	

65% of respondents had no children in the home, which is a lower proportion than the ACS records for Albion households overall. The ACS does not track number of children per household.

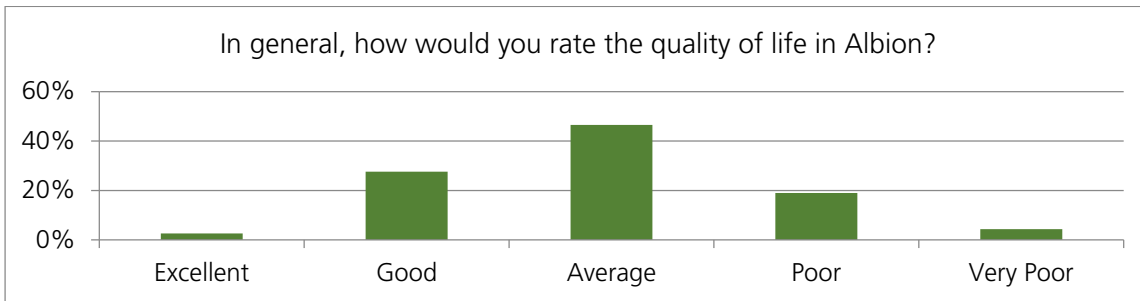
<b>How many members of your household are under the age of 18?</b>		
Answer Choices	Responses	ACS
0	65%	70%
1	8%	
2	18%	
3	6%	
More than 3	2%	

There was a significant difference between the tenure status of survey respondents and the overall population in Albion, particularly where renters are concerned. 12% of respondents are “not responsible for their own housing costs,” perhaps because they are students, which the ACS data does not capture.

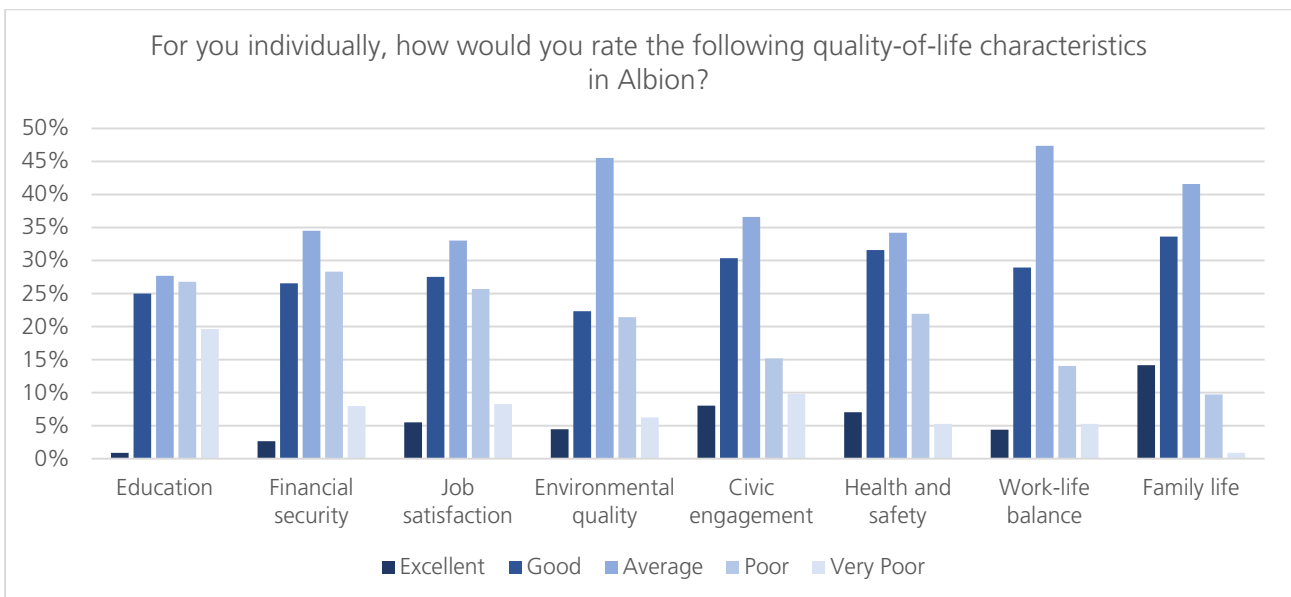
<b>What is your housing tenure status?</b>		
Answer Choices	Responses	ACS
I am a renter	18%	42%
I am a homeowner	66%	58%
Not responsible for own housing costs	12%	
Skipped question	3%	

## Quality of Life

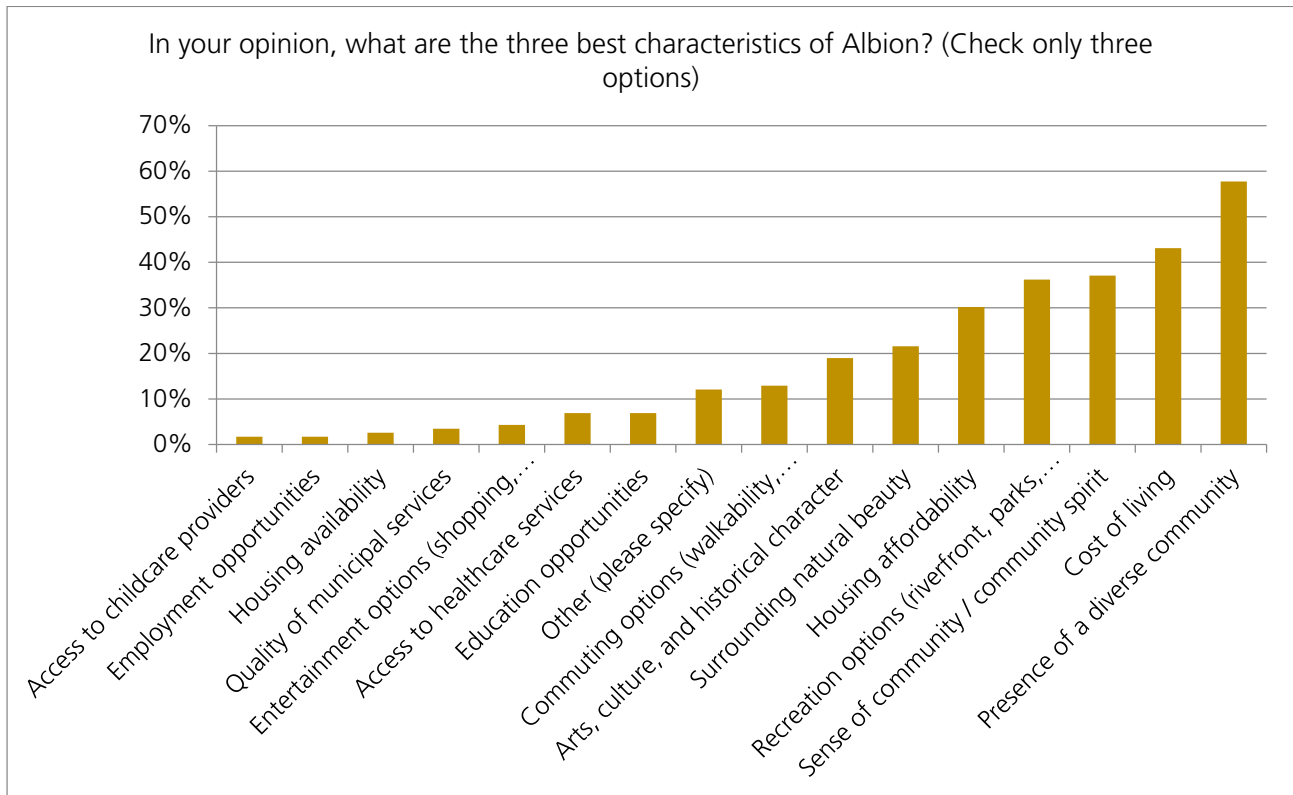
The highest proportion of respondents (47%) reported that the quality of life in Albion was “average,” while 28% reported that it was “good,” and 3% selected “excellent.” Of those dissatisfied, 19% described quality of life as “poor” and 4% said it was “very poor.”



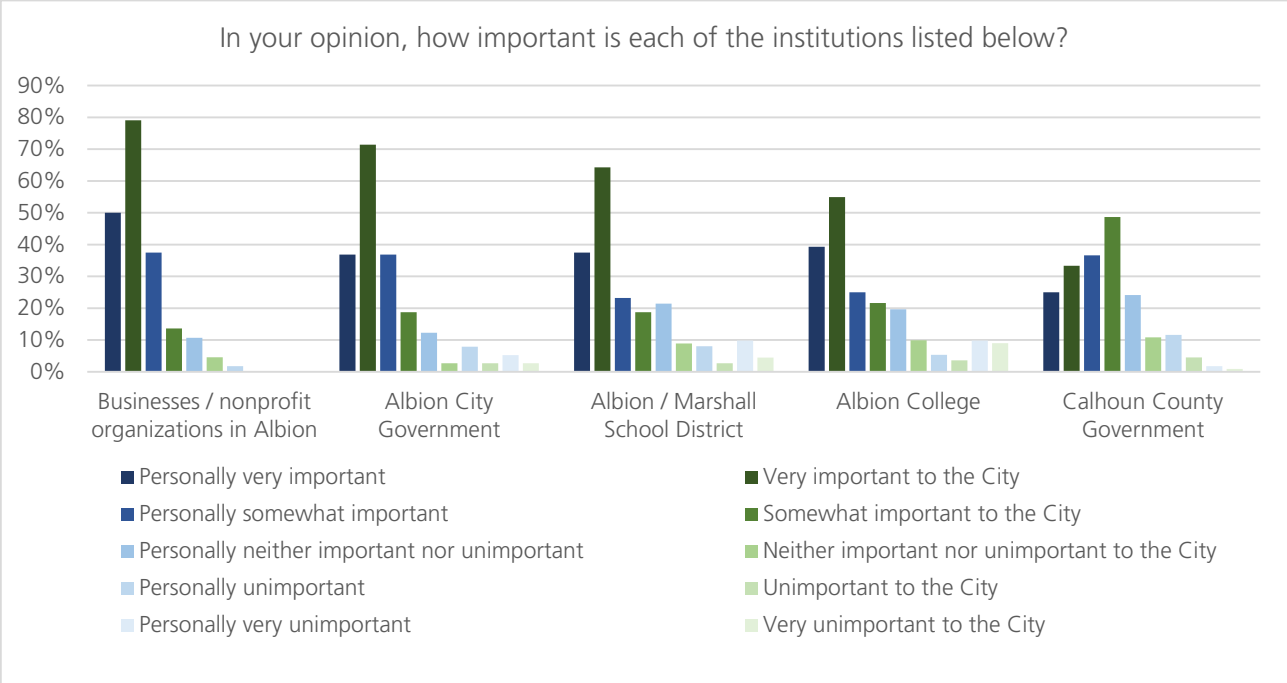
When asked what factors influenced that rating for each respondent individually, participants gave the most favorable assessments to family life, followed by work-life balance and health and safety. The poorest assessments were of education, financial security, and job satisfaction. Taken together, these results suggest that the social aspects of the City are outperforming its economic aspects. Environmental quality ranked squarely in the middle.



When asked to select the three best characteristics of Albion overall, well over half of participants (58%) selected “presence of a diverse community”—the only option to receive a majority of votes, and more than 14 percentage points above the next response. This is a strong finding that the Albion community experiences diversity as a strength, and the third-most common response of “sense of community/community spirit” (37%) suggests that Albion residents are able to knit their diverse population into a cohesive, enjoyable whole. The second most-selected response was “cost of living” (43%), which is the positive presentation of the low marks received for “employment opportunities” (2%); relatedly, “housing affordability” was also cited by a significant number of respondents (30%) as an asset. “Recreation options” also made it into the top third of responses (36%).

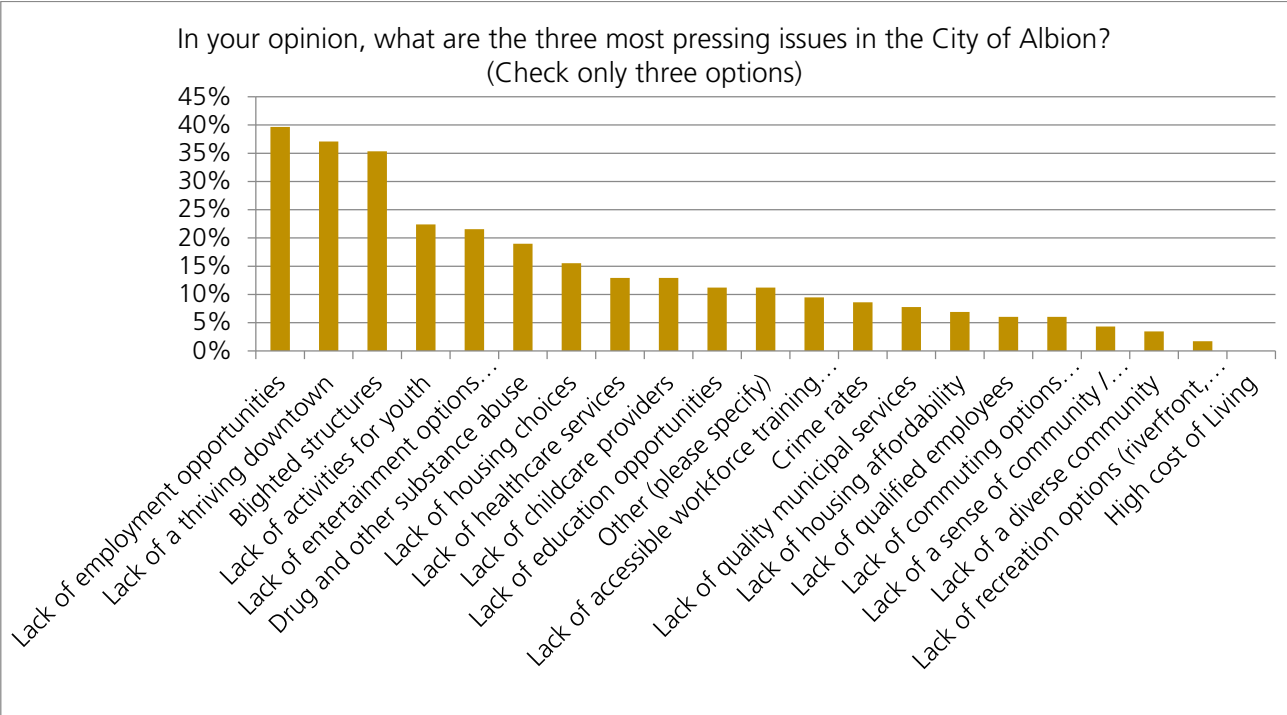


The survey inquired about the importance of various institutions to the daily life of respondents, and also their assessment of those institutions' importance to the overall health and well-being of the City. In both cases, the community's business and nonprofit sector was identified as the most important, followed by Albion City Government. The operations of Calhoun County government were ranked least important among the options given, though not by a significant margin; this finding may also reflect the fact that County government operations are generally less visible to the average citizen. Interestingly, when asked about personal importance, respondents rated Albion College more highly than the Albion/Marshall School district, but those rankings were reversed when considering the City overall. One of the outreach methods was the Albion College e-newsletter, which could account for these results. Across the board, respondents said that these institutions were more important to the City's health and well-being than to their personal daily lives.



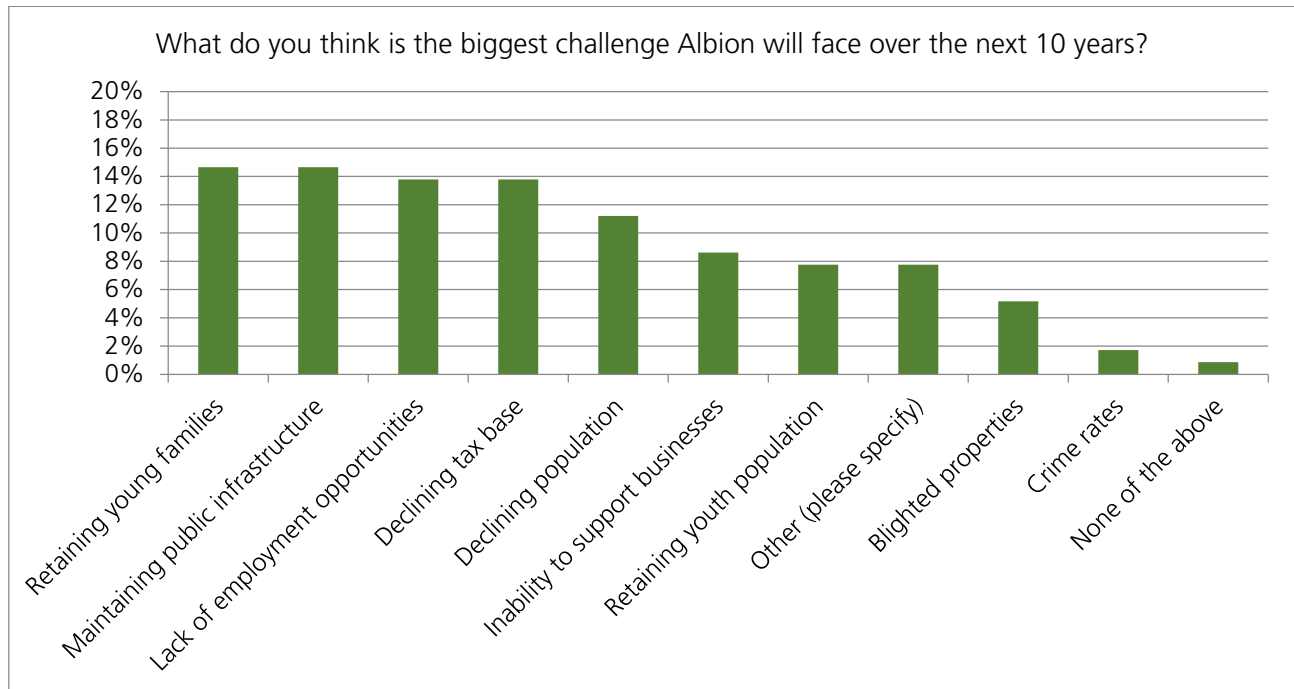
**Major Issues and Challenges**

Albion respondents identified a clear trio of top current pressing issues, all economic in nature: lack of employment opportunities, lack of a thriving downtown, and blighted structures.



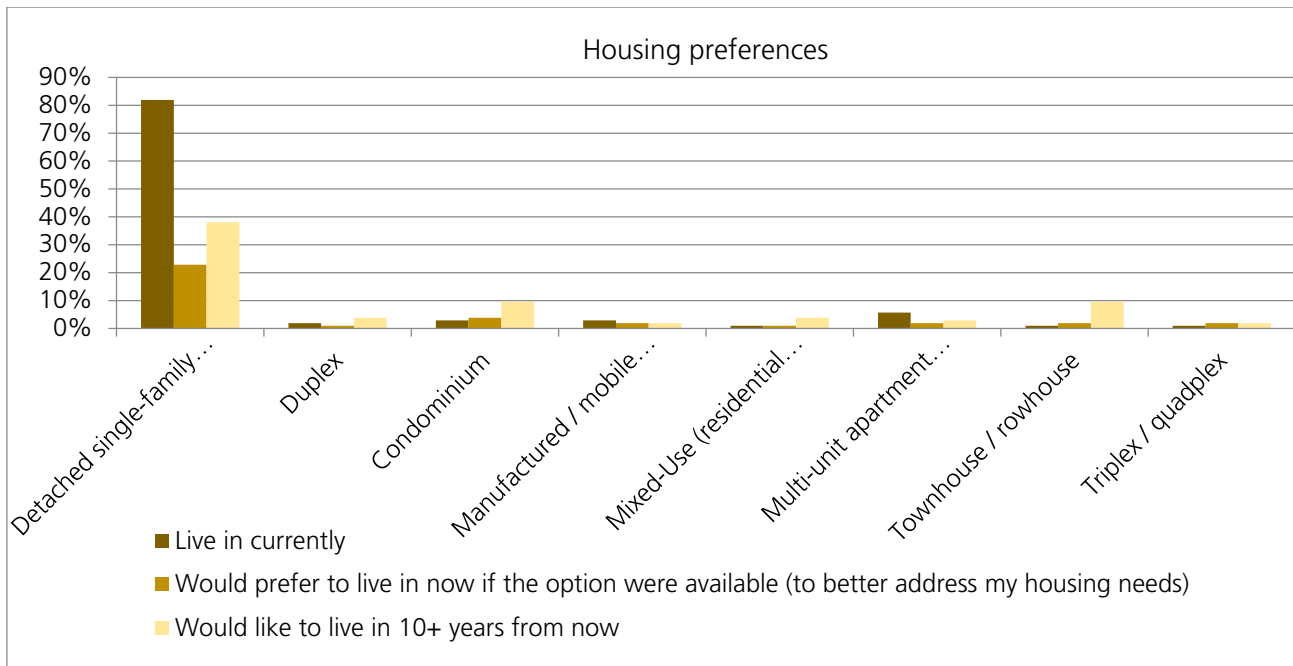


The survey also asked about challenges of the future, within a ten-year horizon. The top responses can be neatly paired: “retaining young families” (15%) will likely be influenced by “lack of employment opportunities” (14%), and “maintaining public infrastructure” (15%) is affected by a “declining tax base” (14%). All these issues are related to the last item in the top tier of responses: “declining population” (11%). Hearteningly, less than 1% of respondents is concerned about crime.

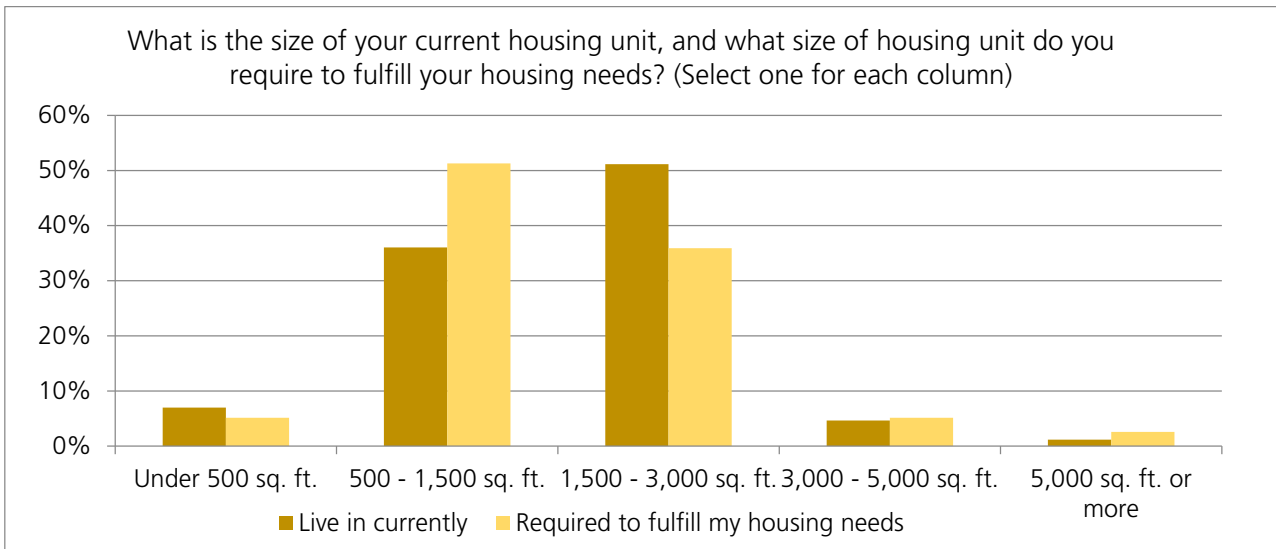


## Housing

Currently, most respondents (82%) live in a detached, single-household home. Those who do not likely live in a multi-unit apartment building (6%), or less frequently, a condominium, manufactured/mobile home (both 3%), duplex (2%) or triplex, quadplex, or above a commercial use (1%). About one-third of respondents went on to indicate a different type of housing that would better meet their current needs; here too, a detached, single-unit home was the most frequently selected response (23% of all respondents), followed by a condominium (4% of all respondents).



Almost three quarters of respondents indicated a housing format that they would like to live in sometime at least ten years in the future, and there was considerably more variety among those choices. Here, only half of those who gave an answer chose the detached format. Condominiums and rowhouses/townhouses were both selected by a significant number of responses, and more people said they would like to live in a duplex or above a commercial use than currently live in either of those formats. Of the 35% of respondents who indicated some kind of barrier to living in their preferred housing type, the most frequently cited was that the housing type they preferred was either not available (18%) or not affordable (13%). Respondents were also asked about the size of their current home, and the size of a home that would meet their housing needs. For those in homes under 500 square feet or above 3000 square feet, the proportions of those respondents was well-matched. However, a much smaller proportion of respondents said that 1,500-3000 square foot house would meet their needs than actually lived in that size house; conversely, there was a larger proportion of those for whom a 500-1,500 square foot home would meet their needs than actually lived in that home. This finding offers support for smaller-sized units across the board, which could include “missing middle” housing formats.



Reinforcing earlier statements about favorable housing affordability in Albion, 54% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “With my household’s current budget, I feel the acceptable housing options in Albion are financially attainable,” whereas 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A very limited number of respondents (about 15%) answered questions about the specific price ranges in which they would be comfortable renting or buying a home. Of those who did, three-quarters cited rent below \$900. When it came to home purchase, about 20% of the limited responses were in the range between \$100,000 and \$200,000, but the most common responses were “I don’t feel financial comfortably buying a home” (26%) and “I am not interested in buying a home in Albion” (32%). Those who already own a home were a bit more forthcoming (59% of total survey-takers answered the question), and almost half (49%) of those who answered the question said \$100,000-\$200,000 while another 19% said \$80,000-\$100,000. The fact that the real estate market experiences highs and lows independently of the overall economy makes it difficult to draw direct comparisons between current and past conditions.

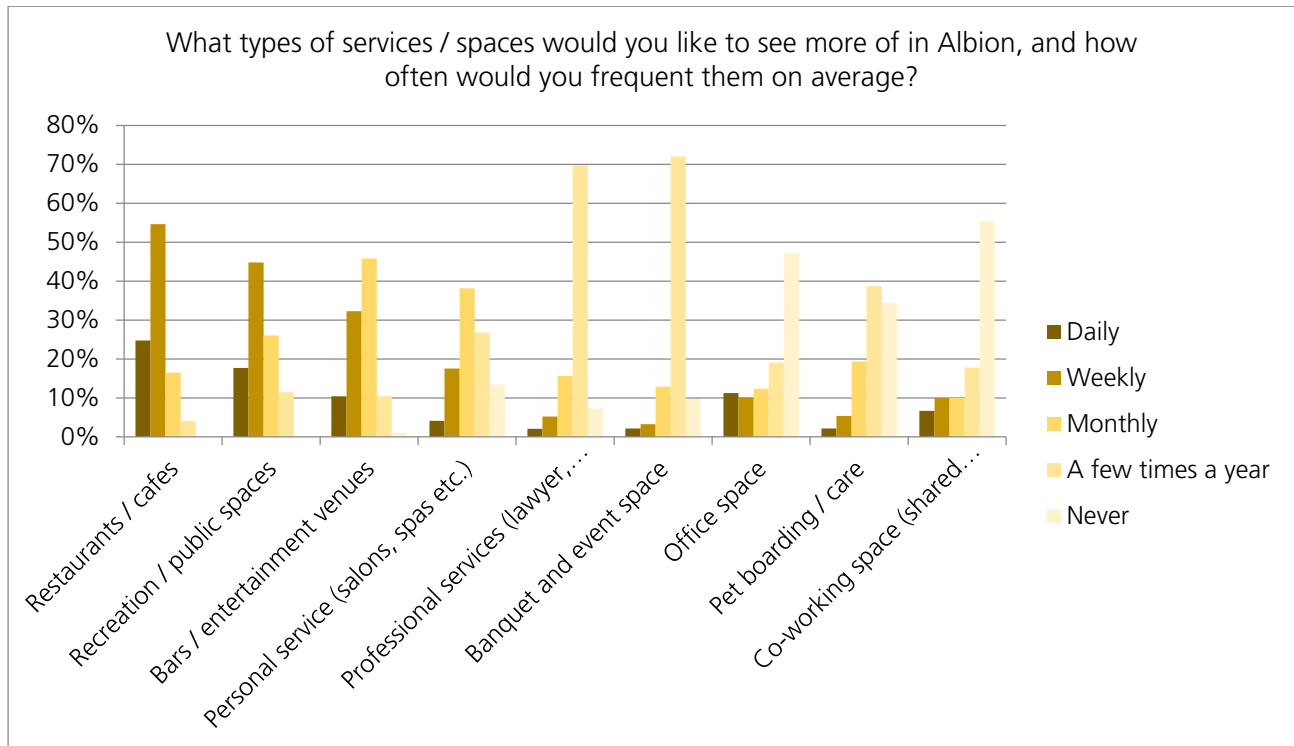
A strong majority of the respondents were homeowners (69%) and there was a significant showing of renters (19%), while 13% indicated that they were neither (not personally responsible for their housing costs). It was somewhat surprising, then, to find that almost half of respondents (47%) “strongly agreed” that the City would benefit from an ordinance insuring that rental properties are regularly inspected for safety, while another 23% also “agreed.” Just 12% were neutral and 15% expressed any disagreement.

## Commercial Development

### Overall

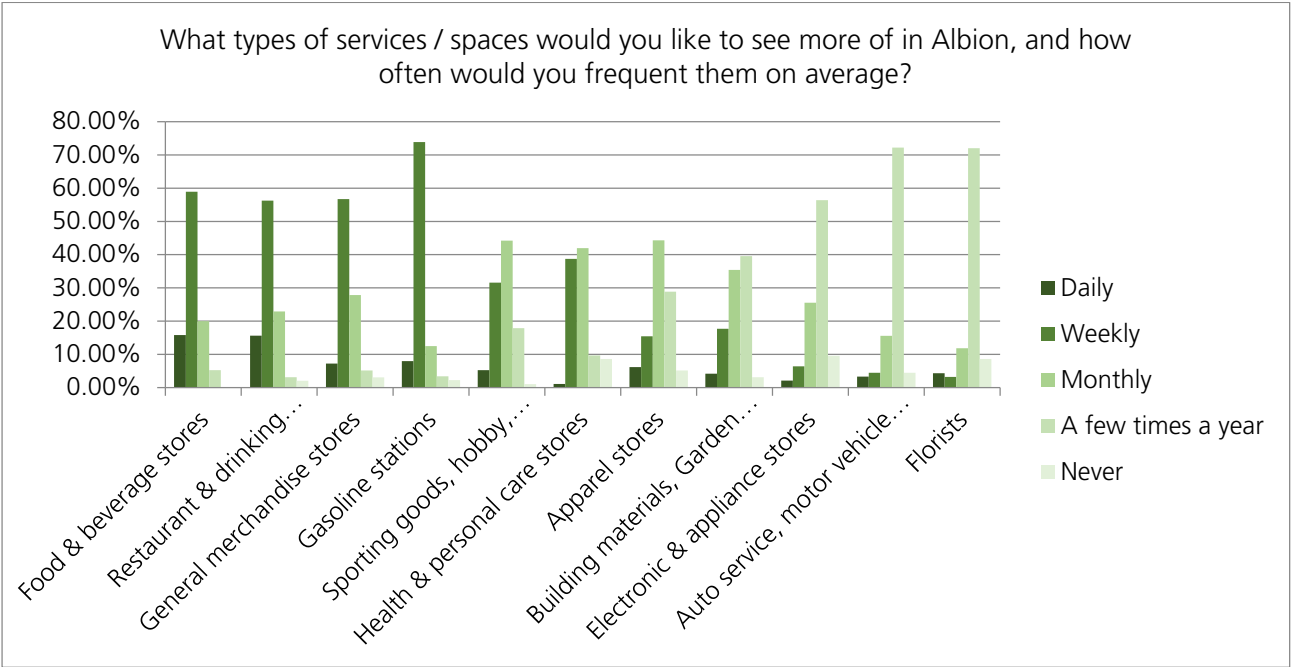
The survey asked how often respondents would frequent a variety of types of non-retail commercial development, if they were available. The strongest response was for restaurants and cafes, followed by recreation or public spaces and then bars or entertainment venues. All of these types could expect daily or weekly attendance from respondents. Professional and personal services, along with banquet and event spaces, could expect much more occasional use. Office and co-working space, along with pet boarding

which could support those activities, were the least desired, with many respondents saying they would “never” use such facilities.



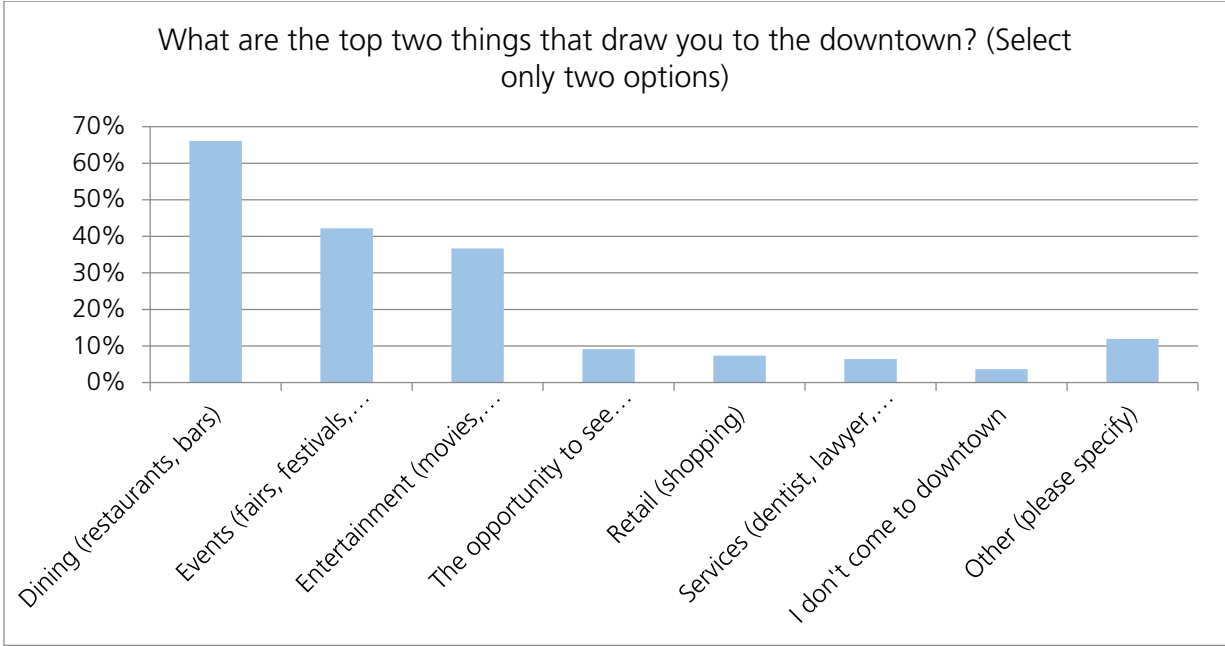
A similar question was asked regarding retail establishments. Here too, food services rose to the top in terms of frequency, alongside staples as general merchandise stores and gas stations. Interest-related establishments (hobbies, sports, books, music, health, personal care, apparel, and building/garden supply) could expect monthly patronage on average, and respondents said they would visit places specializing in electronics, appliances, auto service and parts, and floral arrangements least of all.



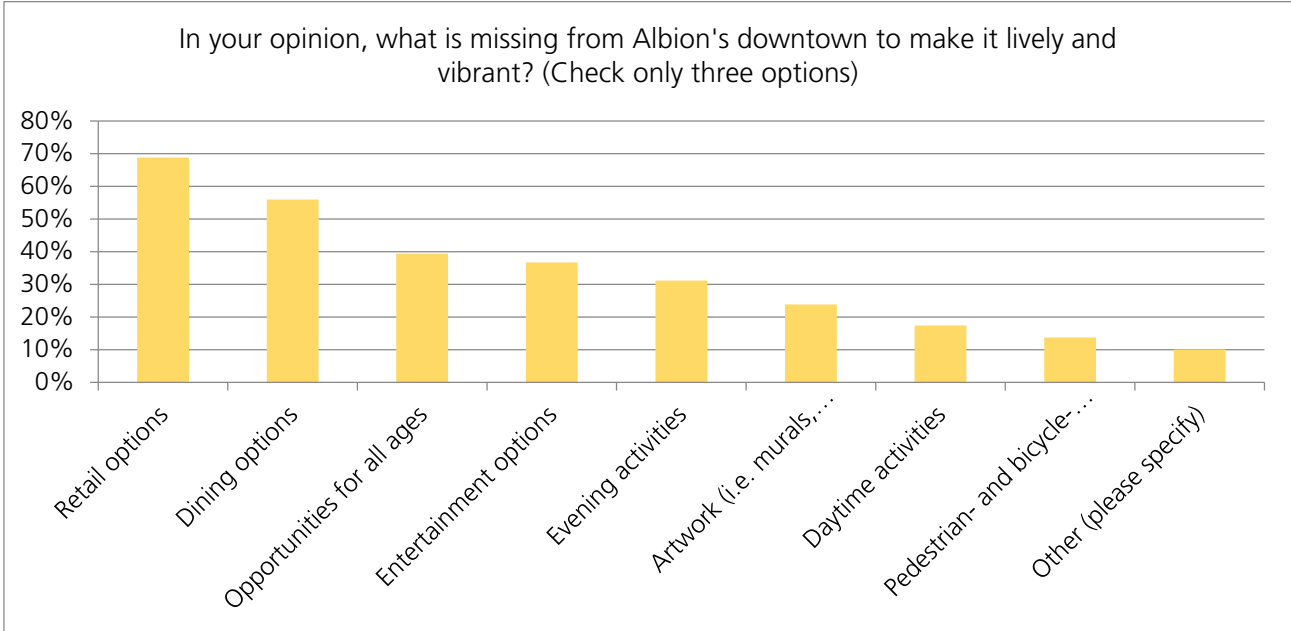


*Downtown*

When respondents were asked how often they go downtown, half (50%) said they visit “weekly” and another 23% said they visit “daily.” No respondents said “never.” Asked to select the top two things that draw them downtown, three responses were the clear winners: dining (66%), events such as fairs, festivals, and community meetings (42%), and entertainment (36%). No other option was selected by more than 10% of respondents except “other,” where the chief responses were work and banking.

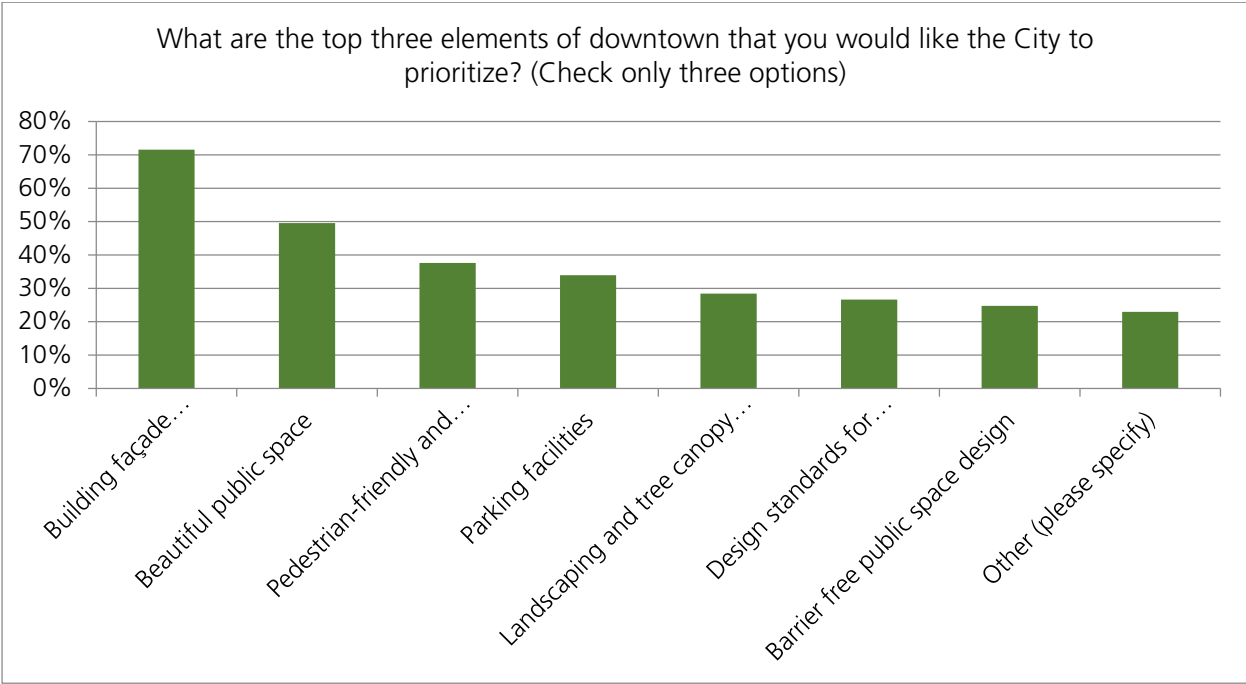


What could make the downtown more lively and vibrant? More of what respondents indicated they already visit frequently and would visit more if available: retail and dining. Entertainment would also be a draw, especially if it included opportunities for all ages and evening hours.



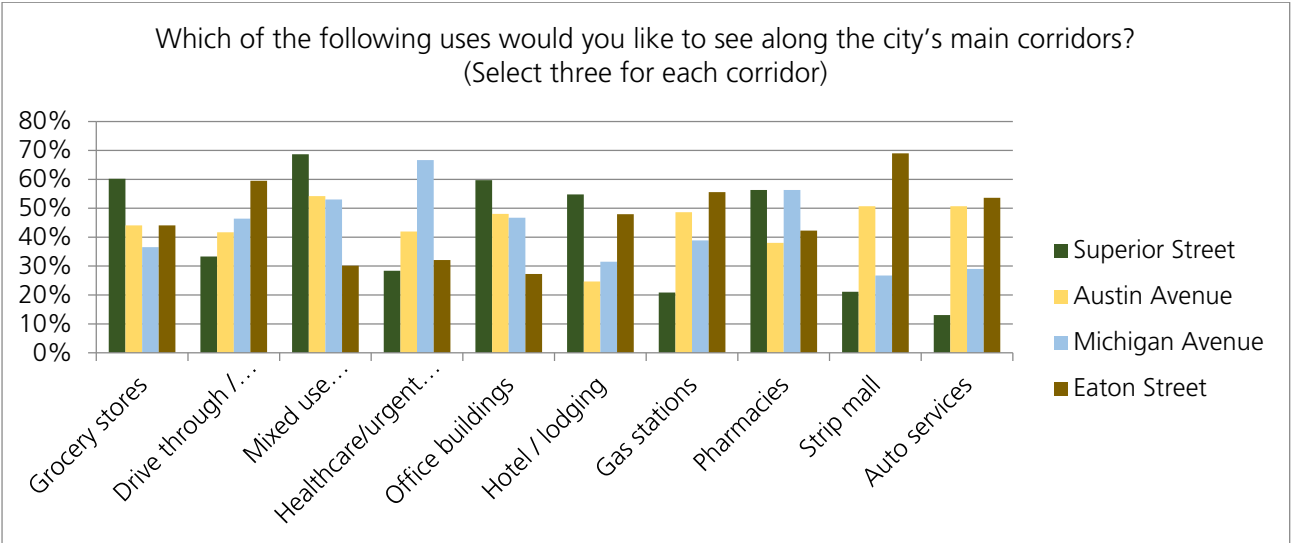
Overall, respondents have noticed a change for the better in the downtown: 77% say it has improved either greatly (33%) or slightly (44%), while only 10% think it has declined and 13% either don't know or

think it's about the same. To continue to improve, survey-takers think the City's top priorities should be improving the facades of existing buildings (72%) and investing in beautiful public spaces (50%).

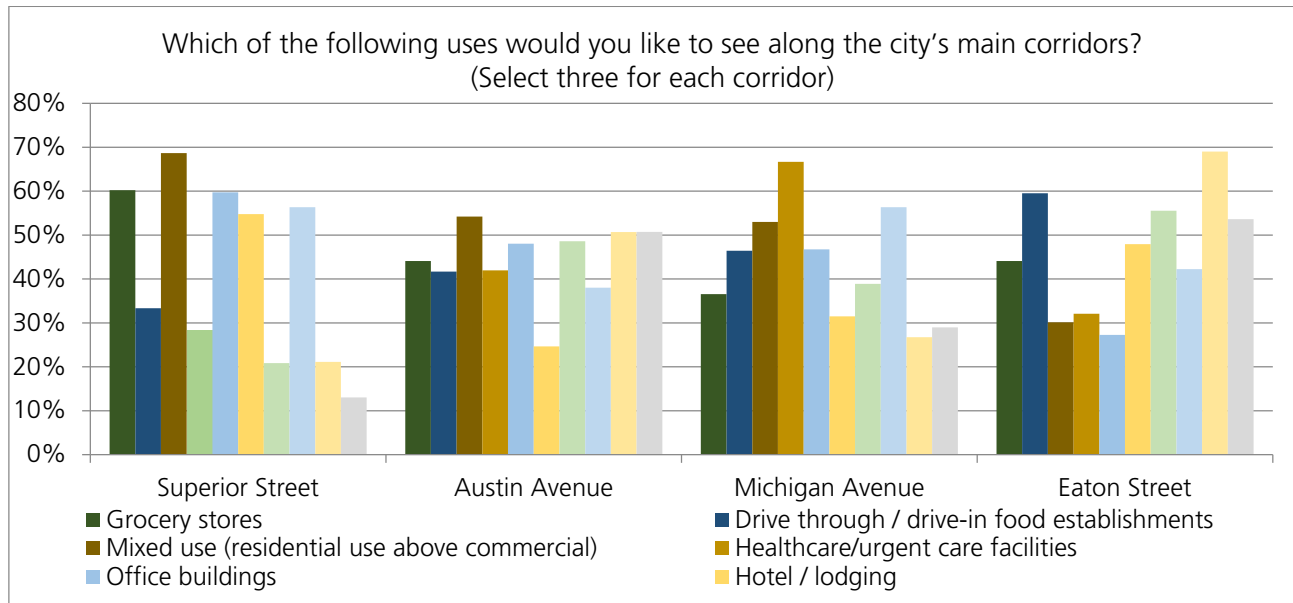


*Corridors*

The survey inquired about types of commercial development that respondents would like to see on each of the City's main corridors. Overall, grocery stores was the most desired, followed by drive-in/drive-through food, residential/commercial mixed use, and health care facilities. Pharmacies, strip malls, and auto services were the least desirable when all responses were combined.



Differences emerge when viewing the results by corridor. Superior Street was seen as a good site for mixed use development, grocery stores, and office buildings, while Michigan Avenue was recommended to host healthcare facilities and pharmacies in addition to mixed use buildings. Strip malls, drive-in/drive-through food establishments and gas stations were suggested for Eaton Avenue. Austin Avenue was represented as almost equally hospitable to all of the suggested uses, with the exception of hotels or lodging.

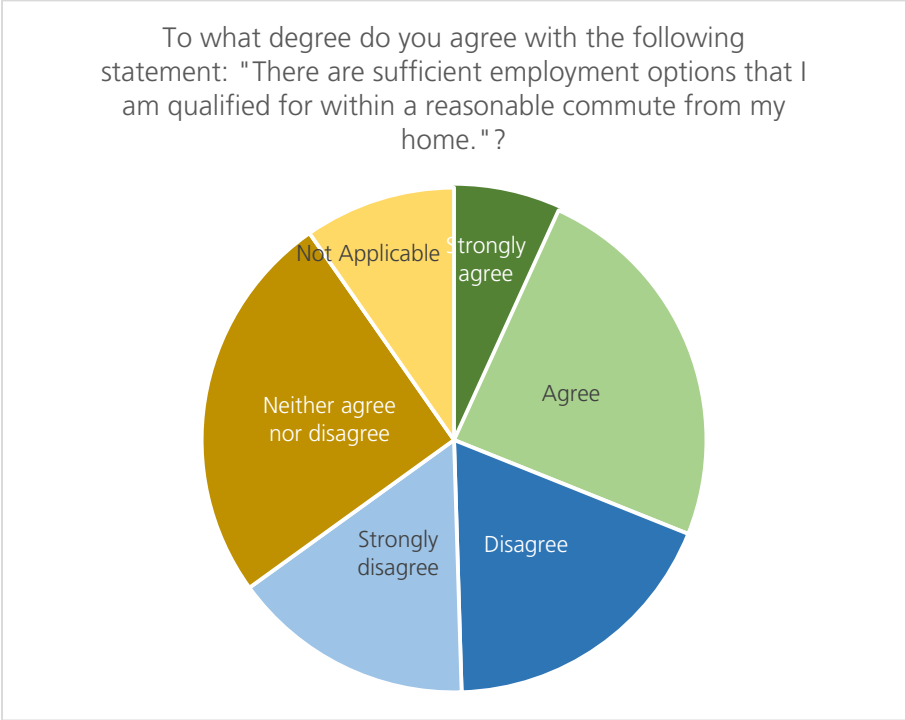


Respondents had definite preferences related to the style of commercial development along the corridors. They strongly preferred neighborhood stores over mini-malls (84% to 16%), and mixed-use buildings that are two to three stories high rather than four to five stories (80% to 20%). They were less definite about a color palette, but still expressed a preference for colorful tones (62%) over earth tones (38%).

### Employment

Survey-takers were fairly evenly split on the subject of how strongly they agreed with the statement, "There are sufficient employment options that I am qualified for within a reasonable commute from my home." About a third strongly agreed (7%) or agreed (24%), while another third disagreed (18%) or strongly disagreed (16%), and the remaining third neither agreed nor disagreed (25%) or said the question was not applicable to them (10%).

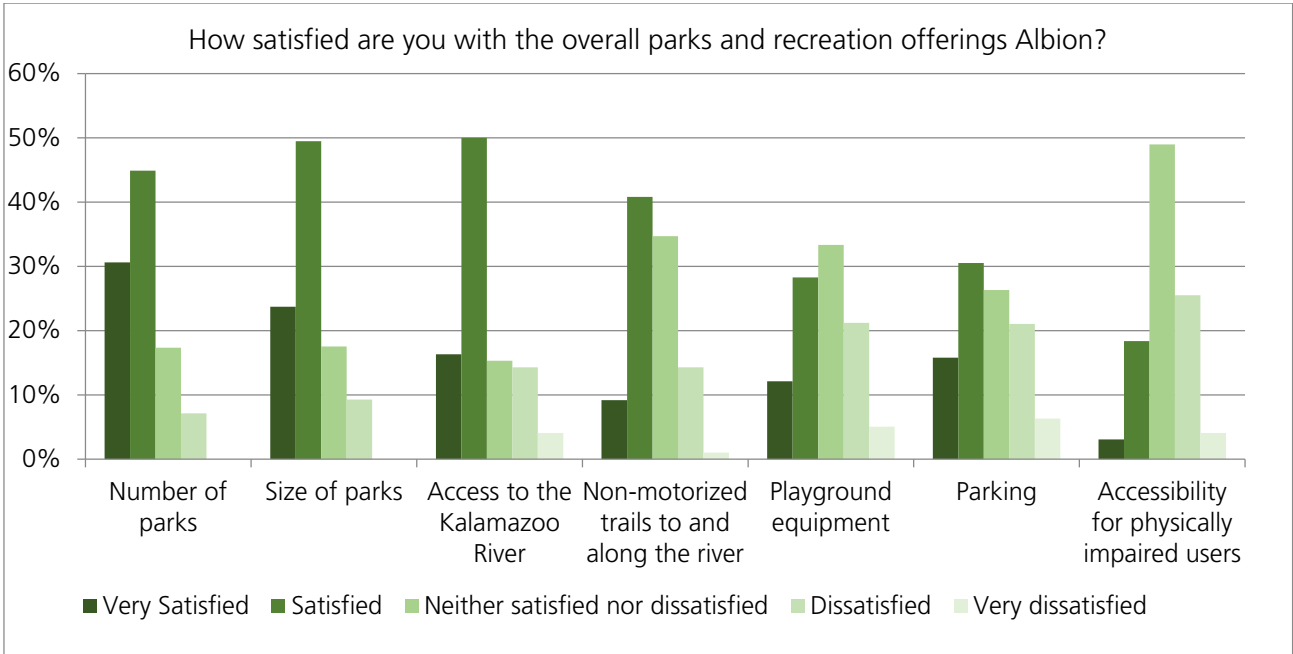




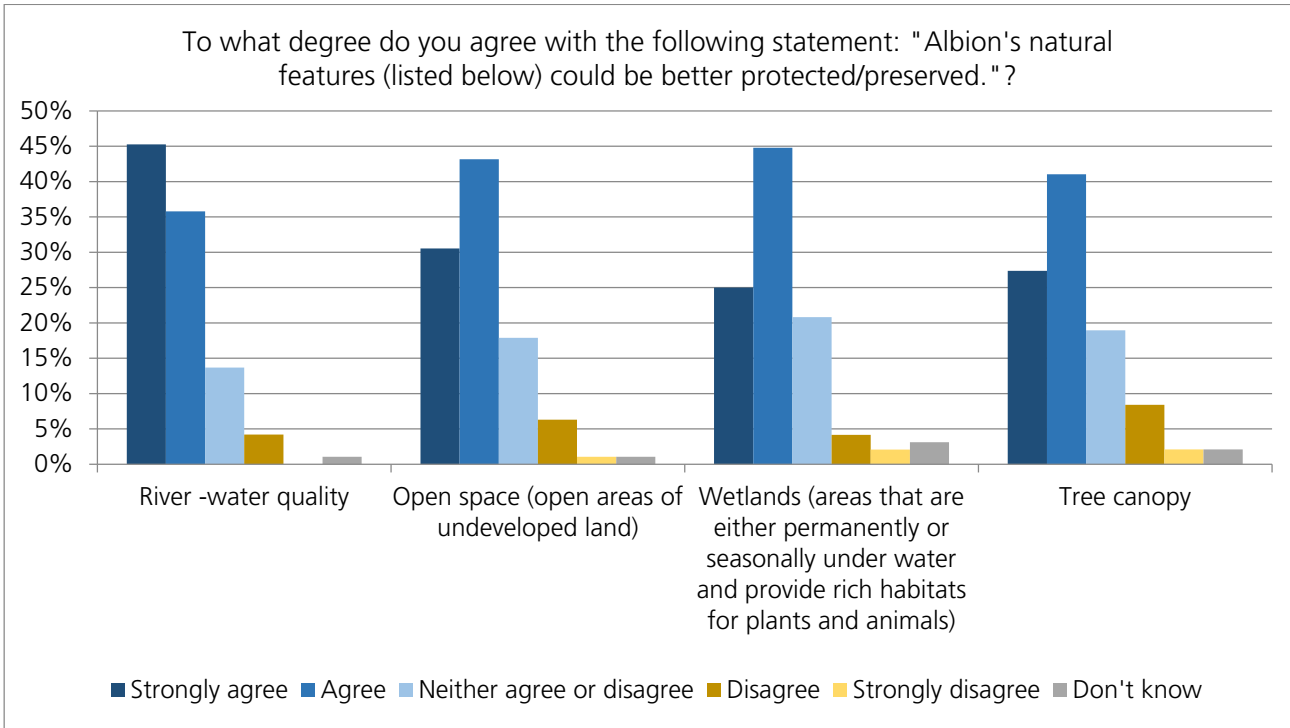
When asked how employment opportunities have changed in Albion over the last five years, an equal proportion found that it had "improved slightly" or "declined slightly" (18% each). However, a smaller percentage found that it had improved greatly (5%) than declined greatly (11%). The greatest proportion said it "stayed largely the same" (30%), and 17% did not know.

**Parks and Natural Features**

Overall, survey respondents reported that they are satisfied with most aspects of parks and recreation in Albion. The number and size of parks received the most favorable ratings, with access to the Kalamazoo River and associated nonmotorized trails close behind. Accessibility for physically impaired users showed the most room for improvement.



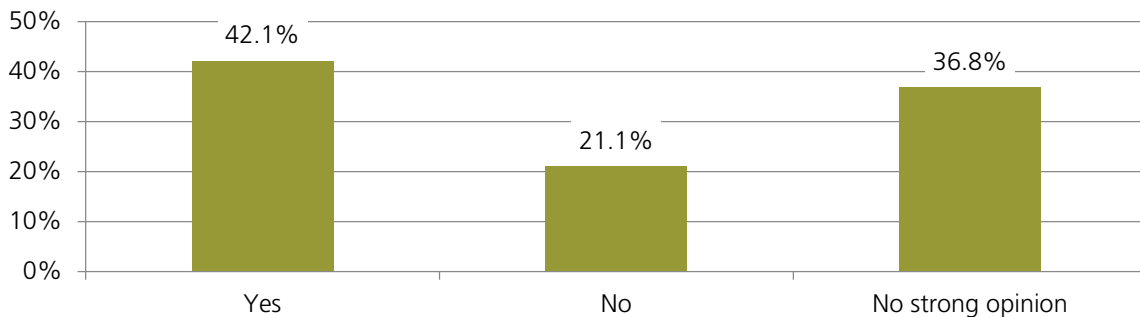
Most respondents felt that natural features are an asset to Albion: 49% strongly agreed, and another 36% agreed. Less than 3% expressed any disagreement at all. Consistent with this, they also felt that specific natural features could be better protected and preserved. Leading this list was the quality of water in the Kalamazoo River, which 4 in 5 respondents agreed could be better protected. A slightly smaller proportion agreed with open space preservation (74%), followed by wetlands (70%) and then tree canopy (68%). Overall, this is a strong showing of support for the City’s natural features.



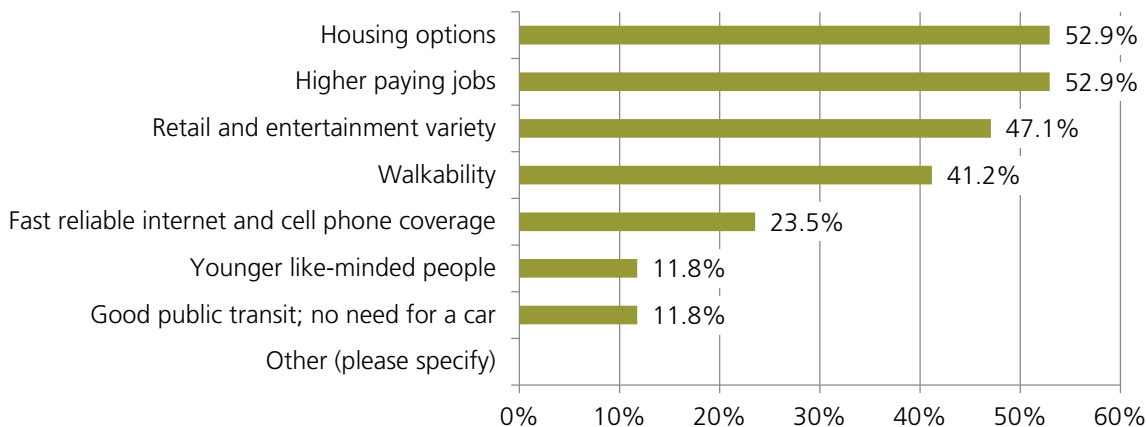
## Albion Comprehensive Plan Youth Survey Summary

On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, Albion College students were invited to participate in Comprehensive Plan engagement exercises. One of the exercises was a youth survey regarding each students’ plans after graduation. A total of 19 people completed the survey after the engagement exercises. Most striking is that roughly 88% of students are planning on leaving the community after graduation. The two biggest reasons students are leaving is to pursue higher education and live in a different/bigger city. When asked what are the top characteristics of a community in which the students want to live housing options, higher paying jobs, and retail and entertainment variety were the top three results. Students were also asked if they would ever consider returning to the community, roughly 13% responded in the affirmative and 40% were unsure. The results from the survey are summarized in more detail below.

### Question 1: Do you like living in your community?



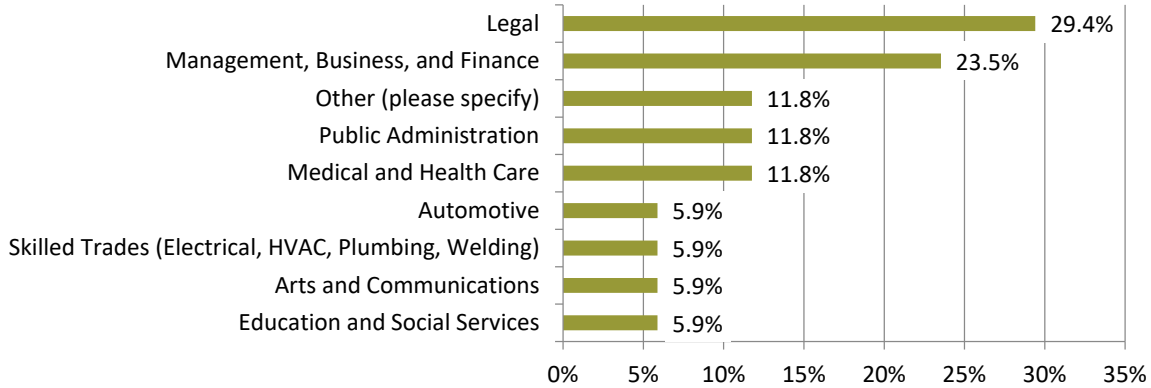
### Question 2: What are the three characteristics of a community you want to live in?



One open response answer indicated a student wanted to live in a community with “diverse school options.”

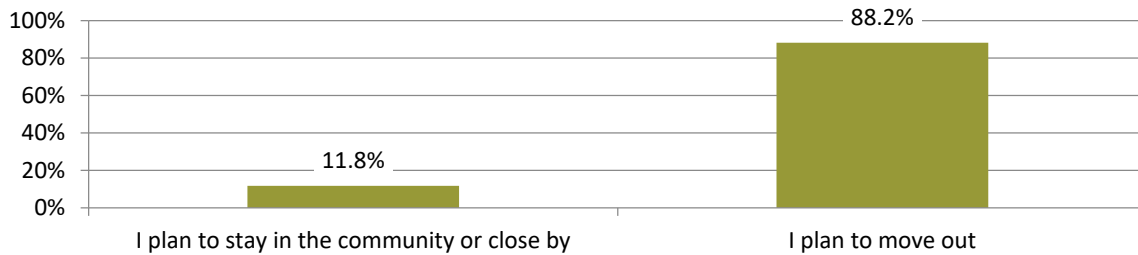


**Question 3: What type of career are you considering after college?**



Other responses recorded through open response include “occupational therapy” (1 student) and “urban planning” (1).

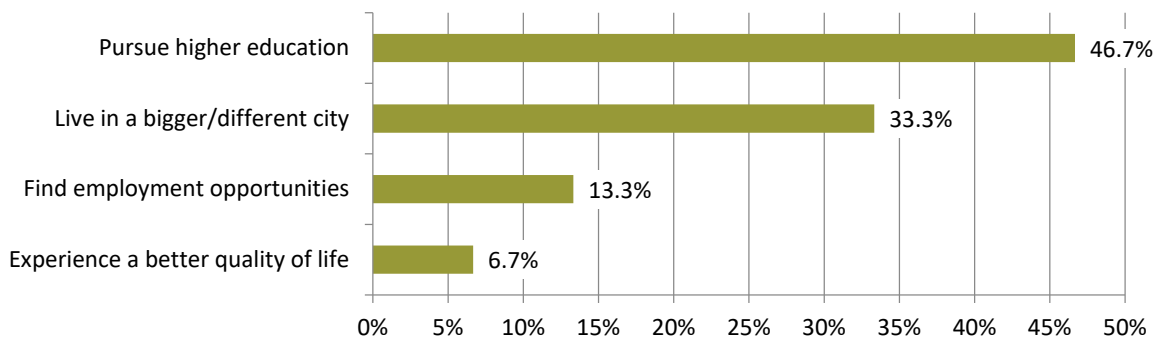
**Question 4: What are your plans after you graduate from college?**



**Question 4a (answered stay in Q4): I plan to stay in the community or close by and...**

Of those who plan to stay in the community after graduation, all responded that they are going to “take some time to evaluate [their] options and next steps.”

**Question 4b (answered move in Q4): I plan to move out of Albion to...**



**Question 5a (answered “pursue higher education” in Q4b): Which city/state do you plan to relocate to pursue higher education?**

Of the seven students who plan to leave Albion to pursue a higher education, two are planning on relocating to Ann Arbor, one to East Lansing, one to Chicago, one to St. Augustine, FL, and two are unsure/unknown.

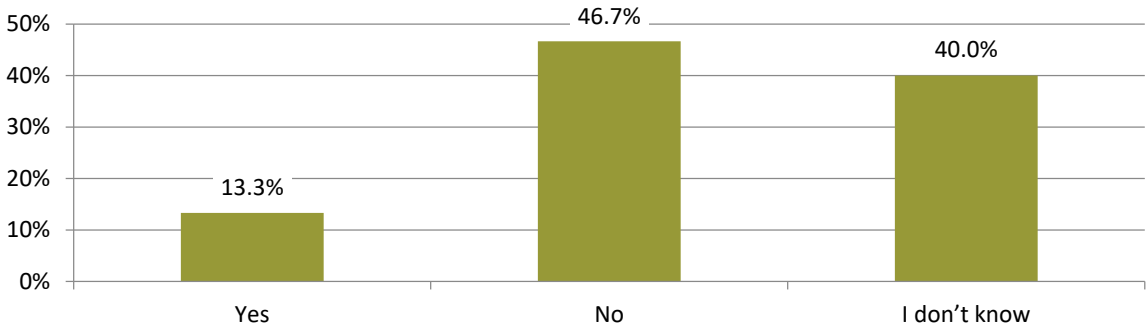
**Question 5b (answered “pursue higher education” in Q4b): Which college/university do you plan on attending?**

The schools listed include University of Michigan (2 students), Michigan State University (1), University of Chicago (1). University of St. Augustine (1), unknown (2).

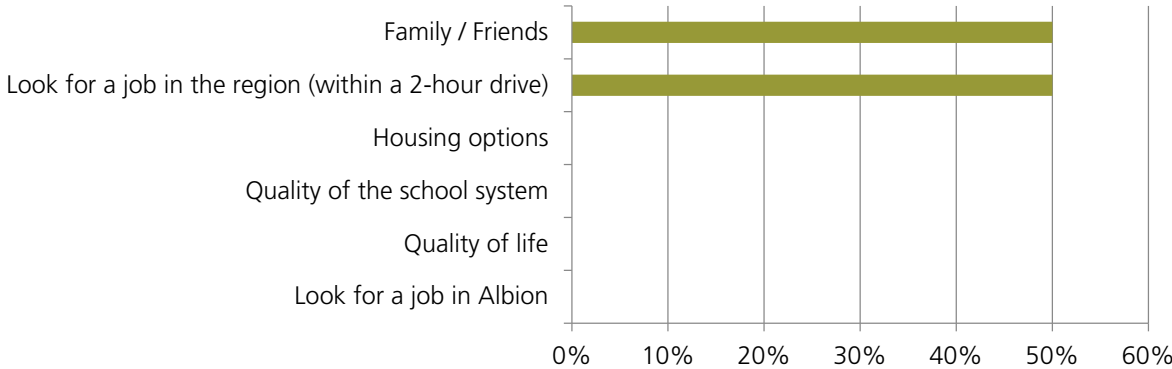
**Question 6: (answered “live in a bigger/different city,” “find employment opportunities,” “experience a better quality of life” in Q4b): Which city/state do you plan to relocate?**

The most common city/state in which students plan to relocate was Detroit (3 students), followed by California (2). Grand Rapids (1), Auburn Hills (1), and “out east or west” (1).

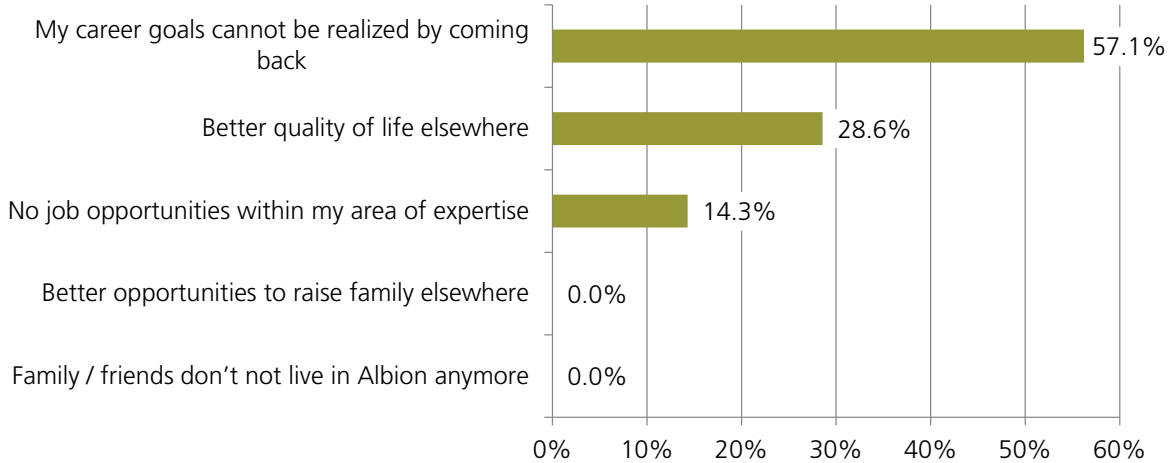
**Question 7 (answered move in Q4): Do you ever plan on returning to the area?**



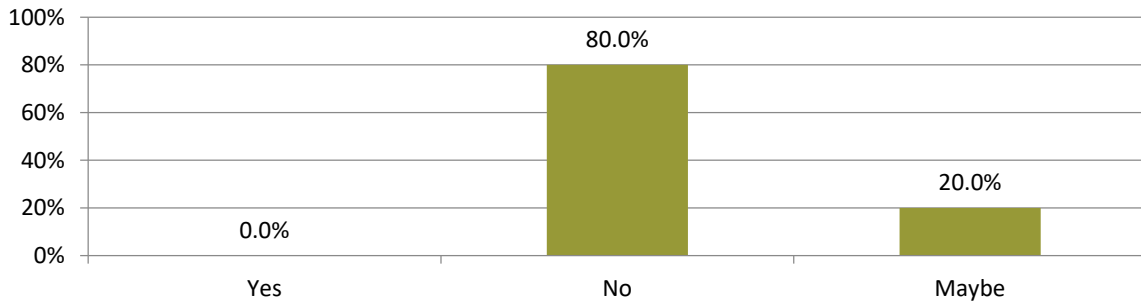
**Question 8 (answered yes in Q7): What is the primary reason you would return to Albion?**



Question 9 (answered no in Q7): What is your primary reason for not returning to Albion?



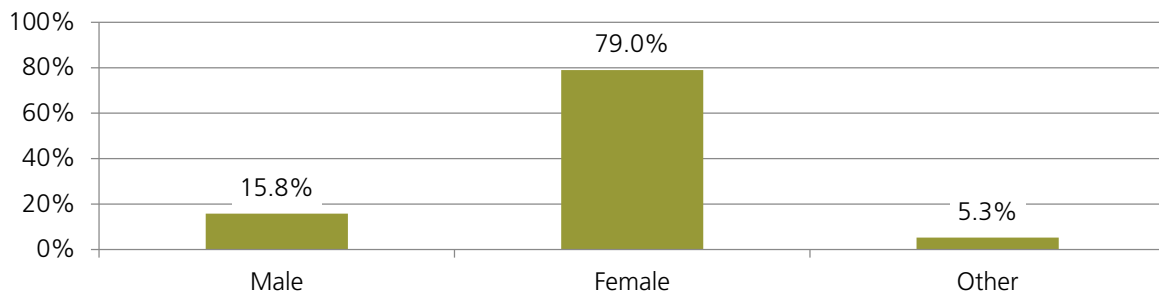
Question 9a (answered "my career goals cannot be realized by coming back" or "no job opportunities within my area of expertise" in Q9): Understanding your career path cannot be realized in Albion, would you consider coming back later in life?



Question 10: What age group do you fall into?

All respondents were aged 18 to 24.

Question 11: What is your gender?



Question 12: How often you use the following social media platforms?

	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Facebook	10.5%	31.6%	21.1%	10.5%	26.3%
LinkedIn	5.3%	15.8%	31.6%	10.5%	36.8%
Twitter	5.3%	0.0%	15.8%	31.6%	47.4%
Tumblr	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%	89.5%
Instagram	36.8%	47.4%	0.0%	5.3%	10.5%
Snapchat	47.4%	31.6%	15.8%	5.3%	0.0%
YouTube	15.8%	10.5%	52.6%	15.8%	5.3%
TikTok	31.6%	15.8%	10.5%	10.5%	31.6%
Vimeo	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	94.7%



## GROUP A



### Exercise 1 (Dream City)

- » Density on the periphery
- » Large central public/park space
- » Contiguous open space
- » No mixing of land uses
- » Large industrial presence



### Exercise 2 (Constraints Added)

- » Infill with single family residential
- » Large urban parks

## GROUP B



### Exercise 1 (Dream City)

- » High-density corridors (Commercial, Mixed-use, Residential)
- » Dense single family residential neighborhoods on the edges of density
- » Dense suburban development
- » Isolated industrial
- » Contiguous open space



### Exercise 2 (Constraints Added)

- » More mixing of land uses
- » Corridor structure preserved

## GROUP C



### Exercise 1 (Dream City)

- » Extremely low density (sprawl)
- » Central commercial mixed-use areas
- » Some subdivision structures
- » "Towers in the Park"
- » Lots of open space



### Exercise 2 (Constraints Added)

- » Maintain the sprawl structure
- » Extremely dense subdivisions
- » Mixing of land uses
- » Lack of contiguous open space



## GROUP D



### Exercises 1 & 2 (Dream City + Constraints Added)

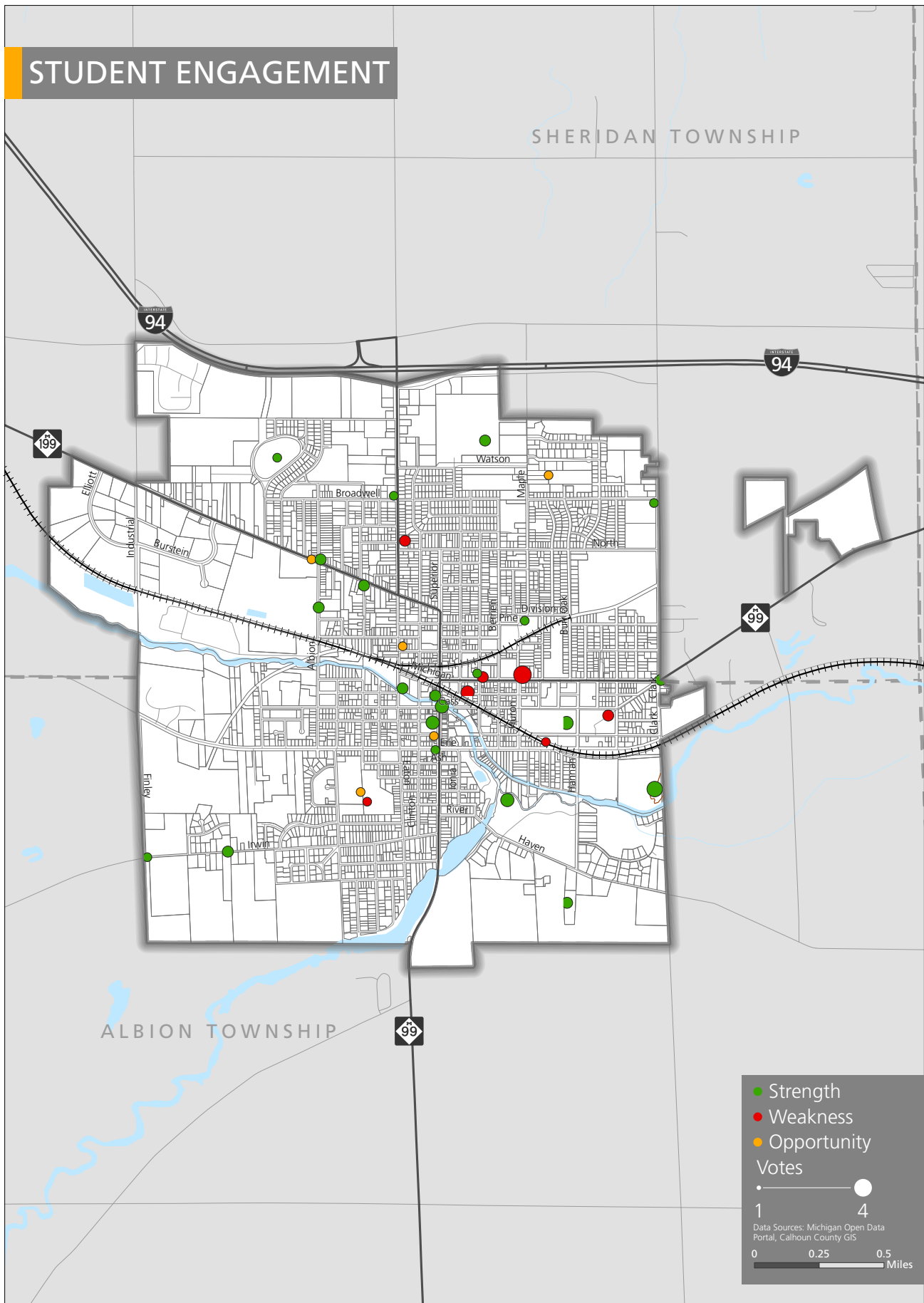
- » Central city a mix of commercial, civic, public, space, mixed-use
- » High-density residential on the edges of the center
- » Dense subdivisions with dedicated public space
- » Contiguous open space
- » Isolated industry
- » Residential corridors



## Appendix D. Community Visioning Results: Collective Priorities

COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES	VOTES
Invest in and advocate for the school system	8
Youth oriented community with activities and spaces	7
Abating and redeveloping contaminated sites	5
Increased public transportation options	4
Development extending beyond downtown district	4
More cooperation and unity in the community	3
Thriving, lively, and vibrant downtown	2
Downtown commercial/residential vacancy rates below 10%	2
Empowered and active community with agency	2
Increased minority and women owned businesses	2
Maintain existing positive community assets	1
Lower poverty and ALICE rates	1
More housing-dense neighborhoods	1
Improved ratio on the number of residents that live and work in Albion	1
Sustainable businesses	0
Healthier housing stock	0
Increased population	0

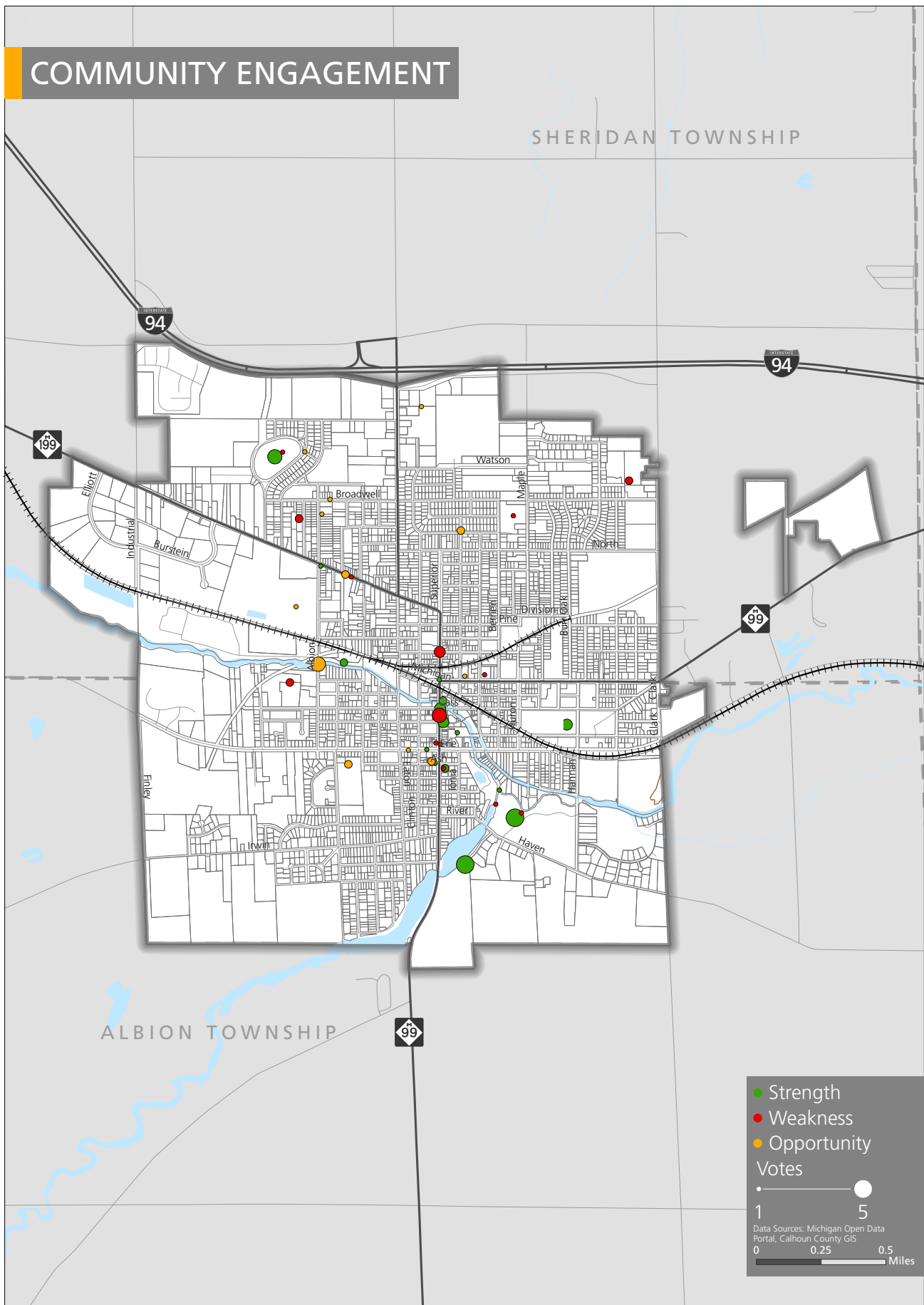
Appendix E. Youth Engagement Asset Mapping Results



*\*The results listed do not reflect the views of City Administration but is the raw data generated by participants.*

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	VOTES
Weakness	College President's House	4
Strength	Whitehouse Nature Center	3
Weakness	Snack Shop	2
Strength	Albion College	2
Strength	Victory Park	2
Strength	The Foundry	2
Strength	Bohm Theatre	2
Weakness	Oaklawn	1
Weakness	Greenspace	1
Weakness	Family Fare	1
Strength	Stirling Books + Brew	1
Strength	Opportunity School	1
Strength	Innovate Albion	1
Strength	Night and Bay	1
Strength	Zick's	1
Strength	New Hope Church	1
Strength	Vet (Irwin Ave)	1
Strength	Vet (5 Points)	1
Strength	Bowling Alley	1
Strength	Grace Temple	1
Strength	Trail head	1
Strength	First Baptist arwan	1
Opportunity	Double vision center, skating rink trying to rebuild	0
Weakness	ATO	0
Weakness	Hazardous green space	0
Opportunity	Abandoned spaces, could be used as storefronts	0
Opportunity	Open green space, graffiti billboards	0
Opportunity	Big open space	0
Opportunity	Tons of potential, Austin Ave next to industrial/shops eateries	0
Strength	Malleable	0
Strength	Biggby	0
Strength	McDonald's	0
Strength	St. Johns Church	0
Strength	Guardian Factory (Kmart?)	0
Strength	MacIntosh Park	0
Strength	Dog Park	0

Appendix F. Community Visioning Asset Mapping Results





*\*The results listed do not reflect the views of City Administration but is the raw data generated by participants.*

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	VOTES
Strength	Victory Park	5
Strength	River trail expansion	5
Strength	McIntosh Park	4
Weakness	Albion street bridge	4
Opportunity	Empty storefronts - beautify! Popups	4
Strength	Albion College	3
Strength	Business District	3
Strength	Bohm Theatre	3
Opportunity	New businesses	3
Strength	Library	2
Strength	River trail	2
Strength	Coca Cola mural	2
Weakness	Business district needs updating and more	2
Weakness	Road condition	2
Weakness	Malleable area - needs to be cleaned	2
Weakness	Brownfield - unusable	2
Opportunity	Community gardens	2
Opportunity	Solar power	2
Opportunity	Infill housing	2
Weakness	Trash	2
Strength	Exit 121 - located off major interstate	1
Strength	MEDC revitalization projects	1
Strength	Brewery mural	1
Strength	Day or night recording studio	1
Strength	People	1
Strength	Kalamazoo River	1
Strength	Stoffer Plaza	1
Weakness	Potential school location	1
Weakness	Erie St road condition	1
Weakness	Broadwell St road condition	1
Weakness	Malleable Contaminated site	1
Opportunity	Victory Park	1
Opportunity	New senior housing development - location not chosen	1
Opportunity	New businesses	1
Opportunity	Anna's House of Flowers	1
Opportunity	Parks	1
Opportunity	Munger hall as a building	1
Opportunity	Youth programs at library	1
Opportunity	Caldwell School site redevelopment - more youth focused intergenerational recreation	1
Weakness	Houses falling down	0
Opportunity	McIntosh Park	0

