



AUTHENTIC ASHLAND

PART TWO

A Comprehensive Plan for Ashland, Wisconsin
February 2017

czb

Market Context

As a small community settled and platted long before the Civil War, Ashland's very basis for settlement and form trace to fishing, logging, and then the Industrial era receipt, storage, processing, and ferrying of raw ore. Likewise, when fishing, logging, and iron ore transit no longer depend on Ashland playing a role, the community's grit, determination, and capacity speak for itself. It's a real testimony to Ashland that the city's economy has adapted, much of its historic civic and commercial architecture has been maintained in excellent condition, and today Ashland is poised to transition into the coming years with strength. This is especially so when one pauses to consider - really consider - just how far from neighboring cities Ashland is.

Traditionally, a market is described in conventional supply and demand terms. This much housing. That much retail. A certain amount of renters. Home owners and their spending habits. Main Street versus big box. The number of laundromats, gas or service stations, and the size of the bed base if tourism comprises the core of the existing or new economy.

But Ashland's location - far away from population centers; its history - well preserved and celebrated; and the community itself - well-spoken, well-informed, grounded, civic-minded, and engaged, all speak to something more remarkable, and what's important for planning, more germane than simple dimensional math and poorly conceived state planning requirements. The fact that Ashland is comprised of hundreds of residents who came out in sub zero weather to join friends and neighbors and have dinner together in small groups to talk about their community means that Ashland residents care deeply. No algorithm yet exists to capture how much the Ore Dock means, or how important it is to be able to pick apples in the fall, or how proud the community is of its City Hall. People planted roots and have stayed in Ashland because it is a beautiful place to live and a terrific place to raise a family. This - the pride and commitment evident in Ashland today - is the basis on which a future can be planned.

Of course, traditional raw numbers cannot be ignored. Ashland was never more than a small community of not even 15,000 people at its height, and that was more than a century ago. Today, at just over half that, there are too many houses and there's too much commercial space. For these reasons, prices are soft. And this softness is now- and for years has been - abetted by owner concerns about the wisdom of reinvesting in their homes, and also by commercial building owners regarding their investments. With median household income at \$38,551, the city's median housing value should be about \$125,000, and median rents should be about \$1,100/month. But they're not; the typical home in Ashland is worth well less than \$100,000 and a good apartment can be rented for about \$700, meaning the difference is an indication of too little demand.

Why so little demand? Distance matters. It's far away from everywhere else. Jobs matter. Few jobs are being created annually. These factors can be interpreted to mean that Ashland's market is going to keep getting smaller and smaller. They can be interpreted to mean that the Ashland community is going to keep getting older

and older. But to get from there to here - from soft demand and an aging demographic to a future only soft and old is to misunderstand some of the differences between The Greatest Generation and Baby Boomers on one hand, and Gen X and Millennials on the other. The former were convinced that internal combustion was the epicenter of a hub-and-spoke economy where progress hinged on fast food and cheap gas; the latter counts on silicon, electromagnetic data transfer, and UPS delivery.

Just as Ashland was at its peak relevance when the housing industry needed 2x4s and steel mills needed iron, Ashland became less important each year that the nation obtained raw materials from overseas.

Now, Lake Superior stands as the one remaining, largely unspoiled Great Lake, and Ashland occupies prime shoreline real estate. Yesterday's iron ore is today's shoreline vacation rental. Sooner or later, what was done in Tofte will be possible in Ashland. Now, UPS makes it possible for businesses in Ashland to get otherwise hard to obtain goods. Now, the internet makes it possible for residents in Ashland to maintain a retail link with national distributors of products otherwise not easily within reach. Technology has begun to shrink the distance between Madison and Ashland. Yet that distance remains. Miles are still miles and that works to Ashland's advantage as it transitions to tourism a little more each year. Ashland, like the Maine interior, was once hardly accessible. Today technology makes it possible for someone rooted in Boston to work for extended periods from the Maine woods, in the same way that it makes it possible for someone from Milwaukee to become an investor in Ashland.

This is possible because while Ashland lost population, it took care of the buildings that remained. It stewarded its history. It minded the store. And now it has distinct competitive advantages that matter.

Ashland has a superb, small private college. Students and their families have been and will continue to be rooted in Ashland. Ashland has a preserved lakeshore of world class beauty. Ashland has maintained downtown and the charm of Main Street in an era when authenticity matters; Ashland has real small town life to offer. Such charms are typically found in mountain resort communities where only the stratospherically wealthy can afford to be. While Ashland's real estate market is soft, it is not distressed; indeed it is affordable; the bones are good.

In short, Ashland's got game. It has bakeries and shoreline sunsets. Skiing and rich, small town life. Natural assets and an involved community. And significant affordability. These qualities 30 years ago weren't leveragable. Today they are. Ashland not only has the shiny objects the market wants - like the Blue Wave - it still makes things. In Ashland resides the expertise to manufacture. Ashland isn't a destination only; not at all; it remains fundamentally more of a home than a stage set, and as long as it keeps it that way, it will thrive.



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ASHLAND**

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**A Comprehensive Plan for
Ashland, Wisconsin**

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Population Trends in Ashland, 2010 to 2040

Area	Population								
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change	% Change
Ashland	16,157	16,100	16,040	16,200	16,140	15,965	15,315	-842	-5.2%
Bayfield	15,014	15,360	15,105	15,100	14,860	14,330	13,725	-1,289	-8.6%
Burnett	15,457	15,425	16,155	17,125	17,800	17,915	17,425	1,968	12.7%
Douglas	44,159	44,665	45,660	46,555	47,185	47,305	47,105	2,946	6.7%
Iron	5,916	5,620	5,680	5,850	5,970	5,825	5,420	-496	-8.4%
Price	14,159	13,700	13,490	13,360	13,075	12,590	11,645	-2,514	-17.8%
Rusk	14,755	14,755	14,440	14,335	14,105	13,855	13,310	-1,445	-9.8%
Sawyer	16,557	16,690	17,070	17,645	18,010	17,895	17,430	873	5.3%
Taylor	20,689	21,110	21,575	21,900	22,070	22,095	21,975	1,286	6.2%
Washburn	15,911	16,010	16,795	17,775	18,460	18,500	18,010	2,099	13.2%
Northwest Regional Planning Area	178,774	179,435	182,010	185,845	187,675	186,275	181,360	2,586	1.4%

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

As Ashland begins the hard work of implementing the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan, it is important to understand the fundamental framework and values the City committed to in its Strategic Plan (2016 – 2020):

Natural environment

We appreciate the natural environment as the cornerstone of our community, now and for future generations. Consideration of land, air and water quality will affect our decisions.

Rich history

We promote and preserve our history. Knowledge of the past, our historical architecture, and distinctive neighborhoods instill community pride.

Unique and Diverse Cultures

We embrace diversity and respect a variety of perspectives, opinions, traditions, experiences, cultures and identities. We create, promote and support a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Way of Life

We foster a way of life that promotes a sense of well-being and fulfillment. We support excellent municipal services in a thriving economy and vibrant community.

Stewardship

We will build a stronger and more resilient Ashland for today and future generations. By embracing stewardship, we sustainably manage our human, natural, financial and material resources.

1. City - Issues and Opportunities

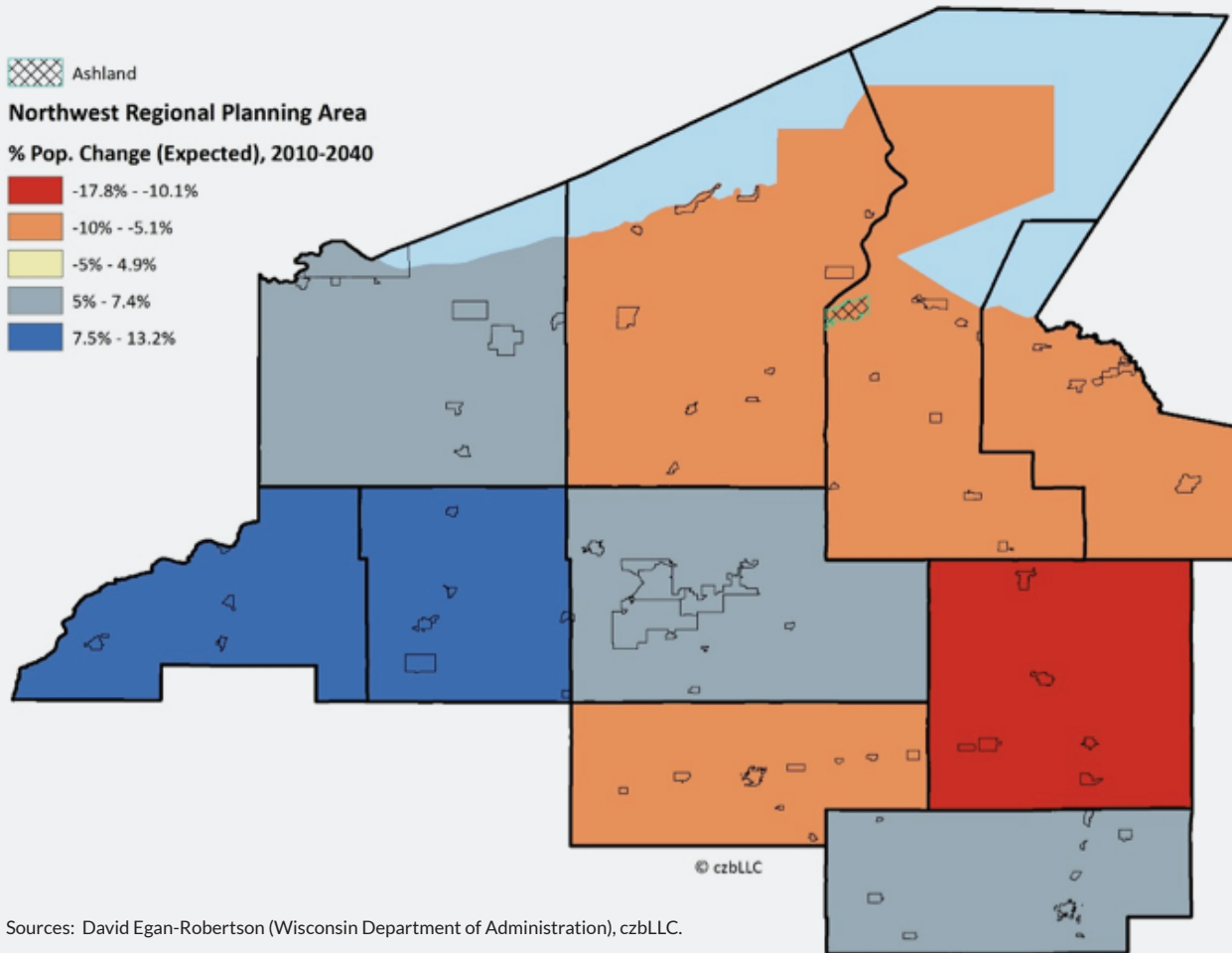
Local Government Structure and Programs

The City of Ashland operates under the laws of the State of Wisconsin as a City of the Fourth Class. It has a Mayor/Council form of government and a City Administrator. The Mayor is elected for a four-year term and presides over the City Council.

The mission of the City of Ashland is to “always promote the betterment of Ashland.” The Vision for the City of Ashland is “a community where we and our neighbors thrive and our environment is preserved.” The City of Ashland employs people in the following departments: administration, airport, fire and EMS, parks and recreation, marina, community development, police, public works and the library.

Ashland has a Mayor-Council form of government where Aldermen and Alderwomen are elected from the City’s 11 wards.

% Population Expected, 2010 to 2040



Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

In July 2015, at the City Council retreat, the Ashland City Council outlined the following strategic priorities for the City of Ashland for 2016 - 2020:

- Facility Improvements to City Hall, Vaughn Library, Police and Recreation Center
- Housing Infrastructure Improvements
- Development of a Sustainable Infrastructure Improvement Plan
- Economic Development and Marketing Strategic Plan Development and Implementation

Primary issues of concern for Ashland residents include the following:

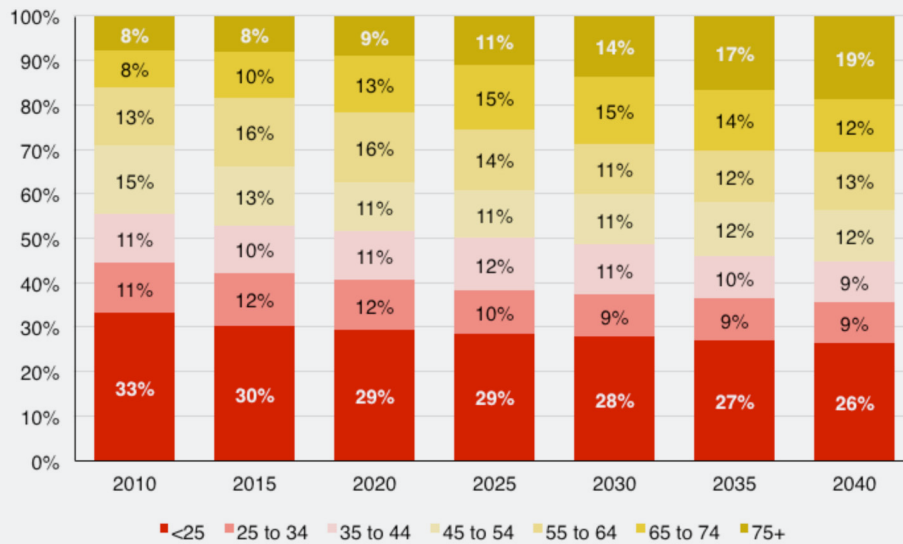
- Lack of high quality, good paying jobs
- Poor property maintenance

- Lack of housing choices
- Lack of opportunities and activities for youth
- Deteriorating streets, walks, and City infrastructure
- Poor appearance and functionality of Highway 2

Key opportunities expressed throughout this planning process include the following:

- Implement and expand the city's waterfront development
- Enhance the Central Business District, including East Main Street
- Promote Ashland's high quality of life as a means of economic development
- Promote sustainable development principles

Age Breakdown of Ashland's County Population, 2010 to 2040



Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

Northwest Regional Planning Area Number of Households, % Change, 2010 to 2040

Area	Number of Households							Change	% Change
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040		
Ashland	6,736	6,986	7,083	7,290	7,372	7,409	7,196	460	6.8%
Bayfield	6,686	7,128	7,207	7,367	7,384	7,232	7,016	330	4.9%
Burnett	6,807	6,965	7,331	7,806	8,132	8,250	8,105	1,298	19.1%
Douglas	18,555	19,331	19,963	20,479	20,816	20,987	20,987	2,432	13.1%
Iron	2,822	2,726	2,780	2,886	2,946	2,878	2,675	-147	-5.2%
Price	6,329	6,286	6,314	6,350	6,294	6,108	5,675	-654	-10.3%
Rusk	6,232	6,407	6,410	6,474	6,468	6,439	6,256	24	0.4%
Sawyer	7,038	7,349	7,643	7,994	8,242	8,266	8,134	1,096	15.6%
Taylor	8,388	8,639	8,884	9,114	9,309	9,477	9,546	1,158	13.8%
Washburn	6,916	7,138	7,562	8,070	8,456	8,556	8,422	1,506	21.8%
Northwest Regional Planning Area	78,519	80,970	83,197	85,855	87,449	87,637	86,052	7,533	9.6%

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

Northwest Regional Planning Area Household Size, 2010 to 2040

Area	Household Size (persons per household)						
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Ashland	2.31	2.22	2.18	2.14	2.11	2.07	2.03
Bayfield	2.23	2.14	2.08	2.03	1.99	1.96	1.93
Burnett	2.25	2.2	2.18	2.17	2.17	2.15	2.12
Douglas	2.31	2.24	2.22	2.21	2.2	2.18	2.17
Iron	2.06	2.03	2.01	1.99	1.99	1.98	1.97
Price	2.2	2.15	2.1	2.07	2.03	2.01	1.99
Rusk	2.34	2.28	2.22	2.18	2.15	2.11	2.08
Sawyer	2.31	2.23	2.19	2.16	2.13	2.11	2.08
Taylor	2.44	2.42	2.4	2.37	2.34	2.3	2.26
Washburn	2.27	2.21	2.19	2.17	2.14	2.12	2.09
Northwest Regional Planning Area	2.26	2.20	2.17	2.15	2.12	2.10	2.08

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population and Number of Households, 2010 to 2040

City of Ashland	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change	% Change
Population	8,216	8,135	8,050	8,065	7,980	7,835	7,460	-756	-9.2%
Households	3,516	3,636	3,669	3,748	3,763	3,751	3,611	95	2.7%

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC

City of Ashland Household Size, 2010 to 2040

City of Ashland	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Household Size	2.17	2.09	2.05	2.00	1.96	1.92	1.89

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC

Population and household forecast

According to data from the Demographic Services Center within the Division of Intergovernmental Relations in Wisconsin's Department of Administration, Ashland County (as well as nearby Bayfield, Iron, Price, and Rusk counties) are all expected to lose population by 2040, by roughly 5% in Ashland's case (and to an even greater degree in the surrounding counties).

As Ashland County's population declines, it is also expected to age: in 2010, over half (55%) of Ashland County's population was under 45 and just 8% was 75 years old or older; by 2040, just 44% of Ashland County's population will be under 45 and 19% (or twice the percentage) will be 75 years old or older.

The number of households is expected to rise (by 460 between 2010 and 2040) but the typical size of these households is expected to fall (from 2.3 people per household to just 2 people per household).

Trends within the City of Ashland are expected to mirror those countywide. Between 2010 and 2040, projections show the city losing just over 9% of its population (declining from 8,216 residents to 7,460 residents). The city's number of households is expected to rise by just under 3%, or 95 households (up from 3,516 to 3,611).

While the typical City of Ashland household includes roughly 2.09 people today, this is expected to fall to just 1.89 by 2040.

These trends will have serious implications for the local demand for housing and services (particularly schools).

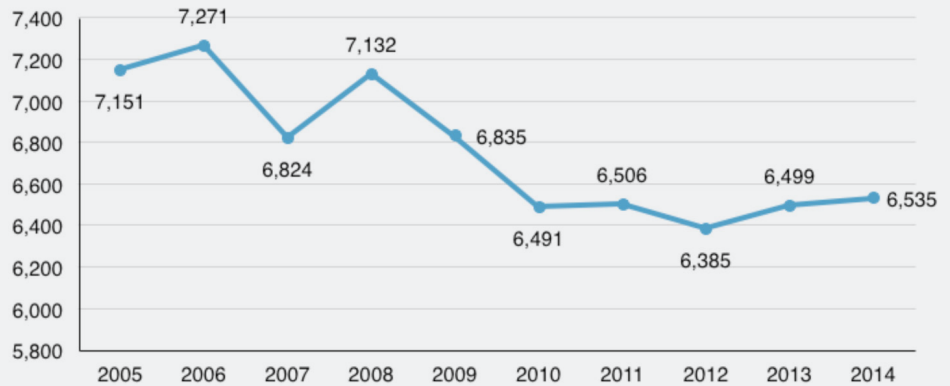
Employment characteristics and forecast

The Ashland County Business Patterns data indicate a slight upward trend in the number of jobs in Ashland County.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the Greater Ashland Region (Workforce Development Area #7, including Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor and Washburn counties) is expecting to see a nearly 5% increase in total employment between 2012 and 2022. Management and business occupations, health care occupations, property maintenance occupations, personal service occupations, construction, production, and transportation, are all expected to see the largest percentage and whole number increases in employment during this stretch. While not growing sectors, sales and food preparation occupations and administrative support are sectors expecting to hire the largest number of new workers in the region.

Those occupations expected to add the most new jobs or provide the most job openings in the region are also typically among those paying lower wages. Food preparation, personal care and services, sales, administrative support and transportation all have average entry-level hourly wages in the \$8 and \$9 ranges, and median annual wages in the \$20,000s or below.

Number of Jobs in Ashland County, 2005 to 2014



Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

Northwest Regional Planning Area, Total and % Change in Employment, and Average Annual Openings by SOC 2012 to 2022

SOC Code and Description	Employment		Change (2012-2022)		Average Annual Openings		
	2012	2022	#	%	Growth	Replacement	Total
Total, All	70,117	73,446	3,329	4.7%	444	1,659	2,103
11 Management	2,595	2,759	164	6.3%	17	54	71
13 Business and Financial Operations	1,645	1,757	112	6.8%	12	33	45
15 Computer and Mathematical	534	598	64	12.0%	7	9	16
17 Architecture and Engineering	972	1,000	28	2.9%	6	23	29
19 Life, Physical, and Social Science	577	601	24	4.2%	4	18	22
21 Community and Social Service	790	823	33	4.2%	3	19	22
23 Legal	240	263	23	9.6%	2	4	6
25 Education, Training, and Library	4,194	4,347	153	3.6%	16	93	109
27 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	578	592	14	2.4%	4	14	18
29 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,979	3,349	370	12.4%	38	61	99
31 Healthcare Support	1,715	1,794	79	4.6%	15	33	48
33 Protective Service	1,474	1,521	47	3.2%	5	47	52
35 Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,580	6,826	246	3.7%	26	235	261
37 Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,882	3,165	283	9.8%	28	60	88
39 Personal Care and Service	3,425	3,772	347	10.1%	36	68	104
41 Sales and Related	7,246	7,267	21	0.3%	15	239	254
43 Office and Administrative Support	9,599	9,990	391	4.1%	53	217	270
45 Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,041	1,733	-308	15.1%	0	32	32
47 Construction and Extraction	2,997	3,348	351	11.7%	35	51	86
49 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2,901	3,040	139	4.8%	17	66	83
51 Production	8,009	8,450	441	5.5%	71	151	222
53 Transportation and Material Moving	6,144	6,451	307	5.0%	34	132	166

Sources: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, September 2015, czbLLC.

**Northwest Regional Planning Area,
Hourly and Annual Wages by SOC 2015**

SOC Code and Description		Rank		Hourly Wage		Annual Wage (by Percentile)			
		Ch.	Open.	Entry	Exp.	25th	Median	75th	90th
	Total, All			\$8.98	\$21.22	\$20,630	\$29,374	\$43,022	\$60,351
11	Management	9	12	\$15.55	\$45.01	\$44,175	\$65,292	\$90,111	\$121,608
13	Business and Financial Operations	12	15	\$15.10	\$30.60	\$37,018	\$49,512	\$63,858	\$79,858
15	Computer and Mathematical	14	21	\$15.47	\$29.62	\$36,709	\$48,413	\$63,994	\$76,506
17	Architecture and Engineering	17	17	\$18.66	\$36.30	\$45,324	\$58,828	\$75,314	\$94,432
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	18	18	\$16.09	\$30.55	\$38,188	\$50,621	\$64,020	\$81,344
21	Community and Social Service	16	18	\$11.85	\$21.83	\$28,080	\$37,796	\$46,601	\$57,208
23	Legal	19	22	\$14.85	\$35.96	\$33,550	\$40,486	\$67,810	\$116,940
25	Education, Training, and Library	10	6	\$12.41	\$24.59	\$30,515	\$40,758	\$55,019	\$64,351
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	21	20	\$9.86	\$21.02	\$23,490	\$31,038	\$44,453	\$58,363
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	3	8	\$16.70	\$42.76	\$41,622	\$57,172	\$77,078	\$122,958
31	Healthcare Support	13	14	\$10.30	\$15.01	\$22,596	\$26,399	\$30,827	\$38,234
33	Protective Service	15	13	\$8.43	\$19.49	\$18,972	\$29,895	\$45,347	\$55,552
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	8	2	\$8.10	\$10.08	\$16,915	\$18,466	\$21,220	\$26,165
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	7	9	\$8.10	\$12.64	\$17,938	\$21,156	\$26,898	\$34,403
39	Personal Care and Service	5	7	\$8.09	\$11.43	\$17,551	\$19,859	\$23,553	\$29,345
41	Sales and Related	20	3	\$8.17	\$16.13	\$17,776	\$20,548	\$29,896	\$47,662
43	Office and Administrative Support	2	1	\$9.25	\$17.52	\$21,659	\$28,811	\$37,278	\$46,676
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	22	16	\$12.33	\$18.24	\$27,772	\$33,349	\$38,952	\$45,855
47	Construction and Extraction	4	10	\$13.28	\$23.27	\$31,390	\$37,455	\$48,727	\$67,666
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	11	11	\$12.95	\$23.91	\$31,555	\$39,943	\$49,897	\$61,881
51	Production	1	4	\$10.67	\$17.83	\$24,393	\$29,423	\$37,921	\$46,964
53	Transportation and Material Moving	6	5	\$9.32	\$18.44	\$22,000	\$29,854	\$39,554	\$49,957

Sources: Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, September 2015, czbLLC.

Demographic trends: age distribution, education levels, income levels

City of Ashland trends in recent years are already illustrating the trends population and household projections show for the future. Since 2000, the city’s overall population has declined by more than 450 people (and just over 5%). The number of Ashland residents under 25 years of age fell by nearly 18% during this stretch; the number between 35 and 44 years of age fell by 28%. At the same time, the number of Ashland residents aged 55 to 64 nearly doubled.

These divergent trends in different age groups has bumped the city’s median age up by almost four years: from 36.4 in 2000 to 40 in 2014.

Accompanying these changes in the city’s age breakdown are changes in the composition of Ashland households. Between 2000 and 2014, while the total number of households remained unchanged, the number of family households, specifically married couples and unmarried couples, declined significantly. In fact, the number of married-couple families that included children under 18 years of age fell by more than 25% over this time period. The number of single-parent families with children increased slightly but the real rise was among non-family households, particularly non-elderly householders living alone.

Fewer families with children under 18 years of age has meant fewer residents enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade in Ashland: down from nearly 1,450 in 2000 to just over 1,000 by 2014 (a more than 30% drop).

Even amid these shifts in total population and age, the racial and ethnic composition of Ashland has stayed fairly constant: by 2014, the city’s population was 83.9% non-Hispanic white, 7% non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.5% Hispanic, and 6.6% some other race or multiracial – not unlike the city’s racial and ethnic breakdown in 2000.

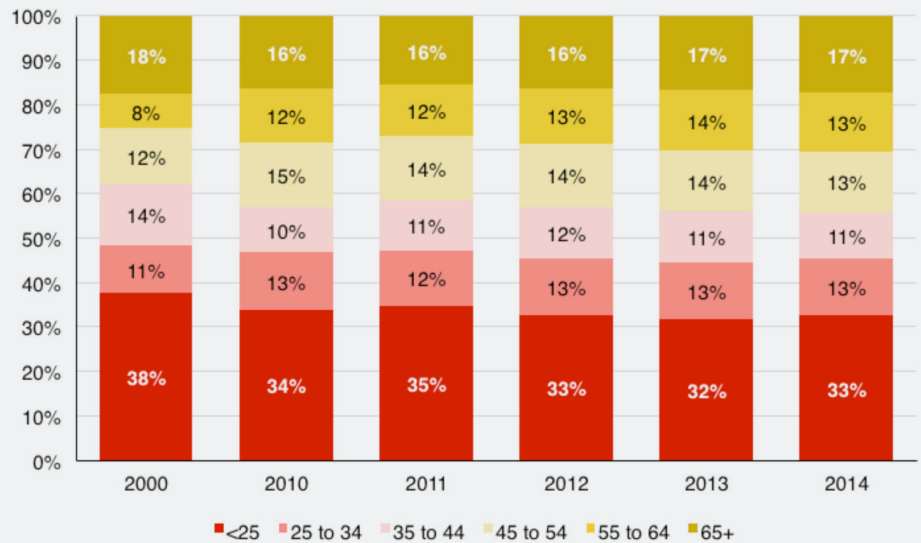
Also largely unchanged is the nativity of local residents. The vast majority was born in the United States (just 2% of the population is foreign born), with only roughly 30% born outside of Wisconsin.

City of Ashland Population Change, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Change (2000-2014)	% Change
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
Total population	8,620	8,216	8,255	8,213	8,189	8,167	-453	-5.3%
<25	3,247	2,789	2,880	2,695	2,603	2,670	-577	-17.8%
25 to 34	926	1,054	1,026	1,039	1,051	1,034	108	11.7%
35 to 44	1,202	836	921	956	939	865	-337	-28.0%
45 to 54	1,059	1,192	1,189	1,156	1,107	1,092	33	3.1%
55 to 64	673	1,009	954	1,032	1,118	1,094	421	62.6%
65+	1,513	1,336	1,285	1,335	1,371	1,412	-101	-6.7%
Median age (years)	36.4	38.6	38.4	39.9	39.9	40		

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population Change by Age, 2000 to 2014



Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population Characteristics, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin								Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Ch.	% Ch.	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total households	3,513	3,516	3,593	3,490	3,493	3,513	0	0.0%						
Family households	2,026	1,942	2,022	1,942	1,931	1,871	-155	-7.7%	58%	55%	56%	56%	55%	53%
Married-couple	1,492	1,327	1,392	1,362	1,356	1,317	-175	-11.7%	42%	38%	39%	39%	39%	38%
Single householder, no spouse present	534	615	630	580	575	554	20	3.7%	15%	17%	18%	17%	16%	16%
Nonfamily households	1,487	1,574	1,571	1,548	1,562	1,642	155	10.4%	42%	45%	44%	44%	45%	47%
Householder living alone	1,250	1,289	1,299	1,319	1,315	1,353	103	8.2%	36%	37%	36%	38%	38%	39%
65 years and over	572	507	523	518	528	530	-42	-7.3%	16%	14%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Family households with own children <18	993	875	1,001	888	871	847	-146	-14.7%	28%	25%	28%	25%	25%	24%
Married-couple	651	475	578	506	509	487	-164	-25.2%	19%	14%	16%	15%	15%	14%
Single-parent	342	400	423	382	362	360	18	5.3%	10%	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population Enrolled K-12, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin							Change	% Change
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014			
Population Enrolled in K-12	1,443	1,208	1,124	1,016	1,029	1,005	-438	-30.4%	

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population Enrolled K-12, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin								Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Ch.	% Ch.	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total households	3,513	3,516	3,593	3,490	3,493	3,513	0	0.0%						
Family households	2,026	1,942	2,022	1,942	1,931	1,871	-155	-7.7%	58%	55%	56%	56%	55%	53%
Married-couple	1,492	1,327	1,392	1,362	1,356	1,317	-175	-11.7%	42%	38%	39%	39%	39%	38%
Single householder, no spouse present	534	615	630	580	575	554	20	3.7%	15%	17%	18%	17%	16%	16%
Nonfamily households	1,487	1,574	1,571	1,548	1,562	1,642	155	10.4%	42%	45%	44%	44%	45%	47%
Householder living alone	1,250	1,289	1,299	1,319	1,315	1,353	103	8.2%	36%	37%	36%	38%	38%	39%
65 years and over	572	507	523	518	528	530	-42	-7.3%	16%	14%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Family households with own children <18	993	875	1,001	888	871	847	-146	-14.7%	28%	25%	28%	25%	25%	24%
Married-couple	651	475	578	506	509	487	-164	-25.2%	19%	14%	16%	15%	15%	14%
Single-parent	342	400	423	382	362	360	18	5.3%	10%	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population - Race and Ethnicity, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total:	8,620	8,216	8,255	8,213	8,189	8,167						
Not Hispanic or Latino:	8,502	8,040	8,054	8,072	7,940	7,959						
White	7,723	7,054	7,105	6,961	6,857	6,856	89.6%	85.9%	86.1%	84.8%	83.7%	83.9%
Black or African American	28	37	99	46	45	31	0.3%	0.5%	1.2%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	527	592	414	506	553	568	6.1%	7.2%	5.0%	6.2%	6.8%	7.0%
Asian	42	37	47	63	64	60	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	3	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	3	7	46	39	26	20	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Two or More Races	175	310	343	457	395	424	2.0%	3.8%	4.2%	5.6%	4.8%	5.2%
Hispanic or Latino	118	176	201	141	249	208	1.4%	2.1%	2.4%	1.7%	3.0%	2.5%

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland Population - Nativity, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin								Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Ch.	% Ch.	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total population	8,601	8,283	8,255	8,213	8,189	8,167	-434	-5.0%						
Native	8,489	8,132	8,110	8,056	8,023	7,999	-490	-5.8%	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Born in United States	8,441	8,054	8,040	7,992	7,960	7,962	-479	-5.7%	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%
State of residence	6,083	5,244	5,275	5,338	5,377	5,484	-599	-9.8%	71%	63%	64%	65%	66%	67%
Different state	2,358	2,810	2,765	2,654	2,583	2,478	120	5.1%	27%	34%	34%	32%	32%	30%
Born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Island areas, or abroad	48	78	70	64	63	37	-11	-22.9%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Foreign born	112	151	145	157	166	168	56	50.0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland - Educational Attainment, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin								Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Ch.	% Ch.	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Population 25+	5,336	5,394	5,375	5,518	5,586	5,497	161	3.0%						
Less than High School	824	534	426	395	430	466	-358	-43.4%	15%	10%	8%	7%	8%	8%
High School Graduate (incl. GED)	1,978	1,696	1,562	1,648	1,629	1,619	-359	-18.1%	37%	31%	29%	30%	29%	30%
Some college, no degree	1,063	1,054	1,093	1,135	1,265	1,145	82	7.7%	20%	20%	20%	21%	23%	21%
Associate's degree	381	700	712	700	643	670	289	75.9%	7%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%
Bachelor's degree	683	983	1,122	1,129	1,083	1,003	320	46.9%	13%	18%	21%	21%	19%	18%
Graduate or professional degree	407	427	460	511	536	594	187	45.9%	8%	8%	9%	9%	10%	11%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland - Labor Force and Unemployed, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Civilian labor force	4,512	4,572	4,416	4,311	4,227	4,232
Unemployed	391	506	482	466	357	398
Unemployment Rate	8.7%	11.1%	10.9%	10.8%	8.4%	9.4%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

Employment characteristics

The city's population, though, has become increasingly more educated: by 2014, 29% of Ashland adults had a Bachelor's degree or more (compared to just 21% in 2000) and only 8% had not graduated from high school (compared to 15% in 2000). The number of adults with less than a high school diploma or only a high school diploma both fell as the number of adults with an associate's degree, a Bachelor's degree, and/or a graduate or professional degree all increased substantially.

These rising education levels may have played a part in the city's fairly stable unemployment rate, which hovered between 10% and 11% throughout the recession and has returned to roughly 9% (or a level comparable with that in 2000, prior to the recent recession).

Similarly, the city's median household income is up (from \$30,853 in 2000 to \$39,257 in 2014, or at nearly the rate of inflation).

Family incomes have held steady as well.

Poverty rates among individuals and families peaked during the worst of the recession (the poverty rate among families reached 18.3% in 2010, when the poverty rate among individuals was 19.9%) and have declined since. These rates have not, however, returned to their 2000 levels: in 2014, 11.3% of Ashland families lived below the poverty level (compared to 7.5% in 2000) and 16.1% of Ashland residents lived below the poverty level (compared to 12.7% in 2000).

City of Ashland - Median Household Income, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Households	3491	3,637	3,593	3,490	3,493	3,513						
<\$10,000	549	413	280	262	233	293	16%	11%	8%	8%	7%	8%
\$10,000-\$14,999	335	353	394	297	310	242	10%	10%	11%	9%	9%	7%
\$15,000-\$24,999	514	508	466	539	657	672	15%	14%	13%	15%	19%	19%
\$25,000-\$34,999	589	523	537	440	359	400	17%	14%	15%	13%	10%	11%
\$35,000-\$49,999	652	533	593	606	656	683	19%	15%	17%	17%	19%	19%
\$50,000-\$74,999	597	761	669	611	571	484	17%	21%	19%	18%	16%	14%
\$75,000-\$99,999	164	323	368	399	325	339	5%	9%	10%	11%	9%	10%
\$100,000-\$149,999	51	139	163	243	283	304	1%	4%	5%	7%	8%	9%
\$150,000-\$199,999	8	58	59	57	54	58	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
\$200,000+	32	26	64	36	45	38	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Median household income	\$30,853	\$35,597	\$36,768	\$39,631	\$39,260	\$39,257						

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland - Family Income, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Families	2032	2,036	2,022	1,942	1,931	1,871						
<\$10,000	108	165	89	79	87	89	5%	8%	4%	4%	5%	5%
\$10,000-\$14,999	107	136	113	71	90	74	5%	7%	6%	4%	5%	4%
\$15,000-\$24,999	219	246	280	253	212	182	11%	12%	14%	13%	11%	10%
\$25,000-\$34,999	379	256	251	157	123	157	19%	13%	12%	8%	6%	8%
\$35,000-\$49,999	499	322	374	424	457	451	25%	16%	19%	22%	24%	24%
\$50,000-\$74,999	506	426	351	351	369	279	25%	21%	17%	18%	19%	15%
\$75,000-\$99,999	134	289	320	333	270	304	7%	14%	16%	17%	14%	16%
\$100,000-\$149,999	51	112	121	181	224	247	3%	6%	6%	9%	12%	13%
\$150,000-\$199,999	8	58	59	57	54	50	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
\$200,000 +	21	26	64	36	45	38	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Median family income	\$40,549	\$42,868	\$45,313	\$49,097	\$49,869	\$49,575						

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland - Poverty Levels, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Below Poverty Level												
Families	152	373	324	217	234	211	7.5%	18.3%	16.0%	11.2%	12.1%	11.3%
Population	1,005	1,525	1,341	1,205	1,236	1,214	12.7%	19.9%	17.8%	16.0%	16.4%	16.1%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

2. Housing Element

Assessment of the occupancy characteristics

While the vast majority of Ashland housing units are occupied, the portion of vacant units is on the rise. In 2000, just 7% of units were found to be vacant by the Census that year; ten years later, vacant units accounted for 9% of all housing units and by 2014 stood at 10.5%. Vacant units that are for seasonal or recreational use account for most of this increase (such units now represent over 4% of all housing units in Ashland, versus just over 1% in 2000). “Other vacant” units, those most likely abandoned by their owners, account for only 2% of all housing units – and this percentage has remained fairly unchanged since 2000.

While the typical City of Ashland household includes roughly 2.09 people today, this is expected to fall to just 1.89 by 2040.

These trends will have serious implications for the local demand for housing.

The breakdown of homeowners and renters has stayed fairly constant as well, with the city’s homeownership rate ranging from 60% to 63% throughout this time period. There have been changes, though, in the age breakdowns of both owners and renters: owners are getting older (over half, 52%, were 55 or older in 2014, compared to just 44% in 2000) and renters are, too (the portion of renters aged 35 to 44 fell by half between 2000 and 2014, while the number of renters 55 to 64 nearly tripled).

City of Ashland, Housing Vacancy, 2010 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total housing units	3,777	3,864	3,938	3,932	3,925	3,927						
Occupied housing units	3,513	3,516	3,593	3,490	3,493	3,513	93.0%	91.0%	91.2%	88.8%	89.0%	89.5%
Vacant housing units	264	348	345	442	432	414	7.0%	9.0%	8.8%	11.2%	11.0%	10.5%
For rent	86	97	80	79	77	85	2.3%	2.5%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.2%
For sale only	44	48	12	22	41	40	1.2%	1.2%	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Rented or sold, not occupied	13	32	25	46	15	40	0.3%	0.8%	0.6%	1.2%	0.4%	1.0%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	50	65	128	172	182	167	1.3%	1.7%	3.3%	4.4%	4.6%	4.3%
For migrant workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other vacant	71	106	100	123	117	82	1.9%	2.7%	2.5%	3.1%	3.0%	2.1%

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Projected Household Size, 2010 to 2040

City of Ashland	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Household Size	2.17	2.09	2.05	2.00	1.96	1.92	1.89

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Housing Vacancy, 2010 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Occupied housing units	3,513	3,516	3,593	3,490	3,493	3,513						
Owner-occupied	2,197	2,131	2,159	2,207	2,198	2,122	63%	61%	60%	63%	63%	60%
Renter-occupied	1,316	1,385	1,434	1,283	1,295	1,391	37%	39%	40%	37%	37%	40%
Owner occupied:	2,197	2,131	2,159	2,207	2,198	2,122						
Householder 15-34 years	273	277	208	163	192	195	12%	13%	10%	7%	9%	9%
Householder 35-44 years	485	297	520	555	504	452	22%	14%	24%	25%	23%	21%
Householder 45-54 years	483	478	501	464	396	363	22%	22%	23%	21%	18%	17%
Householder 55-64 years	322	477	353	398	418	424	15%	22%	16%	18%	19%	20%
Householder 65+	634	602	577	627	688	688	29%	28%	27%	28%	31%	32%
Renter occupied:	1,316	1,385	1,434	1,283	1,295	1,391						
Householder 15-24 years	292	207	229	126	118	159	22%	15%	16%	10%	9%	11%
Householder 25-34 years	233	315	385	340	345	330	18%	23%	27%	27%	27%	24%
Householder 35-44 years	200	193	63	67	78	94	15%	14%	4%	5%	6%	7%
Householder 45-54 years	155	240	257	253	269	269	12%	17%	18%	20%	21%	19%
Householder 55-64 years	104	156	232	245	249	282	8%	11%	16%	19%	19%	20%
Householder 65+	332	274	268	252	236	257	25%	20%	19%	20%	18%	18%

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Projected Household Size, 2010 to 2040

City of Ashland	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Household Size	2.17	2.09	2.05	2.00	1.96	1.92	1.89

Sources: David Egan-Robertson (Wisconsin Department of Administration), czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Housing Units by Year Built, 2014

	Ashland City	
	2014 (#)	2014 (%)
Total housing units	3,927	
Built 2010 or later	20	0.5%
Built 2000 to 2009	212	5.4%
Built 1990 to 1999	200	5.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	204	5.2%
Built 1970 to 1979	402	10.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	319	8.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	387	9.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	433	11.0%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,750	44.6%

Sources: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Housing Units by Type, 2014

	Ashland City	
	2014 (#)	2014 (%)
Total housing units	3,927	
1-unit, detached	2,613	66.5%
1-unit, attached	21	0.5%
2 units	304	7.7%
3 or 4 units	287	7.3%
5 to 9 units	219	5.6%
10 to 19 units	171	4.4%
20 or more units	197	5.0%
Mobile home	115	2.9%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%

Sources: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Single-Family Housing, 2000-2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Single-family, Total	2,472	2,546	2,576	2,610	2,731	2,634
Single-family, Vacant	141	112	171	193	217	197
Single-family, Owner-occupied	2,008	2,078	2,032	2,061	2,070	1,968
Single-family, Renter-Occupied	323	356	373	356	444	469
Vacancy Rate, Single-family	5.7%	4.4%	6.6%	7.4%	7.9%	7.5%
Homeownership Rate, Single-family	86.1%	85.4%	84.5%	85.3%	82.3%	80.8%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

Assessment of the age of housing

According to the 2014 American Community 5-Year Estimates, nearly half (45%) of Ashland's housing units were built prior to 1940. Roughly one-tenth of all units were built in the 1940s, another tenth in the 1950s, another tenth in the 1960s, and another tenth in the 1970s; about 5% of all units were built in each of the subsequent decades (the 1980s, 1990s, and since 2000).

Assessment of the structural characteristics of housing

Two-thirds (67%) of the city's housing units are single-family detached homes while less than 1% are single-family attached homes and just 3% are mobile homes. The balance are multifamily units: 15% of all Ashland units are in smaller multifamily properties (structures with just 2 to 4 units); 10% of all units are in moderately-sized multifamily properties (structures with 5 to 19 units); and 5% are in large multifamily properties (structures with 20 or more units).

Among the city's single-family (both detached and attached) units, the vast majority are owner-occupied. The number and percentage that are occupied by homeowners, though, has declined slightly since 2000: that year, there were 2,008 owner-occupied single-family homes in Ashland, and the homeownership rate for single-family homes was 86%; by 2014, even though 131 owner-occupied single-family homes had been built since 2000, the overall number of owner-occupied single-family homes was down by 40 to 1,968 and the homeownership rate in these units had fallen to 80.8%. At the same time, the number of vacant single-family homes was up from 141 in 2000 to 197 by 2014, and the vacancy rate among single-family homes had risen from 5.7% to 7.5%.

Among owner-occupied units in general, half (49%) have 3 bedrooms and another quarter (26%) are two-bedroom homes. Just 23% of all owner-occupied units have four or more bedrooms. The bulk of the city's rental units have two or three bedrooms, while roughly one-tenth of the rental stock is comprised of studios, another tenth of 3-bedroom apartments, and another tenth of apartments with four bedrooms or more.

City of Ashland, Housing Size (bedrooms), 2014

Assessment of the value of housing

As was the case in 2000, roughly 60% of Ashland owners have an outstanding mortgage on their home.

According to Census and American Community Survey estimates, roughly half of Ashland's owner-occupied units are valued between \$50,000 and \$150,000; another quarter are valued between \$150,000 and \$300,000 while just 5% are valued at \$300,000 or higher. The median value of owner-occupied units increased from \$62,600 in 2000 to \$106,100 by 2014, far outpacing the rate of inflation (which would have put the median value at roughly \$86,000 by 2014).

Recent sales data, however, suggest that prices have been far steadier – and have not kept pace with inflation. According to the Multiple Listing Service, the average sale price in Ashland was \$92,995 in 2004 and, while fluctuating in the interim, remained nearly unchanged (\$99,759) in 2014.

Gross rents in Ashland have changed more dramatically. Between 2000 and 2014, the median gross rent rose from \$410 to \$618 – far outpacing inflation (which would have put the median gross rent at roughly \$565 in 2014). The largest subset of Ashland rentals (40%) have gross rents between \$500 and \$749; another 30% rent for more than \$750. By 2014, just 11% of the city's rentals had gross rents below \$300; this had been true of more than one-fourth (27%) of all rentals in 2000.

Likely related to these rent increases, the portion of renters paying more than 30% of their income on housing jumped from just 36.5% in 2000 to nearly half (46.5%) by 2014.

	Ashland City	
	2014 (#)	2014 (%)
Total:	3,513	
Owner occupied:	2,122	
No bedroom	10	0.5%
1 bedroom	43	2.0%
2 bedrooms	558	26.3%
3 bedrooms	1,032	48.6%
4 bedrooms	367	17.3%
5 or more bedrooms	112	5.3%
Renter occupied:	1,391	
No bedroom	130	9.3%
1 bedroom	473	34.0%
2 bedrooms	454	32.6%
3 bedrooms	178	12.8%
4 bedrooms	117	8.4%
5 or more bedrooms	39	2.8%

Sources: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Owner-Occupied Homes with Mortgages, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Owner-occupied units	2,182	2,226	2,159	2,207	2,198	2,122						
With a mortgage	1,304	1,427	1,311	1,310	1,318	1,226	60%	64%	61%	59%	60%	58%
Without a mortgage	878	799	848	897	880	896	40%	36%	39%	41%	40%	42%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Housing Values of Owner-Occupied Homes, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Owner-occupied units	2,182	2,226	2,159	2,207	2,198	2,122						
<\$50,000	679	270	189	203	207	180	31%	12%	9%	9%	9%	9%
\$50,000-\$99,999	1,154	853	711	785	829	814	53%	38%	33%	36%	38%	38%
\$100,000-\$149,999	219	572	612	607	556	515	10%	26%	28%	28%	25%	24%
\$150,000-\$199,999	86	277	319	301	289	289	4%	12%	15%	14%	13%	14%
\$200,000-\$299,999	31	162	230	240	222	221	1%	7%	11%	11%	10%	10%
\$300,000-\$499,999	8	61	60	47	58	63	0%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
\$500,000+	5	31	38	24	37	40	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Median Value	\$62,600	\$99,400	\$113,900	\$108,000	\$104,600	\$106,100						

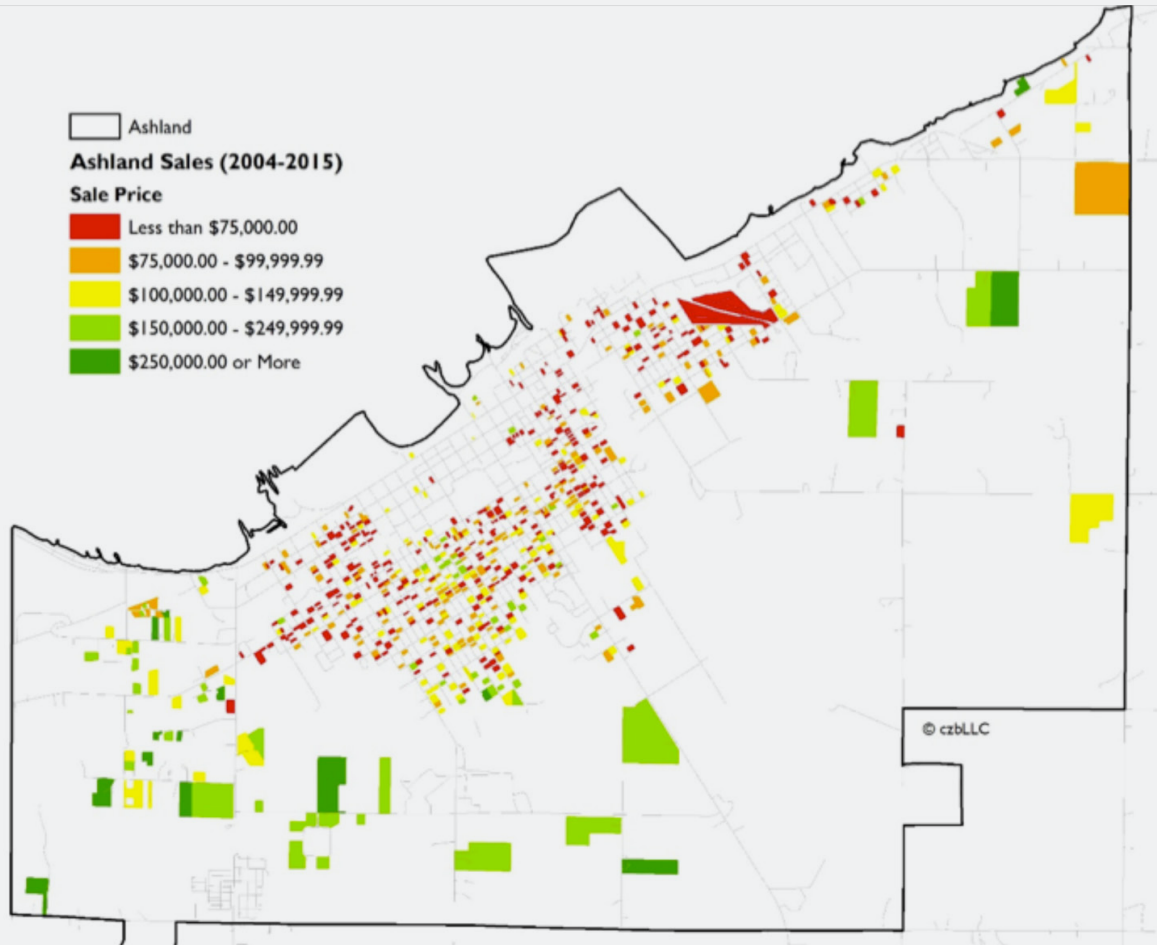
Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Average Sale Price of Homes, 2004 to 2015



Sources: Multiple Listing Service, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Home Sale Prices, 2014 to 2015



Sources: Multiple Listing Service, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Rent Prices, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin						Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Units with Cash Rent	1,260	1,317	1,382	1,260	1,273	1,378						
Less than \$200	153	36	55	85	79	78	12%	3%	4%	7%	6%	6%
\$200-\$299	183	118	101	102	142	71	15%	9%	7%	8%	11%	5%
\$300-\$499	623	415	452	305	282	262	49%	32%	33%	24%	22%	19%
\$500-\$749	262	570	630	529	417	554	21%	43%	46%	42%	33%	40%
\$750-\$999	32	78	74	134	238	321	3%	6%	5%	11%	19%	23%
\$1,000-\$1,499	0	90	61	94	106	92	0%	7%	4%	8%	8%	7%
\$1,500 or more	7	10	9	11	9	0	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Median Gross Rent	\$410	\$529	\$527	\$565	\$566	\$618						

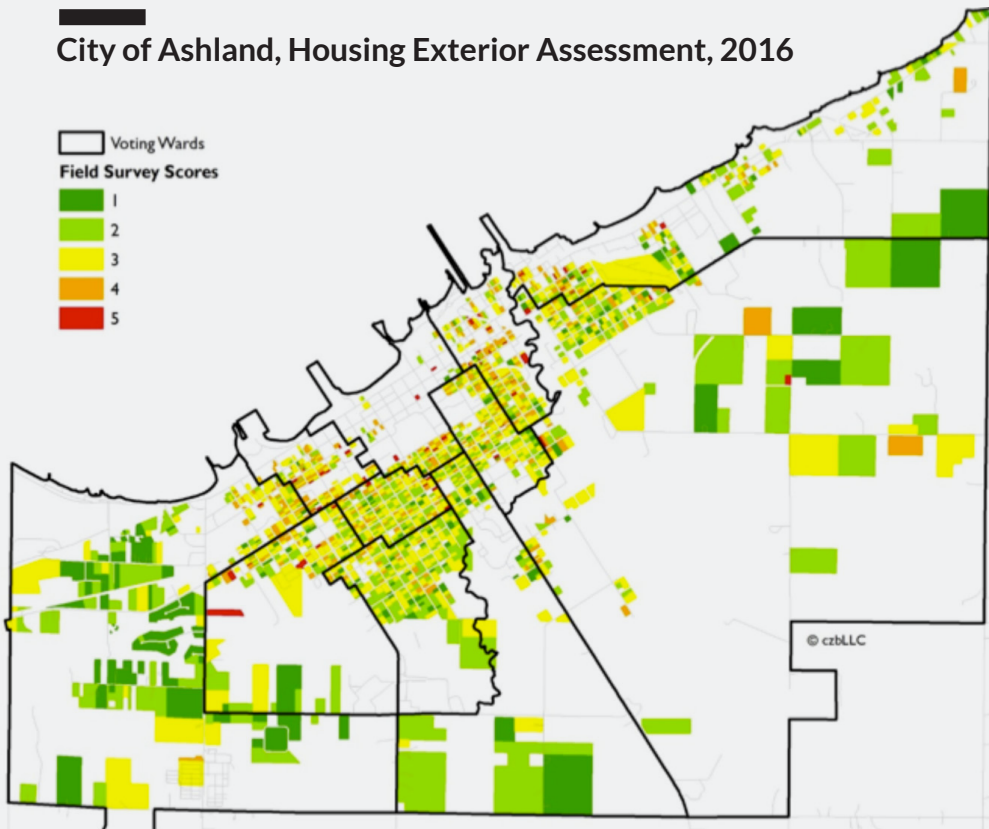
Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Unaffordable Rent, 2000 to 2014

	Ashland city, Wisconsin					
	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unaffordable Rent	454	654	601	552	586	620
% with Unaffordable Rent	36.5%	50.0%	43.9%	44.3%	46.5%	46.5%

Sources: 2000 Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, czbLLC.

City of Ashland, Housing Exterior Assessment, 2016



1	Standard setters	Highest level of care and maintenance	260	10%
2	Good condition	With just a bit of work, they could be standard setters	722	28%
3	Average condition	Always at some risk depending on location	1,065	42%
4	Declining; not in total distress	Under threat; will worsen without intervention	436	17%
5	Distressed; nearly without value	Valuable only to exploitative owners; maybe better to remove	66	3%

Source: czbLLC.

Assessment of housing conditions in Ashland's neighborhoods

Ashland residents are concerned, as evidenced by community input at meetings and via the community survey that the city's core neighborhoods have declined in recent years. When asked in the community survey about how their block appears today versus five years ago, more than half of those who noticed a change reported the change to be negative.

However, an assessment of property conditions shows that Ashland does not have an overwhelming number of physically distressed properties. While Ashland's standard of property care is not as high as it should be for a community with so much pride and promise, it is not coming apart at the seams. The real problem is not anything approaching distress, so much as the very real risk of cumulative slow decline. The great lesson from cities that have become distressed is that if too long neglected, incremental year to year decline eventually becomes unrecoverable. It is always less odious and more feasible to fix a problem before it worsens and becomes malignant.

For this plan, every residential property in Ashland was evaluated. They were scored on a five point scale with 1 being in the best condition and 5 being in the worst. Conditions are mixed across the city, with a "good news, bad news" scenario emerging.

Despite community concerns, it is genuinely good news that only 20% of structures fall into the bottom two categories, with only 3% of residential structures in total distress. The second piece of good news is that 38% of structures fall into the top two categories, meaning they are either in excellent or good condition.

The bad news is that 42% of Ashland's structures are average, and the market overall is stagnant and not generally in the mood to

reward owners who take on the risk of performing more than minor maintenance, never mind those who might make a capital investment. In short, Ashland now faces a situation where 42% of its residential structures are at risk of getting worse without an intervention. Two of every five properties require more than minor attention. These middle quality stocks, the largest segment of Ashland, is where the future condition of the city's neighborhoods will be determined. Without attention, average properties will needlessly decline, negatively influence nearby better properties, and, if not treated now, degenerate into a condition in the not too distant future where recovery is not feasible.

The reasons for the visible deterioration of core city neighborhoods are many. Among those reasons are:

Age of housing: Well over half of Ashland's housing units were built before 1950. Houses, even when well maintained, require constant maintenance and regular reinvestment. Some structures were not well built in the first place and are likely approaching the end of their useful lives.

Age of homeowners: Ashland, like much of America, is a graying community. Its median age is increasing and the city's homeowners are aging too. Over half of owners, 52%, were 55 or older in 2014, compared to just 44% in 2000. As owners age, their ability to maintain aging homes may decrease due to health concerns and lower incomes. As their mortgages season or reach the end of the payment cycle and their financial capacities change, owners also re-evaluate the wisdom of investing in their homes.

Outdated housing types: Like many communities that boomed in the early part of the 20th century, Ashland has a large proportion of houses that worked for that era but have not been recently renovated. Properties like this can be difficult to renovate to today's homebuyer preferences. Many such homes are often too small or designed in ways that simply haven't appealed to contemporary buyers for a while. Even when they have had appeal in some respects, many of Ashland's properties lack the second full bathroom that nearly all households look for. When combined with aging systems that are costly to update, these factors limit demand for older homes.

Stagnant home values: As population and wages, the fundamental drivers of housing demand, either fall or remain stagnant, home values also fall or remain stagnant. When prices don't increase, property owners are reluctant to make investments in their homes or rental units for fear that they are throwing good money after bad. The result of such individually rational thinking is a declining community standard of maintenance.

In sum, as demand falls, so do prices, and eventually, what an owner can expect to get from a sale. As would-be seller expectations fall, investment levels decline. Over time, wear and tear and deferred maintenance begin to show, and the market looks elsewhere, hoping to find in Washburn or Bayfield or in the newer subdivisions at the edge of Ashland, homes more to their liking. Supply in the core becomes excessive, prices fall further, and too high a percentage of homes transition to absentee ownership. It's a hard self-fulfilling cycle that each year becomes even harder, and more expensive, to reverse. This is where Ashland's housing market is, on the wrong side of the midway point between a strong market and a weak one, and each year it will be logarithmically more difficult to tackle.

Assessment of housing market dynamics

Ashland's core residential fabric was planned, platted, and settled upon a grid system characterized by frequent intersections and orthogonal geometry. This was the dominant way that American cities evolved until after the second world war. The benefits of such a development pattern included pedestrian friendliness, ease of wayfinding and orientation, and efficiency of property development. The grid was a perfect response to the challenge of needing to quickly set up a city in the mid 1800s and facilitate commerce.

For many reasons, from the mid 1940s on, asymmetric subdivision construction became the preferred building pattern by developers and housing consumers, constituting what today is commonly labeled suburbia.

The mass development of "suburban" style subdivisions – curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs within a cordoned off set of residentially zoned parcels – coincided with other powerful forces that came together to profoundly shape America's post War built environment. Among others, these included the advent of HFA-financed mortgages, the impacts of Brown vs. Board (the 1954 landmark United States Supreme Court case in which the Court declared state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional), the installation of the interstate highway system, the GI Bill, and the industrialization of home building predicated on the regularized sizing of materials. The result was an inexpensive house easily linkable by car to jobs far enough away so as to create residential life with just enough "town" and just enough "country" to satisfy growing consumer demand for both.

Side by side in the eyes of most consumers between 1950 and 2005, the older, smaller house in the city could not compete against the newer split level colonial on a cul-de-sac a few miles away. It turns out however that what Ashland has to offer – single family detached homes on a grid in easy walking distance from Main Street businesses – is exactly what Americans are returning to, and doing so in droves. What Ashland has – well built houses on well kept streets near good schools, downtown and amenities is perfect for eight year olds and 80 year olds alike. Homes built in Ashland between 1850 and 1950 offer much, if not all, of what today's working families want: solid homes with yards their children can play in that are close enough to walk to school and to the ice cream shop. When connected to the lakeshore, this becomes a virtually unmatched asset.

In order to fully leverage these assets, Ashland will need to prioritize quality of life in the city's neighborhoods. It will need to recalibrate economic and social systems so they can help ensure Ashland realizes the full potential of its housing and neighborhoods.

In any housing market, two characteristics above all come to the surface.

The first is the "fit," that is the match of the physical form to the desires of the market in terms of size of home and yard, modern appliances, new roofs and fences and windows and ingredients like that, along with the feel of the street in terms of charm and upkeep and safety. This can be understood as a quantitative measurement of supply and a qualitative measurement of desirability. Economists measure this as the degree to which consumers are "willing" to

spend what they have on a product. The second is how affordable the supply is, regardless of how desirable. That is, desirability aside, how able a household may be to afford the house it wants.

Ashland’s housing market is very affordable. The average family in Ashland will be able to rent or buy an average sized home of average quality at a price they will be able to handle. The stocks of housing, overall, are well matched to the buying power of the majority of households in the region.

In general, as long as the ratio of median home value to median household income is less than 3 to 1, a market is considered affordable. When the ratios are in this range, the typical household will have enough left over after a rent or mortgage payment to set aside some each month in an account for later use to make capital upgrades (like a new furnace or roof), enough for regular house maintenance, and, provided they don’t have exorbitant commuter expenses, enough for all the other monthly expenditures families have, such as food, clothing, insurance, tuition, car payments, and so on.

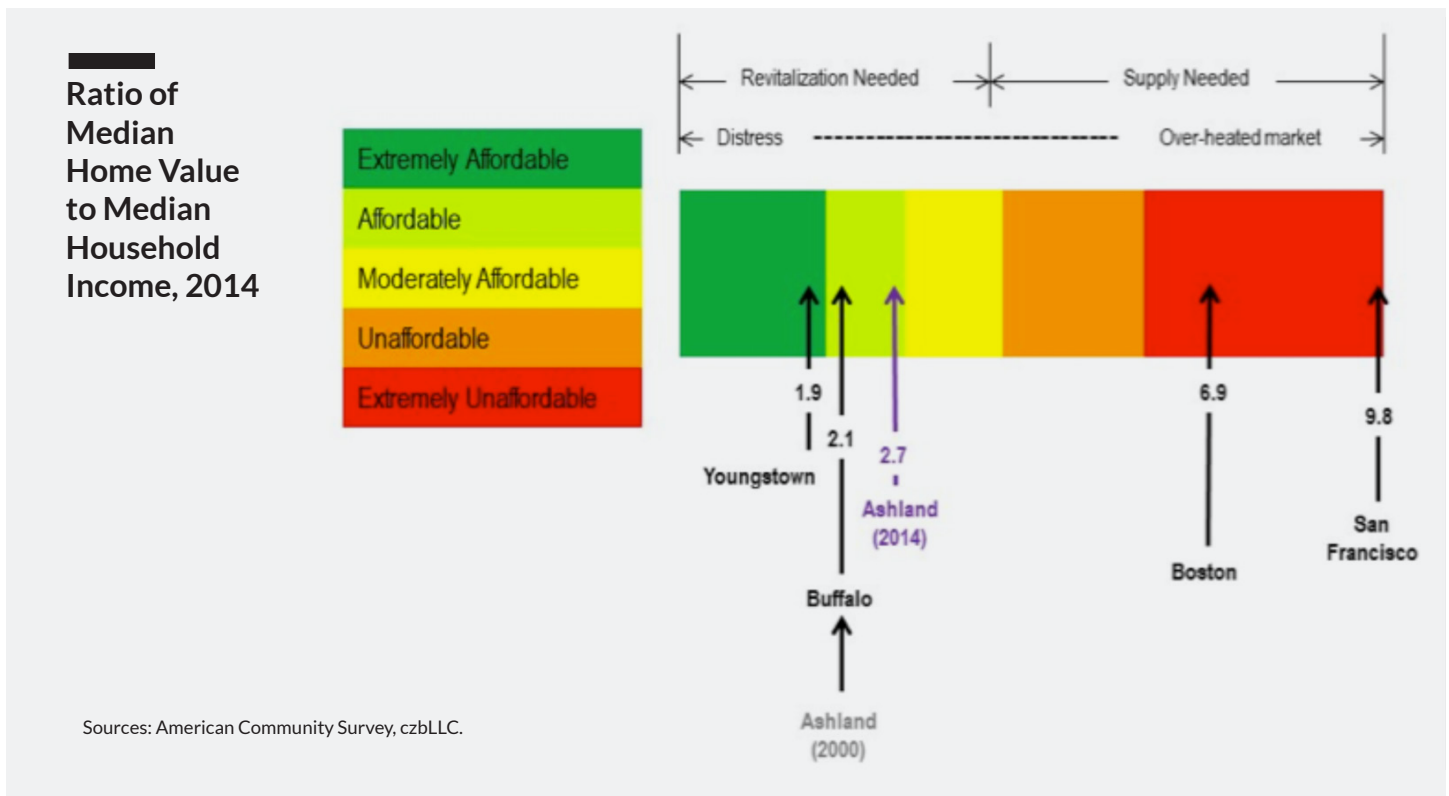
Ashland’s ratio in 2014 was 2.7 to 1. A typical family in Ashland earns just under \$40,000 a year. At current interest rates that means after taking care of all other monthly expenses, they can afford to buy and then maintain a home that costs \$120,000, or about three times their annual income. It also means the typical family can afford a monthly rent of about \$1,100. When housing prices are less than what is affordable, several important points are relevant. One is that the typical family has the chance to buy more house in such a location (larger or better quality) than they typically could in another less affordable market. Another is that if they choose to not buy as much house as they can afford, they have the capacity to save the difference or spend it alternatively. When it comes to housing in Ashland, the chief characteristic of the local

market is that the prices are too far below a healthy ratio of buying power to cost.

Low prices are a sign of the imbalance between supply and demand. Right now, Ashland has too many houses and not enough people who are both able and willing to occupy them. From a planning perspective, the problem to solve is righting this imbalance so higher prices result, signifying rising confidence in the future of the market, and a better fit. Addressing weakness in the Ashland housing market and the deterioration in its neighborhoods must be a high city priority.

Low values, caused in part by too few new buyers, keep current owners from making the investments that older homes need. As property owners have withheld investments, deterioration in individual homes and in the neighborhoods has become visible and pervasive. Tackling this will require leveraging the significant residual charm that many of Ashland’s core neighborhoods retain, because Ashland’s brand value will invariably hinge on the quality of life promised by its residential neighborhoods.

This will mean focusing on those blocks where there is strength to leverage, mobilizing the residential community to pull together and begin the process – slowly but surely – of reinvesting in their homes, and in one another. It will mean building a firm floor in Ashland’s housing market on the city’s weaker demand blocks, through strict, no-nonsense code enforcement, intensive community policing, and focused safety inspections of rental property. It will mean deploying some of the city’s scarce general fund in ways that trigger public private partnership and encourage home owner reinvestment. It will mean linking neighborhood improvement efforts to the city’s public works regimen. And it will mean constant editing and thinning of the housing stocks to obtain a stable and durable balance of supply and demand.



Ashland neighborhoods

Like many small towns Ashland can feel too small to divide into even smaller neighborhoods. After all, it's a very small city of just 3,500 households. Nevertheless, housing markets, even in a small community, are often just a few blocks in size, each subarea having its own history and identity and reputation. So when it comes to developing strategic actions for a city's overall housing market, precision and a sensitivity to scale is needed.

Ashland is comprised of a collection of smaller subareas with their own character. All city neighborhoods share some attributes, but all neighborhoods also have traits that are their own. The combinations of similarities and differences across neighborhoods, if read correctly, can provide insight into the types of actions that will serve Ashland's housing and neighborhoods well into the future.

This plan subdivides Ashland into smaller districts, or neighborhoods. On one hand this serves the purposes creating manageable geographies in which to work, measure baselines, evaluate progress, and help with implementation. On the other hand, and of greater importance, it recognizes that residential life as viewed through the eyes of the average resident rarely extends beyond the one or two blocks surrounding their house.

In Ashland, where the average residential block is about 320' x 720' feet and has five home on either side of the street facing one another, most families will know most people on their street, and a few on the next block. Ashland has ideal residential densities to support a vibrant community life. Across America, at densities similar to what's in Ashland, residential communities tend to share a common identity inside of about 400 families, or for Ashland about – on average – every 60 acres. This works out to about 20-25 blocks, with a walking distance corner to corner of about 15 minutes. Organizing a neighborhood larger than this is difficult. Yet inside such an area, and within groups of 200-500 families, considerable gains are possible, and so this plan is built around a framework of nine Ashland neighborhoods, each distinct, each of a size conducive to organizing, and each with its own history and special future.

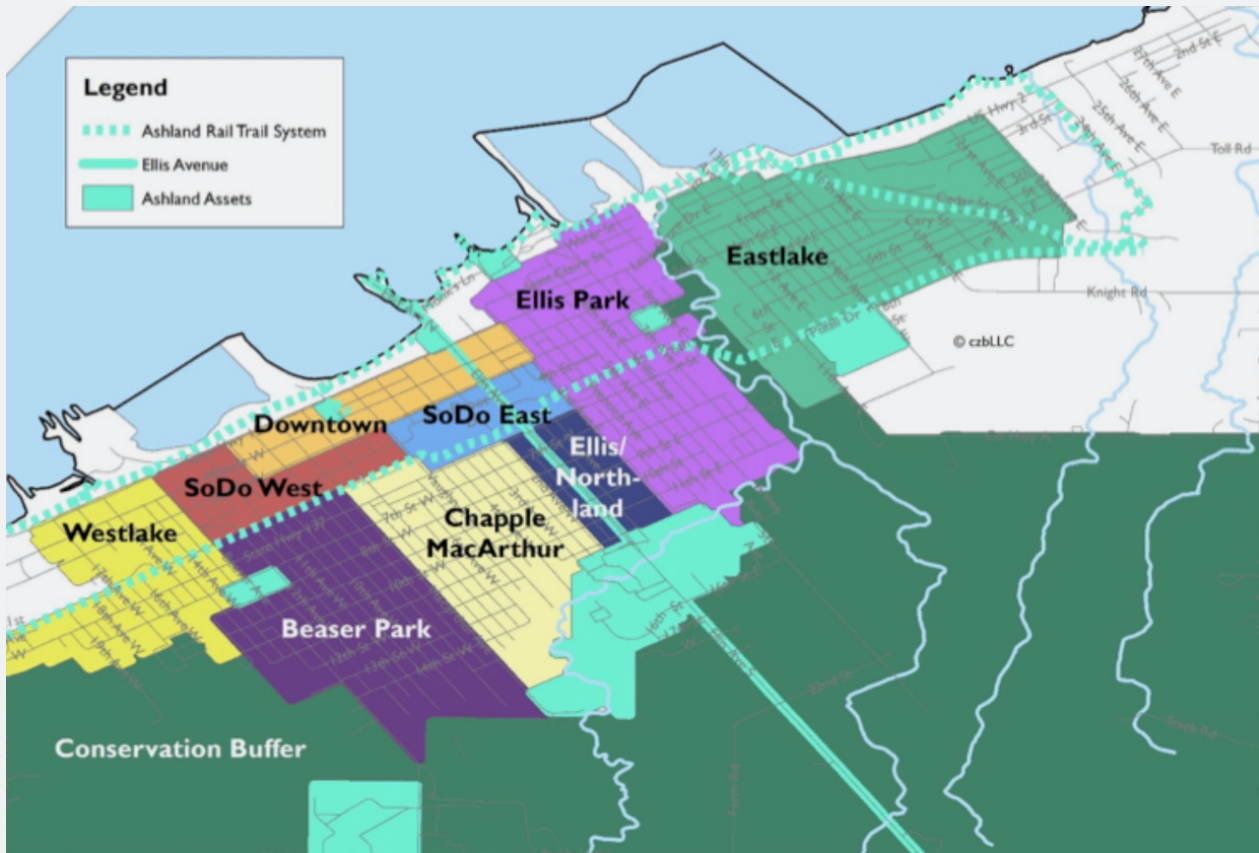
Ashland Housing Authority

The Ashland Housing Authority helps address the need for subsidized and special needs housing in Ashland. The Housing Authority owns and manages four housing complexes for seniors and those with disabilities. Bay Towers has 85 units; Bay Terrace has 30 units; Bay Ridge has 11 units; and Bay Haven has nine units. The Housing Authority also manages dozens of other units throughout the City and they administer the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Housing Program in Ashland, which provides rental assistance to qualifying tenants. In 2003, the Housing Authority began participating in a new home ownership program through HUD that assists qualified families to purchase a home by paying a portion of their mortgage.

Additional rent assisted housing complexes in Ashland include MacArthur Court with 22 units for seniors, Ashland Arms with 36 units for seniors, Holmes Villa with 18 units for general occupancy, Kimball Villa with 24 units for seniors, and Pine Woods with 24 units for general occupancy.

In recent years, several community-based residential facilities (CBRFs) have been developed in Ashland including Tender Elder Care I and II and Forest Haven. These facilities, often referred to as assisted living facilities, provide a limited amount of personal assistance (medical, cleaning, cooking) while allowing residents to live as independently as possible. CBRFs provide an alternative to nursing home living for some residents. Contact the Ashland Housing Authority and the Ashland County Aging Unit for more information about subsidized and special needs housing in Ashland.

Ashland Neighborhoods



Source: czbLLC.

3. Transportation

Ashland's transportation system is typical of many older American cities in the Midwest. The structure has been guided by a solid grid system with blocks that are on average 320' x 720' and provide a good foundation for the land uses that follow this transportation framework. Moving forward, there are a few key opportunities that need to be incorporated into all future transportation projects in Ashland:

- "Complete Streets" – all streets should be constructed (or resurfaced and painted) to address all modes of transportation; pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. All streets should include separated sidewalks for pedestrians to use; vehicle and bike lanes are appropriate within the cartway (paved area) and can either be striped independently or shared - depending on traffic volumes. The "complete streets" philosophy also recommends the consistent use of street trees and pedestrian level lighting (specifically in commercial districts).

- o Street trees are prevalent in the Chapple-MacArthur neighborhood and the aesthetic appeal is apparent. The City should consider a tree-planting program each spring for each of the neighborhoods identified in this Plan to ensure that all neighborhoods are equally addressed.

- o For complete streets to function properly, just as significant numbers of vehicle parking spaces are incorporated into all city streets, so must bike racks: in the downtown, in parks, along the trail system, and near gathering places within the neighborhoods.

- The Community Survey and general public input noted the need for improved street maintenance. Despite the fact that funding is challenging for any community, the City should prioritize street improvements and gradually increase the annual funding to resurface local streets while at the same time ensuring multi-modal, or complete street, rights-of-way.

- "Bridging the divide" – as noted in other sections of this Plan, a bridge (connection) over Bay City Creek to connect the east side of Ashland to the west side is needed from both a sense of community perspective as well as functional perspective (ease of access for police and ambulance vehicles).

ROAD SYSTEM

The road system is perhaps the most important aspect of Ashland's transportation system. It provides links within the community and to surrounding areas. This section describes a functional classification system for the roads in Ashland and it discusses major issues and opportunities relating to the existing road system.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) classifies roads as principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local streets. This classification system recognizes that roads perform specific functions. The following provides a brief description of the classification system as it applies to roads in Ashland.

Principal Arterials - Principal arterial roads provide connections between cities or regions. They move large volumes of traffic on

reasonably direct routes. Consequently, private property access, parking, street intersections, and traffic signals are often limited to help facilitate smooth traffic flow through the City. WisDOT identifies US Highway 2 (commonly known as Lake Shore Drive) and State Highway 13 (commonly known as Ellis Avenue) as principal arterials. US Highway 2 is the major east-west route in the region. It connects Ashland with Superior to the west and Ironwood to the east. State Highway 13 connects Ashland with Washburn to the north and Mellen to the south.

Minor Arterials - Minor arterial roads connect to principal arterial roads. Like principal arterials, minor arterials carry large volumes of traffic, often to activity centers in the City (shopping areas, industries, schools, etc.). But unlike principal arterials, minor arterials generally allow more access to private property and they may allow parking, especially in the more densely populated areas of the City. WisDOT identifies 6th Street, State Highway 112 (Sanborn Avenue), Beaser Avenue, Main Street, part of Vaughn Avenue, and part of West 11th Street as minor arterial roads.

Collectors - Collector roads generally provide major connections within a community or neighborhood. They link local streets to arterial roads. Parking and private property access is generally available on these roads in the "urban" areas of the City. WisDOT identifies several collector roads in Ashland including Maple Lane, Binsfield Road, and County Highway A (11th Avenue East) to name a few.

Local Streets - Local streets are all other roads in the City that are not classified as arterials or collectors. Local streets handle the least amount of traffic volume, but provide direct access to private property. They are generally narrower than the other types of roads and they generally allow on-street parking.

Road Jurisdiction - The State of Wisconsin has jurisdiction over all state and federal highways, unless it chooses to give up this right. However, the City of Ashland and Ashland County maintain all roads within the City. The City of Ashland has maintenance jurisdiction over the following roads:

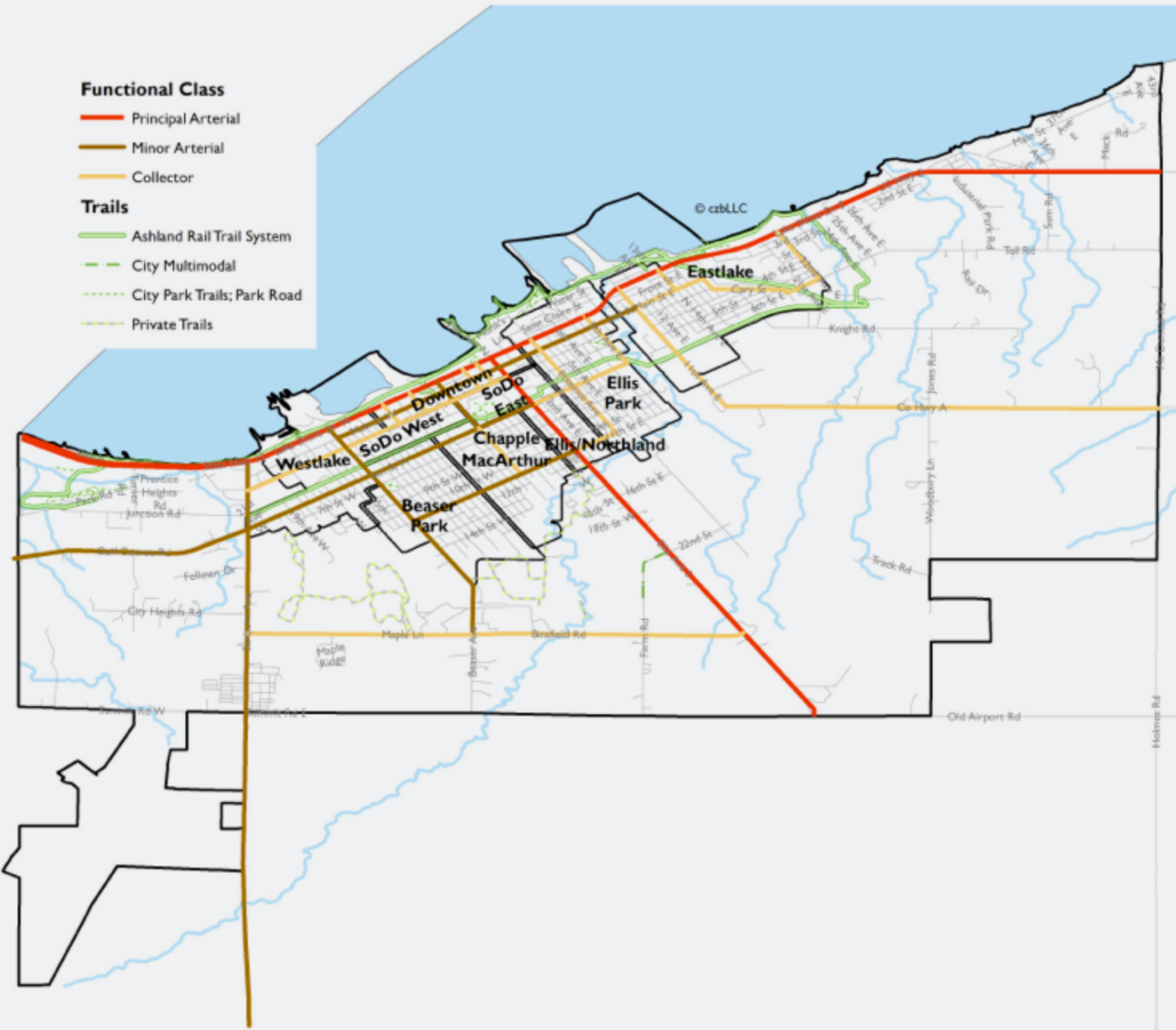
- US Highway 2 between Beaser Avenue and 15th Avenue East
- State Highway 13 between 13th Street and US Highway 2
- State Highway 137 between Sanborn Avenue and Ellis Avenue
- Eleventh Avenue between US Highway 2 and County A
- Binsfield Road
- All local streets

Ashland County has maintenance jurisdiction over the following roads:

- US Highway 2, west of Beaser Avenue to the City limit
- US Highway 2, east of 15th Avenue to the City limit
- State Highway 13, south of 13th Street to the City limit
- State Highway 137 (6th Street), east of Sanborn Avenue to the City limit
- County A from 11th Avenue East, east to the City limit

The City must work closely with the State and the County on all

City of Ashland, Street Typology



Source: czbLLC.

issues relating to the design and maintenance of federal, state, and county highways within the City. For example, even though the City maintains part of US Highway 2, it cannot simply install traffic signals or medians on Highway 2 without WisDOT approval. This must be a collaborative effort and one that the City leaders and community should initiate. There remain additional aesthetic and functional improvements that can be made on US Highway 2 in the form of a possible boulevard with trees as well as entry or gateway features that would slow traffic, increase pedestrian safety and movements, and create citywide placemaking opportunities. Part 1: Priorities of this Comprehensive Plan notes “gateway” opportunities at Sanborn Avenue and Stuntz Avenue (in line with the currently proposed improvements at the Ore Dock park).

State and Regional Highway Plans

At this time, there are no major state or regional (county) highway plans that would affect Ashland.

There are no plans for a Highway 2 bypass. AADC and WIN have expressed concern that there is no bypass to allow for an increase in transportation choices for industrial uses that move freight, etc. This issue should be addressed at a regional level to determine if such an expansion is warranted. The recommendations contained within this Plan are focused upon inward directed growth and utilization of the current infrastructure in place. WisDOT completed reconstruction and resurfacing of US Highway 2 in Ashland over the last decade. In addition, City Staff worked closely with WisDOT to effectuate additional Highway 2 improvements, including pedestrian crossings and beautification projects. There is a continued grassroots effort underway to request that State Highway 13 and part of US Highway 2 be designated a scenic byway. Such a designation could provide grant opportunities for resource protection, safety improvements, trails, and so on. The City will be an active participant in planning for any state or regional highway improvements that may affect Ashland. WisDOT will be resurfacing the east side of US Highway 2 within the next few years and similar to their work to secure pedestrian crossings on the west side, the City of Ashland should work closely with WisDOT to ensure improved pedestrian crossings and gateway features on the east side.

LOCAL STREET PLANS/IMPROVEMENTS

The City is currently replacing utilities under 6th Street from Ellis Avenue to Sanborn Avenue and taking this opportunity to also repair and resurface 6th Street. This project should be complete by Fall 2016. While no additional major repairs are currently proposed for local streets, the Community Outreach and public input as part of this Comprehensive Plan process did note the overwhelming desire for improved road maintenance throughout the City. Additional funds should be set aside annually for this work to be continually improved upon.

RAIL

Ashland’s railroad system presents several issues and opportunities. Many of the former rail lines in Ashland have been removed and converted to trails, but there are still unused portions of the rail

system that need to be addressed. The City is negotiating with Canadian National to remove the rail lines on the waterfront and other areas so that the City can use the railroad bed to expand the city’s trail network. The City worked with the Canadian National Railway in 2010 - 2013 in an attempt to make safe the Soo Line Ore Dock or demolish it. The result, amid controversy, was to demolish the ore dock and create a waterfront park. The demolition of the ore dock and associated trestle structures took place in 2013. In 2016, the City began working with a landscape architecture firm to create a design for the dock and nearby land area. Public input was sought and after a number of public meetings and public hearings, a final design was approved in mid-2016.

While Ashland no longer receives passenger rail service and its freight service is greatly reduced from what it was, rail service could again become an important part of Ashland’s transportation system. Rail service offers many types of industries an efficient and alternative way to ship and receive products. Consequently, the City is negotiating with Canadian National to provide a spur line to provide rail service to the industrial park at the east end of the City.

AIRPORT

John F. Kennedy Memorial Airport is located on Sanborn Avenue, roughly two miles southwest of the City limit. The City of Ashland and Ashland County jointly operate the airport and Bayfield County contributes some funds to help support its operation. The airport has two paved runways. The primary runway is 5,200 feet long by 100 feet wide, and the secondary runway is 3,400 feet long by 75 feet wide. Both runways are adequate for twin-engine aircraft. The airport has a log cabin style terminal building, 21 hangars, and a full time airport manager.

From 1959 to 1966, a commercial passenger airline provided service to the airport. Today, the airport is used primarily for business and recreational use. Businesses and industries such as C.G. Bretting, Larson Juhl, M&I Bank, Duluth Clinic, Xcel Energy, and others contribute to roughly half of the flights to and from the airport. The airport remains an important component of the economic plan of the City and the surrounding area.

The City should continue to work closely with the airport to ensure that runways are continually upgraded and maintenance throughout the facility is ongoing. While Bayfield County does provide some minimal funding on an annual basis for the ongoing airport operations, the City should begin to look at the airport as a regional amenity that services all of northwest Wisconsin (Ashland, Bayfield, Washburn, Madeline Island, the Apostle Islands...the region). Collectively, these communities, chambers of commerce, counties, etc. could create an asset that is unparalleled in the state.

HARBOR

From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, Ashland was one of the busiest harbors on the Great Lakes. Millions of tons of iron ore, brownstone, and lumber were shipped from Ashland during this period. But by the mid 1900s, harbor shipments declined dramatically. Today, only an occasional shipment of coal is transported to Ashland via the harbor.

Although the harbor no longer functions as a thriving industrial

PROPOSED TRAIL ROUTE EXTENSION



Source: czbLLC.

port, it does support a thriving marina. The City of Ashland owns and operates a 142-slip marina at the foot of Ellis Avenue, near the Chequamegon Hotel. In recent years, nearly all slips were full with most tenants residing in Ashland County. As the City continues to implement its Waterfront Development Plan, the marina is expected to grow and attract people from across the region. In the spring of 2016, the City Council began to review three (3) conceptual proposals for the Superfund site.

In 2003, the City purchased a dock for seaplanes. The Ashland marina is the only marina in the area to have such a dock. The City advertises the dock nationwide and anticipates that the dock will increase the City's tourism base and increase business at the marina.

While the economic functions of the waterfront have moved from industry to tourism, a more sustainable "industry" for the area, tourism is still an economic function. The City should continue to explore recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. In the early 2000s, there was discussion to look at increased boat excursions, most of which did not materialize likely due to competition in Bayfield and proximity to the Apostle Islands. While this should continue to be explored, opportunities for stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, fishing, and recreational boating should continue to be expanded. The concepts for the new Ore Dock Park all incorporate some type of access to the water and serve as a logical first step to launch these goals.

TRAIL SYSTEM

The decline of the railroad in Ashland has provided opportunities to convert former railroad lines to trails. Today, Ashland has an extensive trail and sidewalk system – much of it built on former railroad beds. Significant trails in the City include the Waterfront Trail (a walking trail that runs along much of the waterfront in Ashland), the Tri-County Corridor Trail (a multi-use trail that runs from Superior to Ashland), and the Fifth Street Corridor Trail (a multi-use trail that runs east-west through the City). There are also many informal hiking and cross-country ski trails in the Bay

City Creek area and the Memorial Medical Center area. Sidewalks generally exist in the older, more developed areas in the City. Some of the newer, outlying areas in the City do not have sidewalks and residents share the street at present for biking and pedestrian movements.

The existing trail system provides a good framework to expand trails in the City, but the existing trails need to be better linked with one another and with key activity centers in the City. In particular and noted in Part 1: Priorities, there is a strong need to provide safe and convenient linkage to the waterfront and to connect Ashland's Waterfront Trail to the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (NGLVC). A recommended connection from Maslowski Beach through Prentice Park to the Tri-County Corridor trail could be the start to connecting Ashland to the Great Lakes Visitor Center. Once on the Tri-County Corridor, traveling about one mile to the west, there are a couple of options for the County and City to collaborate and construct approximately ¾ mile trail connection to the north, over a stream, then turn east and cross over Highway 2 and connect to the NGLVC. This connection, along with an improved (or better signed) connection via Route G and Torko Road (to the west of the NGLVC) could create an almost 5 mile loop that could be used by runners and cyclists and visitors to the NGLVC. Such a path would wind through wetlands that are indicative of the Great Lakes region and serve as an educational (and recreational) amenity. The map above illustrates a possible route and connection for this trail extension.

Ashland's trails accommodate a variety of uses, including walking, biking, snowmobiling, and ATV use in limited areas. Multi-use trails, especially regional multi-use trails, can have a positive economic impact on a community, which must be balanced with safety and noise concerns that arise with motorized trail activities near residential areas. The City of Ashland has a snowmobile committee that works to address these concerns. The City should consider the creation of a trail committee that is dedicated solely to the maintenance and expansion needs of the City's exceptional trail system.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system provides bus service to Ashland and the surrounding area. BART serves the major activity centers in Ashland including Northland College and Memorial Medical Center and it provides connections to the surrounding communities. The busses are equipped to provide service to those with disabilities.

Taxi companies also provide service to Ashland and the surrounding area. It offers local and long distance transportation and several other transportation services including medical assistance transportation and van rentals.

The City has strived to make Ashland accessible to those with disabilities by providing accommodations such as curb cuts and ramps; however, there is more to be done. Some existing sidewalks are in poor shape and present access challenges. Portions of the trail system are inaccessible to those with physical disabilities. These areas should continue to be improved with an annual funding allocation for infrastructure improvements.

4. Utilities and Community Facilities

City utilities include the sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and water systems. These utilities directly affect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Ashland. They also affect the quality of the natural environment and land use decisions, which in turn affect the economy of the City.

UTILITIES

Sanitary Sewer

In 1992, the City replaced the former wastewater treatment plant located on the waterfront with a new treatment plant located near County Road A. All public wastewater treatment in the City is conveyed through 37 miles of sanitary sewer to the main lift station located at 11th Avenue East and Water Street. It is then pumped to the treatment plant where it goes through a series of treatment procedures and is eventually discharged into Lake Superior. The annual average flow is approximately 1.1 million gallons per day, but Ashland's Wastewater Treatment Plant can process up to 3.84 million gallons per day. The plant also has an 8 million gallon overflow retention basin to accommodate the increased flow through the wastewater system during heavy rainfall and snowmelt.

Storm Water Sewer

The City's storm water sewer system services most of the developed area in the City. Especially in older parts of the City, storm water runoff enters the sewer system untreated – carrying pollutants and sediments with it. It is then discharged into creeks and ravines and eventually makes its way to Lake Superior. New developments that meet certain criteria must comply with storm water management practices that require storm water retention/detention and treatment. Best management practices of storm water are a critical component of improving the quality of surface waters in and around Ashland. In 2003, the City began implementing plans to relocate existing storm sewer outfalls near the City's waterfront area by St. Claire Street. The storm water is now directed away from the contaminated area on the waterfront to a storm water meadow and retention basin that will help filter the storm water before being discharged to the lake. In 2015, the City implemented new Zoning Ordinance language that reduced the parking requirements for the downtown district. Even a small reduction in impervious surfaces reduces the storm water runoff that eventually finds its way to the lake. Ongoing review of regulations should lead to changes to further decrease runoff. Possible revisions include further reductions in impervious surfaces, on-site rain collection, or green roofs. The City's adopted "maximum parking" standards are a significant step in ensuring a sustainable future.

Water

The City built a new, state-of-the-art water treatment plant in 2001. The plant obtains water from Lake Superior, treats it, and distributes it throughout most of the developed area of the City. The system contains a 1.4 million gallon standpipe and a half million

gallon elevated water tower. The plant treats roughly 1.2 million gallons of water a day, but it is capable of treating about two million gallons a day. The new water treatment system provides much safer drinking water than the old system.

Private Wells and Septic Systems

There are many developed properties in Ashland that are adjacent to City sanitary sewer and water lines, but that still use private wells and septic systems. City ordinances require most property owners on well and septic systems to connect into the public water and sewer system within 180 days from the date that these services are available to them. This ordinance should be strictly enforced.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

City Administration

The City of Ashland operates under the laws of the State of Wisconsin as a City of the Fourth Class. It has a Mayor/Council form of government and a City Administrator. The Mayor is elected for a four-year term and presides over the City Council.

Ashland City Hall

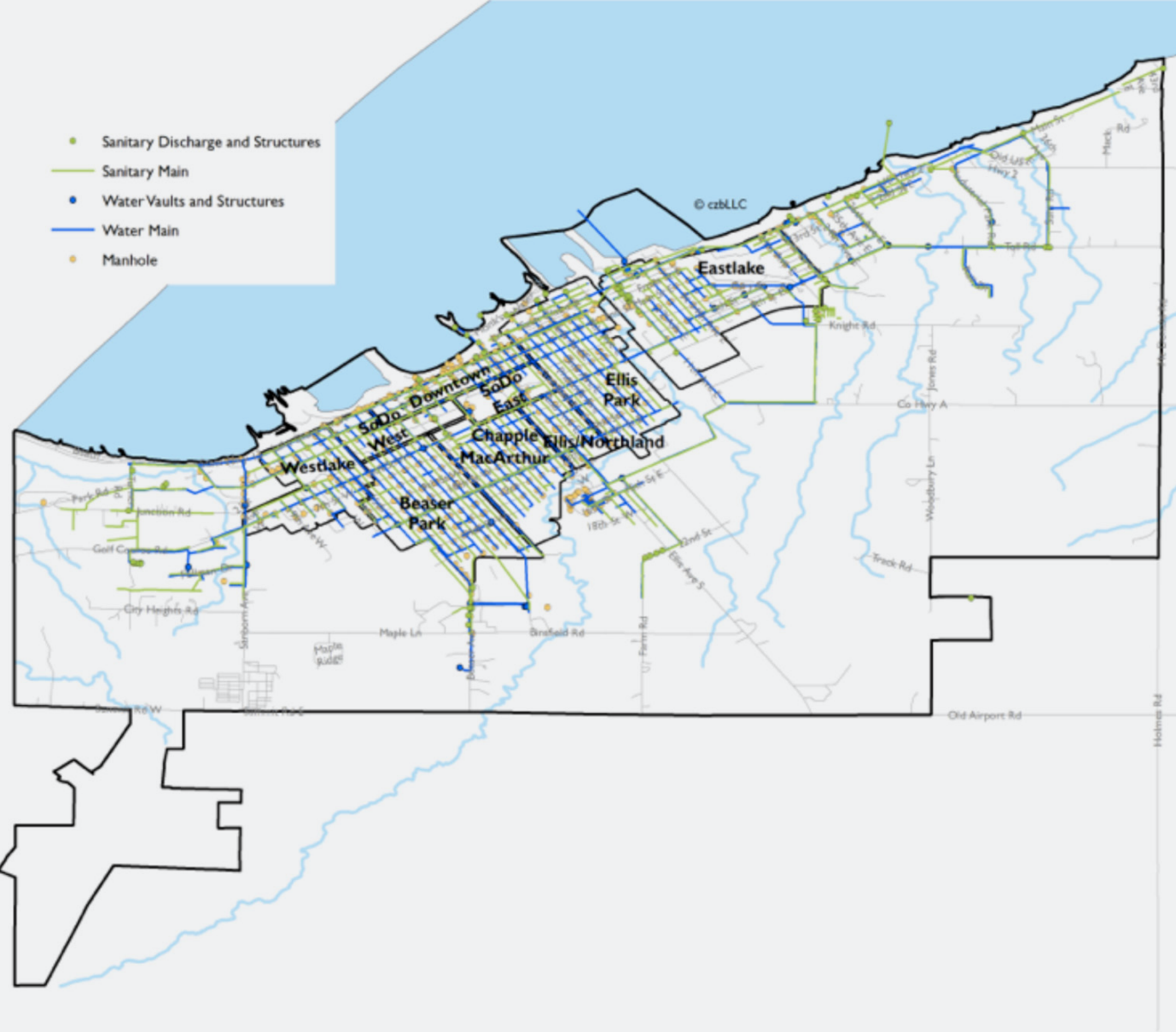
The City Council consists of 11 Councilors, each elected for a two-year term and each representing a specific district. The Council serves as the legislative branch of the City and performs functions such as enacting Ordinances, approving the annual budget and setting policies. The Council receives recommendations from many different commissions and boards including the Planning Commission, the Park Board, the Harbor Commission, the Airport Commission, the Police and Fire Commission, the Library Board, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Public Works Committee, the Leisure Services Committee, and the Teen Board. The City Administrator receives direction from the Mayor and the Council and is responsible for the overall administration of the City.

The City Hall is located in a historically significant brownstone building at 601 West Main Street. It houses the Council Chambers and most City offices. Public Works is located at 2020 6th Street East and it houses the Engineering Department, Streets Division, Parks Division, and Water and Wastewater Division.

Police Department

The Ashland Police Department is located in the City Hall building. The Police Department is scheduled to move into a new building on 6th Street West in 2017. Its 19 full-time officers are responsible for protecting life, property, and the rights of all residents and visitors. The Police Department recognizes that it needs to be a positive role model and that it needs to work closely with the community to solve problems and prevent crime. To that end, the Police Department has assigned one police officer to each of ten different districts in the City. The officer knows the people in that district and they work together to address crime and enhance the quality

City of Ashland, Water Infrastructure



Source: czbLLC.

of life in the district. The Police Department also works closely with the school district. One full-time officer works with the high school and another full-time officer works with the middle school. These officers provide protection services to the students, faculty, and staff and they provide resources to students who are experiencing difficulties at home.

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

The Ashland Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services for the City of Ashland and the Townships of Barksdale, Eileen, Gingles, Pilsen, and Sanborn. It also provides emergency medical service for the Townships of Marengo and White River. As of 2016, the Fire Department operates out of a new facility located on 6th Street E (near 3rd Avenue E). The Fire Department has roughly 18 full-time firefighters/paramedics, one paid on-call firefighter paramedic, and six paid on call firefighter/EMTs. It has three pumper engines, one ladder truck, one water tanker, four ambulances, two cars, a tow truck, a boat, a snowmobile, a hovercraft, and an “ice angel” rescue vehicle that it shares with Ashland County. The Fire Department responds to roughly 300 fire calls and 1,700 emergency medical service requests a year. In addition, it provides semi-annual fire inspection of commercial properties, fire education programs, storage tank inspections, dive team rescues, ice rescues, and level “B” hazardous materials responses.

Schools

Within the City of Ashland, the Ashland School District operates four schools: the Lake Superior Primary School for kindergarten through second grade; the Lake Superior Intermediate School for grades 3 through 5; the Ashland Middle School for grades 6 through 8; and the Ashland High School for grades 9 through 12. The Ashland School District also operates the Marengo Valley School (outside of the City) for kindergarten through sixth grade. In 2016, 2,257 students were enrolled in the Ashland School District. The School District also operates three charter schools: Ashland Elementary School, Oredocker Project School and Ashland Charter High School.

Enrollment in the school district has been relatively stable in recent years and the school district expects it to remain relatively stable in the near future. In late 2015 and early 2016, the School District noted the need for structural improvements and updates to all of the school buildings in Ashland as well as the need for a new track and field house. A bond was put to referendum for \$35 million and passed in April 2016. The passing of this bond had been a long time in the making and in many ways represented a turning point for Ashland – it was indicative of a new “can do” attitude for the City.

Several relatively small private schools, including Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School, also operate within the City.

Ashland is home to two institutes of higher education. The Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) is a two-year technical college that offers students career training in many different fields, including business, health care, computer technology, marine repair, and welding, to name a few. WITC recently built a technology center that houses two state-of-the-art electronic labs, and a computer lab. The center provides computer

and technology training to meet the growing demand for employees with those skills. WITC also offers customized training courses for area businesses. Approximately 900 students a year enroll in classes at the WITC campus in Ashland.

Northland College is a private, four-year, environmental liberal arts college. It attracts students from across the country and world who want a broad liberal arts education with an emphasis on environmental challenges. As of 2016, approximately 600 full-time students are enrolled at the college. Northland College is also home to the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, the environmental outreach arm of the college. The Institute works with citizens and communities to develop sustainable practices that are socially and environmentally healthy.

The Ashland School District, WITC, and Northland College provide education, services and programs, meeting rooms, and recreation facilities that greatly contribute to the quality of life in Ashland. As noted throughout this Plan, partnerships between the City and these schools will be essential if Ashland is to grow its economy over the next decade. Education will play an instrumental role in business start-ups and these can contribute greatly to the City’s economy.

Library

Ashland’s Vaughn Library has a long and significant history. Emeline Vaughn gave the library to the City as a gift in 1888. The library has been housed in the same historically significant building at the corner of Vaughn Avenue and West Main Street ever since. The library offers educational and recreational materials in a variety of formats. It also offers meeting rooms, fax and Internet service, and interlibrary loan service. The Library has noted that it needs additional space for meeting rooms and that it needs to invest in new technology and resources if it is to meet the demands of its patrons. For example, the library would like to offer more DVDs, book tapes, and better Internet connection to its visitors. In 2015 the library board voted to begin fundraising for a renovation project for Vaughn Library that would cost approximately \$500,000-\$700,000.

The library represents an opportunity for the City (and the Chamber of Commerce, AADC, other private entities, etc.) to partner with the library board and lead the way with a strong investment in the downtown. A strategic and economic partnership to keep the library in its downtown location, in its current building, and to allow for renovation and expansion to the building is critical. The loss of the library, the community’s living room, from the downtown runs counter to the fundamental priorities identified in this plan – protect and strengthen the core, the downtown.

Marina and Airport

The Ashland Marina and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Airport are valuable community facilities. The proposed expansion plans for the Marina as part of the Superfund site clean up are noted throughout this Plan and the need for improved regional coordination and funding for the Airport have been outlined.

Health Care Facilities

Ashland's health care facilities serve people primarily from northwestern Wisconsin and Michigan (the upper peninsula region). Memorial Medical Center (MMC) is the primary health care facility in the City and one of Ashland's largest employers. The hospital has 47 full-time physicians and 420 employees. It offers a range of services including surgery, diagnostic services, rehabilitation services, obstetrics, and behavioral health services to name a few. There are several medical clinics in the City, including Essential Health, Chequamegon Clinic, and Main Street Clinic. Nursing homes, mental health clinics, and a drug and alcohol treatment center are also located in the City. Ashland's health care facilities contribute to the City's high quality of life by providing services that meet most of the health care needs of its residents. The health care facilities are also a large part of Ashland's economy and this growth offers significant professional employment opportunities in the future. As the population in the region continues to age, the importance of Ashland's health care facilities will also continue to grow.

In early 2016, Memorial Medical Center commissioned a study to determine the feasibility of an aquatic center that could serve as a medical/physical rehabilitation facility for the hospital as well as a community-wide pool. The Community Survey indicated a strong desire for this type of facility. The opportunity for the City, local businesses, and MMC to partner in this endeavor is ideal and must be capitalized upon. As the planning and analysis continue, these partnerships should unite to cover any financial gaps that might arise in terms of construction or operations for such a facility. Partners for this type of public/private facility include: MMC, the City, the school district, Northland College, WITC, Essential Health, Chequamegon Clinic, etc. MMC may have a desire to keep this facility in near proximity to their existing facilities near Beaser and Binsfield Road; however it is strongly recommended that the City and MMC consider a partnership that would locate such facility in or near the downtown area, specifically near the Bretting Community Center. This would follow the strong recommendations contained within this Plan – focus future development activity into the city's core to transform and revitalize the downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Based upon the results of the study, a facility of this type may not be financially viable at the present time but the local community needs, and has expressed a desire for, an indoor recreational pool and associated amenities. This is specifically desirable over the course of a long winter season – typical of northern Wisconsin. Ongoing studies and opportunities to connect this facility with the Bretting Community Center should be undertaken.

Facilities and Services for Child Care, Youth, Seniors, and Those With Special Needs

The demographic characteristics of Ashland are changing. There are more dual career families and single parent households that need child care services. As Ashland's population continues to age there is an increased need for additional housing and services that meet the needs of seniors, both step-down housing and assisted-living facilities. There is also a growing need for transitional housing and services to deal with issues such as homelessness and domestic abuse. Several childcare centers exist in Ashland and there are many in-home day care centers as well. The City has a Teen Board

and the Leisure Service Program that offer many activities for youth and residents of all ages. The City is considering creating a Youth Committee to deal specifically with youth issues. The Ashland County Aging Unit and the Senior Community Center provide information and assistance to seniors, as well as providing a place for seniors to socialize and eat nutritious meals. Memorial Medical Center and other organizations sponsor an annual senior expo that provides health screening and events for area seniors. The Northwest Community Services Agency operates Ashland's Food Shelf and distributes food to those in need. It is also exploring creating a homeless shelter in Ashland County.

Community Events and Leisure Services

Ashland has several annual community celebrations and events throughout the year that provide an opportunity for residents to get together. These also attract people from across the region. The City's biggest celebrations are Bay Days, Book Across the Bay, and the Whistlestop Festival. The City's Leisure Services Program offers many programs and activities for people of all ages. The Bretting Community Center, which was constructed in 2000, provides a gymnasium, game room, and gymnastics room. It receives approximately 3,000 registrations for classes and activities a year. The Center is also used to host community events, such as the two community open houses that were part of development of this Plan.

Parks, Recreation, and Museums

Ashland has 22 parks that total roughly 216 acres and offer a variety of recreational opportunities. The park system includes small pocket parks in the central business district, waterfront parks with beaches, swimming, and picnic facilities, parks with athletic fields for organized sports, and a large passive recreation, nature-oriented park. Two City parks have camping facilities. Kreher Park has 36 sites for recreational vehicles and Prentice Park has 9 sites for recreational vehicles and ten sites for tent camping. With the current conceptual plans under discussion in spring/summer 2016, Kreher Park could realize an increase in the number of sites for recreational vehicles. The Parks Department is responsible for maintaining all parks in the City as well as the City's Waterfront Trail and the Fifth Street RV Camping at Kreher Park. There is also a plan to rebuild the dock at Bayview Park in late 2016.

Parks, Corridor Trail, and Golf Course

In addition to the City's park system, there are several other notable recreation opportunities in the City. Chequamegon Bay Golf Club is an 18-hole championship golf course that is open to the public, but owned and operated by the Elks organization. The Apostle Islands Cruise Service operates a cruise line on Chequamegon Bay during the summer months. Chequamegon Bay provides excellent year-round fishing opportunities. And the Tri-County Corridor Trail (in addition to the City's trail system) provides recreation opportunities for snowmobiling, bicycling, and hiking.

Ashland's Historical Society Museum is located in the downtown area. The City also has a popular mural walk in the downtown area that depicts the history of Ashland. The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center is a museum and interpretive center located just west of Ashland. Over 100,000 people visit the center each year.

Religious Institutions and Cemeteries

Religious institutions are located throughout the City. These institutions are an important part of the social fabric of the City. Mount Hope Cemetery, St. Agnes Cemetery, and B’Nai Israel Cemetery are located in the southwest corner of the City. The cemeteries have adequate area to meet the needs of the community at least through the year 2023.

Ashland has an improved infrastructure that allows us to promote economic development and secure a high standard of living for our residents. We continue to seek improved energy conservation for buildings, vehicles, and street lighting. We are exploring options for establishment of alternative energy production sites and methods within and outside city limits. Funds have been secured to provide assistance to homeowners for improving residential energy efficiency and waste reduction measures. Infrastructure costs for new developments and expansions have become more cost effective. The telecommunication infrastructure has been expanded.

UTILITIES PLAN

The Utilities Plan promotes safe, reliable, environmentally responsible, and cost effective delivery of utilities to residents, businesses, and industries. The following discussion provides an overview of the key components of the Plan.

City Utilities

The City’s water and wastewater treatment plants are up-to-date and have enough capacity to serve the needs of the community beyond the year 2023. However, the City will continue to maintain, repair, and upgrade water and sewer lines as needed. In particular, the City will continue to reduce inflow and infiltration into the City’s wastewater system. The City will promote development and redevelopment in areas of the City that are currently served by public utilities and streets. Once the core of the City is built out (likely a 20 year timeline), the City should consider some logical and sequential outward expansion of sewer and water that would complete the infrastructure already in place in the Binsfield-Eillis neighborhood.

Storm Water Outlet at Bay City Creek

The City will continue its efforts to handle storm water runoff in an environmentally responsible manner. The City should place special emphasis on developing standards that limit the amount of impervious coverage in a development. The City should ensure that new developments, which meet certain criteria, comply with storm water management practices that require retention/detention and treatment. The City should continue to address ways to handle existing untreated storm water that dumps directly into creeks, ravines, and the lake. The City will work with the DNR, the Coastal Management Program, representatives of the NEMO program, Northland College, and others to develop and implement best management practices for storm water runoff.

Other Utilities

The City of Ashland should continue to work with the Focus on Energy program, Xcel Energy, the Sigurd Olson Institute, and others to secure grants and other assistance to promote energy conservation throughout Ashland and hold itself up as an example of the benefits of energy conservation by incorporating energy conservation measures into its facilities and services. Ashland should promote and support sustainable development that incorporates energy conservation measures through site design, building design, and environmentally responsible alternative forms of energy. The City should also work with Xcel Energy and others to place new and existing utilities underground, especially in the US Highway 2 corridor and waterfront area where above ground utilities adversely affect views of the lake.

The City recognizes that businesses, industries, and institutions need fast, reliable, and up-to-date telecommunication service and a skilled labor force to use the service. The City should be an active participant in working to ensure that Ashland has an adequate telecommunication infrastructure to serve existing and future needs. A goal of the Plan is to ensure that employees, small businesses, satellite offices, and others can live and work in Ashland while being fully connected to clients and company headquarters that are located elsewhere in the country. The 2016 Community Survey noted the importance of internet connectivity for all in the community. Fiber optic infrastructure should be explored city-wide.

Community Facilities

The City recognizes that the demographic characteristics of Ashland are changing. Key issues include the aging of the population, youth leaving the community, and a lack of professional jobs. If Ashland is going to grow its economy, it needs to be a magnet community that attracts and maintains people. An important component of being a magnet community is offering the facilities and services that people need and desire, in addition to the provision of new economic opportunities. These opportunities will best be realized by way of public-private partnerships.

5. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Many of the forests that covered the Ashland area were harvested by the early 1900s. Soon after the land was cleared, people began to farm the cutover lands. Most farms in and around Ashland include dairy operations. The vast majority of croplands are used for pasture or hay, but corn, barley, and oats are also grown in the area. Especially within the city limits, former farmland is beginning to return to a forested condition. Prime agricultural soils do not exist within the city limits.

The Ashland Agricultural Research Station is an important resource for area farmers and the City of Ashland. The station conducts research and provides assistance in growing crops in the area. It also assists homeowners and others who have small garden plots, and it can assist the City in evaluating tree species for urban use.

Although prime agricultural lands do not exist within the city limits, the existing hayfields, pastures, and farms contribute positively to Ashland's unique sense of place.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Throughout its history, natural resources in and around Ashland have attracted people and industries to the City. In particular, Chequamegon Bay, and the area's forests, iron ore, and brownstone resources have had a tremendous impact on the economy and physical development of the City. Although some of these resources no longer have the impact they once did, conservation and effective management of the City's natural resources remains critical to Ashland's future.

GEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE AND TOPOGRAPHY

The City of Ashland is located in a geographical province known as the Lake Superior Lowland, one of five major provinces in Wisconsin. The Lake Superior Lowland occupies the northern portion of Douglas County, small segments of Bayfield County, and a portion of Ashland County that includes the City of Ashland. The hills of the Northern Highland Province surround the Lake Superior Lowland and are visible from Sanborn, 12 miles south of Ashland. These surrounding hills formed the shoreline of glacial Lake Duluth, a predecessor of Lake Superior. Many years ago, the Lake Superior Lowland was submerged under glacial Lake Duluth. The Ashland area, as it exists today, was formed about 10,000 years ago with the retreat of the last of four glaciers that covered the area. Red clay, which is the characteristic soil type in the area, is a result of deposition of materials during the last glacial retreat.

Ashland's topography ranges from roughly 600 feet above sea level along the Lake Superior shoreline to roughly 830 feet above sea level in the southwest part of the City (see Figure 6-1:

Topography). In key areas of the City, this change in elevation allows for good views of the lake, especially in the western part of the City where the topography change is the most dramatic, and along the 15-foot to 30-foot high bluff that runs parallel to Highway 2. Most of the City has moderate slopes that do not

present development issues. However, several areas in the eastern part of the City present development constraints in that they are nearly level (less than 1% slope). Several other areas including the Lake Superior bluff line and the banks of streams and ravines, present development constraints in that they have very steep slopes of 40 to 50% or more. Development should not occur on or near these steep slopes.

ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION

Ashland is located in the ecological landscape known as the Superior Coastal Plain. This area encompasses the region along the southwest coast of Lake Superior stretching from Superior to the eastern edge of Ashland County. A relatively level plain of lacustrine clays that slope gently toward Lake Superior characterizes the landscape. In the 1800s, boreal conifers dominated most of the landscape, but by the 1900s, most of the forested areas were harvested. Today, the landscape is dominated by second-growth forests, of which 40% are aspen and birch forests. Roughly, one-third of the area is open and used for pasture and agricultural use.

SOILS

There are five major soil series in Ashland. Prime agricultural soils do not exist within the city. Soil classifications as noted below illustrate potential development constraints based upon the general characteristics of the soils. However, soil borings should always be taken and carefully analyzed before any site development occurs. The following provides an overview of each of the soil series in Ashland.

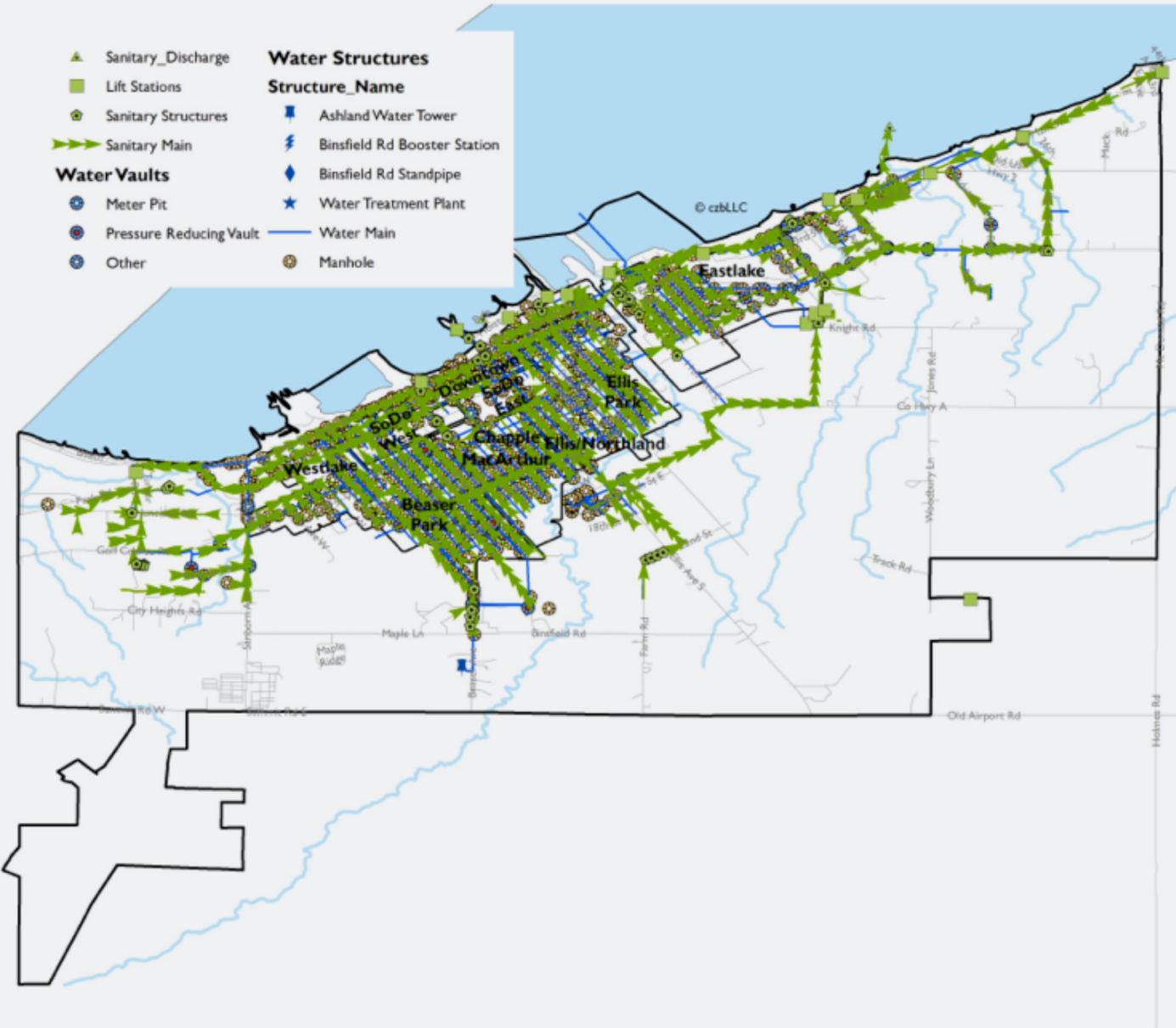
Hibbing Clay-Loam Series

The Hibbing Clay-Loam series are the most prevalent soils in Ashland. These soils are dark, reddish, brown. They have slow permeability and moderate water capacity. They are rated well for forest and wildlife habitat and they are rated fair for agricultural uses. Because the soils lack sufficient strength to support vehicular traffic and buildings, these soils must be replaced with suitable base material before site development can occur. Foundations and footings should be designed to prevent structural damage caused by frost action and the shrinking and swelling of the soils. These soils are poorly suited for on-site sewage disposal. Although these soils present development constraints, they have the least constraints for development of any of the soils in Ashland. Most of the existing and planned development in Ashland has occurred or will occur on soils in the Hibbing Clay-Loam series.

Rudyard Series

The Rudyard series are found in areas that are nearly level and poorly drained. They have slow permeability and moderate water capacity. If adequately drained, these soils have fair potential for growing hay or use as pasture. These soils are poorly suited for building site development and on-site waste

City of Ashland, Water Infrastructure



Source: czbLLC.

disposal and must be replaced with suitable base material before site development can occur. Foundations and footings should be designed to prevent structural damage caused by frost action and the shrinking and swelling of the soils.

Ontonagon-Bergland Series

The Ontonagon-Bergland series are poorly drained, wet soils that have a slow rate of runoff. Most of these soils are associated with wetlands and should not be farmed or developed. However, some of these soils may be suited for pastures and hayfields and some may be suited for development if properly engineered. The Memorial Medical Center on Beaser Avenue was developed on the Ontonagon-Bergland series.

Udor-thents Series

The Udor-thents series are found on the steep slopes along the Lake Superior bluff line and along ravines and streams. They are most prevalent along the Bay City Creek corridor. Water capacity is very low and runoff is rapid. These soils are poorly suited for agriculture or woodland use. Erosion is a severe hazard and tree growth is slow. Because of the unstable nature of these soils, no development should occur on or near these soils.

Aquents Series

The Aquent series are nearly level and poorly drained soils that are often wet and subject to flooding. Most of the soils in the Fish Creek Slough in Prentice Park are in the Aquents series. Because these soils are usually wet, they are not suitable for development or agriculture, but they have tremendous value for wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Constructed Soils

Many of the soils below the Lake Superior bluff line were brought in to build up the waterfront area for development. Also, significant areas of fill were brought in to construct the railroads in the central and eastern parts of the city and Highway 2 near Fish Creek Slough. With the exception of the waterfront area, it is unlikely that future site development will occur on these soils. Where development might occur, the soils should be tested for development suitability.

HYDROLOGY

Chequamegon Bay, Lake Superior - Chequamegon Bay is a relatively shallow and protected bay on the south shore of Lake Superior. Throughout the history of Ashland, people have been attracted to the bay. During the late 1800s to the early 1900s, Ashland's waterfront was lined with sawmills and iron ore docks. At that time, the value of the bay was tied primarily to its value as an industrial port. Today, the bay no longer functions as an industrial port, but it continues to hold tremendous economic and recreational value and must be protected accordingly.

WATERSHEDS

Ashland is located in the Fish Creek Watershed, one of Wisconsin's 16 watersheds that drain into the Lake Superior Basin. Several sub-watersheds exist within the Fish Creek Watershed. Bay City Creek is the primary sub-watershed within the City of Ashland.

WETLANDS

The Wisconsin Wetland Inventory identifies many wetlands in Ashland, mostly in the undeveloped southern and eastern parts of the city. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources identifies the Fish Creek Slough in the western part of the city as one of most important wetlands in the region; Prentice Park borders the Fish Creek Slough.

The Wisconsin Wetland Inventory is useful for general planning purposes, but it does not reflect the exact boundaries of all wetlands in the City. Consequently, it is important to delineate and evaluate all wetlands on a property before considering development of the property. Two areas where future development should be carefully considered in light of existing wetlands, are the area south and east of the existing industrial development on the east side of the city, and the area south of Northland College and north of Farm Road. While existing wetlands in these areas do not preclude development, careful planning and design will be necessary so that the wetlands are not adversely affected.

Wetlands should not be viewed as wasted lands that constrain development. On the contrary, wetlands provide many benefits including water quality protection, groundwater recharge and discharge, flood protection, and wildlife habitat. To that end, the City should continue to ensure their protection and educate the community regarding their importance, specifically in terms of addressing storm water run off and ongoing water pollution challenges in Chequamegon Bay.

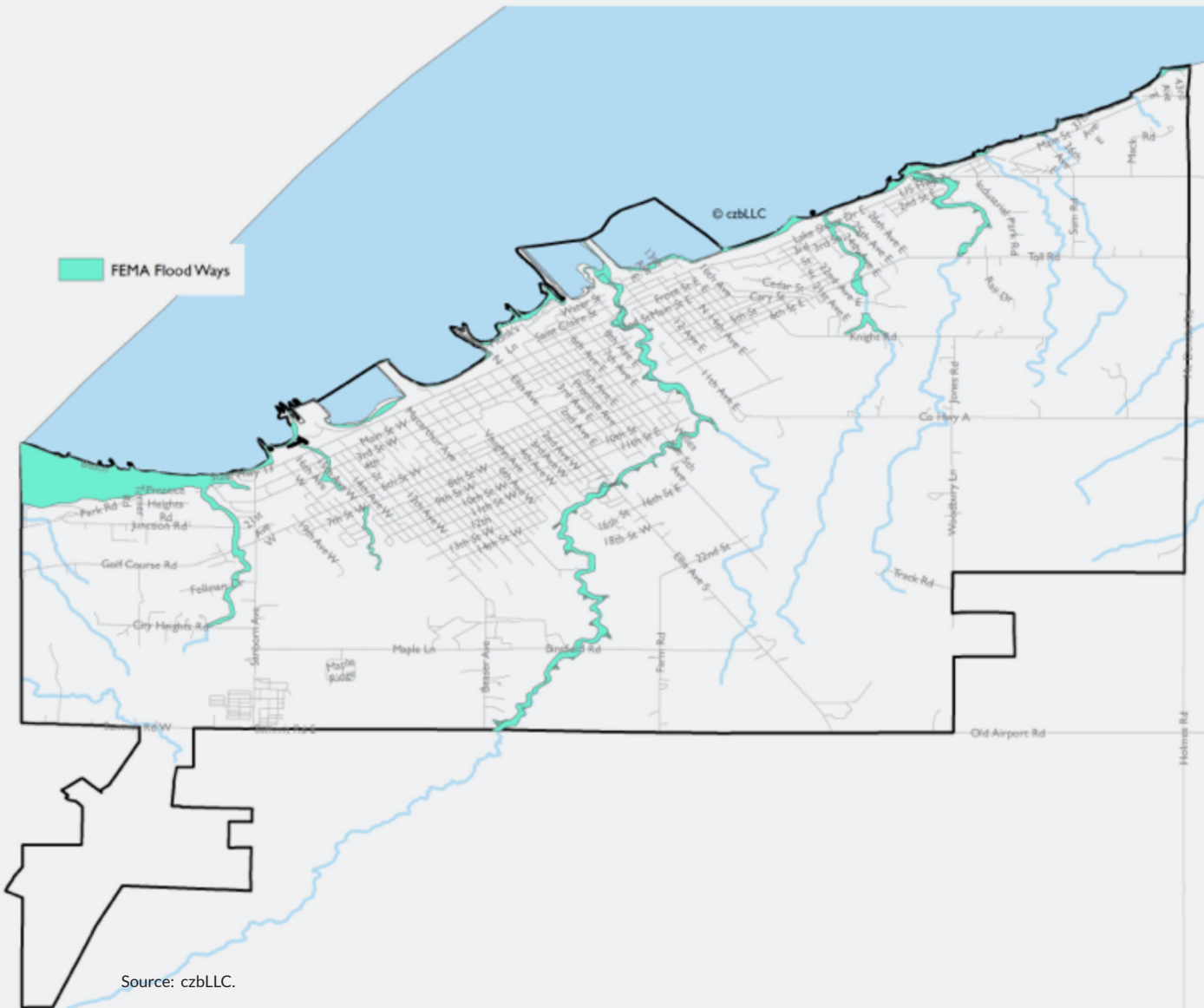
BAY CITY CREEK

Numerous streams and ravines run through Ashland, but Bay City Creek, a warm water stream that originates in open land near the John F. Kennedy Airport southwest of Ashland, is the most significant stream in the city. It flows northeast to Lake Superior dividing Ashland into east and west sides. The watershed of Bay City Creek includes agricultural lands south of the city, and a large area of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in the city. The water quality of the creek is affected by land uses outside the city as well as land uses and land management practices in the city. DNR studies have found that the creek is generally turbid, especially after a heavy rain. Surveys of the creek have not found rare species or a rich diversity of species. The DNR determined that urban pollutants are a significant factor in the impaired habitat quality of the creek. Although Bay City Creek is not pristine, it is an important natural amenity that is highly valued by the City. It has tremendous potential to link many areas of the city to each other and to the waterfront. Changes in land management and zoning language can improve the quality of the creek's habitat; some changes could include reduced impervious surfaces (reduced parking requirements), and ongoing protection of the wetlands surrounding the creek.

STREAMS AND RAVINES

Like Bay City Creek, the smaller streams and ravines that run through Ashland have very steep, erodible slopes of 40% or more, and they have the potential to link many of areas of the city to each other and to the waterfront. Because the streams empty into Lake Superior, they affect the water quality of the lake. Careful planning and design are necessary to protect these stream and ravines,

City of Ashland, Water Infrastructure



and ultimately Lake Superior, from potential adverse effects of development such as increased runoff, erosion, pesticides, and fertilizers.

FLOODPLAIN AND ICE

Most of the floodplain lies in a relatively narrow band along Lake Superior and Bay City Creek. Of particular concern is the area near US Highway 2 at the western edge of the city where existing development occurs within the 100-year floodplain. This area is frequently wet and is not conducive to development or redevelopment. There are also many relatively level, poorly

drained areas in the city that are not in the 100-year floodplain, but nevertheless experience water problems during the spring thaw and heavy rains. Development in these areas must be carefully planned to mitigate drainage problems.

During late winter/early spring, strong winds blow ice off Lake Superior and onto the coast. In some areas, especially the area near US Highway 2 at the western edge of the city, strong winds can push the ice long distances and cause damage to property and habitat. No building construction should occur in the floodplain or in areas susceptible to ice damage.

GROUNDWATER

Public water in Ashland comes from Chequamegon Bay, Lake Superior; however, stormwater runoff and snowmelt carry clay soils into the bay, making the water turbid. In 2001, the Ashland Water and Wastewater Utility built a new water treatment plant that substantially improved the quality and safety of drinking water in Ashland.

In addition to the City's water treatment plant, residents and others can obtain clean drinking water from the several artesian wells that are in the city. In 2016, a new artesian well is proposed to be drilled at Maslowski Beach and will replace the existing one. In conjunction with the well, a new structure will be built. In the past, when water quality from the water treatment plant was poor, many residents would obtain their drinking water from these wells. Several areas of the City are served by private wells. Where feasible, the City requires that these areas be connected to the City's water system.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality in Ashland area is relatively good. In 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency ranked Ashland County in the top 20% of all counties in the United States for the cleanest and best air quality. Nevertheless, at times, coal dust from the Reiss Coal Dock deposits a thin layer of dust over the waterfront area. This has been a source of frustration for some people, particularly those with boats stored across from the coal dock at the Ashland Marina.

VEGETATION

Wetlands and woodlands make up much of the undeveloped areas of Ashland and contribute to Ashland's sense of place. Most wetlands are in the south and east parts of the city. As discussed earlier, wetlands provide many benefits including water quality protection, groundwater recharge and discharge, flood protection, and wildlife habitat. To that end, the City should continue to ensure their protection. The woodlands are scattered throughout the rural areas of the city and are along the streams and ravines that run through the developed parts of the city. The woodlands are generally second growth and consist mostly of birch and aspen.

Although large areas of natural vegetation exist in the rural areas of the city, natural vegetation in the developed areas of the city is fragmented. The City's Tree Advisory Board should work with the City to refine the vegetation within the city – specifically the Tree Advisory Board should coordinate with the City to plant street trees in all neighborhoods on an annual basis.

THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Department of Natural Resources identifies the following endangered, threatened, or special concern species and/or communities in Ashland. Most of these species may be found along the coast or in Fish Creek Slough, which borders the west end of the City. Although the City should be especially careful to ensure

that these areas are protected from adverse development, the City should be aware that other areas, such as the Bay City Creek Corridor, could also potentially provide habitat for these species.

Vascular Plants

Autumnal Water-Starwort Marsh Willow-Herb

Birds

American Bittern
Bald Eagle
Blue-Winged Teal
Cape May Warbler
Common Tern
Merlin
Nashville Warbler
Red-Breasted Merganser
Veery

Rare Macroinvertebrates

Trichoptera

Communities

Emergent Aquatic – shrub swamp, sedge meadow, emergent swamp, small ponds Hardwood Swamp
Shrub Swamp

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not identify any State Natural Areas within the City of Ashland; however, Fish Creek Slough, which borders Prentice Park in the western end of the city, has been identified as a primary coastal wetland and one of the most important wetlands in the region. Other areas where the City should take special care to protect and enhance include the coastal area, bluffs, creeks, ravines, wetlands, and woodlands.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Mineral resources played an important role in the history of Ashland. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, iron ore and brownstone were shipped from Ashland's docks. Even though these resources were not mined within the city limits and they are no longer mined in the area, they contributed greatly to Ashland's economy. Today, there is a relatively small amount of sand and gravel mining in the western part of the city and the surrounding towns. These mines help supply base material for road and building construction in the area. It is important that these mines be properly managed and reclaimed.

Natural resource goals of the City of Ashland have remained

constant over the years and are of a general nature:

- Provide open natural areas throughout the City
- Improve water quality
- Promote the use of native vegetation in site developments
- Promote environmental health

COASTAL RESOURCES

Coastal resources are a significant part of the social, economic, and natural environment of Ashland. Consequently, coastal issues are addressed throughout this Comprehensive Plan. This section provides an overview of the key aspects of coastal resources in Ashland.

Description of Coastal Resources

Chequamegon Bay, Lake Superior is the primary coastal resource in Ashland. The bay encompasses an area of roughly 53 square miles. It is home to 57 species of fish and provides excellent fishing and boating opportunities. The bay also provides drinking water for the communities of Ashland, Bayfield, and Washburn.

Coastal resources, however, include more than Chequamegon Bay. They also include resources such as wetlands and forests that are in the watershed that feed into the bay. Chequamegon Bay's watershed encompasses an area of roughly 1,440 square miles, of which the Fish Creek Watershed and the City of Ashland are a relatively small part. What happens within this watershed greatly affects the bay itself. Because Ashland directly fronts on the Chequamegon Bay, it has additional responsibility to ensure the protection and enhancement of the bay.

WATER QUALITY AND POLLUTION

The clean and clear water of Chequamegon Bay is often cited as one of Ashland's most important natural amenities. Residents and visitors enjoy the beauty and recreation opportunities that the bay offers. Yet, Chequamegon Bay and Lake Superior have water quality problems. PCBs and mercury are two of several major pollutants that have prompted fish consumption advisories for Lake Superior. PCB levels in the lake have been dropping since they were banned in 1976, but PCBs are still found in the lake and care must be taken to ensure that no new PCBs make their way into the lake. Reducing mercury levels involves a strong regional effort. In recent years, good progress has been made in reducing mercury levels, but much

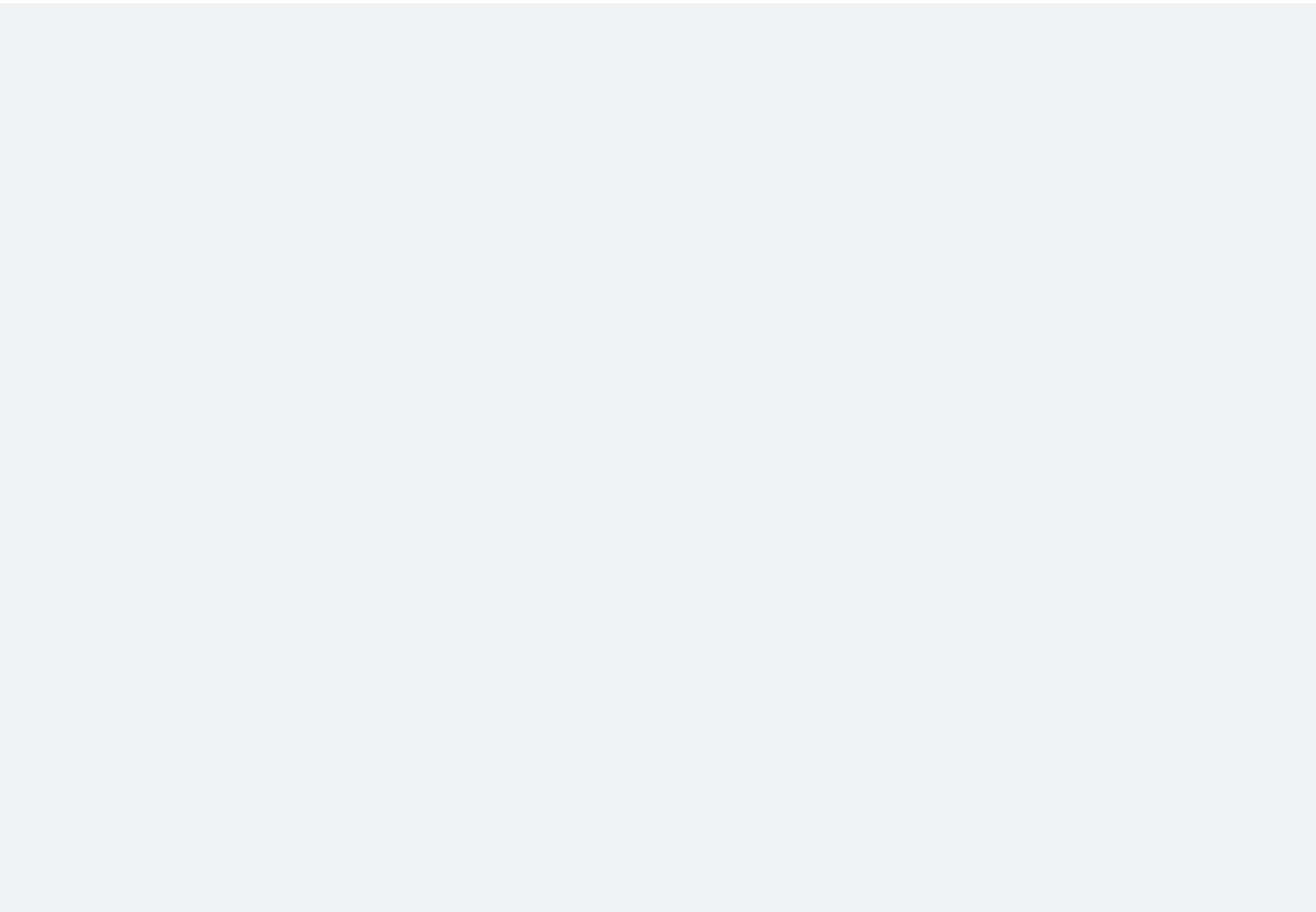
work still needs to be done.

On a regional level, improperly managed storm water runoff adversely affects the water quality of Chequamegon Bay. The red clay soils in the region are highly susceptible to erosion. During the spring thaw and heavy rains, runoff washes these soils into the bay causing the water to be turbid and adversely affecting coastal plants, fish, and water quality. Storm water runoff also carries fertilizers, pesticides, oils, and other chemicals into the bay. Proper storm water management reduces and treats runoff so that the water entering the bay is cleaner. If pollution from runoff is to be reduced, the City of Ashland, as well as the neighboring jurisdictions in the Chequamegon Bay Watershed, must be diligent in preparing and implementing best management practices for storm water runoff.

Specific uses within the City have also contributed to the water quality problems of the bay. In the late 1800s to the early 1900s, sawmills and other industries damaged fish spawning habitat by dumping their waste materials into the bay. Concentrated coal tar from a former manufactured gas plant, and perhaps from a former wood treatment plant, is the pollutant that has received the most attention and that has had the greatest impact on Ashland's waterfront. The area contaminated with coal tar encompasses roughly ten acres of surface water and land. Property owners with contaminated land include Xcel Energy Company, Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad, and the City (specifically, Kreher Park and the City's former wastewater treatment plant). The area has been designated a Superfund site and efforts are underway to remedy the problems; the community finalized a plan in late 2016 based upon three conceptual plans under consideration and generally agreed to the concept on the following page. Strong consideration should be given to preservation of views, limited impervious surfaces, and public access. Although use of the waterfront in this area is not prohibited, boats should not anchor in the contaminated areas and people should avoid coming in contact with the coal tar. Clean-up of this site is critical if the City is to realize its vision for redevelopment of the waterfront.

City of Ashland, Waterfront Redevelopment Concept





EROSION

The area west of Ashland from Bark Point in Bayfield County to Wisconsin Point in Douglas County and the area east of Ashland from the White River to the eastern border of Iron County are highly susceptible to coastal erosion. Although the coastal erosion hazards within the City of Ashland are not as pronounced, erosion from storm water runoff adversely affects the water quality of Lake Superior. The Udon-thents soils that occur around the steep ravines throughout Ashland are highly susceptible to erosion. Some erosion occurs naturally, but impervious material associated with development increases storm water runoff. Improperly managed, storm water runoff creates additional erosion that is eventually deposited into Lake Superior. These elements can adversely affect coastal plants, fish, and water quality.

The bluffs in Ashland are also susceptible to erosion. Both storm water runoff and development close to the edge of a bluff can destabilize a bluff and potentially cause massive slumps. Consequently, development must be setback appropriately from the bluff and the bluff must be properly vegetated. Unfortunately, in several areas of the city, existing development occurs at the top edge of the bluff. In one instance, a former gas station near the edge of a bluff was forced to close, in part, because of concerns over the shifting and settling of underground storage tanks. It is important that the City take steps to ensure that development does not occur too close to steep slopes, that storm water is properly managed, and that steep slopes have appropriate vegetation, to help minimize the erosion.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The Chequamegon Bay area contains unique natural features that are not found elsewhere in the Great Lakes region. The Nature Conservancy identifies that the area is home to 137 plant and animal species and 33 natural communities of special concern. While not all of these species and natural communities exist within Ashland's city limits, it is important to recognize that Ashland's land use decisions can either enhance or adversely affect these plant and animal communities. For example, a poorly designed subdivision within the city can further fragment natural habitats. Conversely, the City can begin to restore connections from Chequamegon Bay to the outskirts of the city and work with neighboring jurisdictions to further reconnect and enhance the quality of the natural communities. The Priorities section of Part 1 of this Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations for improved trail connectivity along Bay City Creek.

COASTAL VEGETATION

Native coastal vegetation provides many benefits. Vegetative buffers along the shoreline and adjacent to creeks and drainage ways help reduce erosion and filter sediments and pollutants. Vegetation also helps maintain the integrity of the bluffs along the waterfront. While non-invasive, non-native plant species may be used in coastal areas, native vegetation has the advantage of being well-adapted to the soils, climate, and other local conditions. Native plant species typically require less maintenance and chemical additives than non-native species. Vegetation, particularly native vegetation, provides important habitat for coastal animal species.

Vegetation also helps screen and enhance views. Enhancing and maintaining coastal vegetation is a very important part of a coastal management plan.

EXOTIC PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Plants and animals that are not native to the habitat they are found in are considered exotic species. Because they are not native, they have little or no predators or competition to keep their numbers in check. As a result, they often flourish to the extent that they severely damage or destroy native species. Once established, exotic species are difficult to control and they are virtually impossible to eliminate. Some common exotic species include purple loosestrife, which has invaded wetlands in and around Ashland, and zebra mussels. Contact the Wisconsin DNR or the University of Wisconsin Extension Service for a more detailed description of exotic species in Ashland.

Besides devastating native species, exotic species can severely damage the economic and recreational value of the City's coastal resources. The more established exotic species become, the more costly it becomes to control them. Once established, exotic species can have a devastating effect on recreation and tourism, including fishing and boating. Therefore, the City should work diligently with appropriate agencies to reduce exotic plant and animal species.

COASTAL REGULATIONS

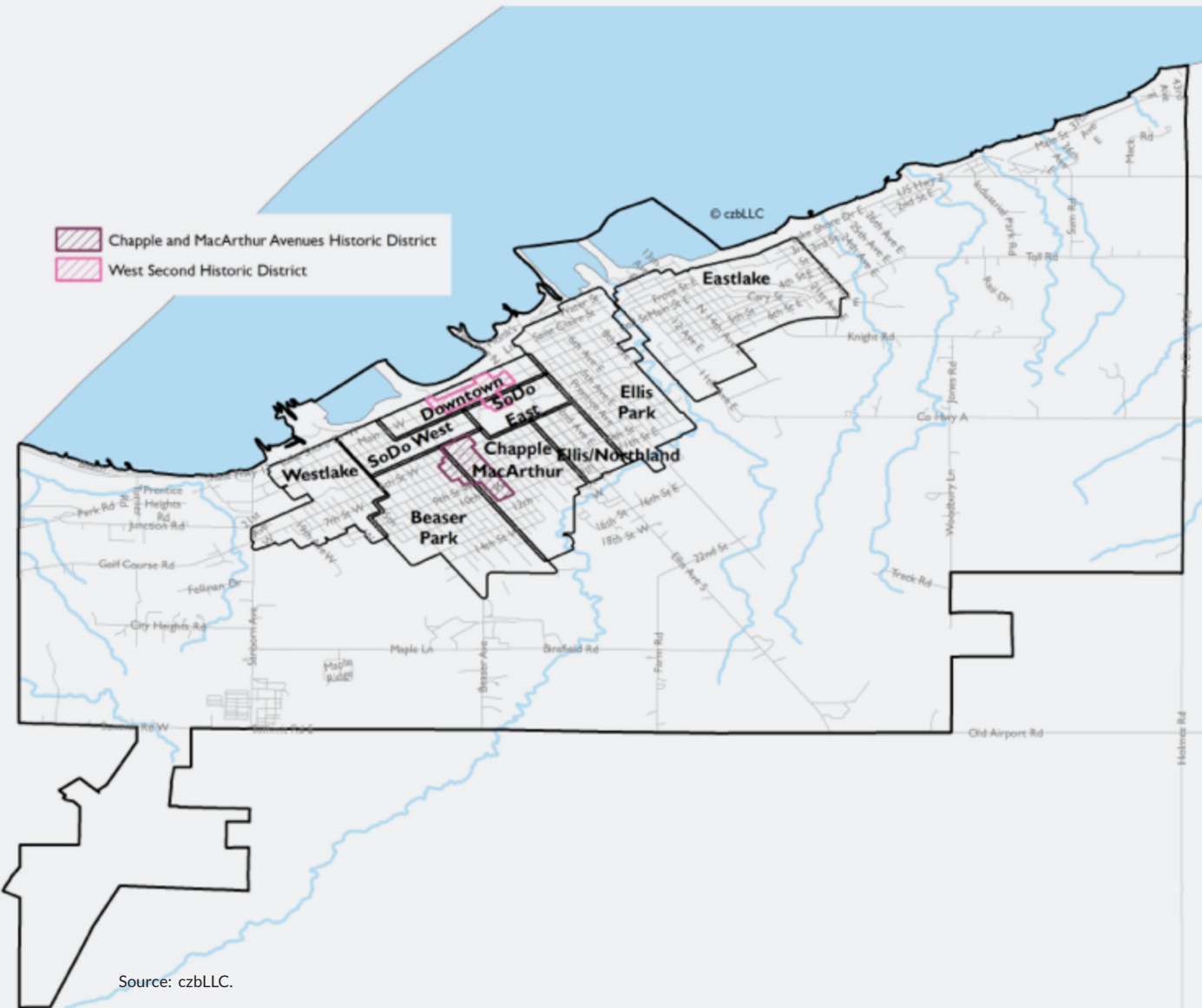
All counties in Wisconsin must adopt and administer ordinances based on minimum state standards. These standards do not apply to incorporated cities, but they do apply to any land annexed by a city after May 7, 1982. The City of Ashland adopted the Waterfront Overlay District (W-O) as part of the Unified Development Ordinance on August 28, 2012. Section 4.46 provides standards for development along the Lake Superior shoreline and includes Design Guidelines for redevelopment or new development. Recent interest in development opportunities along the shoreline should compel the City to update the Design Guidelines for this district. The guidelines are "discretionary" and should be revised in both content and incorporate a "mandatory" tone.

The City's General Protection of natural Features ordinance (Section 8.1 of the Unified Development Ordinance) provides standards to protect wetlands, navigable waters, floodways, and steep slopes. In general, these standard recommend a minimum 50' - 75' setback for wetland and waterways. The City should consider minimum setbacks of 100' to protect these resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following discussion provides an overview of Ashland's cultural resources. Additional information can be found in "Ashland: A Great Lakes Community Study", published in 1975 by the University of Wisconsin, and in "Historical/Architectural Resources Survey: City of Ashland, Ashland County", prepared for the City of Ashland in 2001 by Heritage Research, Ltd.

City of Ashland, Historic Districts



Architectural Resources

Most of Ashland’s historically significant buildings were constructed in the late 1800s to the early 1900s when Ashland’s economy prospered. Fortunately, many of these buildings are in relatively good shape today, but several significant buildings including the Knight Hotel, which was built in 1890 and was one of Ashland’s most significant brownstone buildings, no longer exist. The loss of these significant buildings further reinforces the importance of protecting the City’s remaining historically significant buildings and structures. Recent successes include the preservation and restoration of the Depot building – a collaborative venture in which AADC took the lead and saved this essential part of Ashland’s past.

Historic Areas

Many historically significant commercial buildings are located along West Main Street. The West Main Street area has always been the center of commercial activity in Ashland. Although East Main Street has its share of commercial buildings, the banks, government buildings, and up-scale retail buildings were generally developed along West Main Street. The historical integrity of the West Main Street area is so significant that many of the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the area is designated as a historic district – The West Second Street Historic District. This historic district is accompanied another locally designated residential district – The Chapple and MacArthur Avenues District. Development in the West Second Street (downtown) and Chapple Avenue areas must be especially sensitive to the historic character

of the area and, as noted in Part 1: Priorities, the West Second Street Historic District should be expanded to the west (9th Avenue West) in an effort to protect more structures and provide economic incentives for their revitalization and protection.

Architectural Styles

A variety of architectural styles exist in Ashland including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Queen Anne, to name a few. During Ashland's prosperous years, many businesses and residents could afford to hire architects, engineers, and craftsmen to design and construct buildings that reflected the popular styles found in larger cities elsewhere in the country. Numerous grand houses and commercial buildings were built during the late 1800s to early 1900s when the economy thrived and lumber and brownstone were readily available for construction. But when Ashland's economy began to slow down in the early 1900s, concrete block and other building materials became more popular and fewer architecturally significant buildings were constructed. The City should work closely with the Historic Preservation Committee regarding the recommended expansion of the West Second Street Historic District.

Although a variety of prominent architectural styles exist in Ashland, a vernacular (or local) architectural flavor is evident. In particular, houses with a front gable and historic brownstone Railroad Depot buildings with their gabled roofs (for example, the City Hall and the old railroad depot) reflect an architecture that is uniquely associated with Ashland. Some newer buildings, particularly those on the Northland College campus, use brick and other materials, but the form and massing of those new buildings still relate strongly to Ashland's historic and vernacular architecture. Unfortunately, there are also newer buildings that are not in character with Ashland's historic buildings. Strip shopping centers, metal buildings, and insensitive renovations of historically significant buildings have begun to erode the architectural character of Ashland.

The City appreciates its architectural resources. When a fire severely damaged the old railroad depot in early 2000, the City rallied to ensure that the building would be repaired. The success of this building and its importance has led many in the community to advocate for greater commitments to historic preservation. The City's new fire station on 6th Street East also reflects the City's ongoing commitment to quality design and architecture. The current design proposal for the Ore Dock in spring 2016 reflects the structure that once stood on the site.

Ashland is fortunate to have many historically significant buildings. The City should continue to be diligent in protecting these remaining buildings, but it is equally as important for the City to promote architecture and development that is sensitive to the historic character of the area. Of particular concern is development along the waterfront and Highway 2 corridor. Design Guidelines should be considered for this area. And though this area is not necessarily historic, it could be a good opportunity for the City to collaborate with the Historic Preservation Committee to create a strong set of design guidelines that would create authentic architecture along this corridor.

AGRICULTURE, NATURAL, COASTAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PLAN

Agricultural Plan

The City's proposed Land Use Plan recognizes that agricultural lands in and around Ashland contribute positively to Ashland's unique sense of place. It prohibits haphazard urban expansion into agricultural areas (noted within the Conservation Buffer on the proposed Land Use Plan), which can result in the fragmentation and inefficient use of land as well as high infrastructure costs. The City's Land Use Plan and proposed Zoning Map shows that most of the existing agricultural lands within Ashland should remain as agriculture or open space, thus providing the City direction in terms of re-populating the core. At present time, the City's population is forecast to remain steady or slightly decline and there should be no new development permitted in these agricultural areas (Conservation Buffer). In accordance with the City's current zoning requirements for Future Development - FD, any subdivision of agricultural land shall not create lots less than 5 acres of land, with no more than one dwelling unit per lot. This zoning requirement should remain in effect to help direct growth inward and prevent unnecessary sprawl. The City should also promote collaboration between agricultural owners, the City, agricultural researchers and Northland College's sustainable agriculture classes to encourage best management practices of agricultural land within the city. The City should study the feasibility of developing a City tree nursery and community gardens.

NATURAL AND COASTAL RESOURCES PLAN

Overlay Districts with Design Standards

Per the recommendation in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the City implemented a Waterfront Overlay Zoning District (along Lake Superior) and the Bay City Creek Overlay District to help protect and manage these important resources. Additional design standards, as discussed throughout this plan, are recommended for both overlay district - these standards should be "mandatory," not "discretionary."

District Boundaries

The State's model shoreland ordinance requires that a shoreland overlay district extend back at least 1,000 feet from lakes and 300 feet from navigable streams and rivers. The model ordinance applies only to unincorporated areas, so the City of Ashland does not have to follow the requirements of the model ordinance. Ashland's Natural and Coastal Resources Plan proposed that the boundary of the Waterfront Overlay District generally follow a line parallel to US Highway 2, roughly one-half block south of the highway. This area has the strongest visual connection to the lake. The City's Waterfront Development Overlay District (adopted on August 28, 2012) is generally bounded by US Highway 2 on the south side and generally maintains the recommended 1000' setback from the water; however, US Highway 2 traverses the lake's edge more closely (between 9th Avenue E and Industrial Park Drive) and the setback is ±500'. The City should consider moving the Waterfront Overlay District's southern boundary further south across US Highway 2.

The existing boundary of the Bay City Creek Overlay District (BCC-O) is based upon shoreland standards as presented by the state of Wisconsin and follows a line that is set back 300 feet from the top of the creek's ravine. This area encompasses most of the steep, erosion-prone soils as well as the riparian vegetation along the creek. Protecting this area in concert with the proposed trail system expansion (Part 1: Priorities) will provide an unparalleled natural setting for pedestrians and cyclists. It is noteworthy that UDO, Section 4.49-D-2 provides allowances for trails and bridges within this overlay district. This anticipates a possible 6th Street connection and bridge over the Bay City Creek as recommended in Part 1.

Lot Requirements

The City will need to study and determine the minimum allowable lot area and minimum allowable lot frontage along the lake and creek for various uses in the districts. The State's model ordinance requires a minimum average lot width of 65 feet on sewered property and 100 feet on un-sewered property. The City may want to require wider lots to minimize the adverse impact of development on the natural and coastal resources. The City should also set expectations for easements and land dedication associated with subdivisions and development in these areas.

Building and Site Development Setbacks

The State's model ordinance requires that most structures be set back at least 75 feet from the ordinary high water level and that a 35-foot vegetative buffer be maintained; however, recent research recommends a minimum 50-foot vegetative buffer. The City's Waterfront Overlay District and the East Bay Creek Overlay District have incorporated these more restrictive standards and represent a strong commitment to environmental sustainability by the City. In addition, both overlay districts require a 30' setback from the top of bluffs; the City should consider increasing this to 50'.

Vegetation Preservation and Landscaping

The City would be well served by setting standards for woodland preservation beyond the required vegetative buffer discussed above. The City will also refine its landscaping standards to require adequate and appropriate landscaping in the districts. The City should consider working with the DNR and others to prepare a brochure describing appropriate plant species for use in the districts.

Building Design

The City should determine appropriate design standards and/or guidelines relating to building design in the downtown and waterfront districts. Building height may be of particular concern, particularly for buildings with lake frontage. The guidelines would encourage buildings to relate to the waterfront and the historic character of the areas. They should discourage strip development and franchise architecture that do not relate to the waterfront.

Impervious Coverage and Storm Water Management

The City should set appropriate standards for impervious coverage and storm water management. Since all storm water runoff in Ashland makes its way to the lake, the City may want to apply these standards to all areas of the city – not just the Waterfront and Bay City Creek areas. Representatives from the NEMO program, the DNR, and others can help the City determine appropriate impervious coverage standards and best management practices for various uses in the city. The recently adopted "maximum parking" standards represent an important first step to reducing runoff. Citywide reductions in impervious lot coverages are a logical next step.

Views To and From the Lake and Bay City Creek

Views to and from the lake and Bay City Creek are an important component of this Comprehensive Plan. This plan recommends that development on the north side of Highway 2, where the lake is visible from the highway, to be maintained as a Waterfront Protection Zone, where building activity is limited and no building shall occupy more than 40% of lineal frontage. The City will develop an ordinance that addresses this issue in more detail and that also addresses views to and from Bay City Creek.

Non-Conforming Lots, Structures, and Uses

Many lots, structures, and uses in Ashland are currently non-conforming. The City will determine how best to handle these non-conformities. In some cases, the City may want to promote mitigation to reduce, but not fully eliminate the non-conformities. For example, existing structures that do not meet setbacks within residential or commercial zones could be improved if the property owner enhances or installs an approved vegetative buffer. In other cases such as along the lake, creek, or bluffs (W-O and EBCC-O), the City should actively work with property owners to relocate non-conforming uses to other areas of the city. For example, some existing industrial and storage uses on the waterfront should not be allowed to expand under any circumstances. Rather, the City should work to relocate these non-conforming uses to areas of the city recommended for industrial uses. Section 10 of the Unified Development Ordinance should be revised to reflect more restrictive standards to eliminate nonconformities in the Waterfront Overlay and East Bay Creek Corridor Overlay districts.

6. Economic Development

The priorities outlined in Part 1 of this comprehensive plan – including the promotion of place-based economic development – are all intended to strengthen the City of Ashland’s competitive position with regards to attracting and retaining skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses. They also align with existing tools and assets that the city, the state, and the private sector have assembled to position Ashland and its workforce to become more economically prosperous.

Ashland recognizes the importance of zoning and land availability relative to providing opportunities for economic development. The City has over 500 acres of land zoned for commercial development. The downtown area alone contains approximately 50 acres in of land zoned for mixed-use or commercial development. More than seven acres remain unbuilt and are currently used for parking. This represents 15% of downtown’s total land area (and a greater number of parking lots are located on the fringe of downtown) that is underutilized and awaiting the right incentives for redevelopment. Add to this the more than 100 acres of undeveloped land in the City’s Industrial Parks and Ashland has enough development capacity to accommodate growth for the next 25 – 50 years (based upon historic and anticipated trend projections).

Tools, assets, and agencies currently in place to support economic development – which will be reinforced by the priorities and strategies in this plan – include the following:

Ashland Area Development Corporation

The Ashland Area Development Corporation (AADC) has been in business since 1956. The AADC’s primary function is to create and retain manufacturing jobs in the Ashland area, although it also works with service and retail businesses, and administers a number of programs that contribute to general economic development. The AADC administers industrial parks at the east end of the City and the Ashland Area Enterprise Center (AAEC). The industrial parks have over 300 developable acres, with over 100 acres unoccupied and development-ready. The Ashland Industrial Park has 22 businesses in operation as of 2016. The Ashland Enterprise Center is located in the downtown area and businesses within the AAEC employed 55 individuals in 2016 who work at the AAEC location. These businesses support an additional 100 employees who perform work offsite. There is additional capacity for new business incubation opportunities.

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce provides services to its business members, promotes economic development initiatives in Ashland, and promotes the area and the City for tourism and events. The Chamber’s mission statement is “We ‘sell’ Ashland” and this is done via: sponsoring special events and promotions that emphasize the area’s amenities, supporting a solid and diversified economic base, and collaborating with the public and private sectors. The Chamber of Commerce serves as the hub of all business activity in the region and is actively involved in downtown

activities as well. The Chamber has a wealth of information relative to marketing, networking, partnership building, economic advising, etc. and is a willing and able partner on projects citywide.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission was created in 1959. Its purpose is to improve the quality of life of the residents of the region by increasing the number of jobs and wages paid, while recognizing the importance of planning for balanced use of natural resources.

The NWRPC has three affiliated corporations that focus on economic development issues. The Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Corporation, created in 1984, manages NWRPC’s loan funds. The Northwest Affordable Housing Inc., established in 1996, coordinates the Commission’s creation of affordable housing. The Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation (WBIC), created in 1996, encourages development of technology-based companies in rural Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

The Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College has four campuses in northern Wisconsin, including one in the City of Ashland. The WITC provides a wide variety of classes and training as well as associate and technical degree programs. The WITC works with area employers providing customized training consisting of specific courses that are developed and taught by WITC instructors at an employer’s work site. They provide instruction for apprentices in cooperation with employees, employers, and the State of Wisconsin.

Northwest Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.

The Northwest Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (NWCEP) is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to meeting the workforce development needs of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers and students. The NWCEP has been in existence since 1968. It administers programs that help Northwest Wisconsin youth and adults gain marketable skills and obtain better jobs, in addition to providing a variety of services for businesses and business development. The NWCEP covers a ten-county region in northwest Wisconsin, and has seven full-time offices, including an office in the City of Ashland.

Wisconsin Job Center

A Wisconsin Job Center opened in Ashland in 2002. The Center assists employers who want to upgrade their workforce and it helps individuals who want to improve their job skills. It links people looking for a job with employers looking for employees. The Job Center serves the region, but is a strong asset to the City of Ashland.

Wisconsin Innovation Network

The Wisconsin Innovation Network (WIN) is the membership arm of the Wisconsin Technology Council. WIN exists to serve as an

educational and networking resource for entrepreneurs and people who work for high-growth firms, large and small. WIN connects entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, press and other thought leaders throughout the state.

WIN members note three areas of focus for the Ashland Region:

- Wellness and Health Care Innovation
- Youth and Education
- Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Training

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS AND FORECAST

The priorities in this plan will be implemented within the context of a regional economy that currently employs over 70,000 individuals and is expected to expand modestly through 2022. According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the Greater Ashland Region (Workforce Development Area #7, including Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk,

City of Ashland, Projected Average Annual Job Openings, 2012-2022

SIC Code and Description		Employment		Change (2012-2022)		Average Annual Openings		
		2012	2022	#	%	Growth	Replacement	Total
	Total, All	70,117	73,446	3,329	4.7%	444	1,659	2,103
11	Management	2,595	2,759	164	6.3%	17	54	71
13	Business and Financial Operations	1,645	1,757	112	6.8%	12	33	45
15	Computer and Mathematical	534	598	64	12.0%	7	9	16
17	Architecture and Engineering	972	1,000	28	2.9%	6	23	29
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	577	601	24	4.2%	4	18	22
21	Community and Social Service	790	823	33	4.2%	3	19	22
23	Legal	240	263	23	9.6%	2	4	6
25	Education, Training, and Library	4,194	4,347	153	3.6%	16	93	109
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	578	592	14	2.4%	4	14	18
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,979	3,349	370	12.4%	38	61	99
31	Healthcare Support	1,715	1,794	79	4.6%	15	33	48
33	Protective Service	1,474	1,521	47	3.2%	5	47	52
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,580	6,826	246	3.7%	26	235	261
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,882	3,165	283	9.8%	28	60	88
39	Personal Care and Service	3,425	3,772	347	10.1%	36	68	104
41	Sales and Related	7,246	7,267	21	0.3%	15	239	254
43	Office and Administrative Support	9,599	9,990	391	4.1%	53	217	270
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,041	1,733	-308	15.1%	0	32	32
47	Construction and Extraction	2,997	3,348	351	11.7%	35	51	86
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2,901	3,040	139	4.8%	17	66	83
51	Production	8,009	8,450	441	5.5%	71	151	222
53	Transportation and Material Moving	6,144	6,451	307	5.0%	34	132	166

Source: czbLLC.

Sawyer, Taylor and Washburn counties) is expecting to see a nearly 5% increase in total employment between 2012 and 2022. Management and business occupations, health care occupations, property maintenance occupations, personal service occupations, construction, production, and transportation, are all expected to see the largest percentage and whole number increases in employment during this stretch. While not growing sectors, sales and food preparation occupations and administrative support are sectors expecting to hire the largest number of new workers in the region.

Those occupations expected to add the most new jobs or provide the most job openings in the region are also typically among those paying lower wages. Food preparation, personal care and services, sales, administrative support and transportation all have average entry-level hourly wages in the \$8 and \$9 ranges, and median annual wages in the \$20,000s or below.

City of Ashland, Projected Average Annual Wages by Job, 2012-2022

SIC Code and Description		Rank		Hourly Wage		Annual Wage (by Percentile)			
		Change	Openings	Entry	Exp.	25th	Median	75th	90th
	Total, All			\$8.98	\$21.22	\$20,630	\$29,374	\$43,022	\$60,351
11	Management	9	12	\$15.55	\$45.01	\$44,175	\$65,292	\$90,111	\$121,608
13	Business and Financial Operations	12	15	\$15.10	\$30.60	\$37,018	\$49,512	\$63,858	\$79,858
15	Computer and Mathematical	14	21	\$15.47	\$29.62	\$36,709	\$48,413	\$63,994	\$76,506
17	Architecture and Engineering	17	17	\$18.66	\$36.30	\$45,324	\$58,828	\$75,314	\$94,432
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	18	18	\$16.09	\$30.55	\$38,188	\$50,621	\$64,020	\$81,344
21	Community and Social Service	16	18	\$11.85	\$21.83	\$28,080	\$37,796	\$46,601	\$57,208
23	Legal	19	22	\$14.85	\$35.96	\$33,550	\$40,486	\$67,810	\$116,940
25	Education, Training, and Library	10	6	\$12.41	\$24.59	\$30,515	\$40,758	\$55,019	\$64,351
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	21	20	\$9.86	\$21.02	\$23,490	\$31,038	\$44,453	\$58,363
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	3	8	\$16.70	\$42.76	\$41,622	\$57,172	\$77,078	\$122,958
31	Healthcare Support	13	14	\$10.30	\$15.01	\$22,596	\$26,399	\$30,827	\$38,234
33	Protective Service	15	13	\$8.43	\$19.49	\$18,972	\$29,895	\$45,347	\$55,552
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	8	2	\$8.10	\$10.08	\$16,915	\$18,466	\$21,220	\$26,165
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	7	9	\$8.10	\$12.64	\$17,938	\$21,156	\$26,898	\$34,403
39	Personal Care and Service	5	7	\$8.09	\$11.43	\$17,551	\$19,859	\$23,553	\$29,345
41	Sales and Related	20	3	\$8.17	\$16.13	\$17,776	\$20,548	\$29,896	\$47,662
43	Office and Administrative Support	2	1	\$9.25	\$17.52	\$21,659	\$28,811	\$37,278	\$46,676
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	22	16	\$12.33	\$18.24	\$27,772	\$33,349	\$38,952	\$45,855
47	Construction and Extraction	4	10	\$13.28	\$23.27	\$31,390	\$37,455	\$48,727	\$67,666
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	11	11	\$12.95	\$23.91	\$31,555	\$39,943	\$49,897	\$61,881
51	Production	1	4	\$10.67	\$17.83	\$24,393	\$29,423	\$37,921	\$46,964
53	Transportation and Material Moving	6	5	\$9.32	\$18.44	\$22,000	\$29,854	\$39,554	\$49,957

Source: czbLLC.

Ashland's Largest Employers

Business	# of Employees	Type of Business
C G Bretting Mfg Co Inc	250 - 499	Paper Machinery Manufacturing
Memorial Medical Ctr	250 - 499	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals
Walmart Supercenter	250 - 499	Department Stores
Northland College	100 - 249	Colleges & Universities
Golden Living Ctr	100 - 249	Continuing Care Retirement Communities
Ashland Health & Rehab Ctr	100 - 249	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Anna Marie Designs Inc	100 - 249	Womens Girls & Infants Cut & Sew Apparel Mfg
Bad River Lodge & Casino	100 - 249	Casinos exc Casino Hotels
Ashland Clinic	50 - 99	Offices of Physicians exc Mental Health
Ashland High School	50 - 99	Elementary & Secondary Schools
Ashland Super One	50 - 99	Supermarkets & Other Grocery Stores
Cooperative Educational Agcy	50 - 99	Educational Support Services
Court Manor Health & Rehab Svc	50 - 99	Nursing Care Facilities
Crisis Line	50 - 99	Child & Youth Services
Essentia Health Clinic	50 - 99	Freestanding Emergency Medical Centers
Evergreen Country Shopper	50 - 99	Advertising Agencies
Lake Superior Intermediate	50 - 99	Elementary & Secondary Schools
Lake Superior Primary	50 - 99	Elementary & Secondary Schools
Larson-Juhl Inc	50 - 99	Manufacturing
Mc Donald's	50 - 99	Limited-Service Restaurants
New Horizons North Inc	50 - 99	Individual & Family Services
Super One Foods	50 - 99	Supermarkets & Other Grocery Stores
Wisconsin Indianhead Tech Clg	50 - 99	Junior Colleges

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and InfoGroup, 2014

7. Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Ashland's 2004 Comprehensive Plan listed extensive opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation. Many of those recommendations are valid today. This plan update, as well as other efforts made by the City of Ashland in recent years, recognizes that conditions impacting Ashland's future can be affected by the actions of other jurisdictions and agencies. Working from the 2004 plan as a foundation, Ashland must recognize the importance of intergovernmental cooperation as a way to strengthen the region economically through cooperative efforts and shared resources. To this end, the City should focus its efforts on those subjects that relate to the new Plan's priorities:

Strengthen the Housing Market

The work to pursue in strengthening the city's housing market is the rebalancing of supply and demand. On one hand, this will mean acquiring and removing some structures. On the other, it will mean strategic infill to meet the demands of the households the city hopes to keep or attract. In both cases, the city will need to use whatever levers it may have to influence supply and demand.

A countywide plan that emphasizes the importance of funneling demand to the county's main urban center would help set the regional tone for what the city must do. The City and County would be well served to work on policy development efforts that cement the city's role as the region's urban center. For example, the county and city might work together to explore the feasibility of a land bank that would acquire properties through a variety of avenues and put them to work for strengthening the housing market, but also potentially for economic development.

Focus on Downtown

Similar to efforts to positively influence the housing market, the city should work with the county and neighboring communities to solidify Ashland as the region's downtown. Ashland County is an attractive place to live and do business to the extent that downtown Ashland is successful.

To accomplish the aspiration, neighboring jurisdictions should limit commercial and retail development that will divert demand for those spaces from downtown Ashland.

Protect the Lake

Ashland is well aware of the agencies with which it must collaborate to preserve its lakefront as a community asset. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the State of Wisconsin all play important roles in ongoing and planned projects on the lakefront.

Knitting the Urban Fabric Back Together

Continued work with the WisDOT, the County, and Wisconsin DNR will enable the City to reconnect to the lake, the community's most important asset. This will require continued waterfront development practices that protect access and views to the lake,

gateways along US Highway 2 (Lake Shore Drive), and ongoing trail expansion and street improvements.

Need for Inter-governmental Cooperation

Many of the economic, social, and natural resource issues that affect Ashland do not follow jurisdictional boundaries. Ashland cannot function as an island. It is an integral part of a much broader region. The future of Ashland and the future of the region are closely linked. Therefore, Ashland and neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions must cooperate to ensure that the region is an appealing place to live and work.

Open communication characterizes the relationship between the City of Ashland and neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions. Governments work cooperatively to ensure that the region - not just a particular community - is an appealing place to live and work. Strong intergovernmental cooperation allows Ashland and the region to effectively address economic, environmental, and social needs that are not constrained by political boundaries. We have also worked very hard to promote open communication between city government and the residents of Ashland.

Description of Neighboring and Overlapping Jurisdictions

Neighboring jurisdictions include those jurisdictions that are contiguous to Ashland - Gingles, Sanborn, Eileen, and Bayfield County - as well as other communities in the region including Washburn, Bayfield, Odanah, and Ironwood. Overlapping jurisdictions include units of government that affect planning and decision-making in Ashland. These jurisdictions include Ashland County, WisDOT, the DNR, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Ashland School District, and others.

Existing Communication and Cooperation

The City of Ashland strives to communicate and cooperate with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions on an ongoing basis. For example, Ashland's City Administrator meets regularly with neighboring administrators to foster communication between jurisdictions and to provide opportunities to work cooperatively on issues affecting the jurisdictions and the region. City Staff intends to be an active participant on a WisDOT design team that will be planning transportation improvements to the eastern section of US Highway 2 in Ashland. Ashland participates in Superior Days, coastal management meetings, and other meetings that affect Ashland and the region.

Existing Intergovernmental Agreements

The City has several agreements with other jurisdictions. The most notable agreements enable Ashland to provide neighboring communities with fire protection and emergency medical services. In addition, the City and Ashland County jointly operate the John F. Kennedy Memorial Airport with some financial assistance from Bayfield County. Furthermore, the City, County, and State have agreements for road maintenance. Additionally, the City cooperates with the schools in Ashland on issues, such as recreation and police protection.

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

Land Use

The City does not anticipate the need to annex land as part of this Comprehensive Plan process, however, the City and its neighbors must cooperate to avoid potential land use conflicts. For example, if a neighboring community allowed additional commercial development near Ashland's boundaries and outside of the Conservation Buffer, it could conflict with Ashland's vision to discourage sprawl along its highways. Consequently, jurisdictions must work together to develop compatible land use plans.

There are several opportunities to cooperate on land use issues of mutual benefit. The City and Bad River tribal community could work together to explore developing an eco-industrial park that would be contiguous with tribal land and the City. This concept was noted within the 2004 comprehensive planning process and could be viable if there was limited supply of land in the City's, or nearby, industrial parks. There are existing opportunities to work with the Bad River community to look at local art or local fabrics or clothing that could be sold locally. Local goods, start-up businesses, and increased employment opportunities are not entirely dependent on land use decision.

The City should work closely with the Ashland School District specifically for locating and building public facilities and sharing public services. The passage of the School District's \$35mn bond in 2016 offers greater opportunities for facility improvements and possible new construction. Additional opportunities for the City to partner with the School District must be capitalized upon in an effort to improve neighborhoods, housing, walkability measures and begin to explore community center facilities in conjunction with the schools.

Transportation

The transportation system involves many jurisdictions – some with different goals and objectives than the City. The City will need to work closely with the State and County to ensure that its goal for an attractive highway system with good access, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and the opportunity to consider a boulevard (or partial boulevard) along US Highway 2 is balanced with the goals of other jurisdictions to provide a low maintenance highway system that facilitates smooth traffic flow through the City. The existing pedestrian crossings function well, but could be improved upon as noted in the Priorities section in Part 1 of this Comprehensive Plan. These differing goals and objectives can co-exist, but it will take cooperation between the various jurisdictions.

Opportunities to cooperate on transportation issues of mutual benefit include: the extension of the City's Waterfront Trail to connect to the Tri-County Corridor trail system at Prentice Park and Bay City Creek (and ultimately connect to the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center and beyond), enhancements to the John F. Kennedy Airport, , and petitioning to designate US Highway 13 and part of US Highway 2 a scenic byway and allow for additional pedestrian crossings (gateways).

Utilities and Community Facilities

The City's recent completion of the new fire station on 6th Street East is testament to the community's resolve to provide high quality services. A new police station on 6th Street West is being studied in coordination with the County and planned for completion in 2017 or 2018.

Agriculture, Natural, Coastal, and Cultural Resources

Ashland can do, and has done, its part to address issues relating to agriculture, natural, coastal, and cultural resources, but the region as a whole must cooperate to ensure the protection and enhancement of these resources. The Chequamegon Bay watershed includes a much larger area than the City of Ashland. Consequently, to improve the water quality of the bay, all jurisdictions in the watershed must work together to develop and implement best management practices throughout the region. Jurisdictions also have an opportunity to work together to connect fragmented ecosystems and support the area's agriculture and cultural resources. Potential conflicts between jurisdictions could arise if a local jurisdiction allows insensitive land use practices that adversely affect the entire region's resources. The ongoing issue of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) must be addressed at a regional level. The possible damage to the City of Ashland and the bay on which it sits must be taken into consideration by the surrounding cities and counties. The City and nearby jurisdictions should partner to create a source water protection plan to address these and other similar issues.

Housing

Jurisdictions should cooperate to determine what types of housing are needed in the region and where the housing should occur. Potential conflicts between jurisdictions could arise if a jurisdiction does not consider the need for affordable housing, for example, or if a jurisdiction promotes a high-density housing development in a rural area that cannot be adequately served by community facilities and services. Cooperation on housing issues is important to the health of the region, not just a particular community. This plan strongly encourages that the city focus housing efforts in the core to support existing neighborhoods and downtown businesses. The housing recommendations contained within this Plan are extensive (Part 1 and 2) and should be reviewed thoroughly.

Economic

Resources in Ashland and the surrounding area are scarce and the competition for economic development opportunities is great, however, Ashland's economy is tied to the regional economy. Consequently, Ashland and its neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions need to cooperate to ensure that the regional economy is healthy. Potential areas for cooperation include public-private partnerships to build entrepreneurial talent, continued partnerships with Northland College and WITC, improved communication with the nearby tribal communities, and a continued investment in the city's neighborhoods to attract new talent to the area and improve the residents' quality of life.

8. Land Use

As noted in the Priorities section of Part 1 of this Comprehensive Plan, Ashland's land uses, densities, and regulations generally promote efficient development patterns and low utility costs, while respecting environmental and social concerns. The recommendation for a Conservation Buffer that limits development opportunities and directs development into the City's core begins to provide a definitive delineation between areas that should be serviced by infrastructure and built upon and areas that should be protected from development, at least within the foreseeable future.

Residential Land Use

New housing units average less than ten (10) per year in Ashland and there are many opportunities for infill housing that could begin to revitalize neighborhoods, inspiring existing residents to invest in their homes. Individual lots are peppered throughout the city and offer ideal locations for new housing development. As noted in Part 1 of the Plan, the Timeless Timbers site and the Roffers site are larger tracts of land that offer transformative opportunities for new housing development.

Commercial Land Use

The City's downtown area must shrink in size; the current downtown/main street area is a mile long and the east side continues to experience significant vacancies. The west side maintains significant activity and many historic buildings. This area, between 9th Avenue West and Ellis Avenue, is the heart of Ashland...economically, socially, and historically. The City and private investors must do everything possible to protect and enhance this area. Economic incentives, public private partnerships, increased residential construction, an expanded West Second Street Historic District, etc. should be utilized to further revitalize the downtown. The City should strongly consider creating a new tax increment financing district (TID-10). The east side will be better served as a higher density residential district with neighborhood commercial opportunities.

Industrial Land Use

The industrial park at the east end of the city is just over half full as this plan is written. While the City and its partners should continue to pursue opportunities to bring new businesses to the community, efforts to increase local start-up businesses are increasingly more beneficial to communities.

Waterfront Development

The City must continue to balance the desire for development along the waterfront with the protection of this finite resource. The ongoing work relative to the Superfund site (marina and nearby lands) as well as the re-design for the Ore Dock must address the inherent desire of the community to protect this resource. The results of the Community Survey indicate the lake is Ashland's most important community asset and must be protected. Based

upon this input, the waterfront should be preserved for public recreational use and views to the lake should be preserved. The Priorities section of this Plan (Part 1) recommends the protection of the waterfront from approximately the Timeless Timbers site west to the City's boundary (understanding that some buildings currently exist along the waterfront near the downtown). The opportunity to view (and in some cases, access) the lake from the city should be preserved – any existing buildings that come before the Planning Commission for rehabilitation or full rebuild should be moved to the east or west to allow "view corridors" along all north/south rights of way in the City (this is discussed in detail in the Priorities: Knitting the Fabric Together in Part 1).

Natural Areas and Open Space

Natural areas and agriculture shall be protected to the greatest extent possible in the Conservation Buffer area. The recommendations for increased trail connectivity from the Waterfront Trail to the Tri-County trail will provide improved opportunities to benefit from the natural beauty that lies in the Bay City Creek area in particular.

Land Use Trends, Conflicts, and Projections

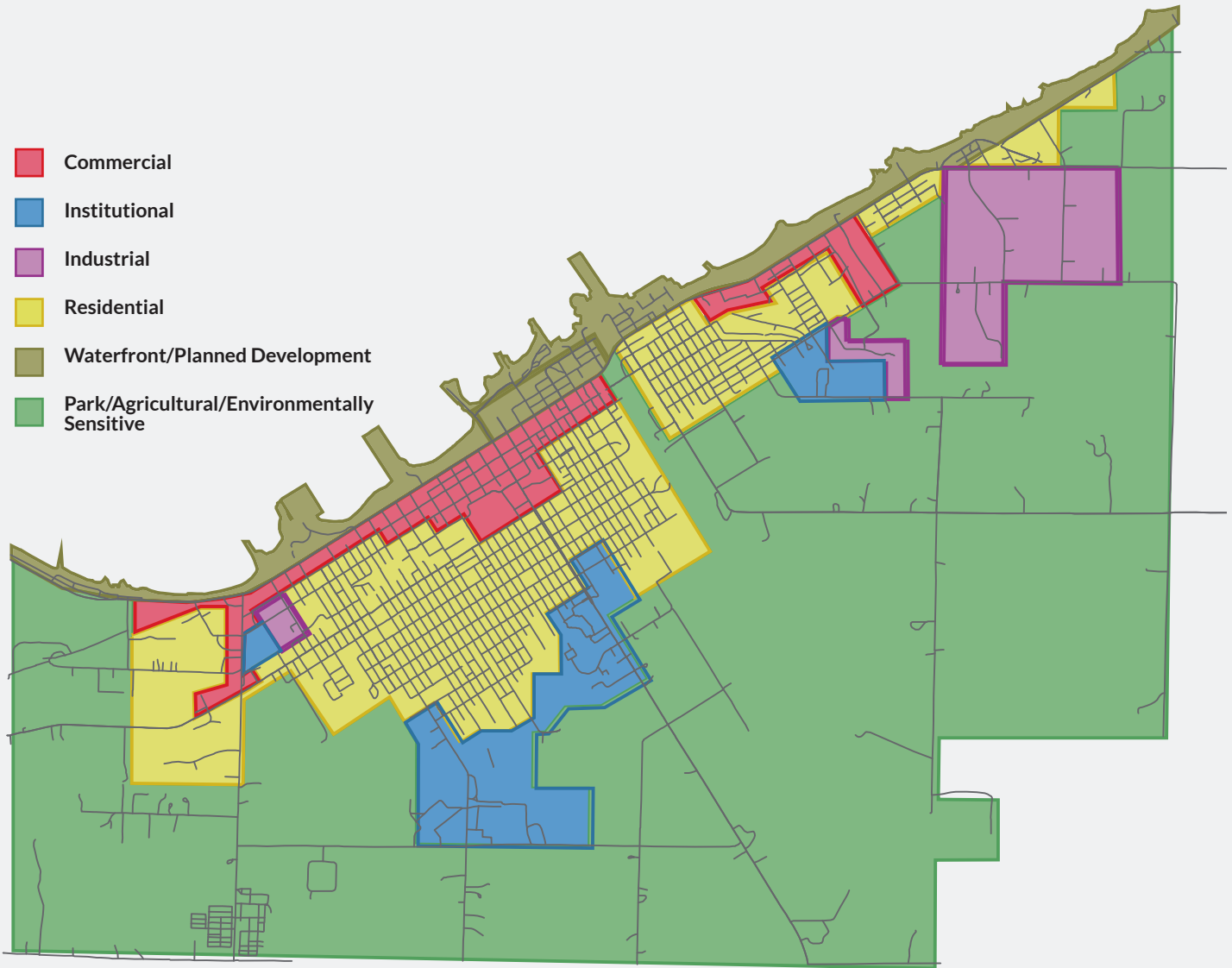
Ashland has a relatively large amount of undeveloped land (approximately 3,500 acres are zoned for Future Development – FD) alone. The demand for development in this outer ring within the City of Ashland's boundary has been relatively static since 2008. Based upon the Ashland Building Department records, the City averages between two (2) and five (5) new units of residential development annually throughout the City. This lack of demand, as outlined in Part 1: Housing Priority is a function of economics: decreasing population within the City over the past few decades, lack of job creation, and available supply in other nearby jurisdictions.

A review of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data indicates stable housing prices within the community since 2000 (with a slight spike in sale prices from 2005 – 2008). Certainly, real estate prices are variable by neighborhood and that is no different in Ashland. It is notable that the most expensive housing sold over the past few years is larger lot developments with large housing units that are located in the far northeastern section (Toll Road) and the far southeastern section (Maple Lane) of the City.

Most land use conflicts in the City occur along the waterfront, an area that most Ashlanders want to see protected. As land use in the waterfront continues to shift from industrial use to parks, trails, and water-oriented use, the negative aspects of having industry on the waterfront are becoming more pronounced. For example, coal dust from the coal dock creates a nuisance for boats in the marina. Also, people have expressed frustration that existing industrial storage sites (that do not need to be located on the waterfront) are blocking views of the lake and hurting the recreational value and beauty of the waterfront.

There are also conflicts between existing land uses and the transportation system. The heavy traffic and current design of the Highway 2 corridor impedes pedestrian-oriented development that can connect the downtown with the waterfront area. The recommendation for improved gateways and additional pedestrian crossings must be balanced with through traffic speeds.

City of Ashland, Existing Land Use Plan



Source: czbLLC.

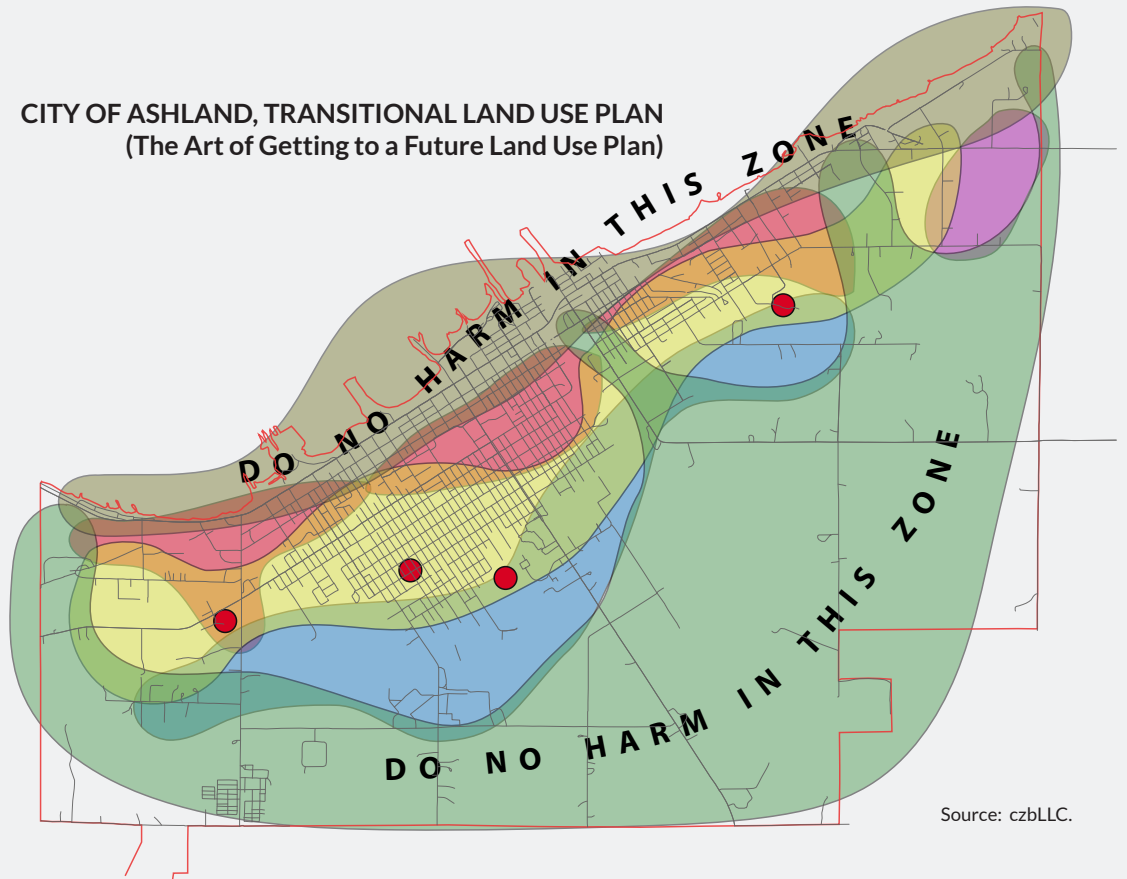
As new development is envisioned to fill in downtown and existing neighborhoods, the City will need to amend its Zoning Ordinance to enhance the benefits while reducing potential conflicts of these mixed-use developments.

Several factors may limit future development in Ashland. Natural features can, or at least should, limit where and how future development occurs. The Conservation Buffer is an area that should realize little to no development over the next decade or two. This Conservation Buffer (and associated Future Development - FD zoning designation) must become the boundary not crossed for any recommended utility infrastructure expansion or communities facilities projects - nothing should be built within this buffer district for the foreseeable future (10 - 20 years or until infill development has fully revitalized the downtown and surrounding residential areas of Ashland.

New development should not adversely affect wetlands, floodplains, creeks, ravines, steep slopes, and so on. Although development throughout the City should respect natural features, the City must pay special attention to several areas including the waterfront, Bay City Creek (with the exception of the proposed trail), and the area at the base of the Ore Dock - an area that offers significant mixed-use opportunities.

The Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) illustrates general locations for specific land uses that will assist in the creation of a new Zoning Map for the City of Ashland. Too often, these maps are taken literally, that is to say the "lines" separating the individual land uses are assumed to be definitive. This FLUP is designed to allow for Planning Department and/or Planning Commission interpretation rather than attempting to draw a hard line that delineates land uses at each block and lot. For example, the red dots noted within the residential land use conceptually represent the allowance of commercial nodes; but the exact location (higher volume street corners) is neither known or intended to be defined exactly on this map. The resulting Zoning Map is a regulatory document that solidifies the recommendations contained within this Comprehensive Plan and the land uses as generally represented within this FLUP.

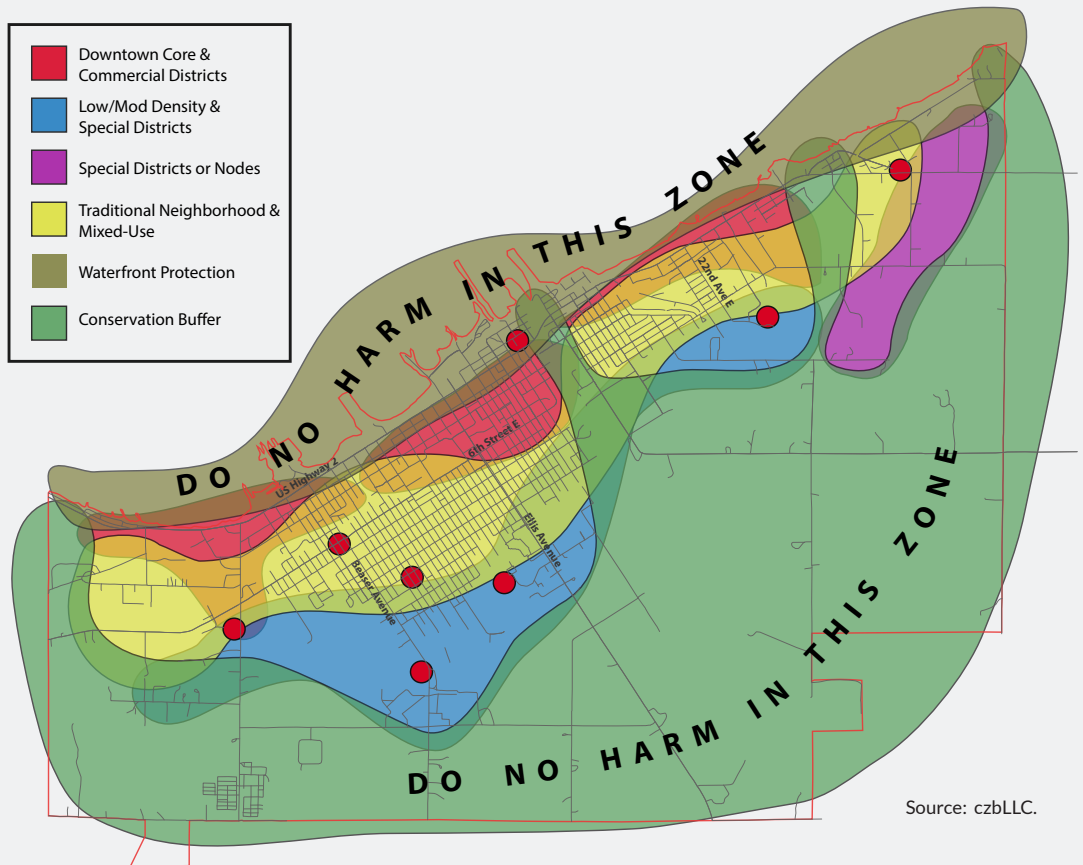
**CITY OF ASHLAND, TRANSITIONAL LAND USE PLAN
 (The Art of Getting to a Future Land Use Plan)**



Source: czbLLC.

CITY OF ASHLAND, FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Downtown Core & Commercial Districts
- Low/Mod Density & Special Districts
- Special Districts or Nodes
- Traditional Neighborhood & Mixed-Use
- Waterfront Protection
- Conservation Buffer



Source: czbLLC.

Downtown Core & Commercial Districts

While a variety of commercial uses make up the majority of these districts, these areas should increasingly be populated by mixed-use development. Residential development and/or offices on the upper floors of retail establishments are encouraged within these districts. Residential development is, and should be, designed at higher densities in these areas. Buildings should front the rights-of-way and begin to move away from the post-WW2 development pattern that situated buildings behind large expanses of parking lots. While the reversal of this outdated development pattern will take time, all new construction must be required to adhere to the new and more desirable setbacks and zoning should be adjusted accordingly. The Commercial Nodes (identified by the red circles) illustrated on the Future Land Use Plan represent commercial opportunities within the existing residential areas of the community. These are those neighborhood “centers” that provide restaurant or retail opportunities within the neighborhoods and at an appropriate scale (see Traditional Neighborhood & Mixed-Use Districts below).

Institutional & Specialized Districts

Hospitals, medical centers, colleges/universities and public facilities make up the majority of uses within the institutional and specialized districts. Parks and playgrounds are appropriate secondary uses within these areas and are encouraged. The City’s Planning Department or Planning Commission should consider small retail and restaurant/café uses on a case-by-case basis – for example, a lunchtime café near a hospital is a prime opportunity. This is especially true given the need (reduce traffic trips) and desirability (convenience) to provide such services in close proximity to these popular employment centers.

Industrial/Technology Park or Economic Nodes

Industrial/technology facilities tend to be concentrated in specific zones as a result of delivery/pick-up and transportation needs (as well as the size of buildings needed for fabrication of materials) and should be limited to specific sites within the community as noted. Landscaping and screening requirements should be strongly implemented and enforced in these areas.

Traditional Neighborhood & Mixed-Use Districts

Single-family housing is the primary building typology in the traditional neighborhood districts. Duplexes and townhouses are often interspersed within these areas and provide a greater range of housing options for households of various income levels. Neighborhoods are not typically considered for mixed-use opportunities but it is strongly recommended that the community begin to consider small cafes (coffee shops, tea houses, bakeries, etc.) or a local mom-n-pop hardware store or pottery or art shop. The Commercial Nodes (identified by the red circles) represent these opportunities. A community cannot always predict where a need, or opportunity, for such will arise but we should plan for it. The Planning Department and Planning Commission can and should lead the way to allow these minor changes to the black-and-white-framework that currently defines zoning in the United States.

Conservation Buffer

The area surrounding the core of the community – the downtown, the neighborhoods, the institutions and industrial sites – should be protected from development for the foreseeable future. This will encourage and guide infill development that will be integrated with the existing built fabric as well as provide a buffer between Ashland and it’s neighbors.

The future land use plan is an interesting tool for planning purposes; typically there is an existing Land Use Plan that is often ultimately converted to a Zoning Map. While this is an effective tool to understand what is currently on the ground, it does not illustrate well the desired future land uses within the community. The following Land Use Plan sequence is designed to show what the current land uses are – how the city’s basic land uses are distributed within the geography of the city’s boundaries.

The three-part sequence is designed to illustrate the existing land use plan with a general progression to the desired future land use plan. It is difficult to pinpoint exact future uses but these maps represent the progression from what the current situation is on the ground to the desired land uses – a community that protects its waterfront and conservation buffer areas while developing the core with a major commercial node, neighborhood service nodes, residential surrounding, and educational/institutional/health services in nodal development patterns on the southern boundary of the residential core. The waterfront area and the conservation buffer should be protected from development. Any rehabilitation or replacement structures within these zones should have strict design guidelines to ensure their quality in these areas, specifically the waterfront area.

And while a Land Use map at this scale cannot illustrate all existing or desired conditions, it is recommended that Ashland look to create opportunities for small commercial opportunities (e.g. coffee shop, bakery, café, etc.) to be scattered throughout the residential neighborhoods. These are illustrated as red nodes on the third and final Future Land Use Plan (FLUP). These nodes are not recommended for specific blocks but rather throughout the residential districts. The City should consider the allowance of small neighborhood retail shops and restaurants as Conditional Uses on corner lots in residential zones.

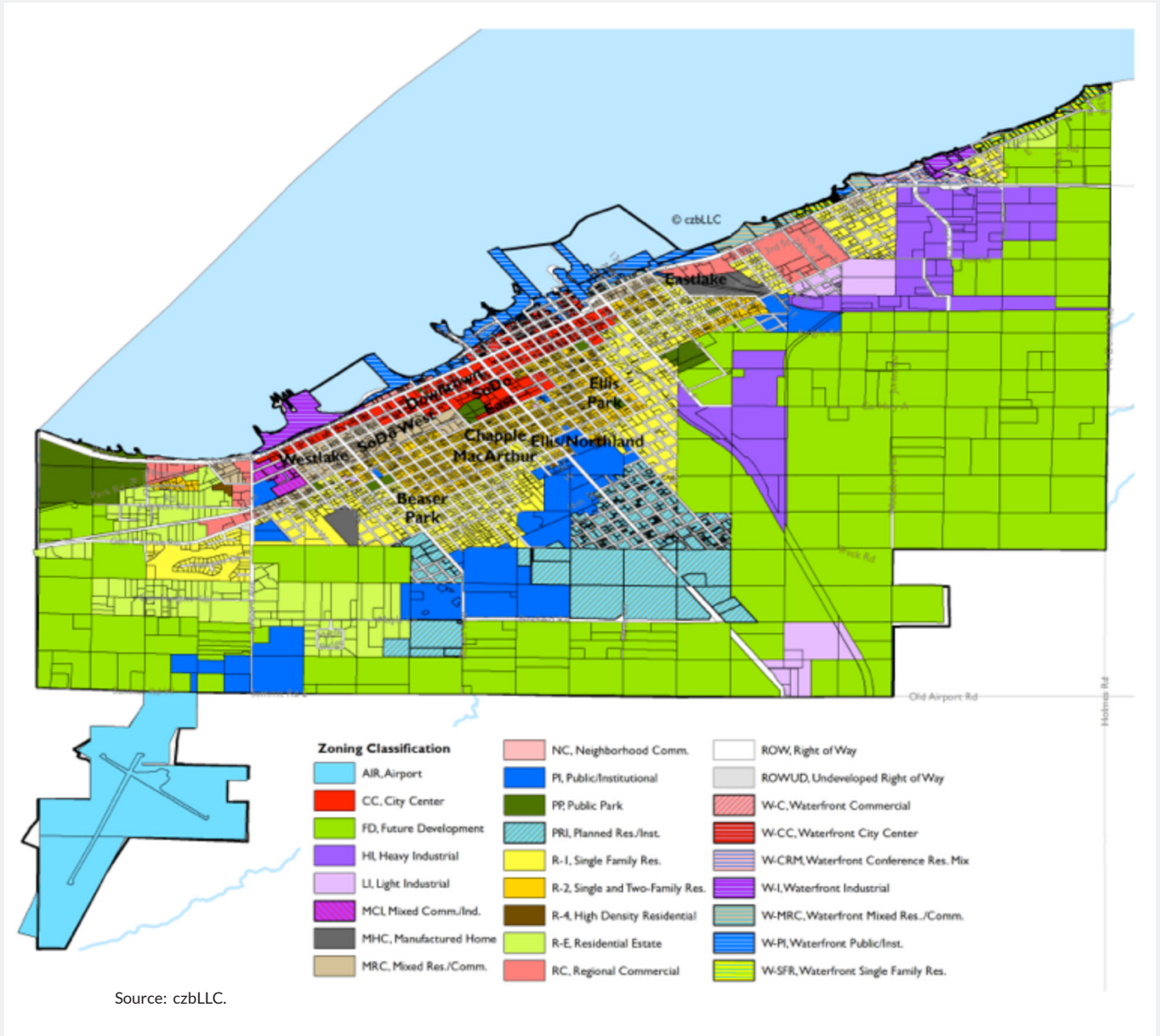
This progression of land use mapping is quantified in the table on pg 59. Based upon existing economic conditions and the trends to date, these numbers are not likely to change significantly over the next ten to twenty years. What is worth noting is the significant amount of land that is dedicated to Industrial uses, almost 12%. Depending on future economic needs, some of this land may be better dedicated to Institutional uses that are tied to technology and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Existing and Proposed Zoning

The City’s Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are the primary tools for implementing the City’s vision for land use. The Unified Development Ordinance (U.D.O.) was updated in 2012 to replace the existing Zoning Ordinance and achieve consistency with the 2011 updates to Comprehensive Plan. Based upon the existing and proposed land use maps above, the City should consider the following overarching amendments to the Zoning Map:

1. Rezone much of the land along Lake Shore Drive that is zoned City Center – CC and replace with Neighborhood Commercial – NC or Mixed-Residential/Commercial - MRC designations to allow for smaller commercial uses mixed with residential uses, thus preserving the City Center – CC and Regional Commercial – RC zones for large scale commercial development.

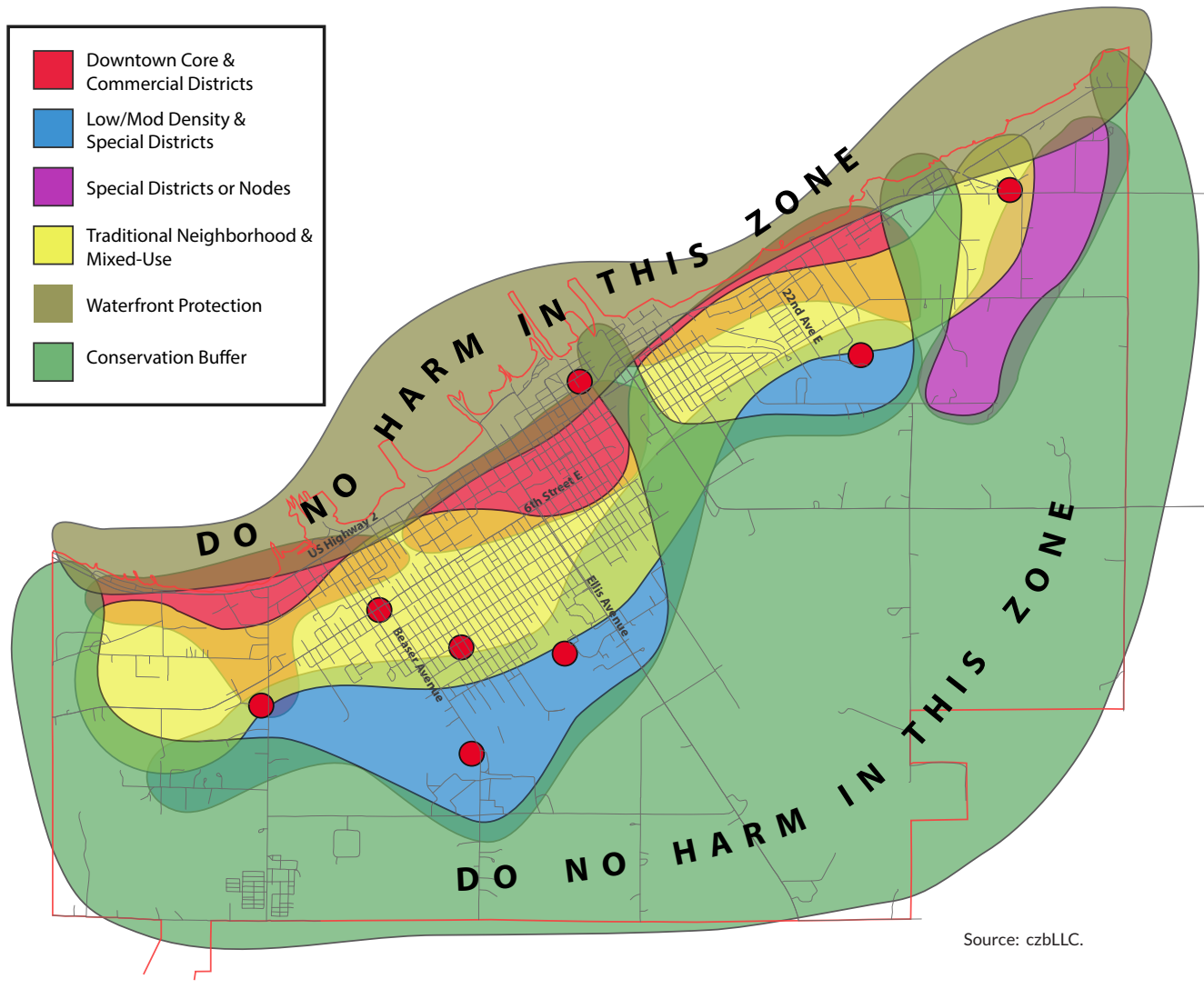
City of Ashland, Existing Zoning



2. Reduce the amount of Planned Residential/Institutional – PRI located to the northwest of the intersection of Binsfield and Ellis Avenues to allow for this area to remain as Future Development – FD as the City focuses on infill development to strengthen the City’s core/downtown. The same recommendation applies to the land near the intersection of Sanborn Avenue and Summit Road West.
3. Reduce the extent of land zoned Industrial at the present time and replace with Future Development – FD designation until demand warrants moving industrial or technological development outside the City’s core/downtown.
4. Much of the City-owned land surrounding Bay City Creek should be considered for parkland that would supplement any future

- trail connectivity in this area; much of the sensitive land in this area is currently zoned Single Family Residential – R-1 and should be considered for rezoning to Public Park – PP.
5. The Timeless Timber site should be considered for Mixed Residential/Commercial – MRC zoning – a designation that would allow for the desired mixed-uses on site and benefit from the Regional Commercial – RC zoning and associated services on the Walmart property to the east.
6. Binsfield-Ellis Neighborhood – the recommendations throughout this plan provide the opportunities for the City to strengthen the Downtown, the core of the community. This translates into opportunities for infill development in both the Downtown and the nearby residential neighborhoods. The City’s 2004

City of Ashland, Future Land Use Plan



Projected Land Use (Acres)	2016	2020	2025	2030	2035
Downtown Core & Commercial Districts	418	410	400	400	400
Institutional & Specialty Districts	1,070	1,052	975	950	900
Industrial /Tech Park or Economic Nodes	1,016	975	950	900	900
Traditional Neighborhood & Mixed-Use District	2,654	2565	2500	2500	2,500
Waterfront Protection	298	325	400	400	425
Conservation Buffer	3,221	3,350	3,452	3,517	3,552
Total	8,677	8,677	8,677	8,667	8,677

* This table represents adherence to the proposed conservation buffer and a commitment to strengthen the City's core over the next 10 - 20 years

Comprehensive Plan provided a well-written and detailed set of planning principles, and guidelines, for developing the Binsfield-Ellis Neighborhood. While this Comprehensive Plan strongly recommends that the City direct into the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods (and not locate infrastructure in this area), if there are applications for development in the Binsfield-Ellis Neighborhood, the Planning Department and Planning Commission should strongly adhere to the principles/guidelines as outlined in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. Traditional neighborhood design, a gridded street pattern, trail connectivity, etc. are all necessary to ensure good development patterns that will complement the existing City conditions.

7. The Waterfront Overlay districts – these zones will need to be revised to reflect the desired protection of the City’s most significant asset – the lake. Currently, the permitted uses and conditional uses include too many uses that are no longer appropriate for these zones. These uses should be removed from the Unified Development Ordinance to prevent unwanted development patterns that could harm the waterfront.

The zoning and land use maps illustrate existing and proposed conditions. It should be noted that the proposed recommendations (incorporating the points as outlined above) are general in nature and should be applied to parcels based upon detailed discussions with the Planning Department and Planning Commission.

As the City considers revisions to these waterfront overlay zones, the number of zones should be closely analyzed to determine if any can be combined into a mixed-use overlay zone.

A final way to begin thinking about the waterfront overlay zones is in terms of proximity to the water:

- “Near Shore” – those parcels abutting the water’s edge. This includes the trail, buffer areas, natural and sensitive lands, etc. and would not allow residential development to occur in this area. It could, however, allow for specific commercial development that contributes to the lakefront experience.
- “Far Shore” – those parcels within the waterfront overlay zoning districts that does not directly abut the water’s edge. This area could allow for residential development.

Sustainability

Sustainability is an overarching principle of this Comprehensive Plan. This plan uses the following definition of sustainability prepared by the United Nations’ World Commission: “Human society rests on three basic types of capital: economic, environmental, and social. Sustainability defines economic, environmental, and social capital as being completely interwoven and interdependent. A sustainable future requires finding a balance among all three.”

This Comprehensive Plan is built upon the following framework to ensure environmental, economic, and social sustainability:

- A Land Use Plan that directs future growth to the existing city core – downtown and neighborhoods, and is supplemented by a Conservation Buffer. This ensures inward growth, prevents sprawl, and preserves natural areas as undisturbed open space. This plan also incorporates a strong housing component to reinvigorate neighborhood investment.
- A complete system to connect residents to their community whether by car or an improved and expanded trail system – recommendations that include connecting the east side to the west side with a new right-of-way along 6th Street West and new trail connectivity
- Increased economic incentives for downtown revitalization that offer opportunities to not only preserve historic buildings (the most sustainable building methodology available by any standard) but also provide increased employment and social activity in the downtown.

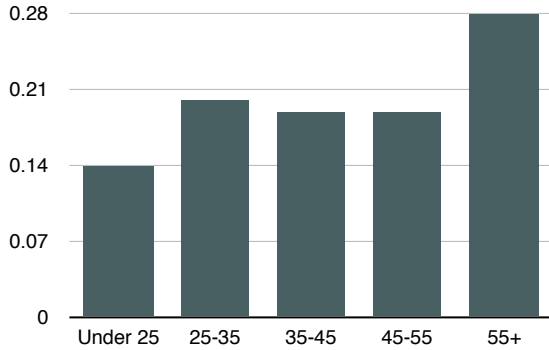
These overarching policies, combined with the detailed approach to Sustainability in Part 1 of this Comprehensive Plan, provide solid direction to respect the environment and take a long-term approach to all project planning in the future. The recognition that simple land use decisions such as growing inward and preserving, and rehabilitating, existing buildings are among the greatest sustainability efforts will help the City achieve its goals of environmental, economic, and social sustainability; they are not mutually exclusive.

**The City of Ashland should continue to expand the capacity of the GIS Planning Department.*

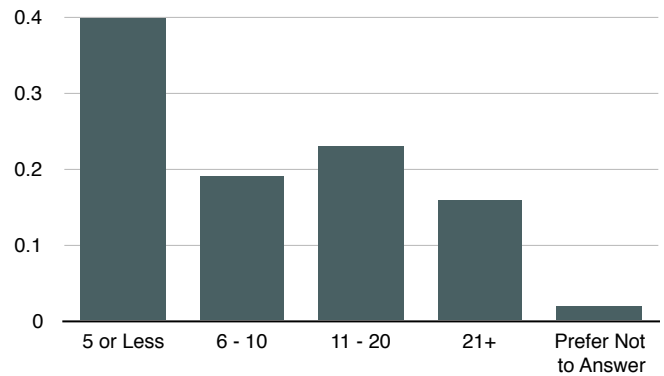
8. Community Engagement Summary

Results from the community survey and an overview of the community engagement process in Ashland are noted on the following pages.

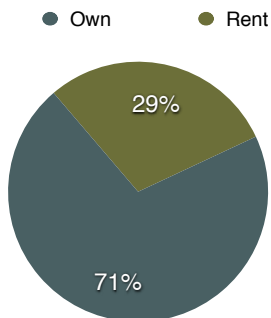
What is your current age?



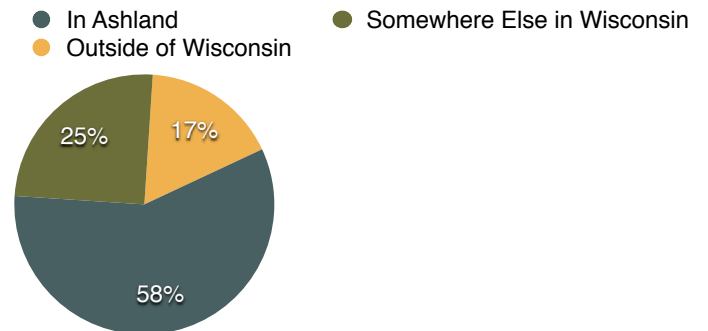
How long have you lived at your current place (in years)?



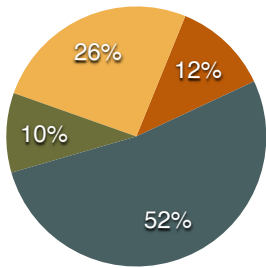
Do you own a home or rent?



Your last residence was...? (Please select your answer)

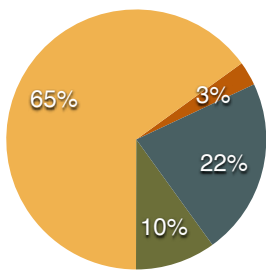


In the last five years, has the block you live on now...



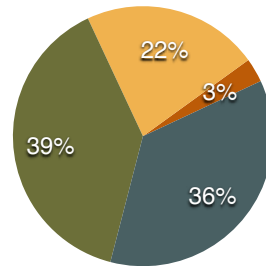
- Stayed about the same?
- Gotten better?
- Gotten worse?
- I have not lived here long enough to notice positive/negative changes

In the last five years, has Ashland's downtown...



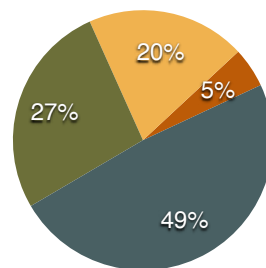
- Stayed about the same?
- Gotten better?
- Gotten worse?
- I have not lived here long enough to notice positive/negative changes

In the last five years, has Lakeshore Drive (Highway 2)...



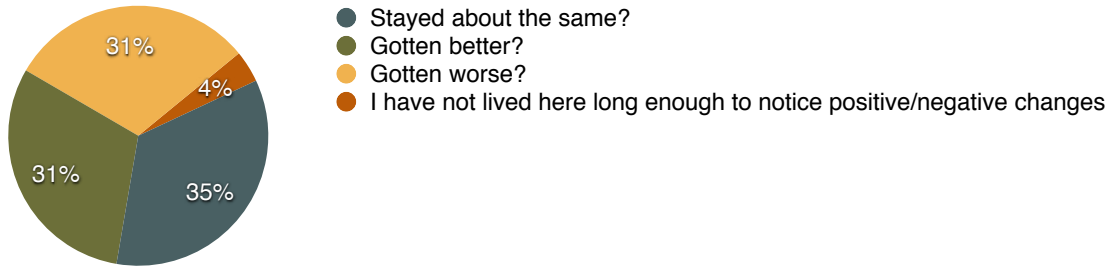
- Stayed about the same?
- Gotten better?
- Gotten worse?
- I have not lived here long enough to notice positive/negative changes

In the last five years, has Ellis Avenue...



- Stayed about the same?
- Gotten better?
- Gotten worse?
- I have not lived here long enough to notice positive/negative changes

In the last five years, has the waterfront...



Please rank these possible assets with the most important ranked first, then second most, and so on:

- #1 WATERFRONT
- #2 DOWNTOWN
- #3 TRAILS (ALONG LAKE AND IN TOWN)
- #4 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES
- #5 GREEN SPACES / PARKS / ENTRYWAYS
- #6 NORTHLAND COLLEGE / WITC
- #7 MARINA AND RV PARK
- #8 GREAT LAKES VISITOR CENTER
- #9 CHEQUAMEGON HOTEL AND BLUE WAVE HOTEL

Other listed community assets included:

- Community center and ice rink
- Vaughn Library
- Ashland School District
- Bretting Manufacturing
- Lands Available in Business Park
- South Shore Brewery
- Non-Profit Organizations (Churches, community development and outreach)
- Co-op
- Rinehart Theater

I have heard quite a few requests for longer bike paths. People from the Twin Cities (where I'm from) would pay good money to be able to bike along Lake Superior for more than 4 miles. This is an area that could be a hub for outdoor activities, so I would say we should take advantage of that and add more trails and be creative with the outdoor facilities we have to offer!

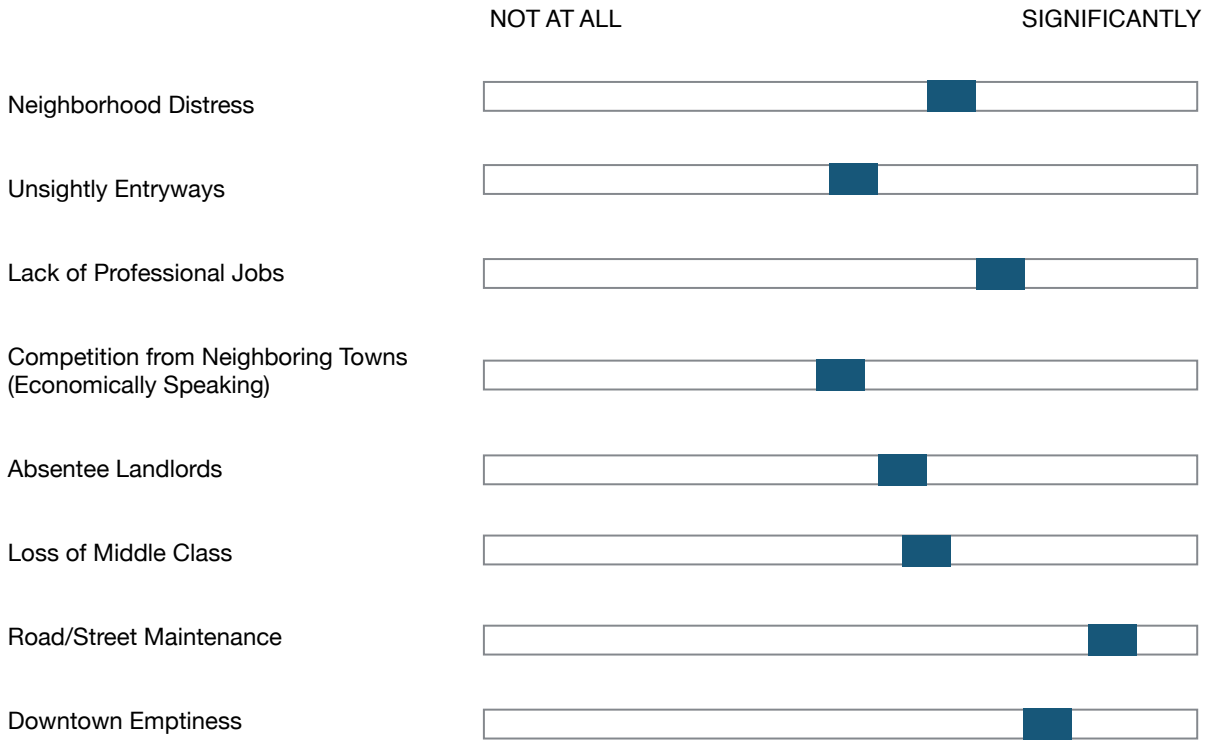
Please rank the following issues with the most important ranked first, then second most, and so on:

- #1 LACK OF PROFESSIONAL JOBS
- #2 DOWNTOWN EMPTINESS
- #3 ROAD/STREET MAINTENANCE
- #4 LOSS OF MIDDLE CLASS
- #5 NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRESS
- #6 ABSENTEE LANDLORDS
- #7 UNSIGHTLY ENTRYWAYS
- #8 COMPETITION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD TOWNS (ECONOMICALLY SPEAKING)

Other listed issues included:

- Quality of rental properties
- We don't have a lack of professional jobs; we have a lack of above-average rental housing. We don't have competition from neighboring towns; we have a lack of imagination about how to partner
- Addiction, homelessness, and poverty

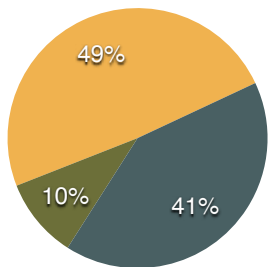
For each item ranked in the previous question, please say whether you think it is something the City of Ashland should dedicate resources to address:



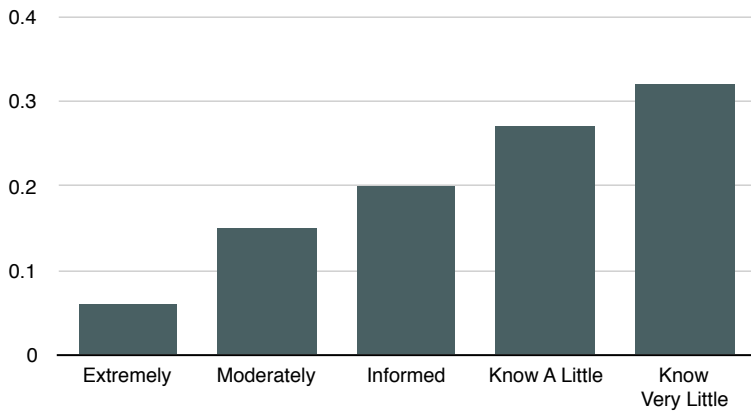
*The sample size for this question was 112

Taxes (local) are:

● Too High ● Too Low ● About Right



Regarding how the City of Ashland spends local tax dollars, how informed would you say you are?



What are the top priorities in your view for spending local tax dollars?
(Please rank the top three; 1 being best/highest priority, 2 = second highest, 3 = third)

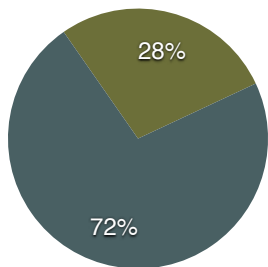
- #1 ROAD/STREET UPGRADES AND MAINTENANCE
- #2 INFRASTRUCTURE - PIPES, STREETS, LIGHTS, SIDEWALKS
- #3 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
- #4 LAKEFRONT MANAGEMENT/STEWARDSHIP
- #5 PARKS AND RECREATION
- #6 HOUSING INSPECTION AND CODE ENFORCEMENT
- #7 ORE DOCK

Early input indicates that the Four Core Values of residents of Ashland are:

- 1. Ashland's History and Culture - architecture, settlement history, traditions
- 2. The City's and the Area's Natural Beauty - land, lakeshore, orchards, farmland, housing styles, buildings downtown
- 3. Our "Small Town" Way of Life - pace and rhythm and connection to one another; Northwoods lifestyle
- 4. Our Sense of Community - we know and trust one another

Are these your four core values?

● Yes ● No



If you answered “No” to the previous questions – please indicate what you think additional core value(s) would be:

Responses include:

Economic development

Jobs, drug free, our lake, community

Innovation / progressive thought

Environmental stewardship

Racetrack, timber industry, mining industry

Our 'Little City' in the country. We have lots of urban amenities such as Hospital, Colleges, Arts & Entertainment, and many quality retail and service businesses - all in a fairly compact area, and it is easy to get around (either by car or by human power). I think this is a real 'selling point' for Ashland that is underrated. I've met quite a few 'young' retirees who come to Ashland for the Four Values, but also (I think, critically) the high level of services available here and ease of access to them.

An appreciation for Outdoor Recreational Activities and the stewardship needed to maintain them.

Would add strong religious component

I agree, but I think a core value would need to be included about innovation and opportunity for professional jobs to help bring sustainability for the first 4 values. If people don't stay, come back, or come as new comers Ashland can't sustain the first 4 values.

I only disagree with #3. Ashland is a small city: an urban, economic and cultural center. It needs to self-identify as this!

Using the Four+ Core Values noted in the previous question, please rank from most important (#1), #2 for second most important, etc.

#1 The City's and the Area's Natural Beauty - land, lakeshore, orchards, farmland, housing styles, buildings downtown

#2 Our Sense of Community - we know and trust one another

#3 Our "Small Town" Way of Life - pace and rhythm and connection to one another; Northwoods lifestyle

#4 Ashland's History and Culture - architecture, settlement history, traditions

What planning concepts are most important to you? Please rank with the most important ranked first, then second most, and so on:

#1 Economics (e.g. how much things cost, how willing the community's residents and business owners are to make investments, the degree to which Ashland is competitive for business expansion and location, homeowner reinvestment, etc.)

#2 Environmental (e.g. how heavy or light our footprint is and resulting water quality, forest quality, native species vitality, lake health)

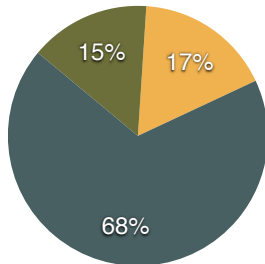
#3 Sustainability (e.g. how durable our fiscal stability is/may be, and how durable our relationship to the land/environment is/may be)

#4 Walkability/Outdoors/Recreation (e.g. how easy or difficult it is for citizens to be connected to the outdoors)

#5 Aesthetics (e.g. how attractive and appealing we are – building architecture, landscaping, urban design, facades)

As new housing is constructed in Ashland, would you prefer to see infill housing to stabilize existing neighborhoods and Downtown, or see the City build roads to extend new housing opportunities out toward the perimeter of the City?

- Infill housing to stabilize neighborhoods
- Extend road infrastructure to City's perimeter for new housing
- Not sure



Comments included:

The city can't really afford to build new roads, especially considering the long term maintenance Ethan roads require. Secondly, there is plenty of space within the city already for homes.

We should NOT put money toward building new until we get our existing housing stock up to par.

New housing on the perimeter would be a disaster, and do nothing to take advantage of Ashland's key assets.

Perimeter building is exactly how slums are created. Restore our beautiful old buildings and housing, it is cheaper in the long run.

Both can be done

Let's revitalize the neighborhoods we have!!!!

Both infill and new housing along city's urban core perimeter

There are so many old decrepit building in Ashland. Empty places. These are the worst they need to be taken care off torn down fixed whatever the answer may be. You need to work on securing your base before you expand outward. Our base is crumbling

The existing neighborhoods will continue to crumble and chase residents to the perimeter of the city. We should not neglect what is already there. Infrastructure to the city perimeter can be handle by those that want to build there (investors or private residence)

Adding infill housing to existing infrastructure bolsters existing neighborhoods and provides additional tax revenue to support existing infrastructure opposed to moving and and expanding into green undeveloped areas where new infrastructure needs to be built and expanded.

Keep the perimeters natural and wild for local recreation: biking, skiing, running, etc.

Population density is the #1 way to jump start economic growth, cultural revitalization, etc. Infill increases population density.

Is there a particular type of store/shop or business/service or amenity/activity that is currently missing in Ashland that you would like to see locate in the city?

Most common responses:

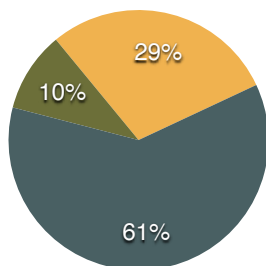
- Bowling alley or arcade for families with kids or teenagers
- Physical recreation center with an indoor swimming pool
- Kohl's, Target or another department store
- Arts and cultural shops for browsing artisan goods
- Music venue
- Sporting goods store

Other responses included:

- Bike shop
- More food options
- "We are seriously lack businesses in town that cater to young families, teenagers, and college age people. We lack things to do for all people during the long winter months. We lack restaurant options that aren't fast food and bar and grill."
- 24 Hour restaurant/diner
- Substance abuse clinic/help
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Gander Mountain
- Men's, women's and children's clothing stores
- Barber shop
- Aldis
- TJ Maxx/Home Goods
- It's easier to list what we don't need. We don't need more fast food restaurants. Walmart needs competition.
- Small business stores that sell household goods, underwear, and other clothing and baby stuff.
- Distillery

Would you support economic incentives for owners of Downtown buildings to rehabilitate their buildings and create additional housing on the second and third floors?

● Yes ● No ● Depends



Is there anything else that we should know about your hopes for Ashland's future?

Primarily I hope that ashland can become a more walkable, thriving city, with plenty of incentives to get out of the car and walk around and BE in the community.

Is there going to be one for my kids to call home and want to come back after college

We really need something for Ashland for families to go to. We lost our bowling alley. Bretting Center doesn't offer much for littler children. In Portage WI, they have a thing called a 'splash pad' its for littler kids, free for public to use, it has a bunch of cool sprinklers etc for kids to run through and play. We don't have much to do around here, its sad. Kids are young and we take them to the visitors center to do something, but that gets old after a while. Movies are expensive. Even if we get a babysitter we sit here and have nothing to do but go to the casino or bar which we like neither.

I would like to see a clean town with citizens who take pride in the upkeep of their property and the environment. Also provide yard waste pick-up.

I'd like to see ashland flourish once again, there is no reason industry and tourism can not coincide. A healthy industry base leads to a healthy downtown and local economy.

no more building along our gem / lakefront

I would like to see more partnerships among Ashland's big entities--city, public schools, Northland, MMC, etc. They seem to be working in isolation. The school district is planning a field house. Northland is planning a field expansion. Someone is planning an aquatic center. The city is planning to refurbish the ore dock base. It seems as though people spend a lot of time in their own silos.

Good paying jobs!!! No more low paying fast food jobs!! Bring in big employment that pays a good livable wage!! I can't stress that enough. If this is all Ashland has to offer for employment in the future, I can't see my kids wanting to stick around this area.

Hope it stops being known as a drug town and the crime stops.

Protection of our water. More jobs

Integration of the retirement homes into higher foot traffic areas to bridge the can do people with the already did it generation.

The Ore Dock is crucial. Once visitors stop they will be inclined to also check out the downtown. Lets provide that cute little shopping district with old fashioned flair (ie soda shop, local art, cobblestone streets, cafes and historical info).

I think Ashland could be a model for a rust belt turn around.

I would love to see the community of Ashland reach its full potential and become a leader in the state as an innovative city with a diverse economic system that is adaptable and protects the natural environment

We have year-round activities and festivals, we have shops and restaurants. But we need competition for those existing businesses. Variety will bring the tourists.

Generalized List of City Services:

Vaughn Public Library

City Parks and Trails

City Recreation Programs

City Band

Marina Facilities and Services

Airport Facilities and Services

Waste and Recycling Collection

Maintenance of Streets and Sidewalks

Snow Plowing

Fire and EMS Services

Police Protection

Animal Control

Building Inspection

Water and Sewer Services

Mt. Hope Cemetery

Election Administration

License and Permit Processing

Economic Development Efforts

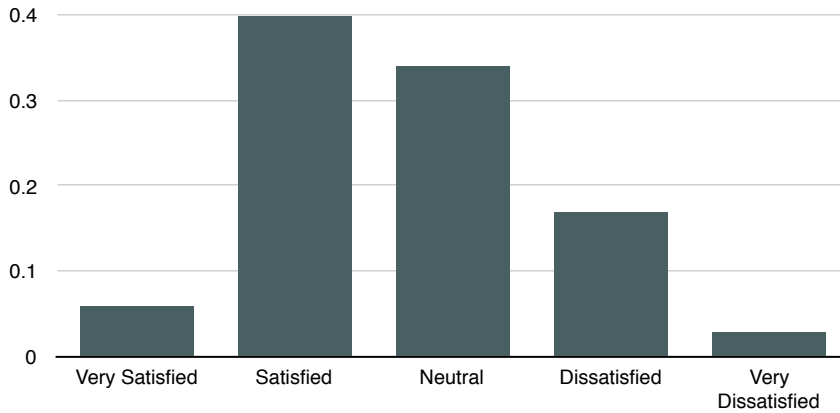
Yard Maintenance and Beautification Efforts

Customer Service

City Council Representation

City Administration

How satisfied are you with the current level of services and programs provided by the City of Ashland? (Check one)



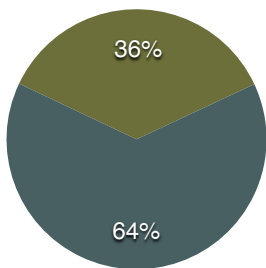
What do you think should be the top budget priority for the City of Ashland in the next 3-5 years? Please indicate:

Most common responses:

- Maintenance of streets and infrastructure
- Promote waterfront
- Attracting business
- Revitalizing downtown
- Reduce crime and drug abuse
- Focusing on activities for youth
- Improving properties around the city
- Library improvements
- Expansion of recreational opportunities

Is there a particular program, service or facility that you would especially like to see provided for within the next 3–5 years?

● Yes ● No





If you checked yes, please indicate what it would be:

Most common responses:

- Indoor recreation center with walking track and indoor pool
- Expanded parks and recreation programs for youth
- Drug abuse services
- Public pool
- Modernize Vaughn Library
- Homeless shelter

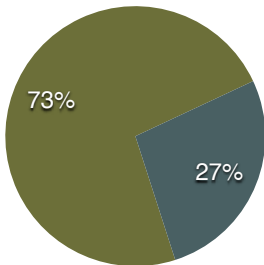
Other suggestions included:

- City garden
- Housing loan and grant programs, low interest building improvement and construction loans
- Yard waste pick up
- Improved police station and police equipment
- Municipal composting
- Improving renewable energy sources, going paperless for utility bills
- City band



Is there any existing program or service currently provided by the City of Ashland that you would like to see reduced or discontinued?

● Yes ● No



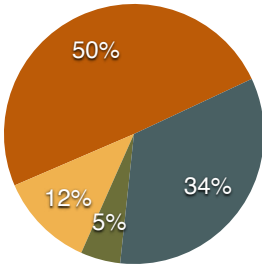
If you checked yes, please indicate what it would be:

Responses included:

- Go to a volunteer fire department
- Yard enforcement
- Move to a system where downtown businesses do their own snow removal in front of their stores
- Airport and related services
- Tax giveaways to chain stores and restaurants with established markets
- Some parks and recreation programs
- Fewer city employees
- The city should discontinue supporting charities in its annual budget

Which one of the approaches below would you like to see the City of Ashland take in preparation for future budgets?
(Check one)

- Increase user fees and other non-property tax revenue sources to offset increased costs (where allowed by law)
- Reduce current levels of service but maintain all current programs
- Eliminate services and programs to reduce any budget shortfall
- Maintain or increase service levels in high priority programs, while decreasing service levels in low priority programs to address budget shortfalls



Other approach (please indicate):

Responses included:

- Fees to park in city lots
- Just one approach will not suffice. Increase some user fees, eliminate/reduce some programs
- Contract with the county for law enforcement services
- Increasing the tax visitors to Ashland pay when they stay at hotels and motels
- Increased population and population density will automatically increase City revenues
- Raise taxes - should have been done a long time ago
- I am always happy to pay taxes or fees if I can see a tangible improvement
- Review organizational structure. Make cuts to staffing where appropriate. We have too many chiefs for the size of the city we have

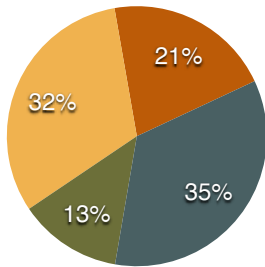
In order in to properly maintain City roads, alleys and sidewalks which of the following actions would you support?

Term Definitions:

Wheel Tax – Additional registration fee in addition to regular annual registration fee paid for a vehicle (\$20 per vehicle per year). The fee applies to vehicles kept in the City of Ashland. Fee can only be used for transportation related expenditures (statutory)

Special Assessment – Charge that is assessed by the City against real estate parcels for certain public projects, such as road improvements and sidewalk improvements. This assessment is levied in a specific geographic region that is adjacent to the improvements

- Rely on City tax levy dollars to finance City projects
- Borrow to finance City projects (may result in increased taxes)
- Create a Wheel Tax or similar mechanism to provide additional funds for infrastructure improvements
- Special assessments to abutting property owners



Other (please describe):

Create pedestrian only zones to eliminate wear in parts of the city, create no truck zones so that semi trucks and larger vehicles travel on Sanborn Ave or Highway 2 for the bulk of their time in Ashland, and go no more than a block on city streets, but may travel on city avenues, significantly reducing the cities cost to maintain roads. Lower speed limits throughout the city, or simply cracking down on existing speed limits with automated enforcement.

Lobby the state legislature to restore/increase block grant funding to cities

Unfair to apply a wheel tax to residents. All the out of town people don't have to pay but use the roads.

Special assessments are punitive, prefer broad base tax levy and wheel tax.

Expansion of the tax base.

Special assessments used to be the norm. When we stopped doing that is when we started getting behind on our infrastructure maintenance.

There should be no new taxes... Cut. Cut. Cut. Combine services. Lay off.

Pursue as many grants as possible and hire a good grant writer

Storm water utility so that the non-tax paying entities pay for services. The vast majority of development in the City is by these entities and the City doesn't get a tax benefit from this.

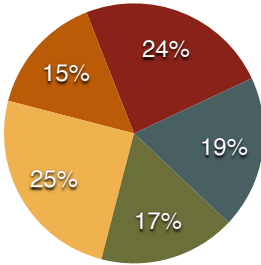
I like the special assessment aside from the fact that only those adjacent would pay. So many people are renters in Ashland. absentee landlords making gains on the necessity of rent shouldn't get a break. Tax everybody and level the playing field.

0.5% increase in sales tax. Then outside Ashland people also pay for roads and walk they also use.



In order to help spur economic development and job growth in the City, which of the following actions would you support?

- Use of City fund balance to create a revolving loan fund for homes throughout the City who wish to improve their property
- Use of City fund balance to create a revolving loan fund for businesses who wish to improve their properties.
- Promote light manufacturing development in the City.
- Additional improvements to City parks and waterfront trails.
- Better market existing revolving loan financing to help businesses expand or locate in the City.

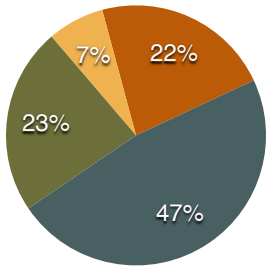


Other (please describe):

Promote heavy manufacturing, let's build stuff!
 New businesses and new people in the area equal more tax dollars.
 Actively try to recruit business to move to Ashland. Offer tax incentives.



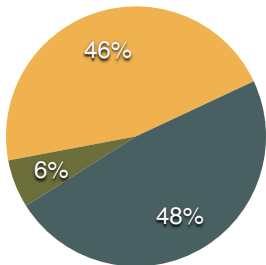
Law enforcement coverage in the City of Ashland is...? (Check one)



- Just Right
- Too Little
- Too Much
- Unsure



If you have received assistance from the City of Ashland Police Department, were your needs met? Please select "Does Not Apply" if you have not received assistance.



- Yes
- No
- Does Not Apply

Fire/EMS coverage in the City of Ashland is...? (Check one)



If you have received assistance from the City of Ashland Fire/EMS Department, were your needs met? Please select "Does Not Apply" if you have not received assistance.



Generalized List of Recreational Services/Activities:

- American Red Cross Training
- Tennis
- Events and Races
- Girls Softball
- Roller Derby
- Gymnastics
- Baseball
- Flag Football
- School Aged Programs
- Preschool Programs
- Bretting Center Game Room and Gym Activities

Recreational services provided within the City of Ashland are...? (Please select one)



Library services provided within the City of Ashland are...? (Check one)

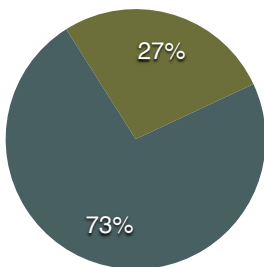


If you have received assistance from the City of Vaughn Public Library, were your needs met? (Check one) Please select "Does Not Apply" if you have not received assistance.



In your opinion, are City of Ashland services/programs easy to access? (Check one)

● Yes ● No

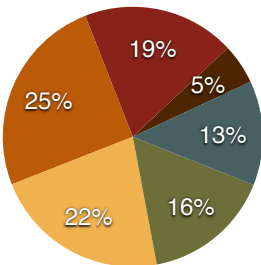


If you answered no, what could be done to improve access to City services/programs? (Please describe)

More of them... for example gymnastics has a waiting list and that means people who want to participate can't and the cost keeps others from participating as well
Improve handicap accessibility
Recreation and Library services should be available on weekends
Updated Parks and Rec website
New website and electronic access to departments and programs. Neither the city website nor the parks & rec website are modern or user-friendly. We should be able to find all information and register/pay easily online.
There is not Clearinghouse that tells you everything that is going. We need one place to find out information about stuff

How would you prefer to be kept informed about City resources, current events, and emergencies?

- U.S. Mail
- City website
- City newsletter
- Newspaper or weekly shopper
- Facebook or other social media
- Other



Do you have any other suggestion(s) for the City of Ashland in the development of future budgets?

If it come down to referendum make sure the tax payers know where every dollar is going to go. I'm currently very discouraged with the Ashland School Districts referendum.

Use tax-breaks and TIF giveaways to small business ideas from our citizens. Grow our next Bretting or H Window, don't go out elephant hunting for some economic savior that's going to exploit our assets and then leave us high and dry. Enough chains – support local food, services, manufacturing.

Involve the community.

Be honest – if you cannot support the service because of lack of tax dollars – say so, and move on.

We face the problems of increased low income, rising crime rate. Landlords are ruining the city's ambiance. We will pass a tipping point where we can no longer make this city attractive to incoming citizens; incoming businesses, or to tourists.

Use volunteers. People love to help plant more trees.

Keep thinking long-term!