

Durand, Michigan

Downtown Development Strategy

Spring 2018

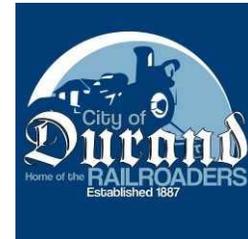
Foreword

Prepared by

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This report is the culmination of work by a senior capstone Practicum group from the Michigan State University (MSU) Urban & Regional Planning program. This course is specifically designed to provide the students with real-world experience, and to provide planning services to communities in Michigan. The City of Durand applied in hopes of garnering a revitalized vision for Downtown Durand.

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Executive Summary

Durand, Michigan is a historic railroad city in mid-Michigan located at the intersection of two rail lines. This project focused on promoting growth and expanding opportunity in the downtown, including its small town feel and iconic Durand Union Station building (The Depot). The city has already made strides in making the downtown streetscape welcoming and interesting. By offering a variety of dining and commercial options, as well as special annual community events, the downtown brings in residents and visitors. By assessing the strengths of downtown and seeing what challenges the city still faces, the Practicum Team has created a report that emphasizes how Durand can foster a more consistent and vibrant downtown.

The overall goal of planning and development efforts in this report are to promote a cohesive downtown area that draws new businesses in and supports existing businesses. Improving the physical downtown space, promoting of the downtown to residents and visitors, and connecting the downtown assets to other parts of the city is vital in ensuring the long-term viability of revitalization efforts.

In order to understand the steps necessary to reach these goals, the practicum team compiled and analyzed data regarding the existing conditions in the City of Durand and in the downtown area specifically. This background information on the current state of the downtown informed the recommendations on attracting and retaining viable uses in downtown structures.

Based on the assessment and analysis of Downtown Durand, the following conditions were realized:

Assets:

- The events that Durand currently hosts are well run and unify the community.
- Durand has plentiful examples of buildings with historic charm.
- Previous downtown revitalization efforts have made sections of the streetscape enjoyable for pedestrians to explore the downtown.

Challenges:

- Durand has had trouble getting new volunteers to take over established community events or start new ones.
- Vacancies are common in the downtown area and many structures show signs of decay or damage.
- Durand lacks a unified visual identity in its downtown.
- Durand lacks some essential businesses for a complete downtown.
- The railroad tracks running through the city act as a barrier between the downtown and the historic Depot building.

Recommendations:

Downtown Durand has great potential to become a more dynamic downtown. The following three thematic recommendation categories have been established based on the existing conditions of the community

Placemaking- Encourage the development of public spaces to promote healthy and happy lifestyles, while capitalizing on the community's existing assets.

- Promote and maintain design standards consistent with the city's historical character.
- Further develop a city marketing and tourism strategy with regional coordination.
- Increase amount of public green space in the downtown project area.
- Promote Durand's railroad heritage, including the use of the Durand Union Station (Depot).

Revitalization- Attract businesses to Durand that will draw people downtown and reinvigorate the local economy.

- Carry out Durand's Master Plan goal of mixed use development to combat vacancies and blight.
- Attract businesses to the downtown area by bringing in missing retail, community facilities, and/or recreational opportunities to serve as destination businesses.
- Host additional public events in Downtown Durand.

Connectivity- Connect people to the downtown area to increase pedestrian and economic activity.

- Improve corridors and overall city connectivity into the downtown by focusing on beautification and infrastructural efforts for walking and biking routes.
- Improve physical and visual connections between areas of the city divided from downtown by the train tracks.
- Capitalize on existing transportation infrastructure.

1 Introduction

The City of Durand, Michigan is located in central Michigan, along I-69 between Lansing and Flint. Its strategic location along the railroad was essential in its establishment and has proved to be a vital asset throughout Durand's history. Recently, the downtown has struggled to draw visitors and provide long-term retail options, resulting in vacancies and areas that are vulnerable to blight.

Because the Durand community is proud of their city and railroad heritage, they are looking for ways to revitalize the downtown and continue to draw people to the area through economic development initiatives and beautification. The city commissioned a Downtown Economic Enhancement Strategy in 2004, which they hope to update and build upon. This project will also find new ways for Durand to adapt to quickly evolving retail trends, marketing strategies, and transportation practices.

Another important factor in the revitalization of Downtown Durand is the possibility of influential future development (namely manufacturing development). The city is seeking ways to adapt and position itself for possible influxes of people, jobs, and amenities.

In January 2018, the City of Durand commissioned the MSU Practicum Team to develop a Downtown Development Strategy. This document provides recommendations for development supported by data, public feedback, and successful downtown enhancement examples from similar communities.

3 History of Durand

The City of Durand, formerly Vernon Center, was originally mapped and planned in 1836. Its history is rooted in the success of the steam locomotive train companies that were common all across the state by the early 20th century. In 1867, Vernon Center began to take root with the addition of a US Postal Office. Vernon Center changed its name to Durand in 1876, honoring the US Congressman and former Flint Mayor George Durand. Durand was incorporated as a village in 1887 with a population of just under 250 people, and then later incorporated as a city in 1932. The population of the city experienced explosive growth between 1890 and 1900, rising from 255 to 2,134 in one decade, a 737% increase. Durand continued to grow much more slowly, but steadily, until 2000. After 2000 the city's population began to decline.

The then Village of Durand was placed along the Detroit and Milwaukee railroad lines. The importance of the railroad culture is still an integral part of the city; the iconic, historic Depot (constructed in 1903) has been well maintained, and there are still active rail lines for both freight and passenger uses. The Depot has taken up private ownership and hosts a rail museum, and is an active Amtrak stop. Durand has continually had a strong connection to railroad infrastructure and activity, while the outlying areas of the city are rural, serving agricultural purposes.



Figure 1 Durand Depot in 1918¹



Figure 2 Durand Downtown in 1959²

¹ Image Source: shiwasseehistory.com

² Image Source: waterwinterwonderland.com/movietheaters

4 Socio-Economic Profile

Downtown Durand is the cornerstone and largest downtown business district in southern Shiawassee County. The data in this section gathered will show the economic, social, educational, and housing characteristics of the Downtown District and the surrounding city. The data presented in this profile was gathered using a combination of U.S. Census data and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Business Analyst data. The methodology used in analyzing Durand's profile helps illustrate the past, present, and future for the city, and reveals the economic development potential for Downtown Durand and its businesses. Insights gathered from this section will inform how this report will assess growth potential and growth oriented recommendations.

Population

The 2017 population of the City of Durand was estimated at 3,406; 4.08% (139) of those residents reside in Downtown Durand (ESRI Business Analyst, 2017). Both the city and downtown populations experienced post-recession declines. The downtown population drop was not as severe as that of Durand as a whole. Both the downtown and the city populations stabilized by 2017. ESRI Business Analyst estimates project the downtown maintaining its population numbers into 2022, while the city as a whole is expected to drop by 48 residents by 2022. This gradual population decrease will continue to affect the markets that local businesses are looking to attract, forcing some businesses to look outside of the city limits for customers.

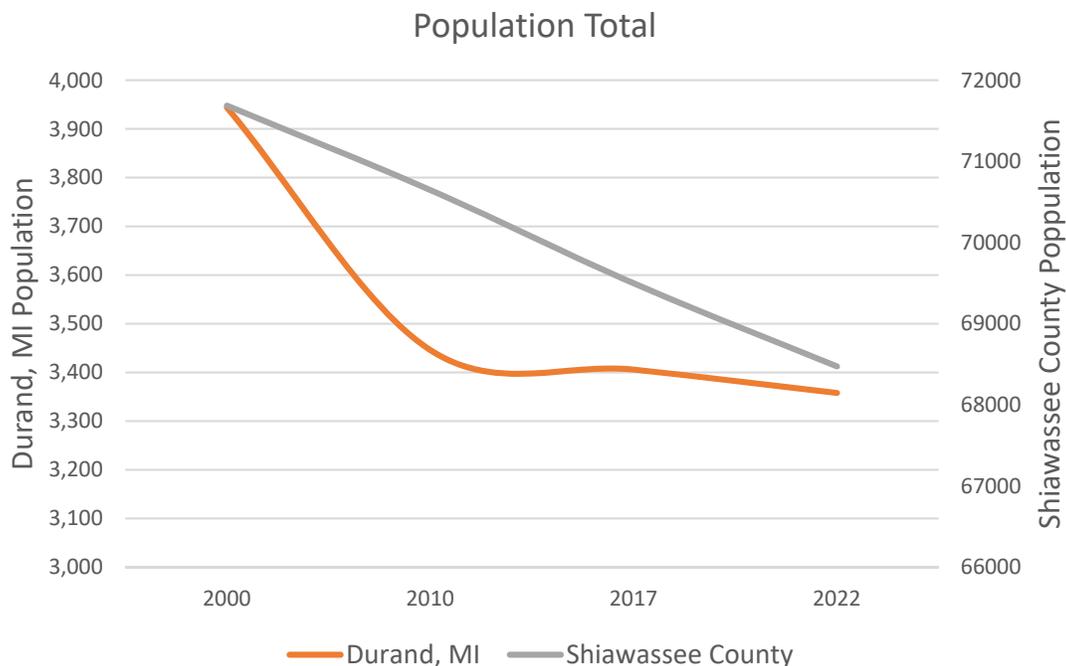


Figure 3 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017 & projection), U.S. Census (2000 and 2010), analysis by authors

Age

The median age in Durand in 2000 was 34.7, while in 2017 it grew to 39.6, indicating that the population of the city is aging (U.S. Census 2000, ESRI Business Analyst 2017). The Downtown area, compared with the rest of Durand and Shiawassee County, has a larger proportion of school-aged children (those under 18). Durand has been able to grow its 20-29-year-old resident population, from 10.5% of its population in 2000 to 14% of its population in 2017. It is also worth noting the large share of people who are older than 80 who reside within the City of Durand. This demographic presence can be attributed to the concentration of assisted living facilities and senior apartments directly north of the Downtown District in Durand, including: Sycamore House, The Lodge of Durand, and Durand Senior Care & Rehab Center.

Figure 4 Source: U.S. Census (2000), analysis by authors

Age Distribution 2010

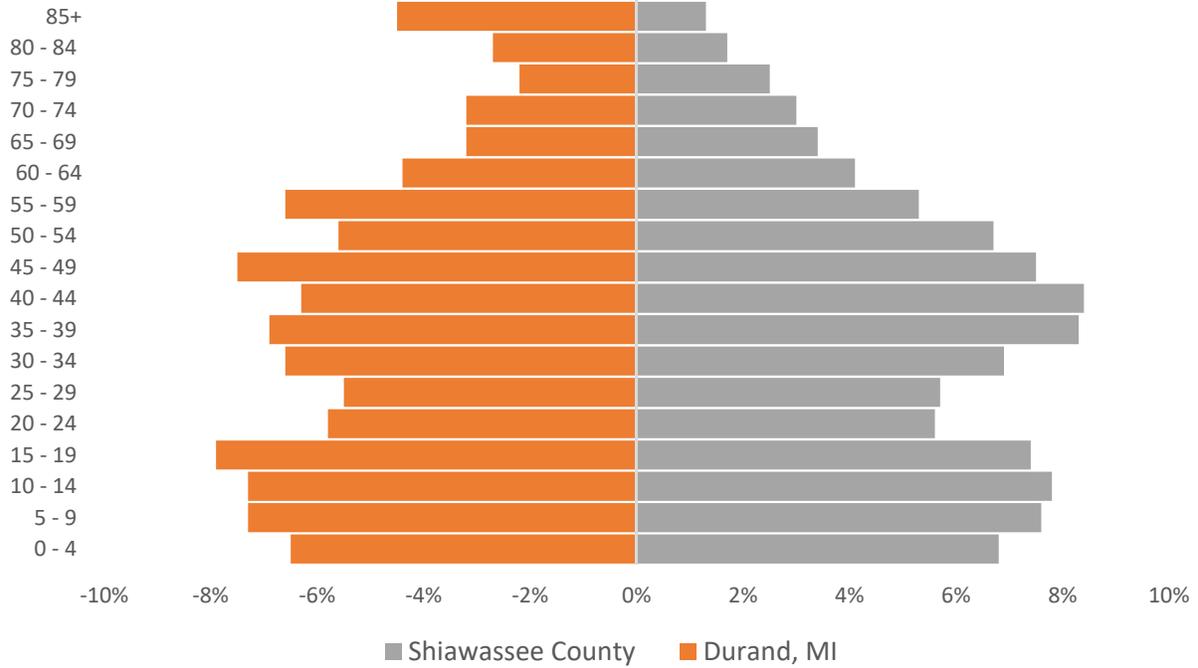


Figure 5 Source: U.S. Census (2010), analysis by authors

Age Distribution 2017

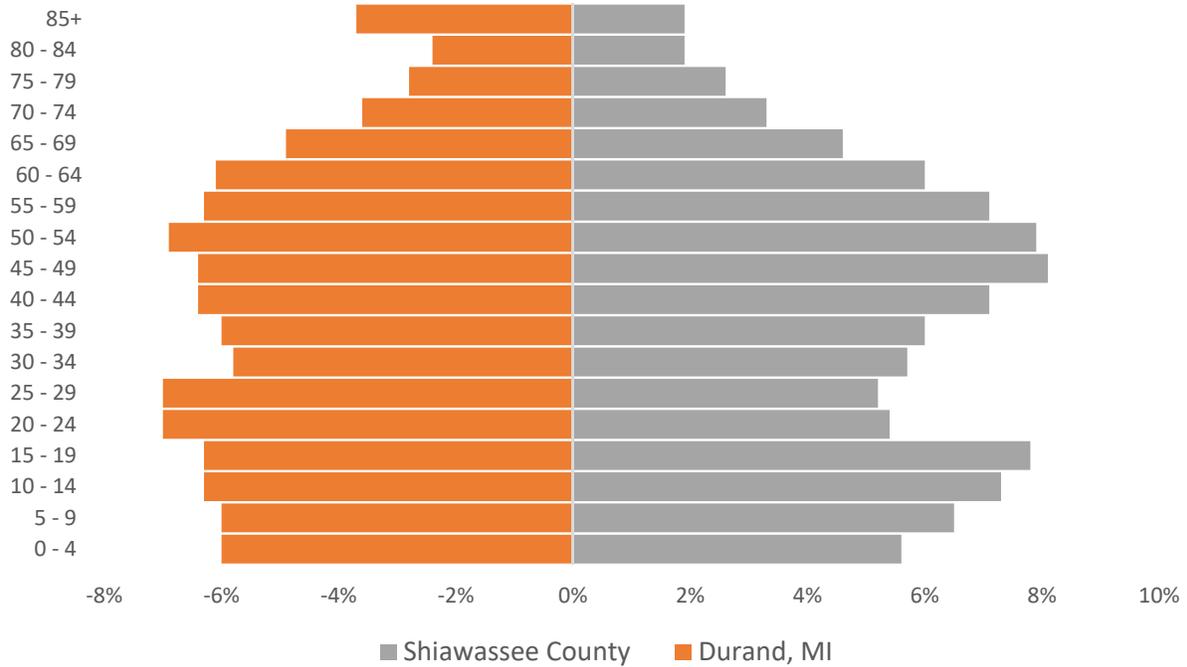
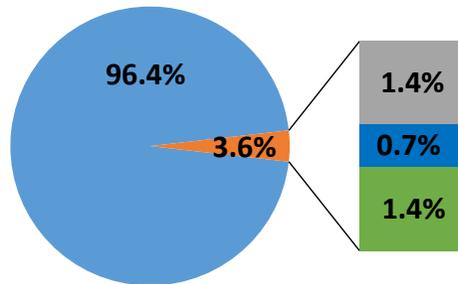


Figure 6 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), analysis by authors

Race

Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County are not racially diverse. Most of the population is white, with Durand being over 95% white since 2000 (U.S. Census 2000, ESRI Business Analyst 2107). Although Downtown Durand and the City of Durand both had a larger proportion of non-white residents than Shiawassee County in 2010, Shiawassee County had more diversity in its non-white population. Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County all became more diverse between 2010 and 2017. Downtown Durand's proportion of non-white residents grew the most out of the three, from 3.6% to 5.7% (Figures 7, 8, and 9).

Racial Distribution: Downtown Durand 2010



Racial Distribution: Downtown Durand 2017

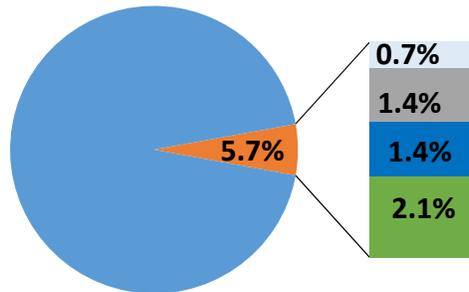


Figure 7 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2010, 2017), analysis by authors

Racial Distribution: Durand, MI 2010

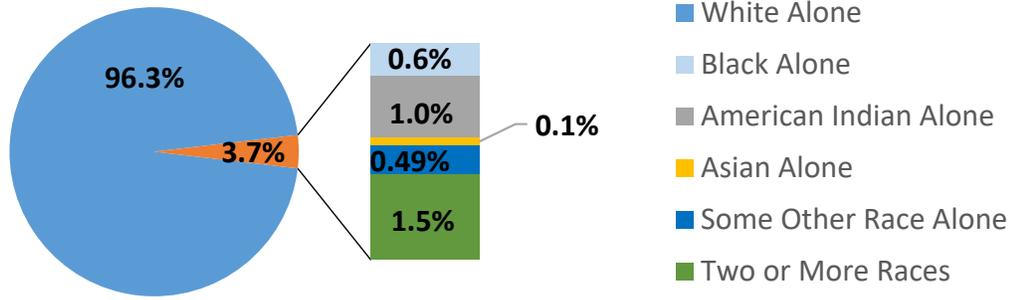
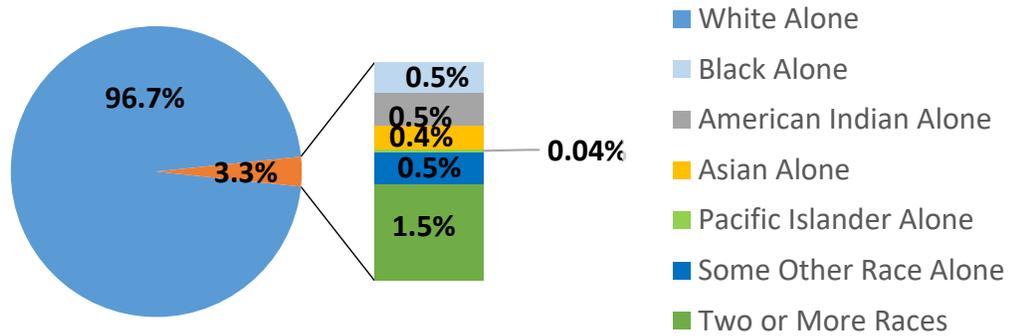


Figure 8 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2010, 2017), analysis by authors

Racial Distribution: Shiawassee County 2010



Racial Distribution: Shiawassee County 2017

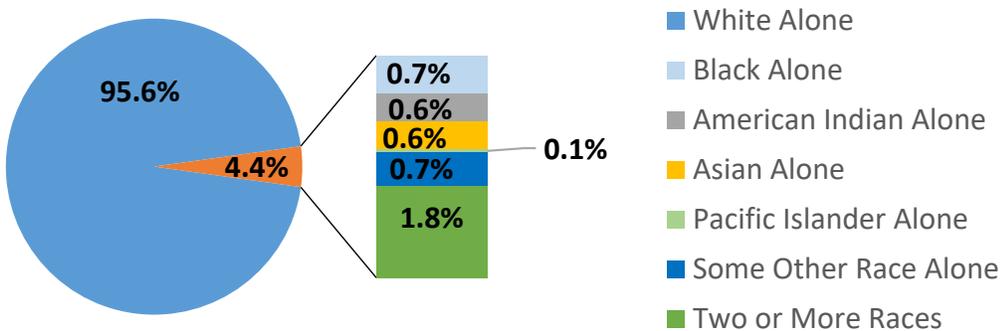


Figure 9 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2010, 2017), analysis by authors

Education

Educational Attainment between Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County is similar. All three have a plurality of either “Some College, No Degree” or “High School Graduate”. These two levels of educational attainment make up a majority in each of the three areas. Downtown Durand is both the only area of the three that has no residents with below a 9th grade education and has the highest percentage of residents with a graduate or professional degree (8%). Shiawassee leads both Downtown Durand and the City of Durand in percentage of residents with either an Associate Degree or Bachelor's Degree (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), analysis by authors

Housing Types

Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County have all had overall drops in their number of households from 2000-2017 (U.S. Census 2000, ESRI Business Analyst 2017), but housing stock has not always followed the same pattern. Downtown Durand had a slight drop in housing units between 2000 and 2010 (2.7%), while both the City of Durand and Shiawassee County raised their number of units slightly (0.9% and 0.3%, respectively). Between 2010 and 2017, Downtown Durand maintained its number of units while the City of Durand added 21 units and Shiawassee lost 1,232 units (Figure 11).

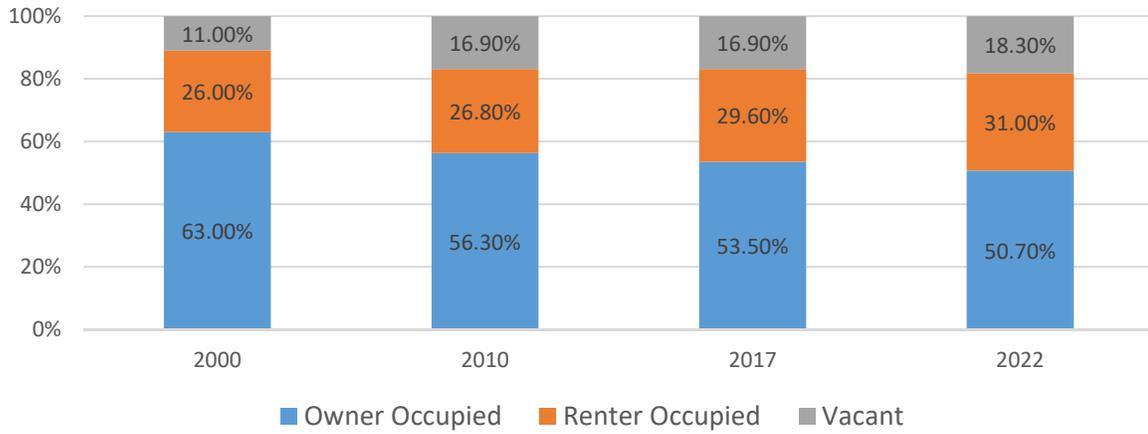
Housing Units 2000-2017						
	Downtown Durand		Durand, MI		Shiawassee County	
	<i>Housing Units</i>	<i>Percent Change in Housing Units</i>	<i>Housing Units</i>	<i>Percent Change in Housing Units</i>	<i>Housing Units</i>	<i>Percent Change in Housing Units</i>
2000	73	-	1,560	-	30,204	-
2010	71	-2.70%	1,575	0.90%	30,319	0.30%
2017	71	0%	1,596	1.30%	29,087	-4.10%

Figure 11 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2000, 2010, 2017), analysis by authors

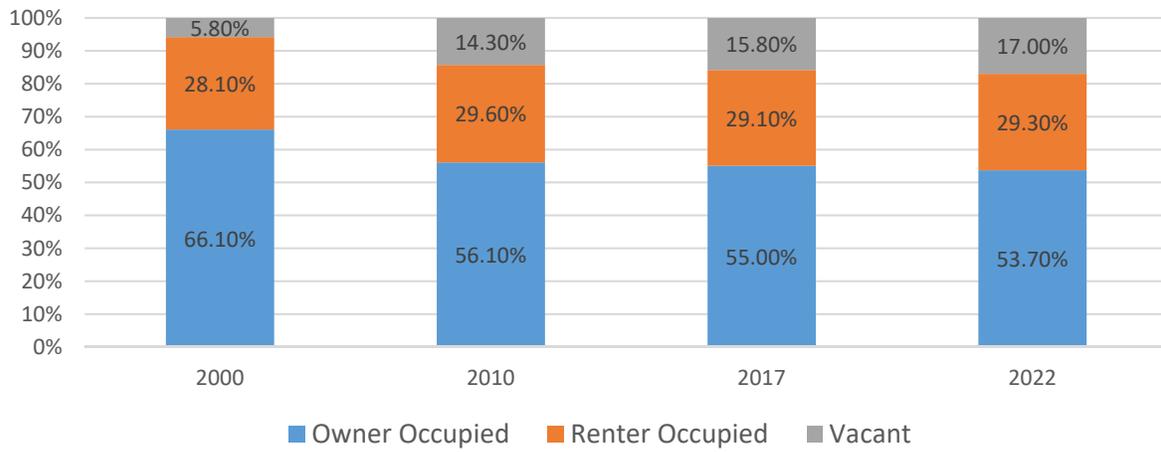
Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County all have a majority of owner occupied housing as of 2017 (Figure 12). In this year, Shiawassee County has, proportionately, 19.1% more owner occupied housing than the City of Durand and, proportionately, 20.6% more owner occupied housing than Downtown Durand. Downtown Durand and the City of Durand have similar rental occupancy proportions, both of which are about 11% higher than the rental occupancy rate of Shiawassee County. Shiawassee County also has about half of the vacancy percentage (7.5%) compared to Downtown Durand (16.9%) and the City of Durand (15.8%).

In all three areas, homeownership rates have dropped since 2000, and are projected to continue to drop into 2022. As the homeownership rate has decreased, Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee County have all experienced increases in the proportion of vacancies and in the proportion of rental units (Figure 12). City of Durand experienced the most dramatic rise in vacancy between 2000 and 2010 (from 5.8% to 14.3%), resulting from the severe impacts the city experienced because of the 2008 Recession.

Housing Occupancy: Downtown Durand



Housing Occupancy: Durand, MI



Housing Occupancy: Shiawassee County

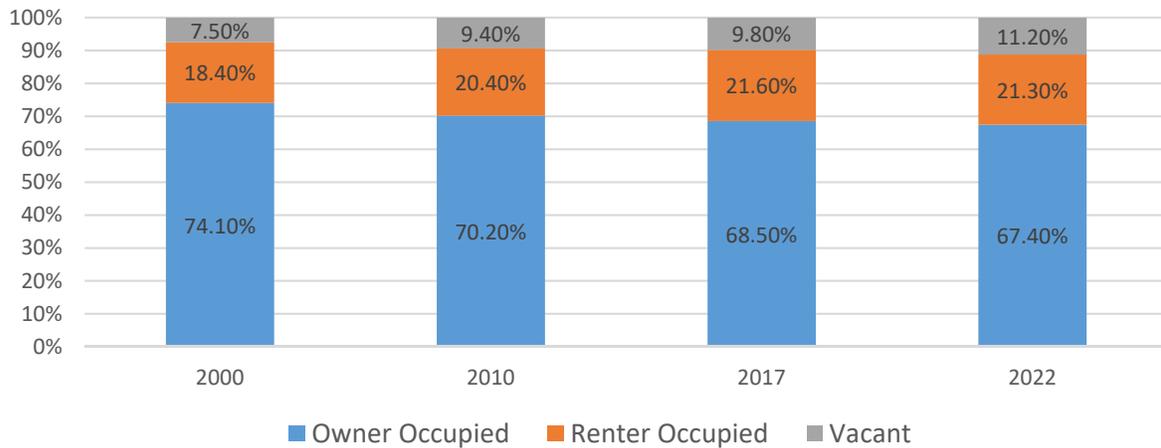


Figure 12 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017 and projection), analysis by authors

Housing Vacancy

The presence of both commercial and residential vacancy can harm a city's ability to present its downtown as an active, vibrant area. Durand, and the downtown specifically, has had some difficulty in this area. However, the downtown does not prioritize housing, as it is a commercial district. The surrounding county is doing better in terms of vacancy. Not only does Shiawassee County currently have a lower housing vacancy percentage than Downtown Durand and the City of Durand, but, since 2000, Shiawassee has reduced its housing vacancy, while both Downtown Durand's and the City of Durand's percentages have risen. The Downtown Durand and the City of Durand vacancy rates are similar. The Downtown Durand vacancy rate was higher than the city's vacancy rate between 2000-2017 (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2000, 2010, 2017), analysis by authors

Housing Value and Rent

Median rents and home values show the City of Durand to be less expensive to reside in than the greater Shiawassee County in 2017. Shiawassee home values were 52.7% higher than home values in Downtown Durand and 41.5% higher than home values in the City of Durand in 2017, reflecting a gap in wealth between the different areas (ESRI Business Analyst 2017). Additionally, in 2017 real dollars, Durand's housing values and rents have decreased between 2000 and 2017 at a similar pace to Shiawassee County's housing value decrease. In both rents and housing values, the City of Durand has not surpassed Shiawassee County, although its margin is smaller in median rents (Figure 14 and 15).

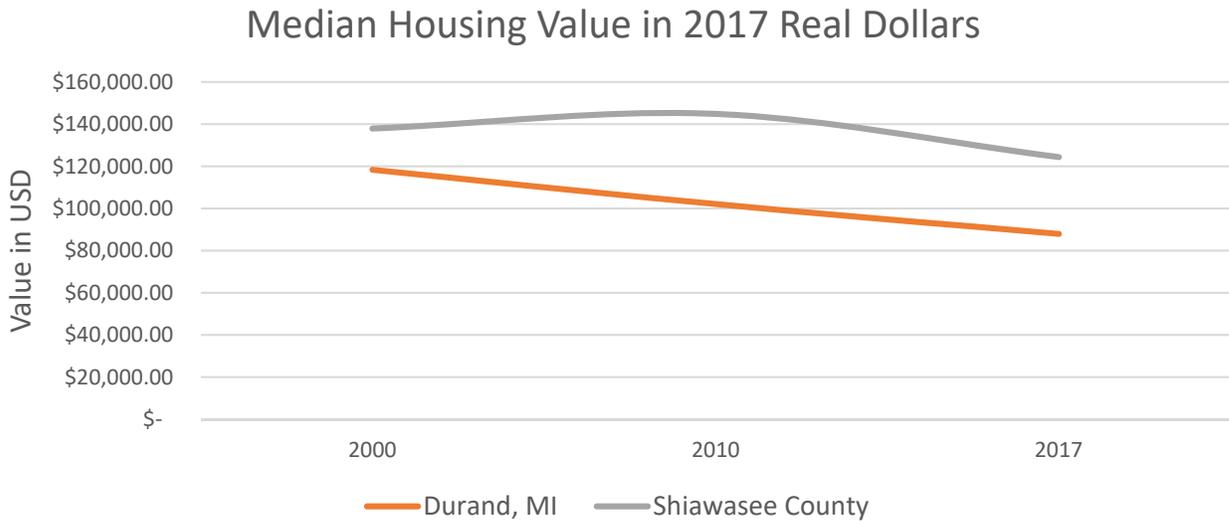


Figure 14 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), U.S. Census (2000, 2010), analysis by authors

Figure 15 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), U.S. Census (2000, 2010), analysis by authors

Employment Status

For both the City of Durand and Shiawassee County, residents are slowly leaving the workforce (Figure 16). Shiawassee had a drop of 7.2% of residents in the labor force between 2000 and 2016 (from 66.2% to 59%), while Durand's residents in the workforce dropped by 5.3% between 2000 and 2016 (from 60.7% to 55.4%). For those who are in the workforce however, employment is relatively high. Downtown Durand is doing especially well in this regard, with only 3.6% unemployment as of 2017. Both Shiawassee County and the City of Durand had higher unemployment rates (6.4% and 8.1% respectively), but neither dropped below 90% employed in 2017 (ESRI Business Analyst 2017) (Figure 17).

Figure 16 Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2016), analysis by authors

Figure 17 Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2016), analysis by authors

Income

The income of residents in Durand, as well as the surrounding area, will greatly impact the economic development of the downtown. With more buying power, residents are able to spend more money in retail, services, and food in Downtown Durand.

Unfortunately, the income in Durand has been slowly decreasing since 2000. Adjusted for inflation to 2017, the median real household income in 2000 was \$52,600. By 2017, the median household income shrank significantly to \$44,413. The median household income in Downtown Durand in 2017 was \$41,574. Additionally, the Downtown has no households that make over \$150,000 as of 2017 (ESRI Business Analyst 2017).

Shiawassee County has had a consistently higher proportion of wealthier residents compared to Durand between 2000 and 2017 (Figure 18). However, Durand has made progress in shrinking the percentage of its population that is living below the poverty line for three persons per household (Durand's average household size is 2.45) (ESRI Business Analyst 2017). The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2018) Poverty Guidelines for three-person households is \$20,780.³ Durand has reduced the percentage of its residents with median household incomes below \$24,999 by 6.9% between 2000 and 2017, from 32.6% to 25.7%. During this time Durand had also maintained a strong middle class; those making between \$35,000 and \$75,000 have consistently been around 40% of the population in 2000, 2010, and 2017 (38%, 40.9%, and 37.7%, respectively) (U.S. Census 2000, ESRI Business Analyst 2017).

³More information on HHS poverty standards at: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

Median Household Income 2017

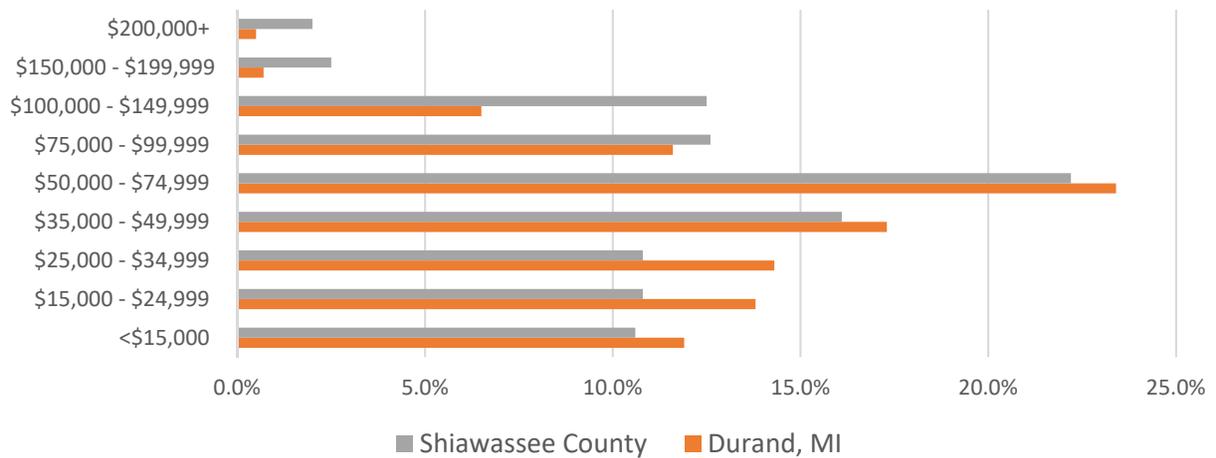


Figure 18 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), U.S. Census (2000, 2010), analysis by authors

Industry

Residents in Downtown Durand, the City of Durand, and Shiawassee were employed largely by three industry categories in 2017: services, retail trade, and manufacturing (ESRI Business Analyst 2017, Figure 19). These are also the industries that have notably fluctuated since 2000 in the City of Durand (Figure 20). From 2000 to 2017 manufacturing dropped by 5.78%, retail trade rose by 10.4%, and services dropped by 9.8% (Figure 20). Also, a higher proportion of residents in the City of Durand work in retail trade than those in Downtown Durand, likely due to the downtown's challenges with retaining retail and filling vacancies.

Additionally, as of 2017, a higher percentage of Downtown Durand residents work in manufacturing than do residents of the City of Durand or Shiawassee County (ESRI Business Analyst 2017). These trends suggest that many downtown residents are choosing to commute to their manufacturing work in order to live in the center of the city. Conversely, many suburban residents are either commuting to downtown for retail work, or work at retail jobs that are outside of the downtown area, such as on Lansing Rd between I-69 and Durand Rd.

Figure 19 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), analysis by authors

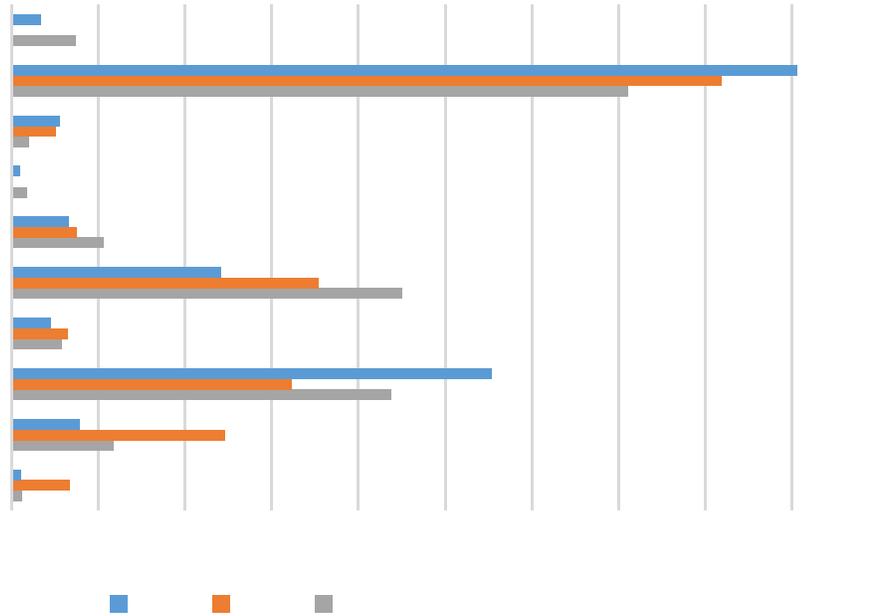


Figure 20 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), U.S. Census (2000, 2010), analysis by authors

The “Services” category is a grouping of subcategories in the U.S. Census (Figure 21). Data on these subcategories is not available for 2017. Service sector work was the most prominent industry category for the City of Durand between 2000 and 2016, and Durand had a plurality of residents within the service sector work in the “Educational, health and social services” category during this time. The number of those working in “Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services” rose between 2000 and 2016 as well. “Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services, and other services (except public administration)” has declined at similar rates to the general business decline in Durand (Figure 21).

Industry Employment: Services in Durand, MI			
	2000	2010	2016
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	51	112	87
Educational, health and social services	310	363	312
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services, and other services (except public administration)	271	194	107

Figure 21 Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2016), analysis by authors

Commuting

Until recently, commuting by private vehicle alone in Durand and Shiawassee County was over 80% of all commuting. In 2017, a lesser share of people drove and a larger share of the working population started to work from home or walk to work (Figure 22). There are no fixed bus routes that service Durand, and limited bussing services through the Shiawassee Area Transportation Authority in Shiawassee County as a whole, resulting in low public transportation usage.

Commuting in the City of Durand and Shiawassee County 2000-2017						
	2000		2010		2017	
	<i>Durand</i>	<i>Shiawassee</i>	<i>Durand</i>	<i>Shiawassee</i>	<i>Durand</i>	<i>Shiawassee</i>
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	80.30%	83.05%	84.42%	83.99%	77.55%	81.33%
Car, truck, or van -- carpoled	13.23%	10.44%	9.63%	9.37%	5.74%	9.83%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0.00%	0.11%	0.84%	0.19%	0.00%	0.41%
Walked	4.33%	2.07%	0.59%	1.73%	9.83%	2.58%
Other modes	0.37%	0.65%	0.00%	1.46%	1.13%	1.07%
Worked at home	1.77%	3.68%	4.52%	3.26%	5.74%	4.79%

Figure 22 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2017), U.S. Census (2000, 2010), analysis by authors

5 Current Downtown Zoning, Land Use, and Goals

5.1 Zoning

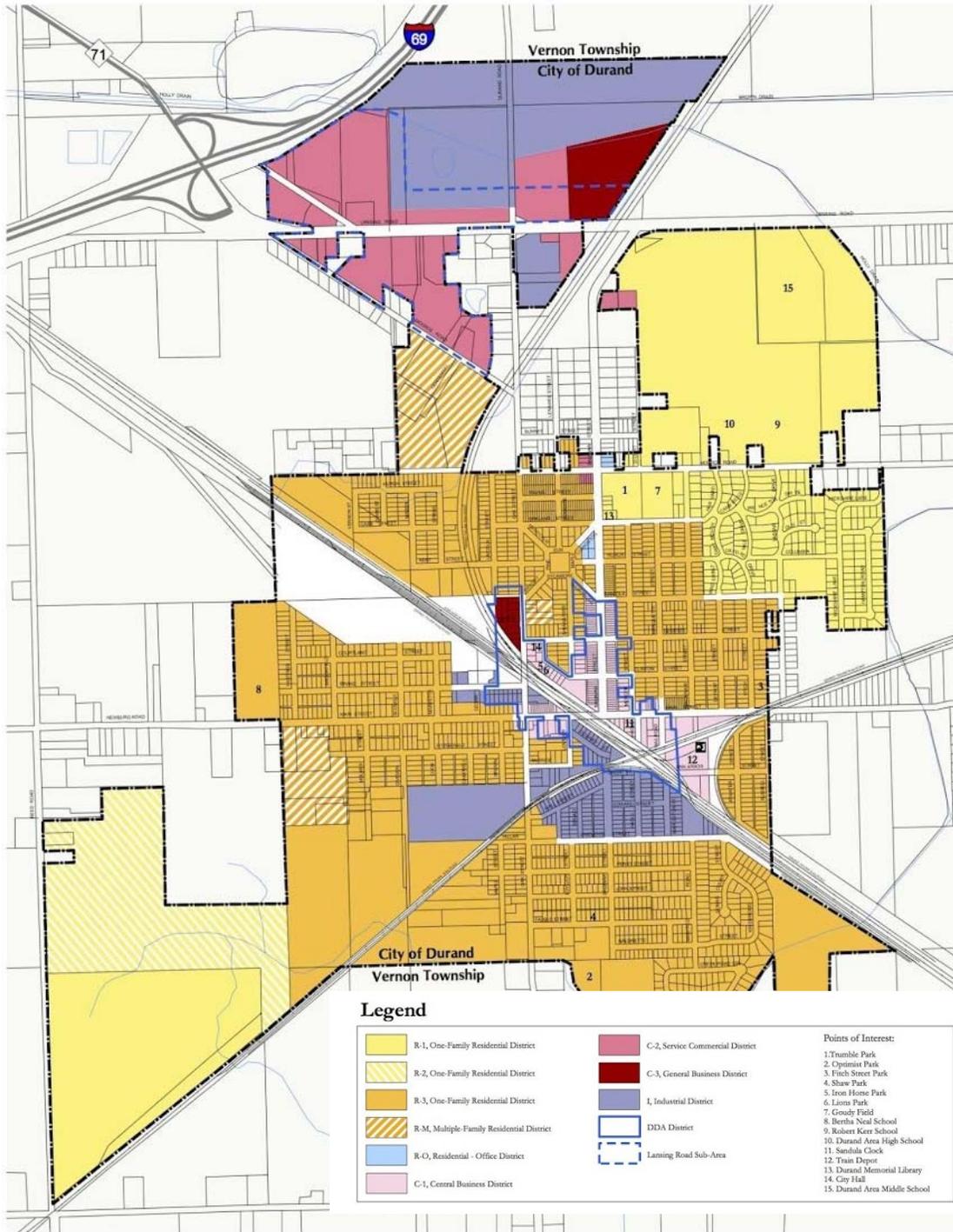


Figure 23

5.2 Land Use



Figure 24

Editors' notes: Updated land use plan for Downtown Durand by Practicum Team

5.3 Established Downtown Goals

The following table uses the goals for downtown set by the Master Plan in 2005 (p. 74-75) and assesses the progress that the community has made in these areas, as well as what has not yet been achieved.

2005 Master Plan Downtown Strategies	Completeness as of 2018	Reasoning
Encourage continued integration of a variety of residential and commercial types within the traditional downtown area for a true mixed-use environment thereby contributing to its image as a unique visitor destination.		The downtown has a variety of uses, however, the challenges the city has faced in attracting specific types of necessary commercial businesses and issues with vacancy have affected visitors' perceptions.
Link outlying City areas with downtown core through a cohesive way-finding program establishing not only transportation continuity but visual clarity for new visitors to the area.		While wayfinding signs do exist, they are limited in number and are not on most of the routes into the city. Additionally, distances to key attractions are not displayed.
Provide for alternative transportation measures during cultural and entertainment activities, including but not limited to taxis, shuttles, special train excursions, etc.		While there is public transportation, there are no fixed-routes nor any special transit services offered during events.
Promote and maintain design standards for new development that is complementary to existing sites and structures so as to ensure a high degree of aesthetic quality and the endurance of new construction.		The zoning code has been inconsistently enforced, and there have been few opportunities to implement design standards, as little development has taken place recently. However, the façade renewal program has contributed positively to the aesthetic of the downtown.
Facilitate development of new community facilities aimed to engage preexisting talent as well as draw from the larger creative class.		This has not occurred in Durand.

Promote revitalization of public spaces to encourage human interaction and allow for ease of use.		Major right-of-way projects have added ADA-compliant curb cuts, public seating, and wide sidewalks downtown.
Encourage installation of information infrastructure within the downtown to increase City connections to local and regional amenities as well as generate prestige as a forward-thinking destination area.		This has not occurred in Durand.
Create, promote and distribute a new graphic identity and place name for the Downtown area, including this graphic identity and name on City signage, banners, future facilities, marketing materials, etc.		New logos and designs have been developed and featured on select promotional material, but city vehicles, buildings, and other owned infrastructure do not display the new logos or designs.
Incorporate a regional marketing strategy detailing assets of Durand as a destination community.		While Durand does have an Area Chamber of Commerce, it has not launched a regional marketing strategy.

Figure 25 Source: 2005 Master Plan Downtown Goals, analysis by authors

Got it!  Getting There  Needed 

6 Community Input and Public Visioning

The MSU Practicum Team analyzed community input in three stages. First, the project team met with and interviewed a variety of community stakeholders individually, including residents, business owners, and city officials. Secondly, the project team hosted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis public meeting. Shortly thereafter, the project team analyzed survey results from a survey that the City of Durand conducted.

6.1 Stakeholder Interviews

On January 12th, 2018, the MSU Practicum group visited Durand to talk with five key stakeholders (including long-term downtown business owners, members of the downtown development authority, and city and school officials) for a preliminary discussion on Downtown Durand's assets and current concerns. The following is a synopsis of the feedback the project team received.



Figure 26

First Impressions and Aesthetics

Stakeholders voiced an appreciation for the seasonal and holiday décor and the streetscaping efforts. The sidewalks are well maintained (although narrow) and the area is safe for all ages to walk in. There is a desire to continue to promote more walkability. Resident do not bike as often. The restaurants were mentioned as the most active spaces in the downtown. However, local students tend to go to parks or sports facilities rather than walk around downtown. The Depot renovation is a major source of pride for the city and important for the railroad history of Durand. Stakeholders feel that the Depot's potential could be further maximized.

Durand began a downtown façade restoration grant program and the city looks to continue on this progress, but lack of funding has stifled efforts. Adding plaques that would explain the history of the downtown's buildings was also suggested as a way to tie in the city's cultural heritage. Vacancies are one of the largest issues to the aesthetic and economic well-being of the downtown. Related to this concern, stakeholders were worried about the downtown's inability to retain restaurants and retail.

Attractions and Special Events

Stakeholders mentioned the wine tasting festival and the car show as key special events for the city. Durand's golf course is thought of as a potential pull factor for both residents and visitors. In addition, the city is interested in implementing a "Rails to Trails"⁴ program in conjunction with a historical walking tour, both of which would extend into the downtown area. Others suggested Durand becoming part of the Friends of the Shiawassee River, an organization that maintains and improves the health of the Shiawassee River. Stakeholders wanted more event opportunities, but the city has experienced challenges in finding volunteers with experience for leadership positions.

Options In and Around Downtown

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) brochure of city/business offerings offers valuable information for potential new Durand businesses owners to better understand the city. The chamber has made past efforts to organize events for local business owners. The DDA has not focused extensively on tourism and is generally short on funds.

Stakeholders were concerned about the lack of grocery, boutique and general retail shops, as well as entertainment options in the downtown area. There is also a desire for fast-service lunch restaurants. Many stakeholders have noticed the nearby City of Owosso has been able to attract businesses, while Durand has not been able to. Because the train traffic often inconveniences residents, parking with a pedestrian bridge has been suggested to solve this issue. Some stakeholders anticipated the need for more rental housing options as well.

⁴ For more information about Rails to Trails: <https://www.railstotrails.org/about/history/history-of-rail-trails/>

6.2 SWOT Analysis Public Meeting

On February 20th, 2018, the MSU Practicum group hosted a public meeting in the Durand City Hall. Residents of Durand were invited to share what they saw as Durand's strongest assets, where there was room for improvement, and how Durand can react to the changes happening around the city. Residents were asked to talk in groups and write down on separate sheets what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were in Durand.

Businesses in Downtown

Although the amount of vacancies that Downtown Durand currently has is highly concerning to residents, many residents feel that the existing businesses are a key strength to downtown. Residents believe that Durand should better promote the dining options in downtown to show locals the variety of restaurants that Durand has to offer. Some meeting participants feel that there is already enough office space in the downtown area, while residential housing stock in downtown is lacking. However, concerns about the high turnover rate of downtown rentals and percentage of rental units in downtown was brought up. This group felt that higher ownership rates in Downtown Durand would improve involvement in the well-being of the downtown. Residents feel that the lack of entertainment, retail, and anchor businesses are all issues that present opportunity for mitigating vacancy. Residents felt that they often had to leave Durand for essentials.



Figure 27

Many attribute the lack of certain essential retail options to land use regulations and prohibitive costs that prevented businesses from succeeding in Durand. Competition from surrounding areas (other cities, but also the northern commercial area on Lansing Rd between I-69 and Durand Rd), as well as conflicts between the city and the township, were also named as obstacles in improving the downtown. Residents also addressed the limited tax base the community had for implementing ideas, and that negative attitudes and perceptions of proposed projects had stifled progress generally.

Special Events and Attractions

Similarly, although Durand residents would like more events to be held in the downtown, they were proud of how well-run the existing events were. Many wanted to further build on events like the Christmas lights display and car show.

Residents are also appreciative of the volunteers that give their time to make the existing events happen. However, many of the volunteers are getting to the point where they would like to hand the responsibilities over. Volunteer burn-out is common, and finding willing and qualified residents to fill those positions is a challenge. This concern is linked with the concern of the generally aging population in Durand, although, based on data from the Socio-Economic Profile (Figure 4, 5, and 6), Durand's 20-29-year-old age demographic is growing.

Connectivity and Railroad History

In terms of connectivity and geography, Durand residents see the Amtrak line and the I-69 highway access as key benefits. Additionally, residents see the city's location between Flint and Lansing as integral to the city's successes. Residents desire easier access to the Depot, higher sidewalk connectivity generally (some end abruptly), wider lanes in downtown, and improved local transportation. Although residents think the rail connection and Durand's history with railroading is essential to the city and for promoting Durand in the future, many were concerned about the inconvenience that the railroad crossings create.

Participants in the public meeting are deeply passionate about the future of Durand's rail heritage and how to best represent the historic importance of the industry. Residents suggested constructing memorials to honor those that worked in railroading and to recognize the role that the downtown buildings formerly had in the industry. Individuals also suggested promoting the role that Durand had in the Underground Railroad, and wanted to draw others interested in trains and the railroad to Durand. Multiple residents also suggested converting some of the unused tracks into trails through the "Rails to Trails" program.⁵

Look and Feel of Downtown

Residents appreciated that Downtown Durand is well-defined, walkable, clean, and welcoming. They also felt that the streetscape, trees, and buildings with historic character were strengths of the downtown. Although many like individual buildings with historic character, or clusters of buildings with historic character, there was a general desire to have a more architecturally consistent downtown. Continuing the façade grant program was brought up as a possible opportunity to improve this aspect of downtown. Residents named specific establishments and event spaces as benefits, including the library, dance studio, farmers market, pharmacy, Depot, and Stomping Grounds coffee shop. Some suggestions for what Downtown Durand should attract included a bank, a small business incubator, and a music store.

⁵ More information on Rails to Trails at: <https://www.railstotrails.org/>

6.3 Downtown Durand Consumer Survey

The City of Durand and the Durand Area Chamber of Commerce partnered to survey residents of Durand and surrounding areas to begin community visioning toward establishing new strategies and goals for downtown development. They received an impressive 236 responses from January 15th to February 2nd, 2018. Respondents were people who have utilized downtown services, but are not necessarily residents of Durand.

This survey asked questions concerning where respondents lived, worked, and spent their time and money. Questions like these will help the city better understand the needs of their community and will guide recommendations given by the MSU Practicum group. It will also help communication between the city and the community, because through this analysis officials will have a better understanding of the priorities and concerns of the residents.

While the other public participation events gave light to the concerns of the community, this survey revealed behavioral trends that could not be ascertained from the socio-economic data.

What is the most important characteristic or element for downtown Durand to maintain?

In the survey, respondents largely agreed that Durand's welcoming and charming small-town feel is its most important characteristic. This feature is clearly an element that the community wants to continue to strive for and retain in the event of growth. The Depot was another common response to this question, as it is the center of the city's railroad culture and heritage. This response was also similar to the multiple responses citing Durand's railroad-related history. Friendly, accessible small businesses were another important fixture in the community, showing that although businesses have struggled to survive in the Downtown (as shown by the large number of vacancies), they are cherished and desired by the community. Lastly, the Durand community takes a lot of pride in the cleanliness of their community.

What is one thing, if anything were possible, you would change about downtown Durand?

Many of the survey respondents had answers relating to activity in the downtown. The community would like to fill all vacant buildings, providing the community with more shopping and dining options. Additionally, the community would like to see increased foot traffic and outdoor gathering or dining spaces.

Do you have any other recommendations about downtown Durand you would like us to consider?

The responses in this section included many business ideas for downtown ranging from an indoor shooting range to an ice cream and fudge shop. Similarly, to the earlier question of what Durand respondents would change, these answers reflected the kind of business and activity they would like to see. Many desire more recreation and entertainment options, while others mentioned that they'd like family-friendly options as opposed to additional bars. There were also responses requesting more fine dining options. There was also a variety of answers around the prohibitive costs and regulations that small businesses coming into the area face. Some noted that costs like these may deter businesses, and may even push them to neighboring towns like Owosso.

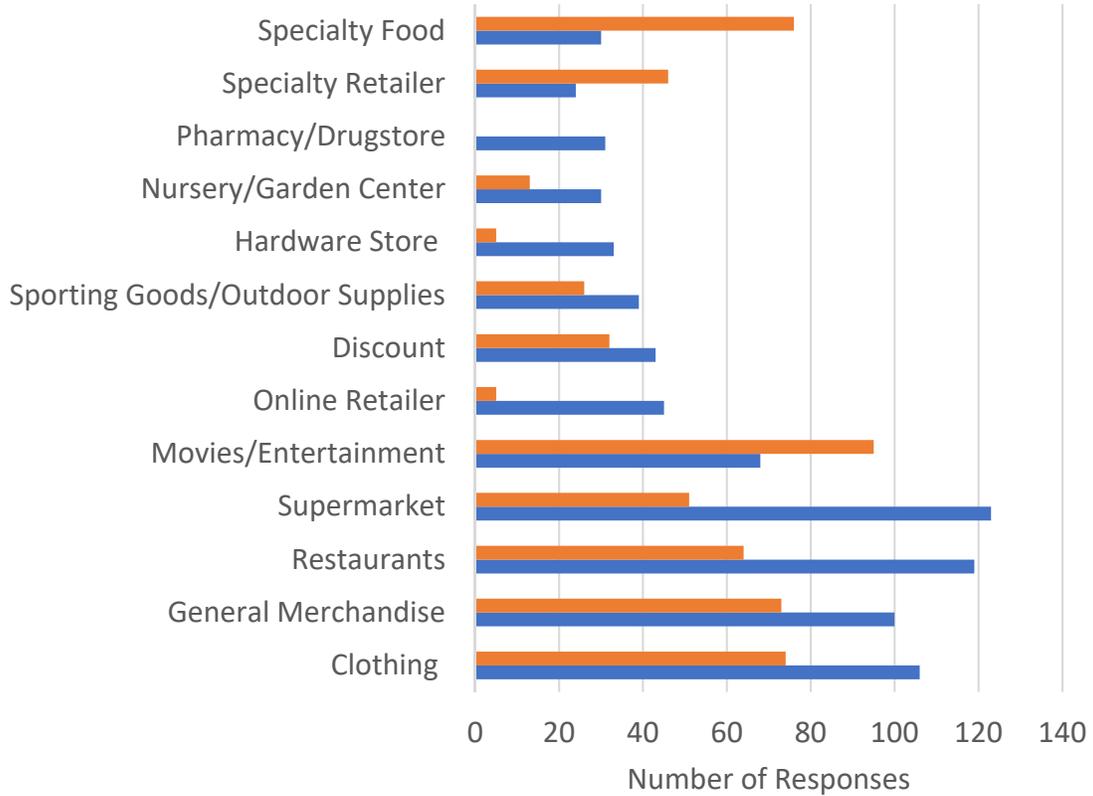
Unmet Commercial Needs

These survey questions reflect a correlation between the businesses frequented outside Durand and the businesses desired for Durand; the Durand community wants to be able to have their commercial needs met within their community. The correlation shown in the data justifies revitalization efforts in the downtown. These results are similar to feedback garnered in other public feedback forums: that the community wants more retail options and entertainment opportunities in their downtown area.

It is interesting to note that that largest response for businesses frequented outside Durand was for the supermarket. Durand currently has only one grocery store, Riverside Market. However, Downtown Durand consumers have shown more of a desire for a new specialty food business, rather than for an additional grocery store. It would be worthwhile to explore what other specialty food stores could thrive in Durand without competing directly with Riverside Market. Another strategy could be looking at ways to expand and make the seasonal Farmers Market more accessible. Movies/Entertainment is another category that is more desired in downtown than is visited outside of Durand, showing that consumers would go to downtown movies and entertainment options if they were made available.

Pharmacy needs for the community are met completely by Shaw's Pharmacy and Rite Aid. The Restaurants, General Merchandise, and Clothing categories are visited more often outside of Durand than they are desired, showing that consumers would not necessarily go to downtown equivalents if they moved to Durand.

Unmet Commercial Needs



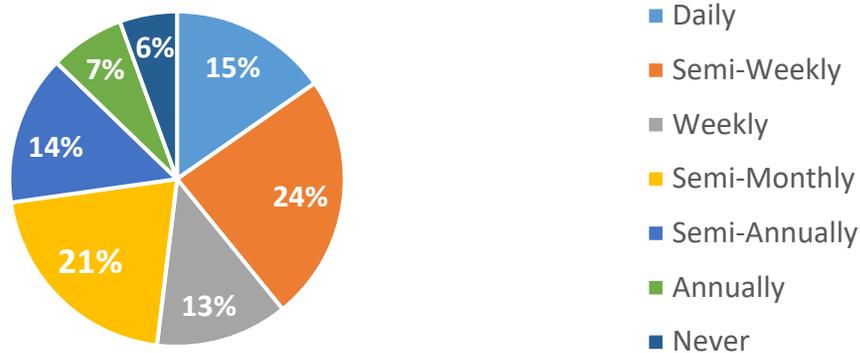
■ Businesses Desired in Durand
 ■ Businesses Frequented Outside of Durand

Figure 28 Source: 2018 Downtown Durand Consumers Survey

Downtown Visits & Expenditures

When asked about retail visits to Downtown Durand, 52% of respondents claimed to visit at least weekly. This trend reflects the pull factor of existing businesses in the downtown, especially with the predominant presence of services and restaurants. The City of Durand needs to find solutions for how to bring in businesses that will encourage longer and more frequent trips downtown. The city should also find new businesses that draw people in from different regions.

Downtown Retail Visits



Expenditures During Retail Visits

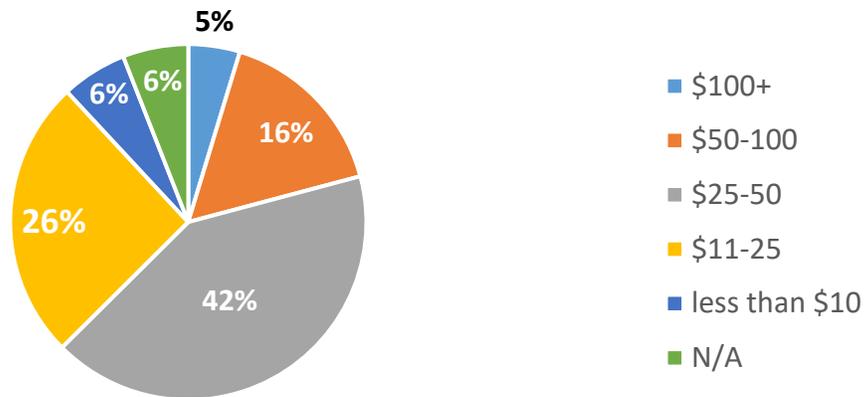
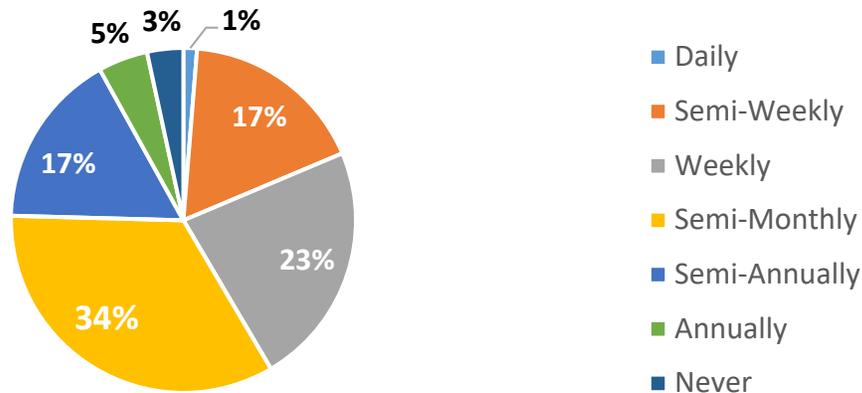


Figure 29 Source: 2018 Downtown Durand Survey, analysis by authors

When asked about restaurant visits, over half of respondents replied that they frequent restaurants downtown multiple times a month or more. Again, this pull factor shows the opportunity that existing restaurants present to downtown. Many people in the Durand community already come downtown to eat, but what else can the community offer while they are downtown? Other types of dining options may pull people downtown more frequently, such as a variety of breakfast, lunch, and dinner options.

Downtown Restaurant Visits



Expenditures During Restaurant Visits

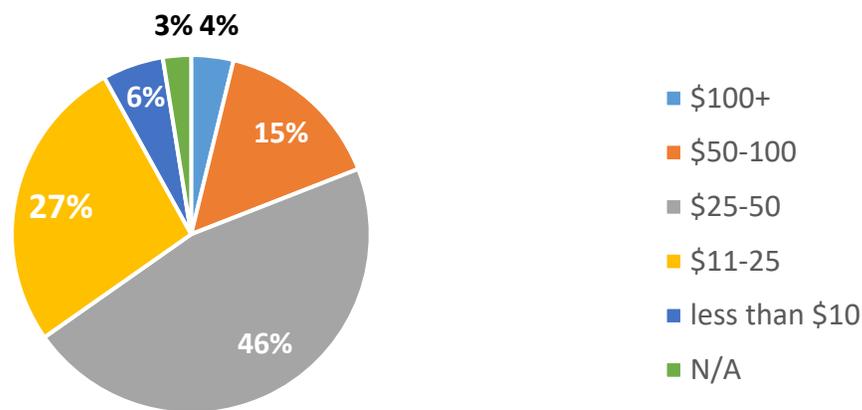


Figure 30 Source: 2018 Downtown Durand Survey, analysis by authors

In both questions, over 40% of respondents claimed to spend between \$25-50 per visit to Downtown Durand, which would cover a meal at one of the five casual dining options downtown, or a new hairstyle at one of the three beauty salons. In other public feedback, the desire for more fine dining has been stated, and attracting these restaurants would be a good opportunity to have locals and visitors spend more money when they come downtown.

7 Downtown Economic and Physical Analysis

In order to better understand the Downtown economy, existing buildings and businesses were inventoried. This section discusses what businesses are located within the project area, as well as trends that may be pushing and pulling different types of businesses to this downtown area. The project area is comprised of 52 commercial addresses and seven single family residences, all of which are one and two-story buildings.

7.1 Downtown Retail Analysis, Uses & Vacancies

A retail analysis was conducted to identify and catalogue existing businesses in the downtown project area. This analysis will allow the city to better understand how they can build on the existing business network, and how to best position themselves to attract certain kinds of new businesses. Identifying vacancies is another method of analysis for economic development. These two analyses contribute to a combined effort to address vacancies in Downtown Durand by finding economically sustainable businesses to fill them.

Each parcel within the downtown project area has been identified by its current tenant, address, commercial use, number of stories, and additional uses. This complete commercial inventory is located in the appendix.

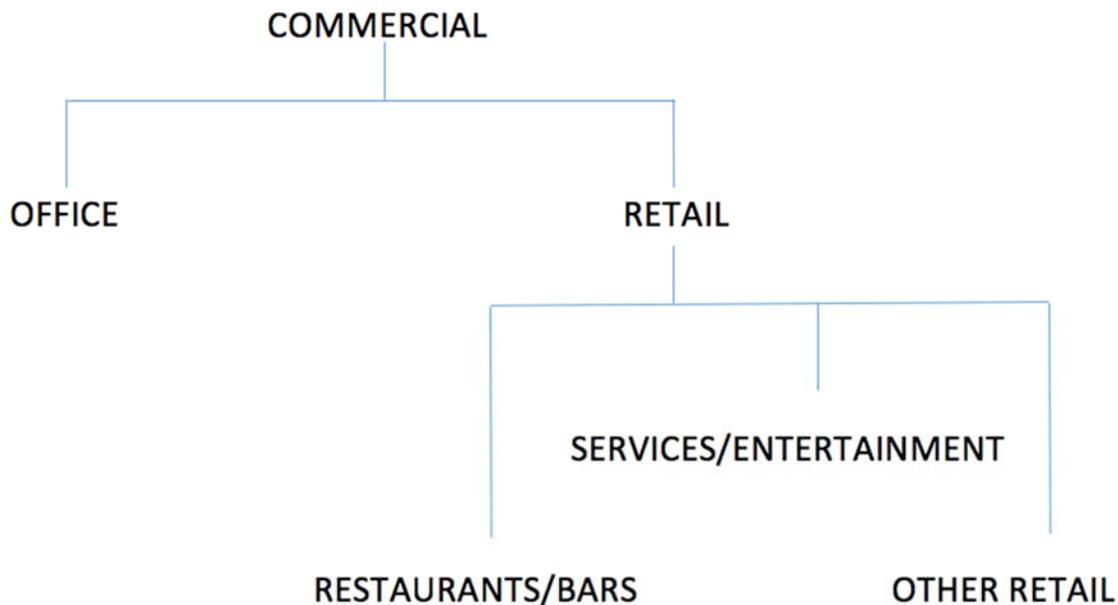


Figure 31

Commercial Land Uses are defined as:

Category	Definition
Office	Professional workspace for occupants
Retail	Business provides goods and/or services for use or consumption for public consumers
<i>Restaurants/Bars</i>	Business prepares and serves food and beverages
<i>Service/Entertainment</i>	Business provides service or entertainment for patrons
<i>Other Retail</i>	Other forms of retail such as shopping

Figure 32



Figure 33: Examples of Service/ Entertainment (Royalty Tattoo and Acker Insurance Agency)



Figure 34: Example of Other Retail (IMN Antique Store)



Figure 35: Example of Office (Sagelink Credit Union)



Figure 36: Example of Restaurants/Bars (Rancho Grande)

Existing Commercial Building Levels



Figure 37

The first floor offerings in Downtown Durand (Figure 38, 39, 40) are predominately services and restaurants, making up 69% of commercial uses on the ground floor. Prioritizing first floor retail storefronts is important for engaging pedestrians and improving street life. The next category is office space, making up only 16% of all first-story commercial uses.

First Floor Commercial Uses

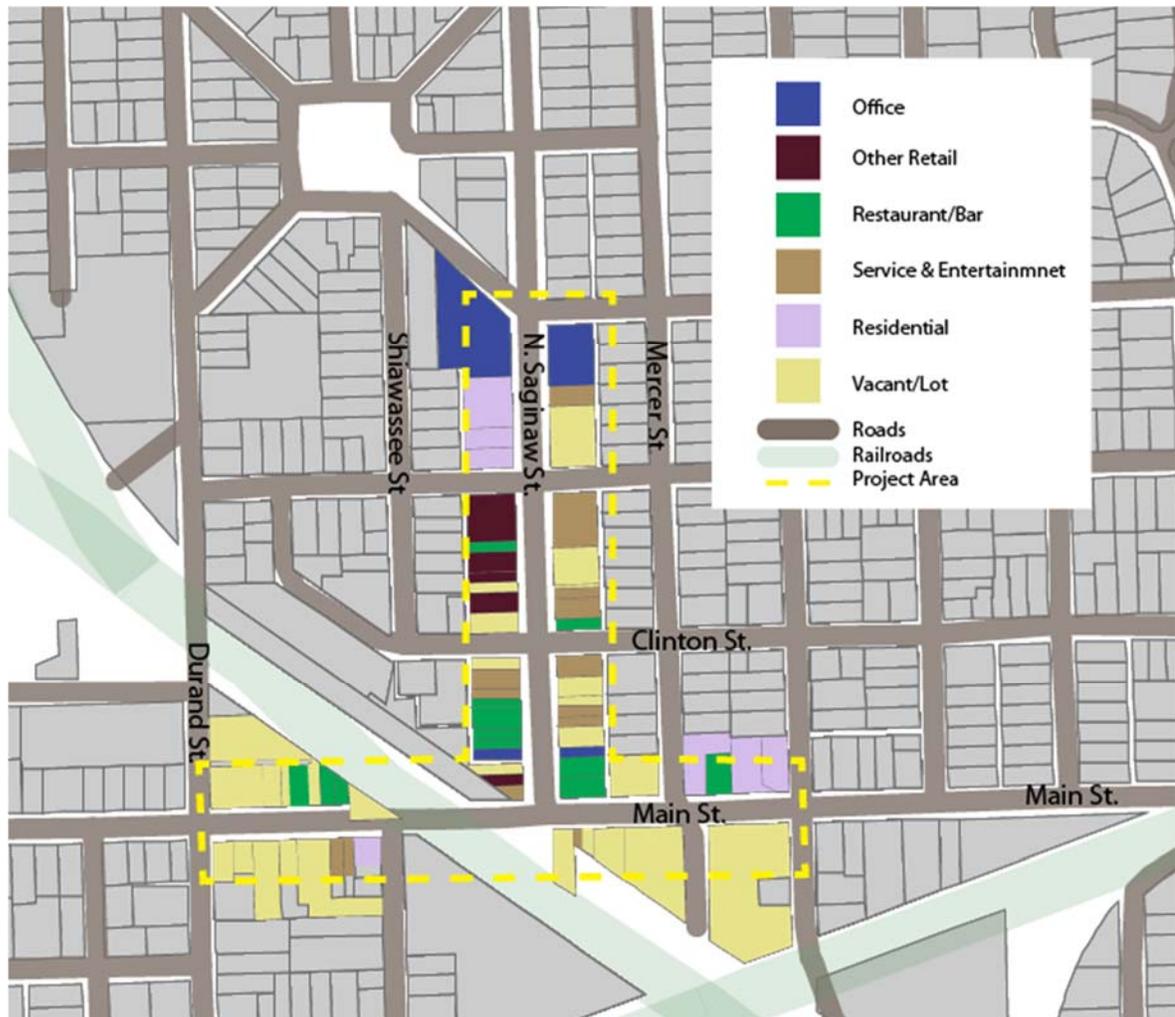


Figure 38

Figure 39

Current Uses (First Story)

Name	Address	Business Type
<i>Office – 16%</i>		
Chamber of Commerce	109 N Saginaw St	Local Association
Durand Area Public School	310 N Saginaw	Education Administration Building
Kal Family Chiropractic of Durand	118 N Saginaw St	Medical Office
Kelley Bean Co.	106 N Saginaw St	Agricultural Office
Sagelink Credit Union	311 N Saginaw St	Banking
<i>Other Retail – 16%</i>		
Dietrich Flower Shop	211 N Saginaw St	Flower Shop
IMN Resale	205 N Saginaw St	Resale Store
Jon Michael's Jewelers	105 N Saginaw St	Jewelry Store
Shaw's Pharmacy	221 N Saginaw St	Pharmacy & General Merchandise
Then & Again Resale Boutique	215A N Saginaw St	Resale Store

Restaurant/Bar – 29%

D-Railed	111 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar
Iron Horse	104 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar
Jim's Pizza	215B N Saginaw St	Restaurant
Nick's Hometown Grill	102 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar
Our 206 Bar	206 W Main St	Bar
Papa Joe	115 N Saginaw St	Restaurant
Papa Joe	117 N Saginaw St	Restaurant
Rancho Grande	200 W Main St	Restaurant
Stomping Grounds Coffee	200 N Saginaw St	Restaurant
Union Station Smokehouse	205 E Main St	Restaurant

Service & Entertainment – 39 %

Acker Insurance Agency	101 N Saginaw St	Insurance
BP Gas Station	220 N Saginaw St	Gas Station
Changes Barber Shop & Salon	205 W Main St	Beauty Salon
Durand Ambulance Depot	305 N Saginaw St	Civic Service
Durand Moose Lodge	116 N Saginaw St	Event Space
Greyson's Salon	123 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon
Greyson's Salon	125 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon
Hiram's Dining Hall	204 N Saginaw St	Event Space
Kathy's School of Dance	124 N Saginaw St	Dance Studio
Kathy's Touch & Style Salon	114 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon
Royalty Tattoo	103 N Saginaw St	Tattoo Parlor
Ruthy's Cleaning	110 N Saginaw St	Laundromat
Teasers Salon	202 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon
Village Cleaners	203 W Main St	Cleaners

Figure 40

The commercial uses in downtown are predominantly services, which reflects the type of businesses that are able to draw returning local patrons. This indicates that service businesses may have a more resilient business model in Durand. There are also numerous restaurant offerings making up almost 30% of downtown commercial uses. These restaurants are casual establishments serving moderately-priced food, often in a bar atmosphere. The coffee shop, Stomping Grounds, also offers light food and beverages in a casual setting. There are five distinct offices located on the ground floor within the project area, including banking, healthcare, educational administration, economic development, and agricultural administration. The remaining retail options offer jewelry, flowers, resale items, and select general merchandise.

The second story uses in Downtown Durand (Figure 41 & 42) include residential uses, as it is a common practice in mixed-use development to place residential above retail. Durand has a total of twenty-one second story spaces. The interior condition of many of these, especially those located in vacant buildings, is poor/unmaintained.

Second Story Uses



Figure 41

Figure 42

Moving forward, it is important that Durand prioritizes the rehabilitation and maintenance of the second floor units. Feedback from community members indicated that many remain of untenanted/vacant because of poor unit condition, despite residential demand in the downtown.

Overall, vacancy is a serious issue within the downtown project area; almost 40% of all spaces are vacant (Figure 43 & 44). Vacancies reveal economic instability and lead to infrastructural deterioration and blight. Vacancy will need to be addressed to ensure a successful revitalization effort in this area.

Storefront Occupancy



Figure 43

Downtown Durand Storefront Occupancy

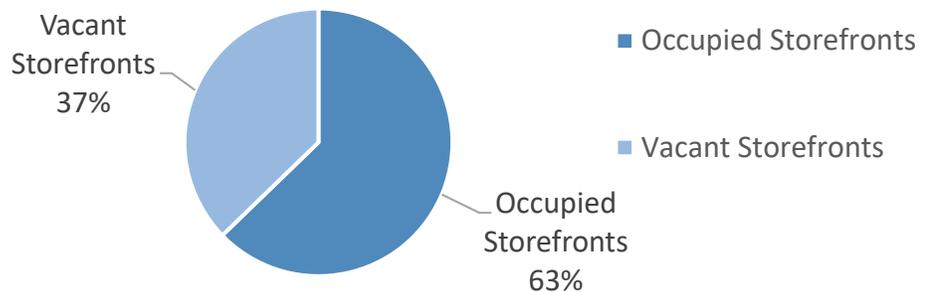


Figure 44

7.2 Community Physical Character Analysis

In order gain a better picture of the existing conditions of Downtown Durand, the Practicum Team inventoried building quality and assessed current placemaking assets. The following section contains a full inventory of the facade, window, door, and signage quality of all downtown commercial uses. This section also features specific examples where Durand creatively used space and sites that are in need of redevelopment to improve the overall quality of the downtown.

Commercial Building Stock Quality

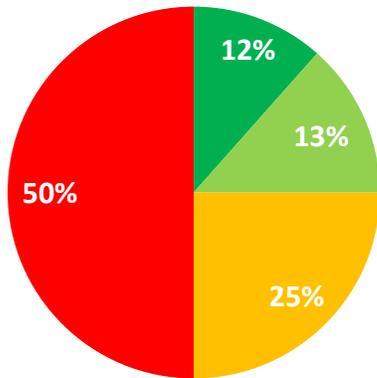
Key components of the downtown buildings (Exterior Façade, Windows, Door, Signage) were assessed using four categories (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor). The Evaluation Matrix (Figure 45) lists the criteria that was used to judge each commercial or mixed-use building in the downtown. The complete list of every downtown property with evaluations for each of the four categories can be found in the appendix.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Exterior Façade	Siding or brick is intact, showing little signs of wear and visually interesting	Signs of deterioration, including peeling paint, rust, and material wear. Still contributing visually to the downtown	Noticeable signs of neglect. Paint and/or siding is missing. Visually uninteresting or inconsistent to character of downtown	Significant signs of neglect
Windows	All windows are intact and clean, the framing is intact, and the size and number of windows is appropriate	Most windows are intact and clean, framing is acceptable	Wear or weathering on the widows, framing is misaligned or deteriorating	Widows are broken and/or dirty, framing is warped and rusted, and/or the size of the windows makes the business uninviting
Door	Door is new or freshly painted	Door is intact with some minor wear	Door is noticeably old with either rust or peeling paint	Door is damaged
Signage	Signage is aesthetically interesting, easy to read, and shows no signs of wear	Signage is aesthetically acceptable, easy to read, and shows minor wear	Signage is aesthetically average or unattractive, easy to read, and shows noticeable wear	Signage is non-existent or difficult to read and bland

Figure 45

A plurality of each component was evaluated as poor. The largest contributor to the amount of evaluations marked as poor is the high downtown commercial vacancy rate. The exterior façades of downtown businesses were the most often categorized as poor, of the four building components (Figure 46), while the doors were evaluated as the most acceptable out of the four building components (Figure 48).

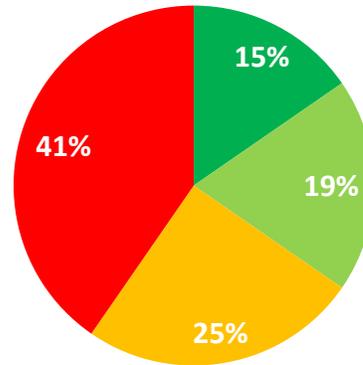
Exterior Façade



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Figure 46

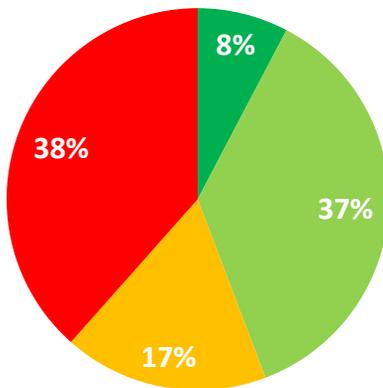
Windows



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Figure 47

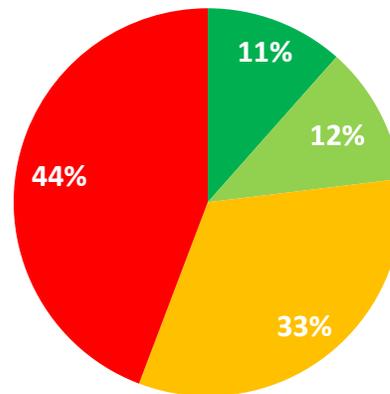
Doors



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Figure 48

Signage



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Figure 49

In order to concisely evaluate the 52 addresses in the downtown area, the Practicum Team attached number values to each of the four categories:

Category	Number Value	Category	Number Value
Excellent	3	Fair	1
Good	2	Poor	0

Figure 50

Each of the values for the Exterior Façade, Windows, Door, and Signage was added for each individual building. The totals for each address are shown in a table in Figure 51 and in a map in Figure 52.

Address	Total Number Value	Address	Total Number Value
102 N Saginaw St	12	205 N Saginaw St	3
311 N Saginaw St	12	115 N Saginaw St	3
205 E Main St	12	119 N Saginaw St	3
205 W Main St	11	111 N Saginaw St	3
101 N Saginaw St	11	310 N Saginaw	2
103 N Saginaw St	10	210 N Saginaw St	2
200 N Saginaw St	9	300 N Saginaw St	1
221 N Saginaw St	9	204 N Saginaw St	1
220 N Saginaw St	8	124 N Saginaw St	1
109 N Saginaw St	7	121 N Saginaw St	1
203 W Main St	7	117 N Saginaw St	1
118 N Saginaw St	6	114 N Saginaw St	1
125 N Saginaw St	6	108 N Saginaw St	0
215A N Saginaw St	6	110 N Saginaw St	0
215B N Saginaw St	6	120 N Saginaw St	0
209 N Saginaw St	6	122 N Saginaw St	0
106 N Saginaw St	6	123 N Saginaw St	0
104 N Saginaw St	6	127 N Saginaw St	0
105 N Saginaw St	5	206 N Saginaw St	0
208 N Saginaw St	5	217 N Saginaw St	0
116 N Saginaw St	5	112 E Main St	0
206 W Main St	5	114 E Main St	0
200 W Main St	4	208 W Main St	0
211 N Saginaw St	4	213 W Main St	0
201 N Saginaw St	4	216 W Main St	0
202 N Saginaw St	4	218 W Main St	0

Figure 51

Building Quality Gradient

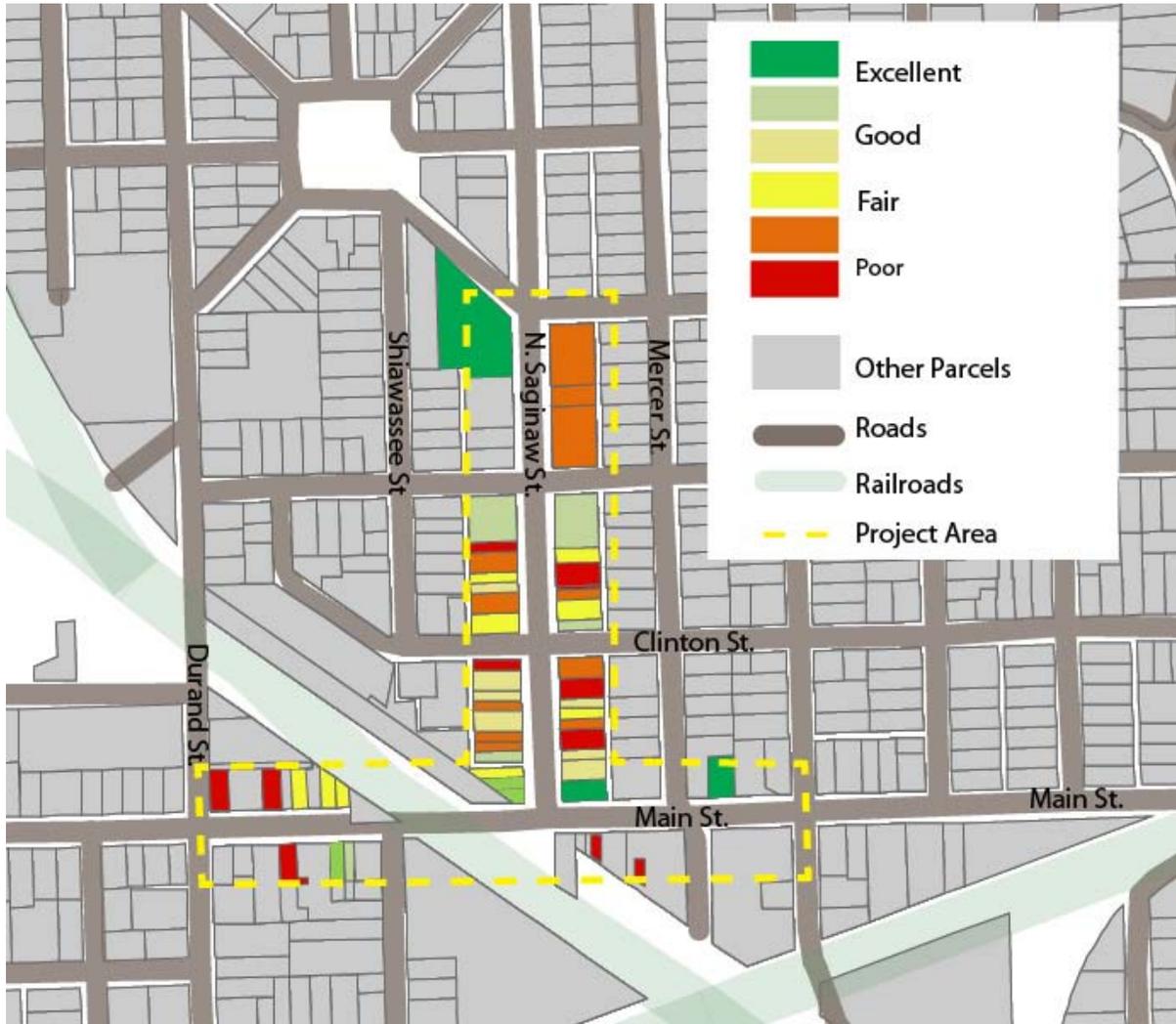


Figure 52

One of Downtown Durand’s key issues in commercial building quality is the inconsistency of quality in a given block. If a vacant, dilapidated building is next to a newly renovated property, the overall quality of the street façade is still brought down, reflecting poorly on the businesses who have put an effort into façade renovation. Bringing business owners together to renovate blocks simultaneously will be a vital step in ensuring that the downtown is aesthetically improved as a whole.

Aesthetic Opportunities

The evaluative framework provides insights into the overall state of the downtown streetscape. However, in addition to a general look at the overall state of building quality downtown, the Practicum Team has identified individual examples of facades that are, or have the potential to become, defining aspects of Durand. Additionally, this section features properties that have made progress on their facades, facades that disrupt the streetscape unity of the downtown, and city branding inconsistencies in the streetscape. The following map (Figure 53) identifies the specific examples that are expanded on in this section. Captions under every picture refer back to the map (Point A, Point B, Point C, etc.).

Aesthetic Opportunities Locations



Figure 53

Façade Potential

Many of Durand's downtown buildings are key elements of the city's streetscape. However, several buildings have either had additions to their facades that take away from their aesthetic value (Figure 54) or have not been optimally maintained (Figure 55). The following examples are properties that add to the historic beauty of downtown, but that are in need of renovation to reach their full potential:



Figure 54

Point A: These building fronts have charming second stories, but the metal siding on the first stories gives the buildings a feeling of being outdated.



Figure 55

Point B: The second story for each of these buildings have a similar historic charm as seen in Point A, but the brick facades are damaged, the paint is peeling, and the signs do not fit with the character of the building.

Other facades disrupt the aesthetic appeal of the streetscape. Vacancies are especially problematic in this regard (Figure 56). However, bland facades (Figure 57) can be similarly disruptive.



Figure 56



Figure 57

Point D: The most noticeable aspect of this structure's front facade is the large, blank wall, lacking decorative touches.

Many of Durand's downtown buildings have completed restoration projects on parts of their façade, but have left either the side (Figure 58) or the front (Figure 59) visually uninteresting. Conversely, several Durand businesses have made an effort to make the entirety of their facades, visually interesting (Figure 60 and 61), contributing positively to the overall look and feel of the streetscape.



Figure 58

Point E: The front and corner façade of this structure has a welcoming feel, clear signage, and large windows that allow pedestrians to look inside. However, the side façade of this structure is bland and has paint peeling.



Figure 59

Point F: Although the front façade of this building is dated-looking and not inviting, the excellent mural on the side façade is a creative use of space.



Figure 60



Figure 61

Point H: Although the side of this structure is lacking windows, the signage on the side facade is creative and inviting.

Streetscape and City Branding Inconsistencies

Durand has made progress in renovating parts of the downtown to make it a welcoming and distinct area. Certain areas have been used in creative ways (Figure 62), while other sites in the downtown are not being used effectively (Figure 63). Durand has also taken steps to brand its downtown as a distinct area (Figure 64 - 71), but different stages of branding make the overall physical identity of downtown feel inconsistent. Moving forward with revitalization, restoring and updating physical aesthetics will be a key step in improving the downtown.



Figure 62

Point I: This alley renovation is a creative use of space, providing a comfortable area for pedestrians to take a break as they explore the downtown.



Figure 63

Point J: This underused area is an ideal space for a pocket park. See the Practicum Team's rendering in the Appendix.



Figure 64



Figure 65

Point K & L (respectively): Both the tree grate and diamond brick pattern on the downtown streets are nice details to identify the downtown as the “Diamond District”. These features are excellent first steps in creating a unified downtown identify if Durand was to choose to commit to the “Diamond District” theme.



Figure 66



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71

Point P, Q, & R (respectively): Like the trashcans, these three types of signage do not have a common design language. Only Point P features the “Diamond District” and the color scheme is different between the three examples. To make Downtown Durand an aesthetically consistent area, the city signage and banners should be kept within pre-determined design standards.

7.3 Market Leakage

Using 2017 data from ESRI Business Analyst Online, we can assess the conditions of the retail market. In Downtown Durand, the strongest retail industry is the one with businesses that both attract downtown residents and pull people in from other areas. This pull effect is represented by a coefficient between -100 and 100; this coefficient is a calculation of the total amount of demand for a retail industry in the analysis area, compared with the amount of sales in a particular retail industry. A positive coefficient indicates a leakage (more demand than sales), and a negative coefficient indicates a market attraction (more sales than demand). The types of retail analyzed is split into the larger retail industry groups, then refined into subgroups of the retail industry groups into retail industries.

Industry Group	Demand	Sales	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Coefficient	Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$267,935	\$0	\$267,935	100	0
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$40,933	\$0	\$40,933	100	0
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$39,720	\$0	\$39,720	100	0
Building Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$84,898	\$0	\$84,898	100	0
Food & Beverage Stores	\$227,407	\$0	\$227,407	100	0
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$90,515	\$0	\$90,515	100	0
Gas Stations	\$148,345	\$6,489,756	-\$6,341,411	-95.5	1
Clothing & Accessories Stores	\$62,885	\$518,849	-\$518,964	-80.5	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$33,554	\$0	\$33,554	100	0
General Merchandise Stores	\$195,500	\$280,111	-\$84,611	-17.8	1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$46,436	\$1,232,699	-\$1,186,263	-92.7	5
Non-store Retailers	\$23,199	\$0	\$23,199	100	0
Food Service & Drinking Places	\$128,534	\$1,763,347	-\$1,634,813	-86.4	5

Figure 72 Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

Downtown Durand has strong market attractions in the Clothing, Gasoline, Food, and Miscellaneous retail industry groups. All these groups have over a coefficient of -75 and below, meaning that these retail industries pull in consumers from other retail markets. The strongest retail industry in both Downtown Durand and the city as a whole is alcohol establishments, such as bars and breweries. The demand for bars from people who reside in Downtown Durand can be quantified to \$117,516, but the sales that bars make in Downtown Durand is \$976,450.

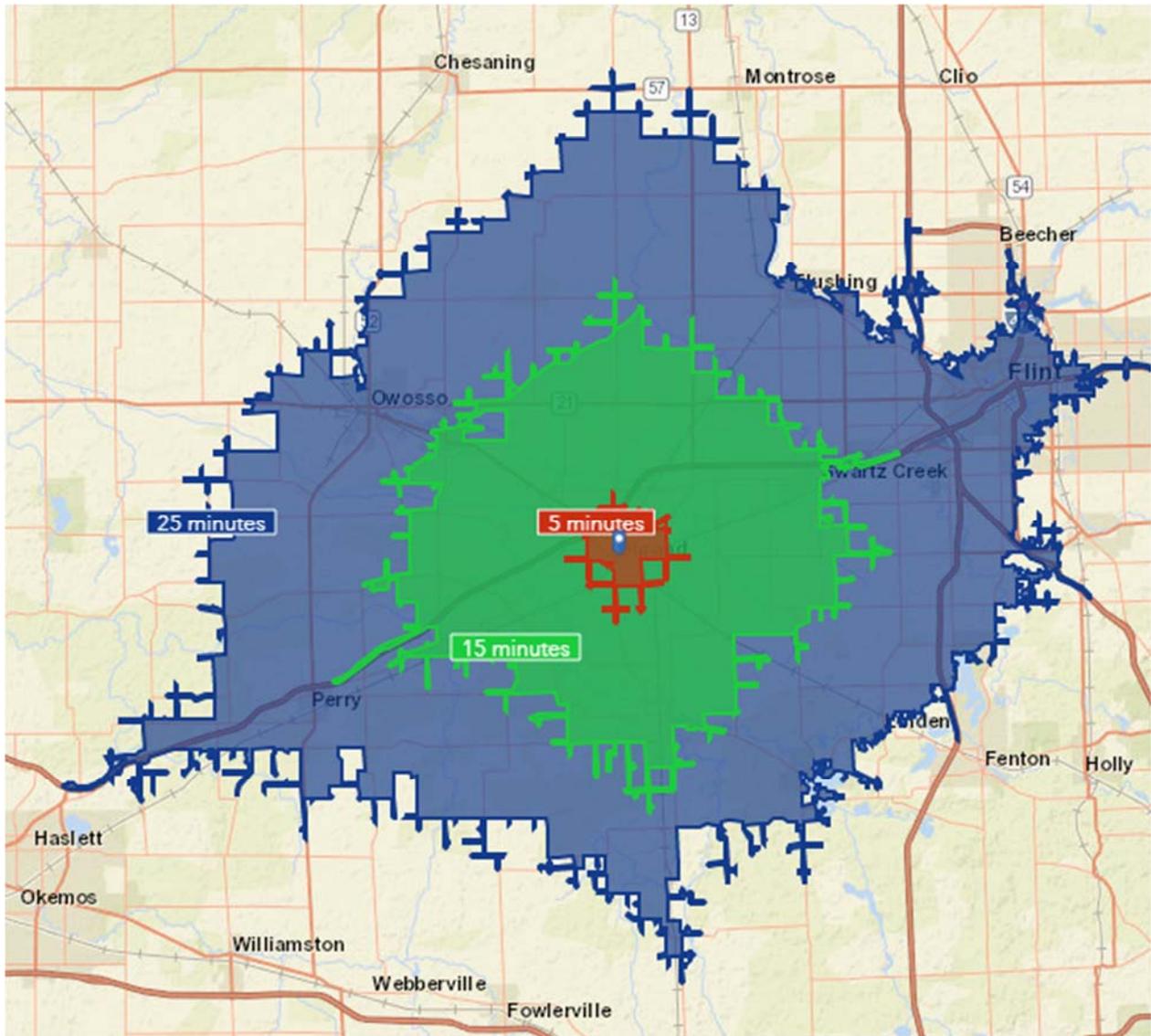


Figure 73 Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

When analyzing the diversity and availability of businesses based on travel distances, the 5-minute travelers and the 25-minute travelers from Downtown Durand are satisfied in their retail needs in the local market. The businesses that are in the 5- or the 25-minute travel zones pull customers in from different areas. People who live in the 15-minute travel zone do not make as many retail purchases in that zone, and they leak out of the 15-minute zone to make purchases elsewhere (Figure 74).

5-Minute

	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus	Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	-\$12,116,241	-12.5	38
Total Retail Trade	-\$10,415,988	-11.9	26
Total Food & Drink	-\$1,700,254	-18.2	12

15-Minute

	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus	Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$137,504,185	22.6	139
Total Retail Trade	\$120,070,674	21.5	100
Total Food & Drink	\$17,433,511	35.1	39

25-Minute

	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus	Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	-\$657,998,162	-11.8	1,575
Total Retail Trade	-\$597,640,673	-11.9	1,131
Total Food & Drink	-\$60,357,489	-11.7	444

Figure 74 Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

While there are many factors for why consumers would choose to leave the local retail market to make purchases, one of the main reasons is the availability of retail goods. In the 5- and 15-minute travel zones, there are multiple retail industries, that do not capture the consumer demand. The Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Alcohol retail store industries have zero representation in the 5- and 15-minute travel time zones from Downtown Durand. The additional retail industries that have a leakage outside of both the 5- and 15-minute travel time zones are below (Figure 75). Any market leakage that occurs is a signal that a space in the economy exists where a business could develop.

Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores Furniture & Home Furnishing Store Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores Shoe Stores Book & Music Stores Florists Non-store Retailers	Electronic & Appliance Stores Specialty Food Stores Clothing & Accessories Stores Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores General Merchandise Stores Used Merchandise Stores Specialty Food Service
---	--

Figure 75 Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2017

As seen in the Retail, Vacancy, and Market Leakage Studies, retail industry groups (such as Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Alcohol Stores) are missing, not only in downtown, but also in the surrounding area. In addition, those listed above (Figure 75) are underrepresented regionally as well. With the existing vacancy downtown, there are plenty of opportunities for these underrepresented retail industry groups to expand into Downtown Durand.

7.4 Public Assets Analysis

A Public Assets Analysis is an overview of strengths or resources in a community that improves the quality of life. Assets could include anything from key community members to structures, specific places, businesses, associations, or organizations. Asset mapping can uncover solutions and help communities think more thoroughly about how to build upon existing assets to address community needs and improve health. Mapping out these assets not only is an exercise in identifying what assets exist, but where are there hubs of certain resources and where assets are lacking. Understanding the distribution of assets through the city can also help the city strategize which areas or corridors are key, and which may need development to help overall connectivity.

Overall, asset mapping helps promote community involvement, ownership, and empowerment as these strengths are identified and highlighted. The MSU Practicum group inventoried and mapped public assets identified in the downtown and surrounding area. Public assets in Durand have been inventoried in the following categories:

1. **Citizen Assets** (Social/Civic Associations, Neighborhood Associations, Public Safety)
2. **Cultural Assets** (Museums, Performing Arts, Historical Organizations, Public Spaces, Community Events & Festivals, Media)
3. **Educational Assets** (Childcare and Preschool Providers, K-12 Districts, Colleges & Universities, Public Libraries)
4. **Business Development Assets** (Major Employers, Small Employers, Self-Employed & Startups, Unemployment and Job-placement Services, Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations)
5. **Faith-Based Assets** (Worship spaces)
6. **Food System Assets** (Grocery Stores, Community Gardens, Farmer's Markets)
7. **Healthcare Assets** (Hospitals, Urgent Care, Public/Community Health, Treatment & Recover, Physicians, Nursing Homes, Rehabilitation, Hospice)
8. **Recreational Assets** (Athletics and Community Ed Programs, Community Centers, Parks, Trails & Sidewalks, YMCA/ Nonprofit Recreation and Fitness Organizations, Private Fitness Clubs)
9. **Tourism Assets** (Lodging Hotels, Motels, Travel Agency, Visitor Center)
10. **Public Green Space**

1. Citizen Assets



Figure 76



- 1.1 Amvets Post 2273
- 1.2 Durand Amtrak Station
- 1.3 Durand Area Lions Clubs
- 1.4 Durand City Hall
- 1.5 Durand Fire Department
- 1.6 Durand Fraternal Order of the Eagles
- 1.7 Durand Moose Lodge
- 1.8 Reed-Raymond VFW Post
- 1.9 US Post Office

The Citizen Assets map shows a large number of fraternal organizations located in the Durand area, showing a strong sense of community and comradery. The Durand City Hall and Fire Department are also centrally located in the Downtown, within a walkable distance to the downtown area. It is beneficial for the community for civic institutions like these to be accessible and close to community activity.

2. Cultural Assets

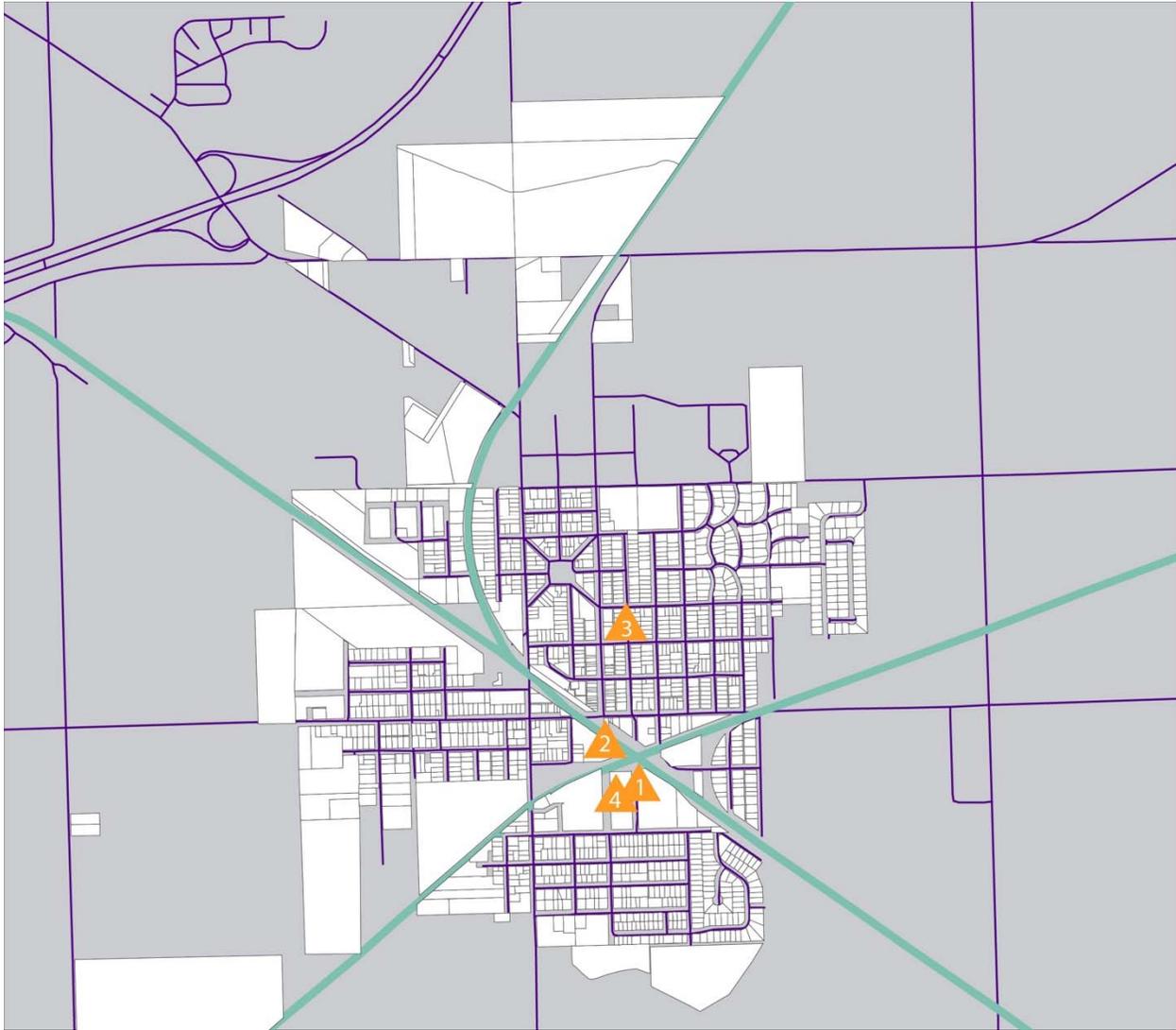


Figure 77



- 2.1 Durand Union Station, The Depot
- 2.2 The Clock Tower
- 2.3 Kathy's School of Dance
- 2.4 Michigan Railroad History Museum

The Cultural Assets map shows that city icons and hubs of community activity are centrally located. The Depot is arguably the most important building in the city's history, located right off E. Main St in Downtown Durand. Similarly, the Sandula Clock Town sits at the heart of the Downtown project area at the intersection of N Saginaw and Main St. Kathy's School of Dance occupies a large parcel in the heart of the downtown as well.

3. Educational Assets

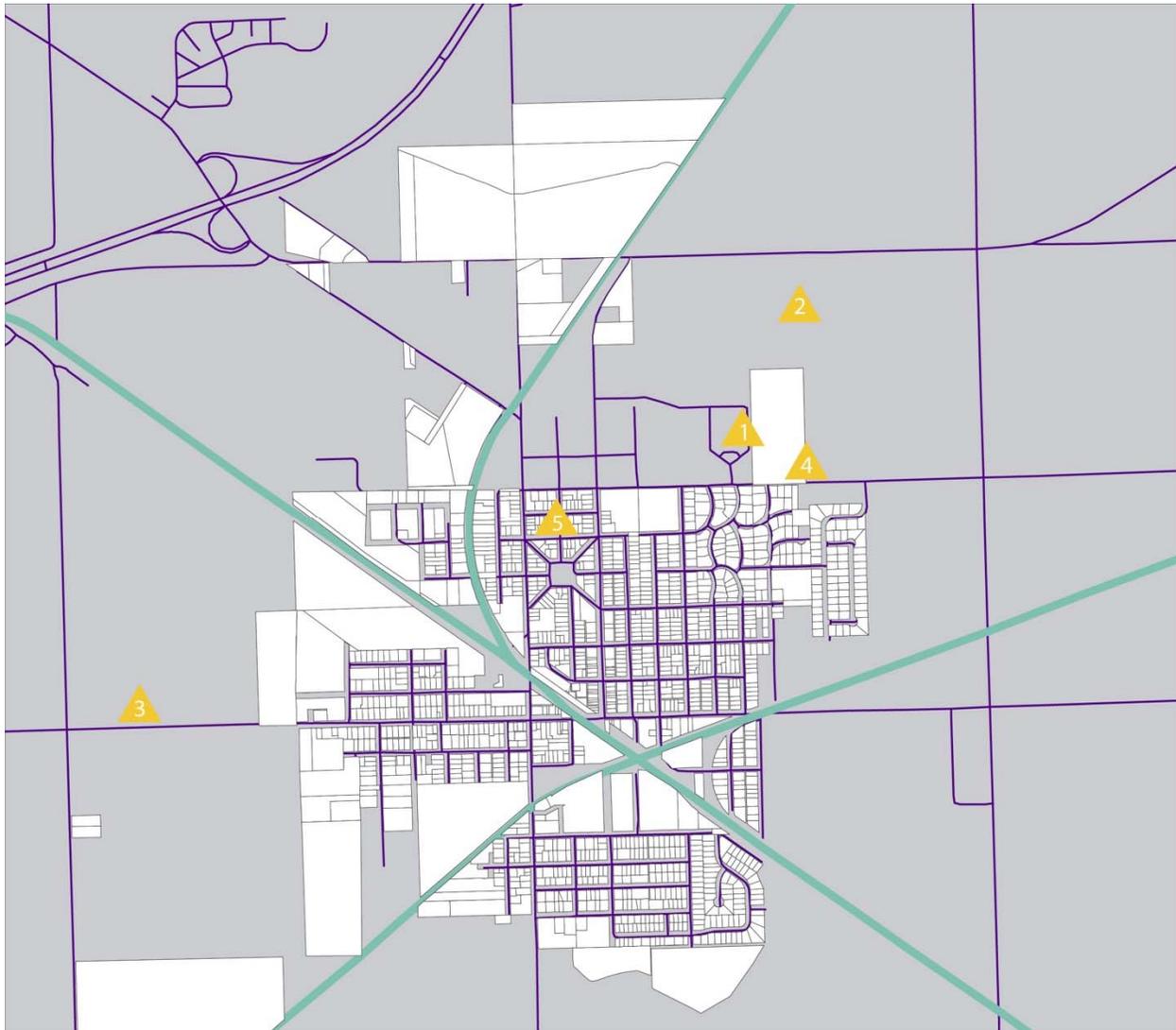


Figure 78



- 3.1 Durand High School
- 3.2 Durand Area Middle School
- 3.3 Bertha Neal Elementary
- 3.4 Robert Kerr Elementary
- 3.5 Durand Memorial Library

The Educational Assets map shows that three of the four Durand Area Public Schools are clustered to the northeast of the downtown. The fourth school is located directly west of the downtown. The Durand Memorial Library, an important civic institution for learning and equity, is located north of the Downtown area, within walking distance. This map also shows that the small size of the City of Durand, with the proper infrastructure, could connect its schools to the downtown through pedestrian and biking-oriented design.

4. Business Development Assets

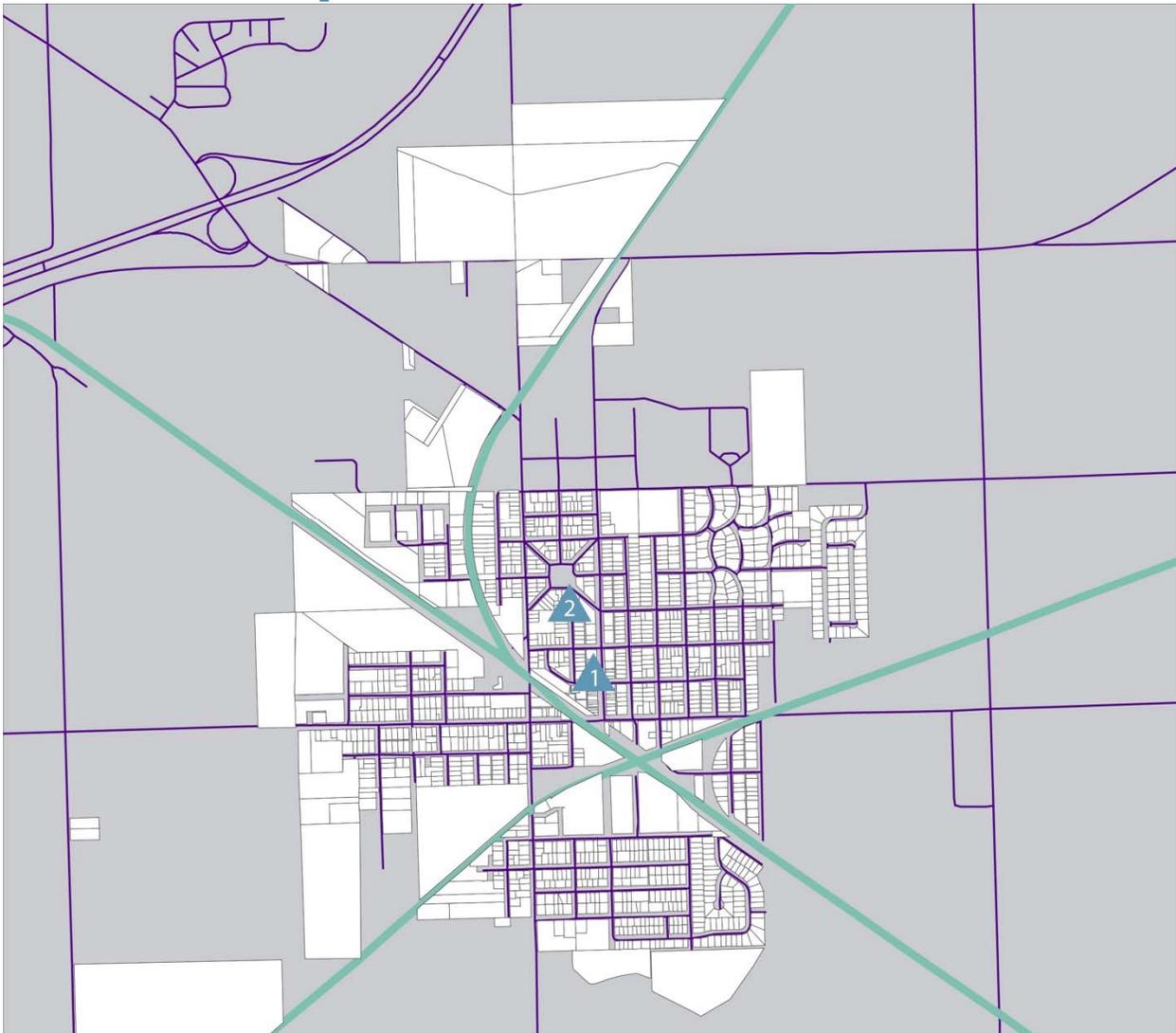


Figure 79



- 4.1 Durand Chamber of Commerce
- 4.2 SageLink Credit Union

The Business Development Assets map shows that the two key institutions that encourage and support healthy businesses are located right in the downtown area. They are positioned strategically for a community looking to increase the number of businesses in the downtown.

5. Faith-Based Assets

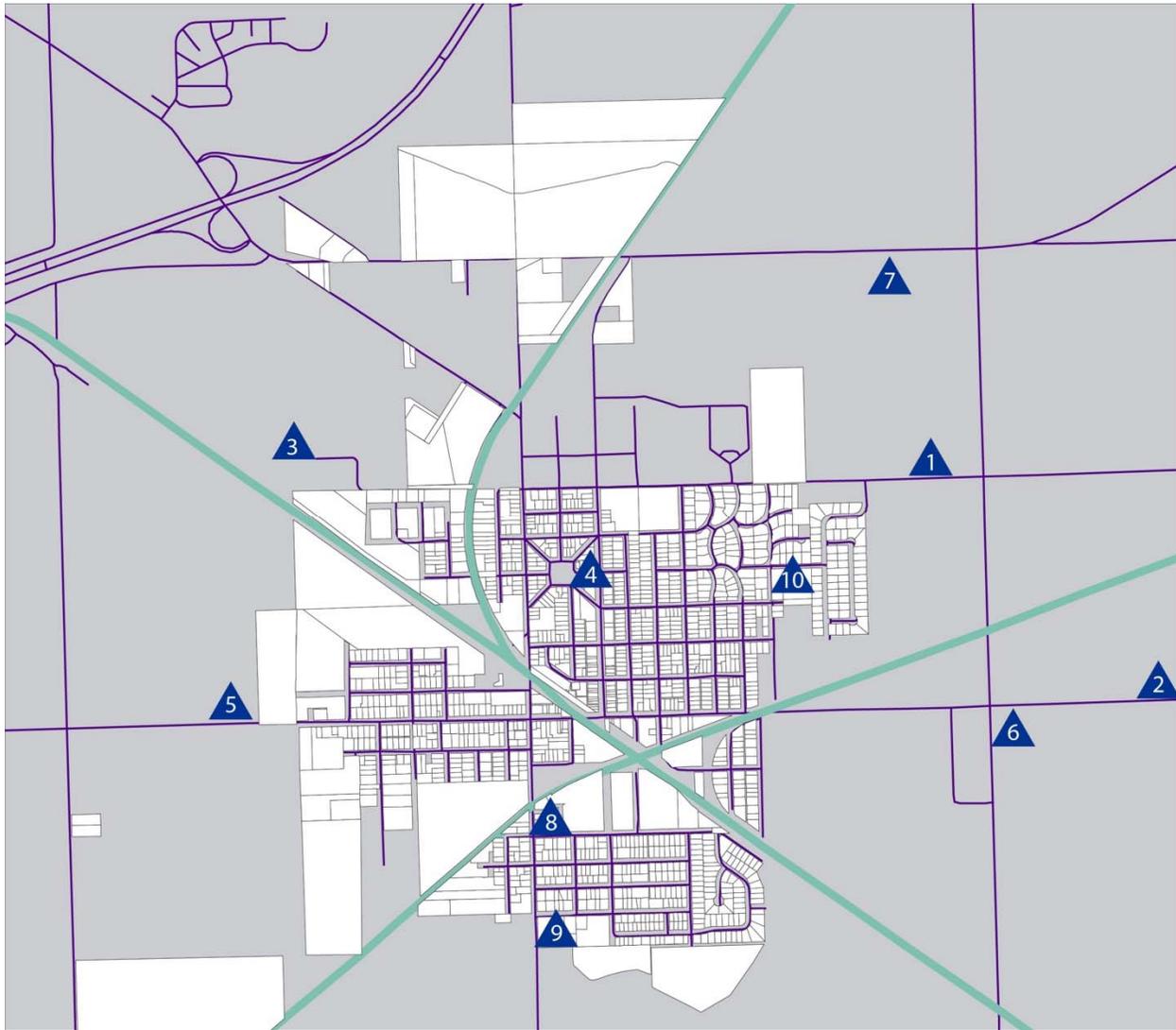


Figure 80



- 5.1 Church of the Nazarene
- 5.2 Durand Church of God
- 5.3 Faith Baptist Church of Durand
- 5.4 First Congregational Church
- 5.5 First Baptist Church
- 5.6 First United Methodist Church of Durand
- 5.7 Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses
- 5.8 Light of Faith Fellowship
- 5.9 Oak Street Baptist Church
- 5.10 St. Mary's Catholic Church

The Faith-Based Assets map reflects the strong presence of Christian religion and community in the city of Durand. Within this small city, there are ten churches and religious Christian institutions spread throughout the Durand City area. It should be noted that call faith-based institutions are various denominations of Christianity, but no other major religion is represented.

6. Food System Assets

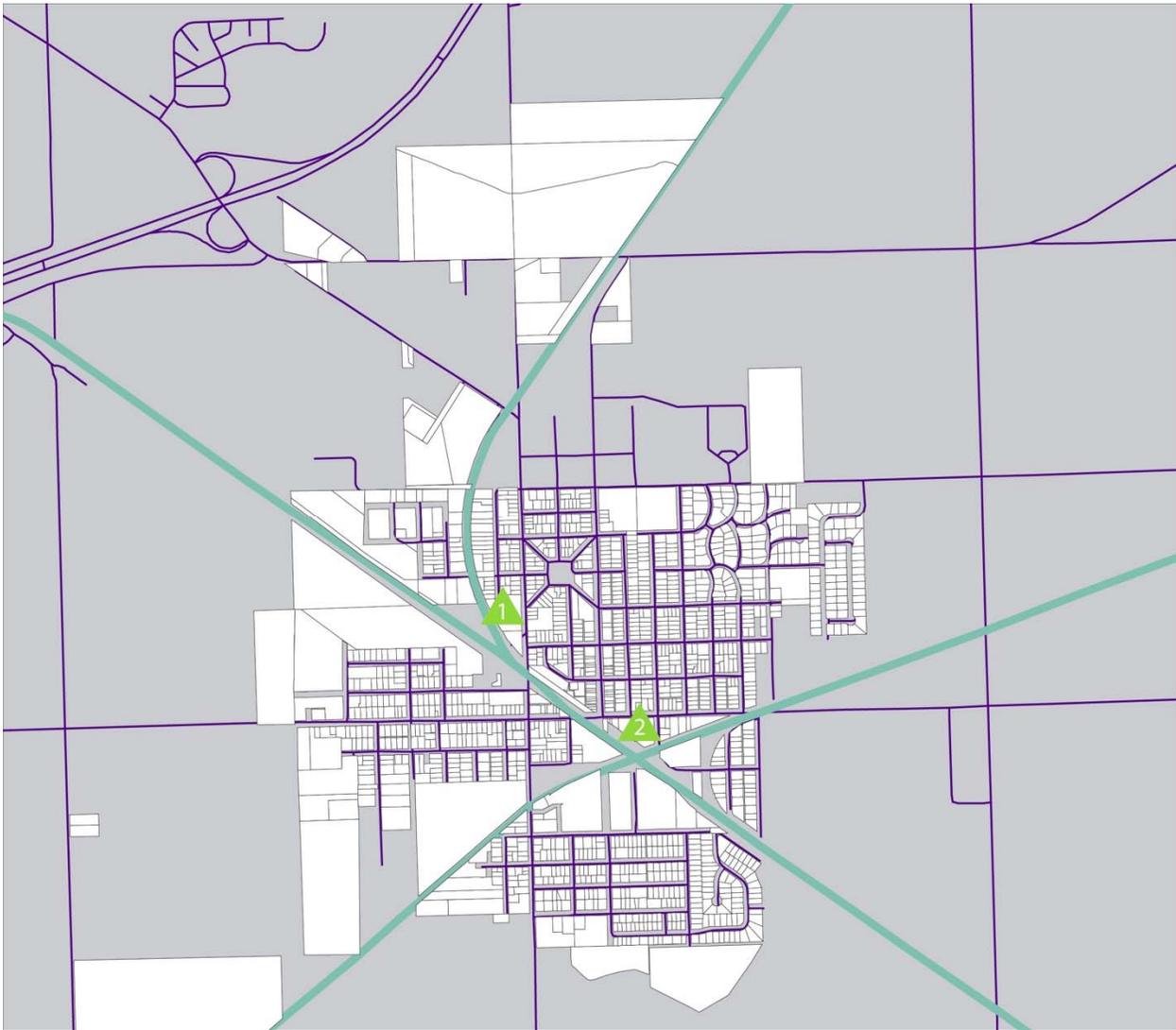


Figure 81



- 6.1 Riverside Market
- 6.2 Farmers Market (seasonal)

The Food Systems map reveals the few opportunities for the people of Durand to purchase fresh food within their community. Riverside Market is vital to the community as the only grocer in the area. The Farmers Market is hosted in a good location, in front of the Depot, but has struggled due to scheduling, seasonality, and accessibility.

7. Healthcare Assets

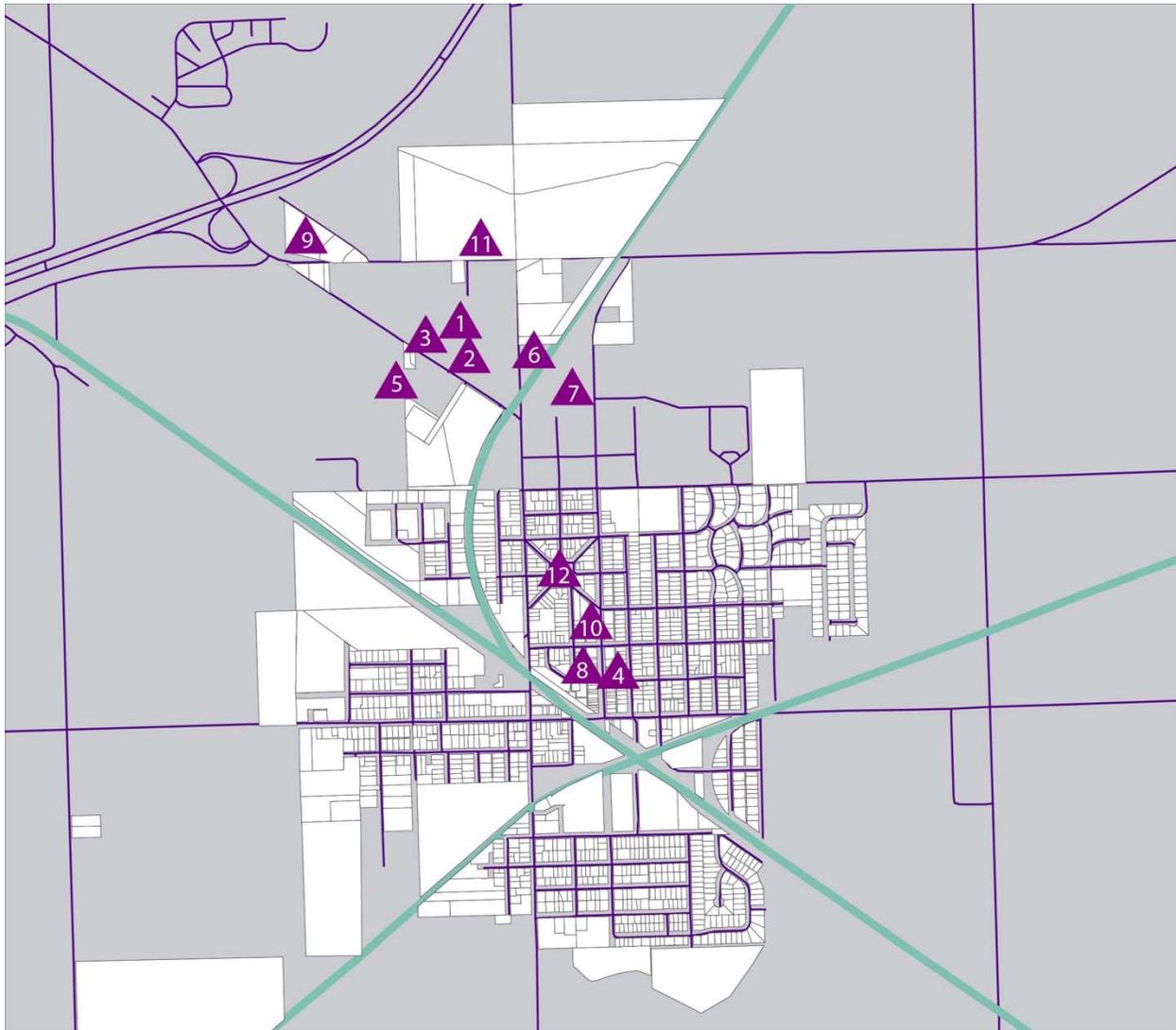


Figure 82

- 7.1 Anytime Fitness Durand
- 7.2 Hass Vision Center
- 7.3 Hurley Urgent Care & Occupational Health Durand
- 7.4 Kal Chiropractic of Durand
- 7.5 The Lodges of Durand
- 7.6 Memorial Family Healthcare - Durand
- 7.7 Tender Care Home Healthcare, LLC
- 7.8 Rajiva Tirtha, DDS & Associates
- 7.9 Rite Aid Pharmacy
- 7.10 Shaw's Pharmacy
- 7.11 Sobak's Home Medical, Inc
- 7.12 Sycamore House Senior Living



The City of Durand offers a wide spectrum of healthcare services, from assisted living to dentistry to medical supplies. While there are two practices downtown, the majority of these healthcare assets are clustered north of the city. The city must find a way to design for connectivity despite the interjection of the railroads, to make the downtown and the surrounding assets feel more unified and accessible.

8. Recreational Assets



Figure 83



- 8.1 Dutch Hollow Golf Club
- 8.2 School Athletic Facilities

The City of Durand has two major sites for recreation: The Dutch Hollow Golf Club, which is a destination within the surrounding area, and the extensive athletic facilities in and around three of the Durand Area Public Schools to the northeast of the downtown. These are strong assets for the community, but also show opportunity to explore new and different recreational options, ones closer and more accessible to downtown.

9. Tourism Assets

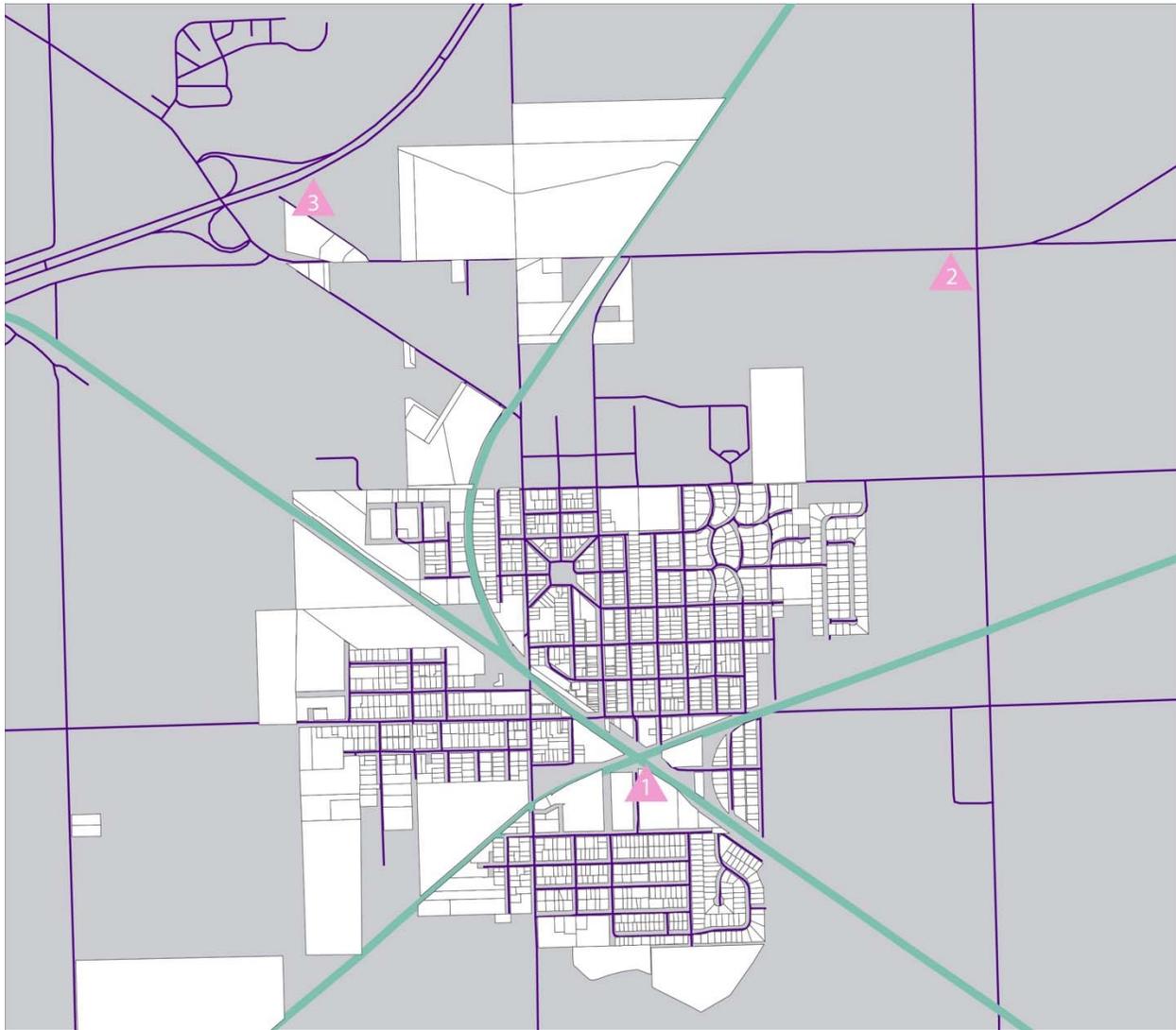


Figure 84



- 9.1 Durand Union Station, The Depot
- 9.2 Sunset Motel
- 9.3 Quality Inn

Durand's only hotel options are located at the edge of the city area, not walkable to the downtown area. For a community looking to revitalize and increase public events, they need to explore infrastructure that can support visitors, such as a Tourism Center and additional places to stay such as a bed and breakfast or an inn. Festivals have become a large part of the energy of Downtown Durand. These grand public events are family-friendly affairs for the local people, and successfully draw thousands to the area in the summertime.

10. Public Green Space

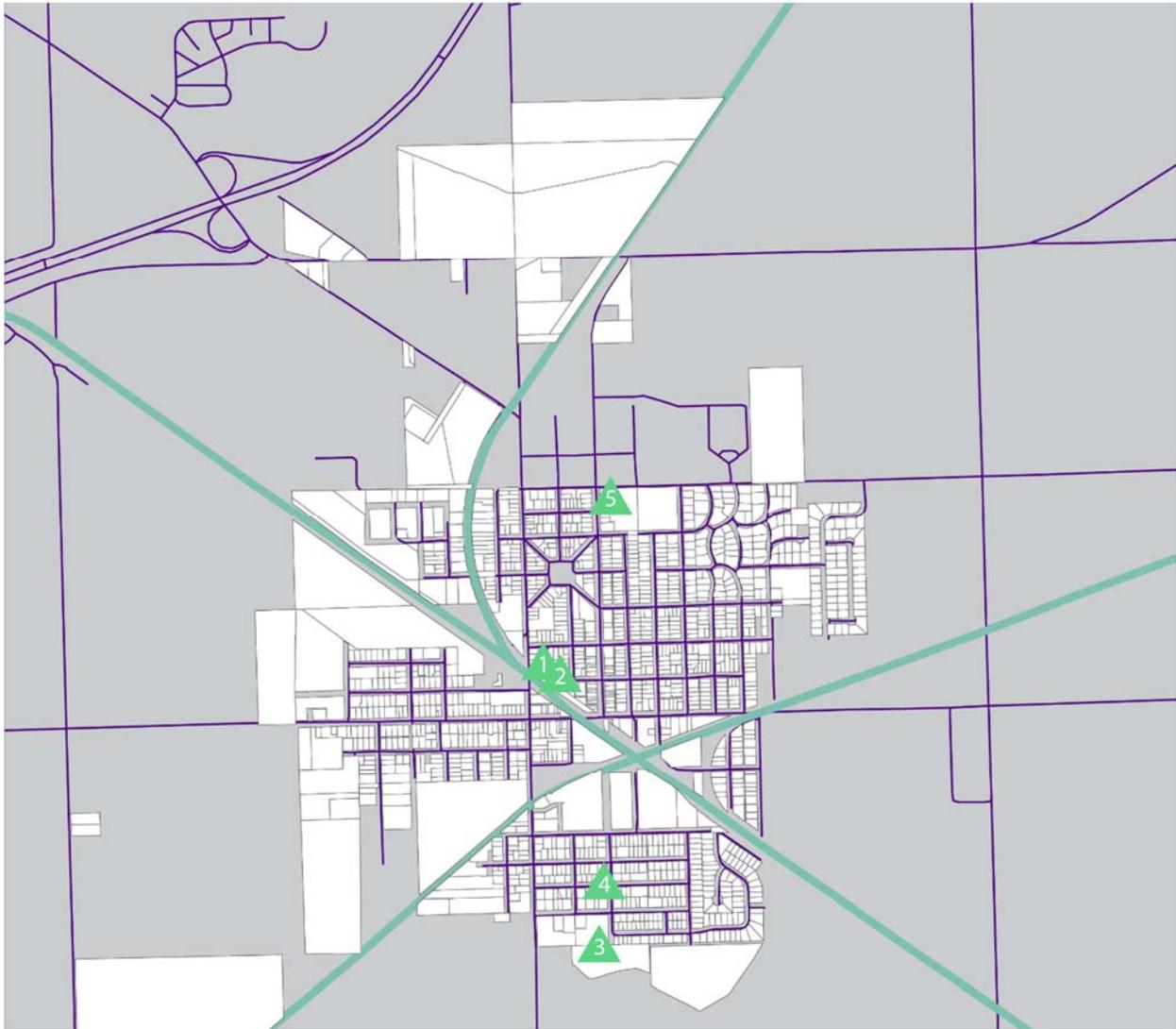


Figure 85



- 10.1 Ironhorse Park
- 10.2 Lions Park
- 10.3 Optimist Park
- 10.4 Shaw Park
- 10.5 Trumble Park

Durand has made strides toward public green space with the Ironhorse and Lions Parks that celebrate the city's railroad heritage with a pathway along existing rail beneath the city's water tower. This is the only dedicated green space directly accessible from the project area. Outside this area, there is no public green space in the downtown area.

Additional Public Assets

In addition to assets identified and mapped on the previous pages, there were several other staples of Durand that required additional focus:

Durand Historic Railroad Depot

The Durand Union Station Depot is listed as a civic, cultural, and tourism public asset. This depot is a very important landmark to the citizens of Durand as it embodies their historical foundation. The building was originally designed by Spier and Rohms and was constructed in 1903, only to be burnt down in 1905. The building was rebuilt back to the Spier and Rohms design that same year. In 1974, during the decline of the railroad, Grand Trunk Railroad determined it was no longer economically viable for maintaining the building and marked it for demolition. The community rallied against this, and through political maneuvering, the City of Durand bought the building for \$1.00.

Its current ownership is by a private/non-profit organization, Durand Union Station, while Amtrak operates a commuter line that runs in the morning from Port Huron southwest to Chicago, and in the evening from Chicago back northeast to Port Huron. It is currently used as an active Amtrak stop, as well as a railroad museum and utilizes additional space as multiple rentable meeting rooms, and private offices. Its historical character is important to maintain, an expensive undertaking. The Depot roof was recently renovated with the historical red clay tiles. The city views the Depot as one of its core attractions, and seeks to further connect this icon with the downtown area.



Figure 86: Historical Photo of Durand Union Station, durandstation.org

Public Events

Public events in Durand are a large part of the summer culture and opportunity to draw people from the region to experience Durand's history and culture.

Durand Railroad Days - This festival, held every May, celebrates Durand's railroad heritage and kicks off the summer season.

Car Cruise - Durand's Car Cruise invites local people to show off their vintage vehicles in a slow roll parade. It's a regional celebration with ties to the automotive-loving soul of this region. Held the first week of September, it wraps up the summer season.



Figure 87: Photo taken during the Durand Days festival in 2010, Argus Press

Asset Distribution

- 1.1 Amvets Post 2273
- 1.2 Durand Amtrak Station
- 1.3 Durand Area Lions Clubs
- 1.4 Durand City Hall
- 1.5 Durand Fire Department
- 2.1 Durand Union Station, The Depot
- 2.2 The Clock Tower
- 2.3 Kathy's School of Dance
- 2.4 Michigan Railroad History Museum
- 3.1 Durand High School
- 3.2 Durand Area Middle School
- 3.3 Bertha Neal Elementary
- 3.4 Robert Kerr Elementary
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- 4.1 Durand Chamber of Commerce
- 4.2 SageLink Credit Union
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- 9.3 Quality Inn
- 10.1 Ironhorse Park
- 10.2 Lions Park
- 10.3 Optimist Park
- 10.4 Shaw Park
- 10.5 Trumble Park

When looking at the catalogue of public assets, it can be noted that the area lacks key framework in a number of areas. For one, while the area has many civic associations, it lacks any kind of community center or YMCA. A community center is a great place to build a sense of community and encourage interactions across age groups through various activities. Another aspect of Durand to note is that although they have a robust school district, the area lacks support at the bottom and the top with no daycare services nor higher education institutions. Prioritizing these sorts of organizations could help Durand diversify their age demographic as well as attract younger families or millennials to settle in the area.

Concluding Remarks on Public Assets

The initial observation from the Public Assets Analysis is that Durand contains three hubs of assets and public activity. The first is in the downtown area, along the project area intersection of N Saginaw and Main S. The second is a hub along Monroe Rd at the Durand Plaza at the Crossroads and The Lodges, to the northwest of downtown. Those entering the city from the highway also pass through this area. The third is to the northeast of the downtown, where three Durand Area Public Schools are clustered as well as athletic facilities and other communal facilities. The city must plan and design to connect these concentrations despite the interjection of the railroads, to make the downtown and the surrounding assets feel more unified and accessible.

8 Case Studies

The MSU Practicum team selected three case study communities within the United States that worked effectively to adapt to find new markets and creatively improved the look and feel of their downtowns. The project team will consider aspects of these success stories when making suggestions for Downtown Durand. ⁶

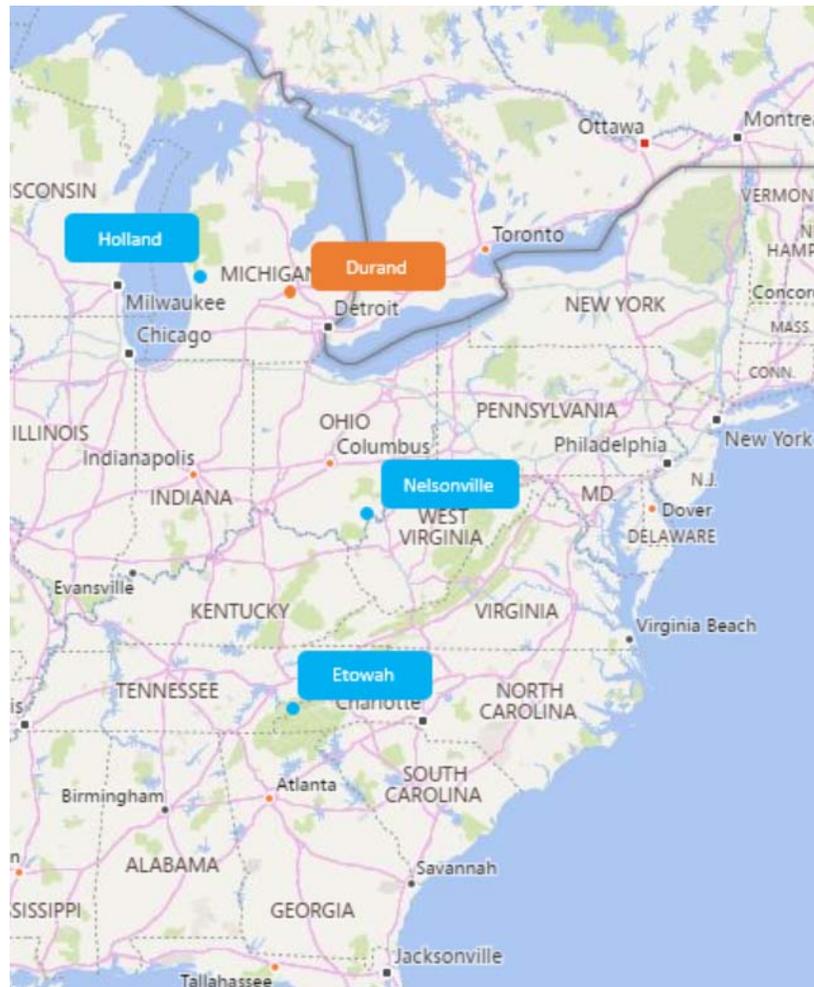


Figure 89 Source: Bing Maps 2018

⁶ Information on these, and other downtown case studies can be found at: http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/pdfs/stbi_final.pdf

Case Study 1: Holland, MI

Holland, MI is located in Western Michigan in Ottawa County. In recent years, they have had great success in branding their downtown through. The City of Holland, MI has implemented a heritage-based branding strategy celebrating their Dutch roots. These Dutch influences include cultural wooden dance shoes, the icon Dutch windmill and tulips, which are the national flower of the Netherlands. Their brand extends into signage, architecture, city branding and marketing events. The most notable event hosted in Holland is the annual Tulip Time festival, which includes Dutch dancing, Tulip-themed floats and special festival events on Windmill Island. The following figures are examples of Holland's branding.



Figure 90 The City of Holland logo features characteristics of the city including tulips, the windmill, its location as a port city, and the national Dutch¹



Figure 91 Logo for the 2018 Tulip Time festival



Figure 92 Signage at entrance into downtown Holland⁷



Figure 93 City of Holland's Website⁸

⁷ Image Source:

https://www.cityofholland.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/04142017holland_master_plan_reduced_size_0.pdf

⁸ Image Source: <https://www.cityofholland.com/>

Case Study 2: Nelsonville, OH

Nelsonville and Durand are both Midwest towns. In 2001, Nelsonville had similar issues that Durand faces today: high retail vacancy, buildings in disrepair, and facades that were unwelcoming. Multiple revitalization projects had failed and Nelsonville was desperate.



Figure 94 Revitalized Downtown Square⁹

Overtime, the new creative residents' energy and entrepreneurship made the city much more attractive to outside investors. Coffee shops and art galleries now line the streets that used to be vacant and dilapidated. Ultimately, this former industrial community turned artist-driven community helped the small-town attract tourists and outside investment.

In late 2001, the city became determined to revitalize their downtown into the retail center it used to be. The strategy that Nelsonville used was to tap into the creative economy, which they achieved by subsidizing rent to artists in exchange for their services in rehabilitating storefronts in the downtown square.



Figure 95 Parade of the Hills¹⁰

⁹ Image Source: <http://athensohio.com/blog-posts/spend-a-day-in-historic-nelsonville/>

¹⁰ Image Source: <http://athensohio.com/blog-posts/7-ways-to-spend-the-dog-days-of-summer/>

Case Study 3: Etowah, TN

Etowah, much like Durand, was a town built around their railroad. Etowah was the first planned community in the United States, and was built by the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad Co. in 1906. This town was a crucial rail connection between Atlanta and Chicago. Etowah was a company town and home to the L&N Railroad Co headquarters until 1974.

The slow movement away from rail between the 1950s and 1970s led to a massive economic downturn in the town. Unemployed people left town to find new work, and the population waned. In the 1990s, the town saw opportunities for redevelopment. The local government invested in rehabilitating historical buildings, such as the Railroad Depot building and the Gem Theater.



Figure 96 Hiwassee River Rail Adventures starting in Etowah for the Copperhill Special¹¹



Figure 97 Louisville & Nashville Depot in Etowah¹²

In 2001, the city bought the abandoned railroad track that was previously owned by L&N Railroad, and, through a partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority, rehabilitated the line and initiated rail excursions into the surrounding National Forest. The town quickly turned from a declining industrial town into a tourist attraction, with restaurants and retail shops in their downtown district. The rail excursions have been extremely successful, with 30,000 passengers riding the train in 2007.

¹¹ Image Source: <http://tennesseehill.com/hiwassee-river-rail-adventures/>

¹² Image Source: <http://www.pwrr.org/prototype/Etowah/index.html>

9 Going Forward

The MSU Practicum Team developed various recommendations based on concerns identified through public visioning and data analysis. These recommendations are presented under three themes to focus redevelopment efforts: Placemaking, Revitalization, and Connectivity. Many of the recommendations are centered around new policy and policy revision to ensure that future development is consistent their community vision.

Within the individual themes, the Practicum Team listed recommendations both for the current pace of growth in Durand, as well as in the case of future major development growth (marked MDG Recommendation). At the time of this report, the major development in question is Project TIM, a specialized industrial development.

The following recommendation section also contains a timeline for each objective and the grant opportunities (including due dates) that are available to assist in completing that objective (Figure 100). Cost estimates have also been provided for each objective under the following three cost levels:

Cost Level	Symbol
Low Cost	\$
Medium Cost	\$\$
High Cost	\$\$\$

Figure 98

9.1 Thematic Recommendations

The following three recommendation themes address the overall objectives within the theme, the Practicum Team's concern that makes this objective relevant, achievable actions within those objectives, the expected results if the actions are followed through on, the estimated cost of completing the objective, possible resources to actualize the objectives, and estimates for the time it will take to complete each objective.

Placemaking

Encourage the development of public spaces to promote healthy and happy lifestyles, while capitalizing on the community's existing assets.

Objective 1: Promote and maintain design standards consistent with the city's historical character.

Concern: Desire to retain small town character based on feedback from public visioning analysis (see page 27, 28).

Action 1 (MDG): Develop a Form-Based Code in the Zoning Ordinance that outlines desired design guidelines for the downtown area.

Action 2: Develop a Streetscape Plan, outlining the design and coordination of public furniture, city branding and other public design elements.

Expected Results: A set of design guidelines that ensures all future façade improvement and development are in keeping with the city's desired aesthetic.

Estimated Cost: \$\$\$

Possible Resources: Staff time, collaboration between the City, Chamber of Commerce and DDA, Michigan Main Street Program for the 2018 Cycle (Letter of Interest Due Sept 7, 2018)

Timing: 1 year

Objective 2: Further develop a city marketing and tourism strategy with regional coordination.

Concern: Desire greater tourism draw and graphic identity, as identified in Durand’s Master Plan (page 22-23, see Holland case study).

Action 1: Include the new logo and branding guidelines on all city documents, letterheads, street signs, buildings, and vehicles.

Action 2: Coordinate a regional marketing committee that will work to promote the identity of Shiawassee County with nearby towns concerning the Shiawassee River and the current Rails-to-Trails program.

Action 3: Update and brand resources given to new downtown businesses (i.e. welcome packets) with new materials and a downtown branding strategy.

Action 4: Work with downtown businesses to promote the current “Downtown Durand Gift Card” program and expand the program to applicable business who have not signed up for the program.

Expected Results: A cohesive brand that sets the foundation for Durand to grow its tourism economy in Shiawassee County.

Estimated Cost: \$\$

Possible Resources: Staff time and volunteer time. Consider utilizing freelance work through organizations like Fiverr.¹³

Timing: 1 year

¹³ More information about Fiverr at: <https://www.fiverr.com/>

Objective 4: Promote Durand’s railroad heritage, including the use of the Durand Union Station (Depot)

Concern:

Action 1: Coordinate façade revitalization with heritage celebration efforts by adding railroad themed installations or murals.

Action 2: Investigate options of a railroad crosswalk for pedestrian and biker usage. Connect path with citywide walking/biking paths.

Action 3: Incorporate the Depot and Sycamore House along Durand’s Historic Walking Tour as “bookends” of the downtown area.

Action 4: Identify sites or houses used as stops during the Underground Railroad in the City of Durand. Indicate with historical plaques and include stops into historical walking tour.

Expected Results: Broader awareness of Durand’s railroad heritage and intrinsic beauty.

Estimate Cost: Action 1 & 3 \$

Action 2 \$\$\$

Possible Resources: Coordinate with a local arts organization to apply for the MEDC Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) Grant. Must apply by June 1, 2018.

Timing: 3 years

Revitalization

Attract businesses to Durand that will draw people downtown and reinvigorate the local economy.

Objective 1: Carry out Durand’s Master Plan goal of mixed use development to combat vacancies and blight (page 22, 23).

Concern: Durand has experienced high levels of vacancy, as seen in the Vacancy analysis (page 33), and desires more pedestrian activity (page 24).

Action 1: Enter the Michigan Main Street Program for the 2018 Cycle (Letter of Interest Due Sept 7, 2018), for technical assistance in preserving and revitalizing their traditional commercial corridor.

Action 2: Prioritize filling downtown buildings’ second and third stories with residential units before investing in new housing unit projects.

Action 3 (MDG): Identify lots available for infill development within the downtown area to increase overall density.

Action 4: Coordinate business owners to focus revitalization efforts and renovate downtown block by block, to ensure the downtown is aesthetically improved as a whole.

Expected Results: A denser and more vibrant downtown district by growing the population and tax base.

Estimated Cost: \$\$\$

Possible Resources: Apply for MEDC's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for blight elimination or facade improvement grant, staff time

Timing: 5 years

Objective 2: Attract businesses to the downtown area by bringing in missing retail, community facilities, and/or recreational opportunities to serve as destination businesses.

Concern: Desire and need for additional entertainment and specialty retail identified in Public Visioning (page 30) and Market Leakage Analysis (page 50).

Action 1: Encourage current business owners of downtown bars to reinvest and consider bringing a specialty entertainment aspect, such as an arcade pub or a karaoke bar, to their business.

Action 2: Attract specialty retail stores, such as an outdoor gear shop, to diversify retail options and draw a wider range of visitors to the downtown.

Action 3: Explore possible locations for a community arts center/gallery or other types of community spaces like a YMCA.

Action 4: Establish a co-working space or artist co-op in a vacant downtown unit, to attract those who generally work at home or remotely to the downtown.

Action 5: Attract specificity food options, such as a bakery or a sweets/desserts shop.

Expected Results: A more diversified and resilient downtown economy

Estimated Cost: \$\$

Possible Resources: Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Authority

Timing: 3 years

Objective 3: Host additional public events in Downtown Durand.

Concern: Desire to build upon existing public events (page 26), as outlined in the Public Assets Analysis (page 63).

Action 1: Reestablish the Durand Quilting Festival.

Action 2: Plan outdoor movie screenings of family-friendly movies in the summer on the grass areas beneath the water tower or clock tower.

Action 3: Organize a Food Truck Festival on the parking lot west of the 100 block of N Saginaw St.

Action 4: Coordinate more downtown events with spring activities such as the Durand Railroad Days festival or Durand Area Public Schools graduations.

Expected Results: Renewal of local activity in the downtown, drawing more residents to activities and engaging more potential future volunteers. Also drawing tourists and highlighting Durand assets may lead to higher commercial tax base, and greater awareness of the Durand.

Estimated Cost: \$\$

Possible Resources: Apply for MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places (PSCP) Grant for targeted funding for a public spaces project

Timing: 1 year

Connectivity

Connect people to the downtown area to increase pedestrian and economic activity.

Objective 1: Improve corridors and overall city connectivity into the downtown by focusing on beautification and infrastructural efforts for walking and biking routes.

Concern: Desire for increased walkable and bike-able infrastructure (page 24), supported by the need to connect hubs of assets within the city (best illustrated in Healthcare Assets map on page 61).

Action 1: Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance to prioritize multimodal transportation infrastructure and programming.

Action 2 (MDG): Focus future infrastructural and beautification efforts north of the project area, along Saginaw Street toward Durand Area High School, and northbound on Durand Road toward the Monroe Road business area for a more pleasant trip into the downtown.

Action 3: Continue adding wayfinding signs in and around the City of Durand and Vernon Township that lead to the Downtown.

Action 4: Work with Shiawassee County and nearby cities and townships to ensure that regional trail projects include Durand.

Action 5: Establish fixed bus routes during the peak tourism season to create stops between the railroad depot, recreational assets, surrounding downtowns, and Downtown Durand.

Expected Results: More walkable and bike-able paths in Downtown Durand, increasing economic activity. Developing these corridors will enhance the overall convenience of downtown by connecting it to other clusters of business and activity within the city.

Estimated Cost: \$\$\$

Possible Resources: Staff time, neighborhood associations, other volunteer groups. Apply for Safe Routes to School Grant for federal funding towards infrastructural and programming improvements for safe roads paths.

Timing: 5 years

Objective 2: Capitalize on existing transportation infrastructure

Concern: Pursue existing Master Plan strategy (page 22) to develop alternative transportation options. See Etowah case study.

Action 1: Increase marketing efforts and coordination with Shiawassee Area Transit Authority with bus service during peak season, to encourage utilization for transportation to and from the downtown.

Action 2: Engage with the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities to ensure that the “A2TC” train from Ann Arbor to Traverse City establishes a stop in Durand.

Expected Results: Increase tourism both in and out of Durand.

Estimated Cost: \$\$

Possible Resources: Staff time, coordination between the city and other transportation agencies for a comprehensive transportation strategy.

Timing: 3 years

9.2 Potential Development Considerations

At the time of this report, two notable developments are in progress. The Practicum Team has considered these developments in their recommendations.

Project TIM

“Project TIM” is a potential heavy industrial development. The new plant would focus on high-tech steel technology. The development’s first phase is estimated to cost approximately \$4.5 - \$5 billion. The development would require approximately 800 contiguous acres and the plant itself would be 6,200 by 3,900 ft² (Figure 99). The City of Durand estimates that 800 full time on site employees would be needed for Phase 1, that the plant would contribute to a total tax foundation increase conservatively \$19.2M annually, and would increase foot traffic in current small businesses, supporting an estimated 240 current and new small businesses with annual sales of \$175,000.¹⁴ Durand’s location between Flint and Lansing, available contiguous tracks of land, highway access, railroad access, close proximity to high voltage power lines, access to a highly skilled workforce, and community leadership all have made it an attractive destination for a manufacturing development of this magnitude.

The project is not yet finalized, and a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) has left many details of the construction confidential. The NDA was, in part, put in place to prevent land speculation, saving taxpayer money. Purchase agreements have begun, although multiple landowners occupy the area, and if the developer is not able to secure all of the area, they will not build. An Ohio-based steel technology firm, New Steel International Inc., is one of several pursuing the project. New Steel International has sought a \$7 billion federal loan through the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program.¹⁵

Many factors may change the probability of “Project TIM” coming to Durand. However, given the progress that the development has experienced this far, and the possibility of a similar manufacturing development of this scale coming to Durand because of the city’s advantages, this report will address how Downtown Durand should prepare if a development like TIM materializes. If this project is confirmed, hundreds of temporary construction jobs will come to Durand for years during the construction of this facility, and upon completion, thousands of permanent, full-time industrial jobs will come to Durand. If capitalized, Downtown Durand can capture a new market population through this Major Developmental Growth and can grow its business base, and housing stock further.

¹⁴ For more specifics on Project TIM specifications and community concerns as of June 2017, refer to *Responses to Land Owner Forum*:

<http://www.durandmi.com/Land%20Owners%20Forum%20Question%20Responses%20061117.pdf>

¹⁵ For updated reporting on Project TIM’s development and impact, refer to Crain’s Detroit Business:

<http://www.craigslist.com/article/20171204/news/646746/project-tim-revealed-steelmaker-planning-sprawling-plant-in-rural>

Project TIM Location

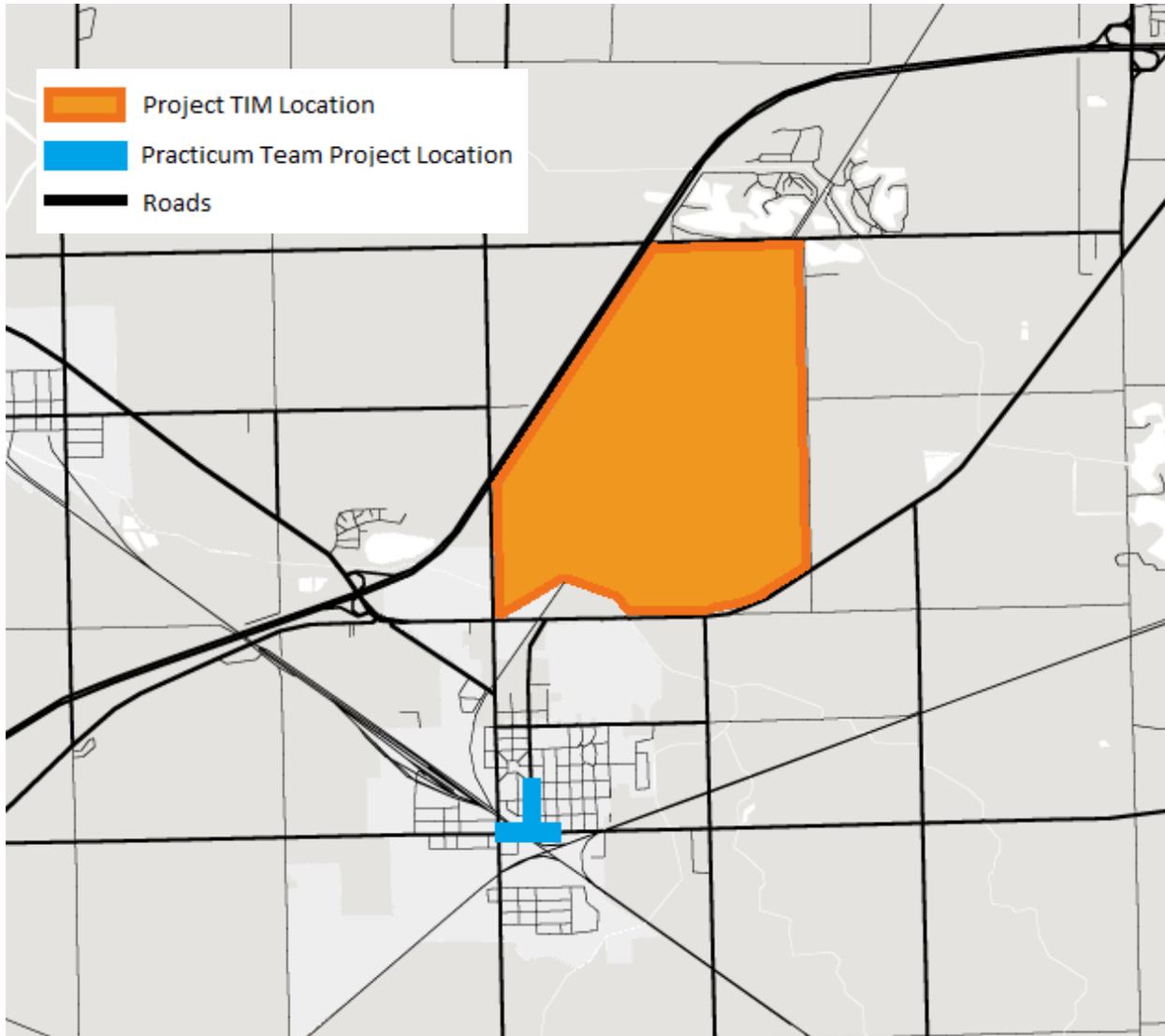


Figure 99

Practicum Team recommendations specific to major development growth, such as if Project TIM were to actualize:

Placemaking Objective 1: Promote and maintain design standards consistent with the city's historical character.

Action 1: Develop a Form-Based Code in the Zoning Ordinance that outlines desired design guidelines for the downtown area.

Revitalization Objective 1: Carry out Durand's Master Plan goal of mixed-use development to combat vacancies and blight (page 22, 23).

Action 3: Identify lots available for infill development within the downtown area to increase overall density.

Connectivity Objective 1: Improve corridors and overall city connectivity into the downtown by focusing on beautification and infrastructural efforts for walking and biking routes.

Action 2: Focus future infrastructural and beautification efforts north of the project area, along Saginaw Street toward Durand Area High School, and northbound on Durand Road toward the Monroe Road business area for a more pleasant trip into the downtown.

Incoming Housing Development

Durand also has 16 build-ready lots in Creek Point Circle subdivision, with additional

Although not to the same extent as Project TIM, housing developments like this one fits into an effective strategy for growing Durand's population and tax base.

9.3 Timeline

The following timeline shows all of the thematic recommendation objectives and funding opportunities chronologically one, three, and five years from the time of the report's writing.

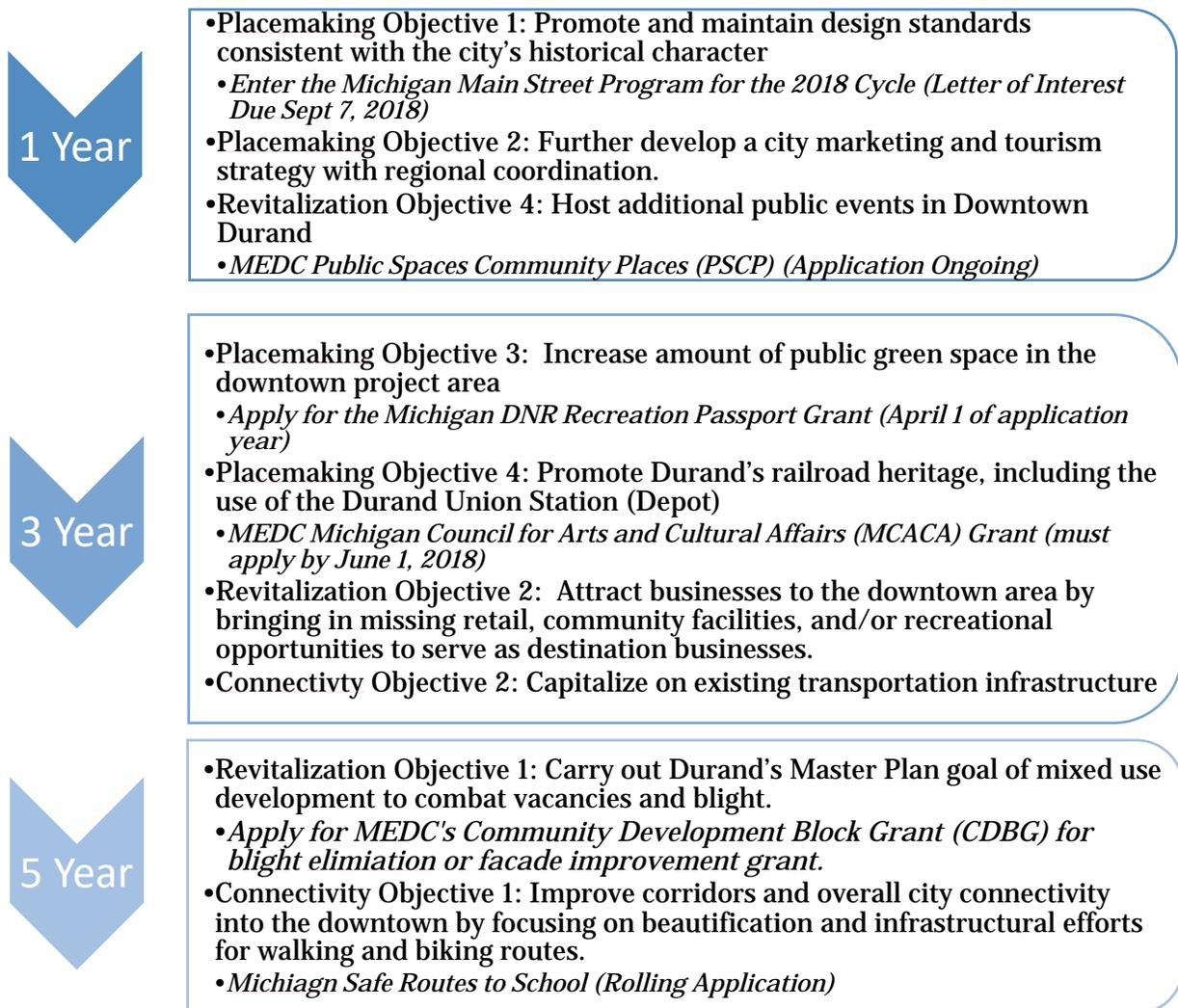


Figure 100

10 Appendix

Scope of Project: Durand, MI		
Project Description	Create a high quality 5-year downtown plan for Durand, MI.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Incorporate Downtown Enhancement Plan (2004)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cement what is relevant and evaluate viability of strategy/plans • Include a section on what has been completed since the last plan update • Incorporate 2018 Downtown Consumers Survey 2. <i>Facilitate Public Participation event</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare presentation and questions • Receive community input 3. <i>Host Interviews with Key Stakeholders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with key business owners and members of the Downtown Development Authority on progress of analysis and request feedback on recommendations 4. <i>Provide 5-year Vision Plan</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest potential physical improvements, as well as branding and event suggestions • Add additional section on planning steps that should be taken if “Project Tim” actualizes 5. <i>Present Findings and Recommendations to Durand City Council</i> 	
Deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5-year plan for Durand Downtown that incorporates the planning progress that has already been made, takes other case studies into account, addresses the key issues Durand sees in its downtown (vacancies, preserving historic character, etc.), and addresses how planning strategies may shift depending on changing circumstances (namely the “TIM project” or a similarly influential development). 2. Interaction with Durand public and specific downtown stakeholders 3. Presentation on findings and recommendations 	
Milestones	February 9, 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule SWOT public participation event 2. Develop report content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Community Profile & History • Socioeconomic Profile & Comparative Analysis (Case Studies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy Study • Market Leakage Analysis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Analysis • Public Assets Analysis • Existing Conditions Study/Facade Analysis • Current Land Uses, Zoning
	February 28, 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of changes implemented since 2004 Downtown Enhancement Strategy 2. Host Public Participation Event 3. Analysis from public feedback 4. Analyze Downtown Consumer Survey 2018 data & Retail Study 5. Identify Case Studies (3-5), and thematic ties to Durand 6. Meet with key stakeholders before formulating recommendations
	March 30, 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Downtown Enhancement Recommendations 2. Anticipating Future Growth (Project Tim or similarly influential future development) 3. 5-year plan Completed Draft
	April 20, 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete revisions on drafts after community and faculty input 2. Present findings to City Council
Success Criteria		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practicum group brings novel, innovative ideas to downtown Durand that can be implemented in the proposed 5 year established time period 2. Practicum group incorporates input from city officials, key downtown stakeholders, and the public in the plan. 3. Practicum group includes next steps based on probable future development scenarios

Limits and Exclusions

The following are outside of the realistic scope:

1. Recommendations will pertain mostly to the area highlighted below



2. Organizing the logistic elements of the public participation event (finding the venue, bring a projector, etc.) and informing residents of the event

2004 Enhancement Strategy Progress

The 2004 Enhancement Strategy conducted by Beckett Raeder for the City of Durand details and summarizes issues and recommendations concerning a broader project area. Many recommendations given in this report mirror or update recommendations given in 2004 as many have not yet been addressed. Similarly, this report emphasized the importance of the Depot, and better utilizing the areas between the downtown and Depot to draw connection both visually and physically. There was also a larger focus on vehicular traffic in/out and through the downtown area and parking, which was out of the scope of this report. Although traffic flow and parking were not addressed in this report, they will be very important in the case of growth in Durand. This report provides thorough analysis and recommendations in those areas. Similarly, the Enhancement Strategy identified specific buildings to target for rehabilitation. Only one of the buildings mentioned in located within this project's area, and has not seen any renovation.

A large focus of this report is on the brand and aesthetic of the community. While Durand succeeded in addressing many *Character-Defining Elements*, this report recommends a further step; the elements added to the downtown streetscape should be cohesive and intentional, and use design to tie the downtown area together.

Overall, this document can be a helpful resource moving forward. The Enhancement strategy provides a broad spectrum of recommendations, using supporting details such a full collection of signage examples. It also lists suggested recommended *Design Standards* that will be helpful to consider when developing a Form-Based Code for Durand.

2004 Enhancement Strategy Recommendation Progress by Category

The Depot	
Restore and preserve important views to the Depot	
Reestablish a pedestrian linkage between depot and downtown	
Increase attractions the Depots	
Redevelop open space around the Depot	
Establish a design review process for development in proximity to Depot	NA
Approaching and Entering the Downtown	
Landscaped entry sign at Saginaw/Oakland St	
Develop NW corner of West Main/Oak St as two-story, mixed-use infill	
East Main Track Crossing entrance	
Wayfinding at Railroad/ E Main St	
Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation	
Reconfigure Saginaw/Main St intersection as three-way stop	
Give eastbound drivers notice not to block the tracks	
Clearly designate the Saginaw/Main St as pedestrian crossing	

Decrease the number of lanes on Saginaw	
Character-Defining Elements	
Wayfinding Welcome & Directional Signage	
Bumpouts & Pavement Design	
Architecture	
DDA to require upkeep on rear facades and side walls	
Introduce public art	
Street furnishings & light	
Benches	
Trash receptacles	
Lighting	
Bicycle Racks	
Seasonal Decor	
Open Space Redevelopment Opportunities	
Street trees and landscaping	
A park setting for Sandula Clock Tower	
A farmer's market and festival grounds	

Reconfiguration of Centennial Parkway	✓
Existing Building Redevelopment Opportunities	
A neighborhood park on the old Middle School site	✗
The Sparling Hammond Building	NA
The Brand Building	~
Infill Redevelopment Opportunities	
Upper story redevelopment in the downtown core	~
Housing	~
Lodging	✗
Service, Office, and Mixed Use	~

Got it! ✓ Getting There ~ Needed ✗

Stakeholder Interview Raw Feedback

On January 12th, 2018, the MSU Practicum group visited Durand to talk with four key stakeholders for a preliminary discussion on Downtown Durand's assets and what is still needed. Divided into a SWOT Analysis format the results are the following:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durand has good seasonal and holiday décor • Most activity at ice cream shop, families at restaurants • Very safe, well connected and maintained sidewalks • Historical Rail Trails • Wine tasting festival • Depot renovation • Chamber organized events for local business owners • Brochure of city/business offerings, walking distances • Good streetscaping efforts • Sycamore house, senior living, walkable • Chamber coordinates and promotes all area businesses • Car show • Golf outing • Golf course is attraction • Rail instrumental to history of city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students go to park/sports facilities rather than walk around downtown • Very limited housing, diverse pricing but old housing stock • Only one grocery store • Lacking in boutiques and shops • Train traffic is pain • Road infrastructure bad, sidewalks very narrow • Housing will be biggest problem, need more retail • Hallmark, bowling alley, Donuts all closed • Need more activities • Sagelink CU HQ -- DDA used TIF, failed because property values plummeted, recruited business to downtown • Biggest challenge is finding manpower, experience, will in leadership positions • No movie theater, missing entertainment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students go to park/sports facilities rather than walk around downtown • More walking than biking • Not large focus of tourism from DDA • Desires for quick lunch spots • Friends of Shiawassee, River activities -- could be destination • Coalition along river, coordinating with businesses, STEAM and Depot • Parking with pedestrian bridge could solve train inconvenience • Depot has lots of potential • focus on improved facades • Historical plaques • Plan to paint every street in Durand over next 2 years • A lot of walk-in interest in houses for sale • People are joining chamber from outside areas - moves to advertise buildings for sale • Historical walking tour in works • More rentership, apartment needs anticipated • Want more foot traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning not necessarily enforced • Businesses opening in Owasso not Durand • DDA short on funds

SWOT Public Meeting Raw Feedback Tallies

Strengths	Count
Existing Downtown Businesses	3
Public Events	2
Schools	2
Amtrak	2
Volunteers	2
Highway Access	2
Community Feel	1
History	1
Cleanliness	1
Parks	1
Civic Organizations	1
Volunteers	1
Friendliness/Welcoming	1
Depot	1
Senior Housing	1
Walkability	1
Affordable Housing	1
Pharmacy	1
Farmers Market	1
Music Program	1
Dance Studio	1
Library	1
Well-defined Downtown	1
Steetscape	1
Historic Buildings	1
Location between Lansing and Flint	1
Trees	1
Distance (13 miles to gen goods)	1
Lack of community buy in	1
Lack of entertainment	1
Lack of anchor business	1

Threats	Count
Zoning Rules/Regulations Prohibitive	1
Railroad Hazards	1
Prohibitive Costs for New Businesses	1
Competition from nearby towns	1
Township/City Issues	2
Train Blockages	1
Age of Residents (Extremes)	2
Volunteer Burnout	1
No Vacant Land	1
Lansing HW is Durand Commercial Area	1
High # rentals - limits community investment	1
Limited Tax base = economic uncertainty	1
Attitudes and Perceptions	1

Opportunities	Count
More/better festivals	3
Trains	2
Amtrak to promote us	2
Rails to Trails	2
Location	1
Underground RR History	1
Industrial History	1
Circus Train Wreck	1
Better Local Transportation	1
Promote façade grants	1
National Memorial	1
Restore downtown buildings	1
tourism	1
Build on Car show	1
Banking downtown	1
Promote Dining - many options	1
Small Business Incubator	1

Pocket Park Before/After



Community Garden Before/After



Address	Business Type	Category	Stories	2nd Story Use	Exterior Façade	Windows	Doors	Signage
101 N Saginaw St	Insurance	Service & Entertainment	2	Vacant	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
102 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar	Restaurant/Bar	2	Office	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
103 N Saginaw St	Tattoo Parlor	Service & Entertainment	2	unknown	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
104 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar	Restaurant/Bar	1		Good	Fair	Good	Fair
105 N Saginaw St	Jewelry Store	Other Retail	2	unknown	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair
106 N Saginaw St	Agricultural Office	Office	1		Good	Fair	Good	Fair
108 N Saginaw St			1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
109 N Saginaw St	Local Association	Office	1		Good	Good	Good	Fair
110 N Saginaw St	Laundromat	Service & Entertainment	1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
111 N Saginaw St	Restaurant/Bar	Restaurant/Bar	2	unknown	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair
114 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon	Service & Entertainment	2	Residential	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair
115 N Saginaw St	Restaurant	Restaurant/Bar	2	unknown	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair
116 N Saginaw St	Event Space	Service & Entertainment	2	Service & Entertainment	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair
117 N Saginaw St	Restaurant	Restaurant/Bar	1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair
118 N Saginaw St	Medical Office	Office	1	Office	Poor	Good	Good	Good
119 N Saginaw St					Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor
120 N Saginaw St			1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
121 N Saginaw St					Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor

122 N Saginaw St			1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
123 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon	Service & Entertainment	2	Residential	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
124 N Saginaw St	Dance Studio	Service & Entertainment	1		Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor
125 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon	Service & Entertainment	2	Residential	Fair	Good	Good	Fair
127 N Saginaw St					Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
200 N Saginaw St	Restaurant	Coffee shop/Café	2	Residential	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Good
201 N Saginaw St			2	Residential	Fair	Fair	Good	Poor
202 N Saginaw St	Beauty Salon	Service & Entertainment	2	Service & Entertainment	Poor	Fair	Fair	Good
204 N Saginaw St	Event Space	Service & Entertainment	2	Service & Entertainment	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair
205 N Saginaw St	Resale Store	Other Retail	1		Poor	Good	Poor	Fair
206 N Saginaw St			2	Residential	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
208 N Saginaw St			1		Fair	Good	Good	Poor
209 N Saginaw ST			1		Good	Good	Good	Poor
210 N Saginaw St			1		Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor
211 N Saginaw St	Flower Shop	Other Retail	1		Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair
215A N Saginaw St	Resale Store	Other Retail	1		Fair	Good	Good	Fair
215B N Saginaw St	Restaurant	Restaurant/Bar	1		Fair	Good	Good	Fair
217 N Saginaw St			2	Vacant	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
220 N Saginaw St	Gas Station	Service & Entertainment	1		Good	Good	Good	Good

221 N Saginaw St	Pharmacy & General Merchandise	Other Retail	1		Good	Good	Good	Excellent
300 N Saginaw St			1		Fair	Poor	Poor	Poor
310 N Saginaw	Education Administration Building	Office	1		Good	Poor	Poor	Poor
311 N Saginaw St	Banking	Office	1		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Address	Business Type	Category	Stories	2nd Story Use	Exterior Façade	Windows	Doors	Signage
112 E Main St					Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
114 E Main St					Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
200 W Main St	Restaurant	Restaurant/Bar	2	Vacant	Poor	Fair	Fair	Good
203 W Main St	Cleaners	Service & Entertainment	1		Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
205 E Main St	Restaurant	Restaurant/Bar	1		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
205 W Main St	Beauty Salon	Service & Entertainment	1		Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
206 W Main St	Bar	Restaurant/Bar	1		Fair	Fair	Good	Fair
208 W Main St			2	Vacant	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
213 W Main St			1		Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
216 W Main St					Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
218 W Main St					Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor

