

City of Ravenswood Comprehensive Plan Update

Honoring Ravenswood's past while preparing for a bright future



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October 26, 2023

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

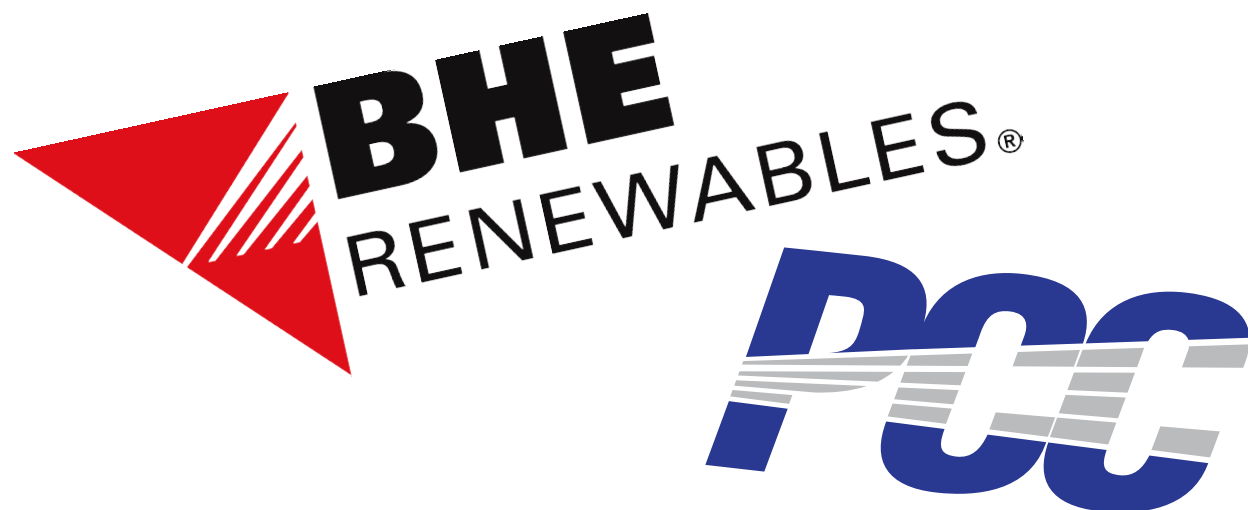
In the fall of 2022, BHE Renewables and Precision Castparts announced the construction of a modern titanium melt facility powered by a first-of-its-kind solar energy microgrid with other large manufacturers coming to the area. Then, in 2023, another large manufacturer, Our Next Energy, announced it would locate its battery storage system manufacturing facility outside Ravenswood. Together, these manufacturing facilities will bring 1,000 full-time jobs to the surrounding area. The City of Ravenswood is now preparing for this economic boon.



Ravenswood is familiar with manufacturing-related economic spurts; in 1954, Kaiser Aluminum announced it would locate its new sheet and foil rolling mill just seven miles away from Ravenswood. The mill employed 500 employees in its first year and an additional 2,000 employees in the following year. Ultimately, Kaiser Aluminum employed a total of 4,000 individuals, doubling the population of Ravenswood overnight. At the time, Ravenswood was largely undeveloped and considered a farm town. With sensible foresight, city planning consultants were brought in to guide orderly growth for the town.

Today, Ravenswood recognizes the need for a community plan to:

- create a new vision,
- clearly outline critical initiatives, and
- determine the necessary actions to achieve its vision.



Planning process

To explore how best to address its challenges and leverage its opportunities, the City of Ravenswood undertook a seven-month planning process.

- Starting in March 2023, significant community demographic and statistical data was collected and analyzed.
- The consulting team then completed community future forecasts for population growth and a land use analysis.
- To understand Ravenswood's challenges, interviews were conducted with 27 participants. Participants included real estate and economic professionals, businesses, property owners, staff, and community members. The interviews were held throughout the process to gain insights and clarifications into items or ideas discovered through
- Three site visits were conducted.

How to use this document

This plan amends the 2018 City of Ravenswood Comprehensive Plan to prepare for the growth prompted by BHE Renewables and Precision Castparts' expansion into the Ravenswood area. It is divided into three foundational elements: housing, downtown revitalization, and connectivity. In addition, each foundational element provides an explanation about why it matters and how to move forward.

The Ravenswood community developed a vision statement to serve as a compass for consistent and compatible decision making for the community's desired future. To accomplish this vision, an action plan was developed from goals and objectives. Finally, success indicators are provided in the action plan to help measure the community's progress.



CURRENT TRENDS IN RAVENSWOOD

HOUSING TRENDS

A review of Ravenswood’s present condition will provide a baseline measure for success as the community looks to grow. Ravenswood has not seen much population growth since Kaiser Aluminum arrived. The city’s population peaked in 1970 and remains relatively steady with a slight decline. The employment growth outside of the town will undoubtedly influence population growth in Ravenswood.

Between 2010 and 2020, occupied housing units decreased in Ravenswood by almost one-quarter (Table 1).

For those who rent, housing challenges are dire—the number of renter-occupied housing units was cut in half in the same timeframe, though units only declined slightly in Jackson County and the rest of the state. This trend in occupied housing puts tremendous pressure on growth in Ravenswood.

Like many towns that developed after World War 2, Ravenswood’s housing stock is dominated by traditional single-family homes. This is largely because almost 30% of Ravenswood property is legally restricted to single-family housing, which means fewer houses built and reduced housing affordability. As buildable land becomes scarcer in Ravenswood, a variety of housing types that use smaller footprints should be encouraged to take advantage of constraints like steeper slopes and smaller lots.

Figure 1. City of Ravenswood population since 1940

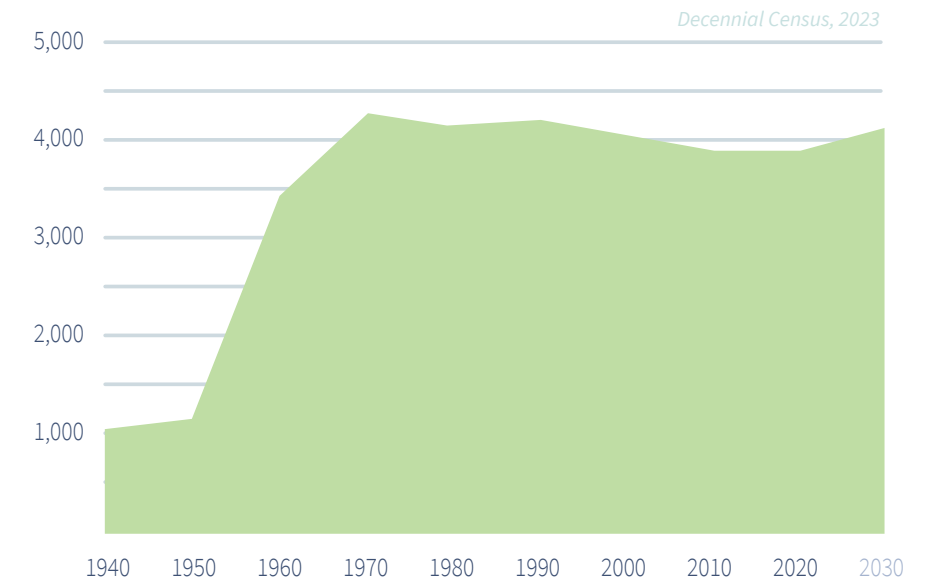


Table 1. Occupied housing units between 2010–2020

	2010	2020	Percent change
Ravenswood	1,801	1,450	-24.21%
Jackson County	11,634	11,427	-1.81%
West Virginia	740,874	734,235	-0.90%

Table 2. Renter-occupied housing units between 2010–2020

	2010	2020	Percent change
Ravenswood	635	290	-118.97%
Jackson County	2,378	2,629	9.55%
West Virginia	188,019	193,449	2.81%

American Community Survey



Since the 1970s, very few houses have been built in the community. Fewer than 20% of houses in Ravenswood were built in the last 40 years; and, of that 20%, two-thirds were built in the 1980s. In short, new housing in Ravenswood only grew in response to the need of Kaiser Aluminum employees, which peaked in the 1950s. Meanwhile, surrounding Jackson County has seen considerable growth while Ravenswood's housing development remained largely stagnant: half of all homes in both the county and state were built since the 1970s.

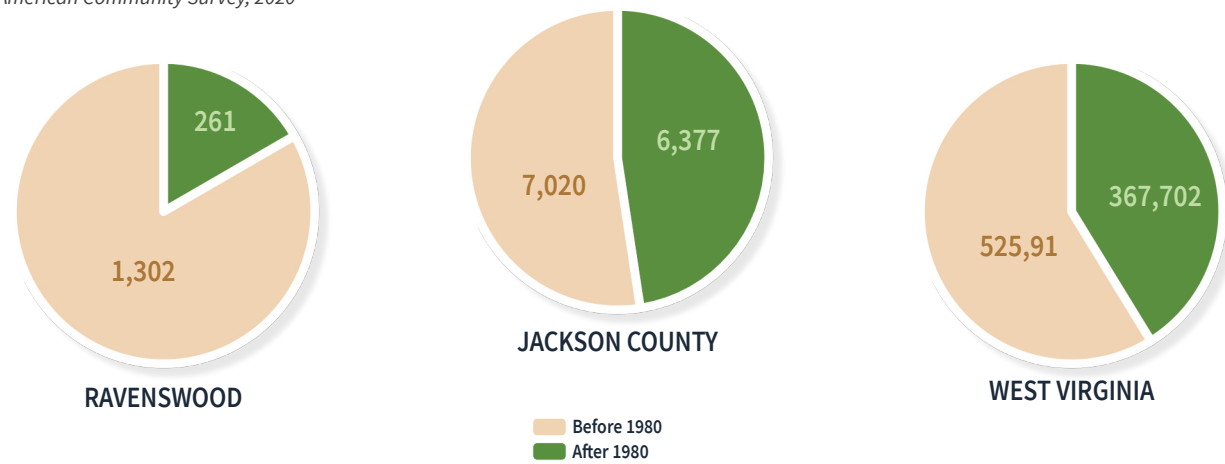
Table 3. Number of units in a structure in Ravenswood in 2020

	Estimate	Percent
1-unit, detached	1,251	80.04%
1-unit, attached	79	5.05%
2 units	10	0.64%
3 or 4 units	69	4.41%
5 to 9 units	66	4.42%
10 to 19 units	7	0.45%
20 or more units	4	0.26%
Mobile home	77	4.93%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.00%
Total	1,563	100%

American Community Survey, 2020

Figure 2. Number of housing units built before and after 1980

American Community Survey, 2020



With so few homes under construction in Ravenswood, there is a noticeable strain on finding housing on the market for prospective homebuyers. Since 2010, the total number of housing units decreased by nearly 15%, while the number of vacant units increased by nearly 50%. A homeowner vacancy rate that sits at virtually 0% further demonstrates a housing supply strain. At the same time, the rental vacancy rate increased by 3%, bringing the total to 12.1% in 2021. Fewer occupied rental units suggest that rental housing may be substandard, causing tenants to rent elsewhere.

Table 4. Occupied housing units, vacancy rates, and changes between 2010 and 2021 for the City of Ravenswood

	2010	2020	Percent change
Occupied housing units	1,801	1,462	-18.8%
Vacant housing units	133	198	48.9%
Total housing units	1,934	1,660	-14.2%
Homeowner vacancy rate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Rental vacancy rate	7.1%	12.1%	3.0%

American Community Survey, 2020

Even with a 3% increase in the rental vacancy rate, rent prices in Ravenswood have nearly doubled since 2010. Yet Ravenswood renters are also spending a larger proportion of their income on rent: 71.3% spent one-third or more of their income on rent in 2021 compared to 44.5% in 2010, which suggests there is a large deficit of affordable rental housing in the community.

Table 5. Median rent prices between 2010–2021

	2010	2021	Percent change
Ravenswood	\$454	\$863	90.1%
Jackson County	\$523	\$698	33.5%
West Virginia	\$549	\$770	40.3%

American Community Survey, 2021

Table 6. Value of owner-occupied housing between 2000–2021

	2000	2010	2021	Percent change (2000–2021)
Ravenswood	\$70,900	\$100,800	\$79,000	12.7%
Jackson County	\$78,500	\$102,100	\$137,800	75.5%
West Virginia	\$72,800	\$94,500	\$143,000	96.7%

American Community Survey, 2021

For homeowners, the 0% vacancy rate has not translated into financial gains. While the median housing price increased by 12% between 2000 and 2010, it has been in decline since 2010. These prices lag significantly behind those in Jackson County and West Virginia, where prices almost doubled in the same timeframe.

LAND USE TRENDS

In the 1950s, Ravenswood progressed from a river town with an agricultural base to a largely built-out town. The city grew rapidly and orderly along with the aluminum industry as prescribed in the General Plan, but like many towns in West Virginia, the city limits are reined in by the Ohio River to the west and the hills to the east. With these natural constraints, the City of Ravenswood consists of 1,500 acres today.

According to the Jackson County Assessor's office, the top three land uses in Ravenswood are vacant, public or semi-public, and residential (see Table 7). As Ravenswood plans to construct additional housing, vacant land provides two interesting points. First, although 40.6% of Ravenswood land is considered vacant, 63.1% of it is constrained by floodplain or steep slopes (see Figure 3), which diminishes buildable land from 602 acres to 222 acres. Second, the large amount of unzoned land (73.5%) is beneficial for housing construction due to the lack of zoning restrictions; however, the lack of restrictions also means there are no safeguards to ensure eventual housing construction on the property.

Table 7. Existing land use classifications

Classification	Number of parcels	Total acres	Constrained acres	Buildable acres	Percent of total acres
Agricultural	2	9	9	0	0.6%
Residential	1,321	384	134	250	25.9%
Single-family	1,271	333	110	223	22.5%
Two-family	12	3	1	2	0.2%
Multi-family	38	47	23	25	3.2%
Commercial	82	45	8	37	3.1%
Industrial	2	7	0	7	0.4%
Mixed-use	9	2	0	2	0.1%
Office	25	20	2	18	1.4%
Public, Semi-public	70	392	334	58	26.5%
Warehouse	11	22	19	3	1.5%
Vacant	264	602	379	222	40.6%
Total	1,786	1,482	885	597	100%

Jackson County Assessor's Office, 2023

Since the 1970s, very few houses have been built in the community. Fewer than 20% of houses in Ravenswood were built in the last 40 years; and, of that 20%, two-thirds were built in the 1980s. In short, new housing in Ravenswood only grew in response to the need of Kaiser Aluminum employees, which peaked in the 1950s. Meanwhile, surrounding Jackson County has seen considerable growth while Ravenswood's housing development remained largely stagnant: half of all homes in both the county and state were built since the 1970s.

Ravenswood faces two main challenges regarding available land. First, although vacant land is the largest land use in the city, only 36.9% is buildable without constraints. In addition, most of this buildable land is located along the CSX rail line and Route 33. If the community desires to build more housing in these areas, reducing road and train noise will need to be a consideration along these corridors.

Second, among the established residential areas, almost 90% are zoned as single-family residential. This land use district restricts housing to only one dwelling unit per lot, which requires more land for each housing unit to be built. These two challenges will limit the amount of housing growth in Ravenswood.

Figure 3. Map of environmental constraints in Ravenswood

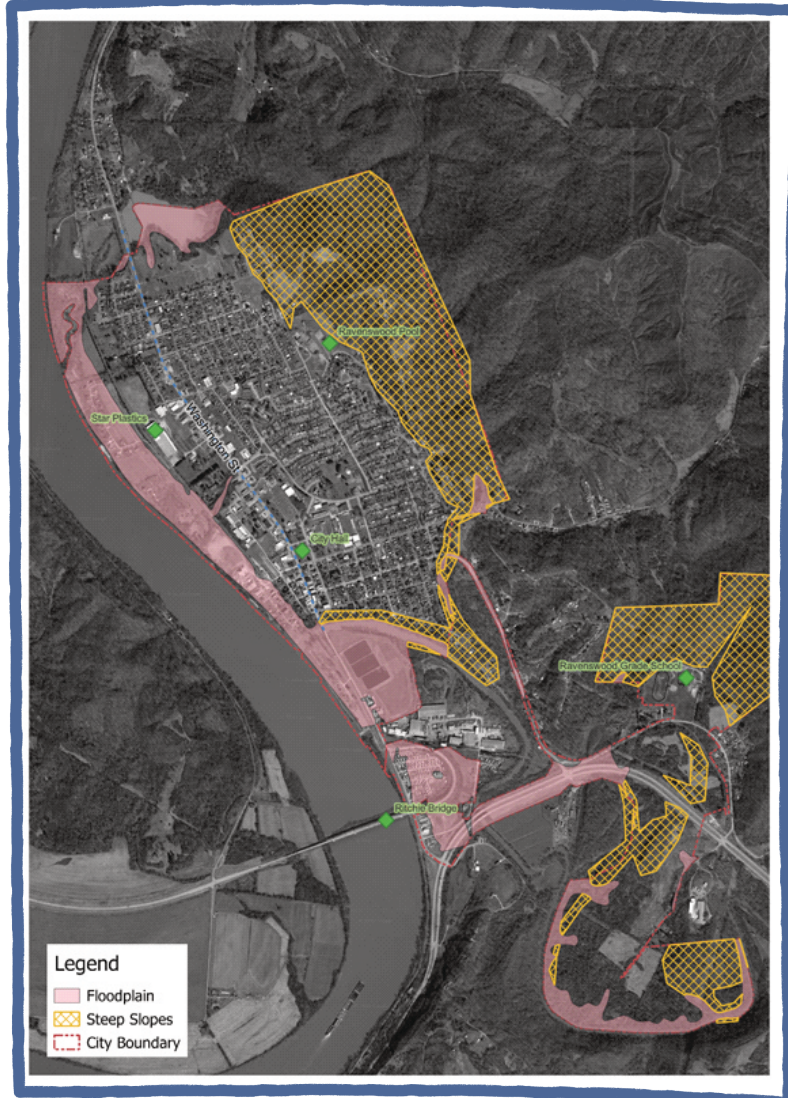


Figure 4. Suitable land for housing along the CSX line and between Gibbs and Brown Streets



As shown in Figure 4, four areas are suitable for housing development. The first is located behind Star Plastics along the CSX railway and has ample flat acreage, but screening and buffering may need to be considered for areas along the railway. The second is located south along Route 33. This property is currently marketed for commercial development, but with a proper strategy and developer, the property could be a mixed-use development with residential lots. The third and fourth locations are various vacant lots in the northern part of town, outside of Old Town. These lots could be redeveloped if smaller lot sizes were permitted in their land use districts.



OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSETS IN RAVENSWOOD

Despite these current trends, Ravenswood is on the cusp of an economic resurgence.

It is not often that small towns are located near large job centers. Even before the BHE Renewables and Precision Castparts' announcements, people were drawn to the Ravenswood community. However, the planning process revealed that potential residents of Ravenswood prefer to move to areas like Parkersburg, Charleston, and Marietta largely because of the amenities they offer, such as small local shops, restaurants, and housing options.

Ravenswood is also a community with assets. With its proximity to a major, first-of-its-kind industrial center and its own river town charm, Ravenswood should foster and leverage its opportunities and assets to compete with these larger areas to attract potential residents and visitors.

Increased households in Ravenswood

The arrival of BHE Renewables and Precision Castparts brings new jobs and people to Ravenswood, with the firms expecting to create at least 1,000 jobs. The consultant team forecasts between 70–115 households to locate in Ravenswood, which would increase the city's population by 160–270 people. These additional individuals and families will increase demand for housing and services and ultimately help support the construction of new housing and small businesses.

70–115
households
from new
jobs



160–270
total
population
increase

Table 8. Vacant land by land use district

Classification	Number of parcels	Total acres	Vacant acres	Constrained acres	Buildable acres	Percent of buildable acres
R-10, Single-Family Residence	31	48	30	30	0	0.0%
R-8, Single-Family Residence	283	257	151	144	6	2.8%
R-7, Single-Family Residence	573	132	25	2	23	10.3%
R-3, Multiple-Family Residence	235	60	1	0	1	0.4%
R-2, Multiple-Family Residence	196	43	4	1	3	1.2%
RR-C, Restricted Residential-Commercial	276	90	22	11	10	4.7%
C, Commercial	121	118	16	0	16	7.0%
Unzoned	70	735	354	190	164	73.5%
Total	1,785	1,483	601	379	223	100%

Jackson County Assessor's Office, 2023

Increased spending and economic development in Ravenswood

The additional manufacturing jobs will bring substantial new spending to the community. Based on commuting patterns and Downstream Strategies' analysis, 42% of employees will likely live within 30 minutes of Ravenswood. In addition, these households will earn a total income of \$45.5 million. After adjusting for taxes, purchases outside the region, and household savings, \$26.6 million is expected to be spent within the Ravenswood local economy. Relevant to Ravenswood's downtown, \$13.5 million is expected to be spent in businesses commonly located on main streets. Based on this additional spending in the community, Ravenswood could address vacant and underutilized storefronts downtown.

Table 9. Total potential spending from new households within a 30-minute drivetime of Ravenswood

Sector	Total sales	Potential jobs	New square feet needed	New businesses
Total local spending	\$26,600,000	–	–	–
Total (selected sectors)	\$13,700,000	130	–	–
Health care and social services	\$7,200,000	56	8,400–11,200	1–2
Retail	\$3,700,000	41	12,000–18,500	4–8
Restaurants	\$2,200,000	30	11,200–15,000	5–7
Professional service	\$300,000	3	400–600	1–2

IMPLAN, Downstream Strategies analysis

Downtown

The downtown area is the historic and symbolic core of the Ravenswood community. The charming turn-of-the-century structures provide a direct connection to Ravenswood's past—a time where it was easy to walk from shop to shop or just watch people go by.

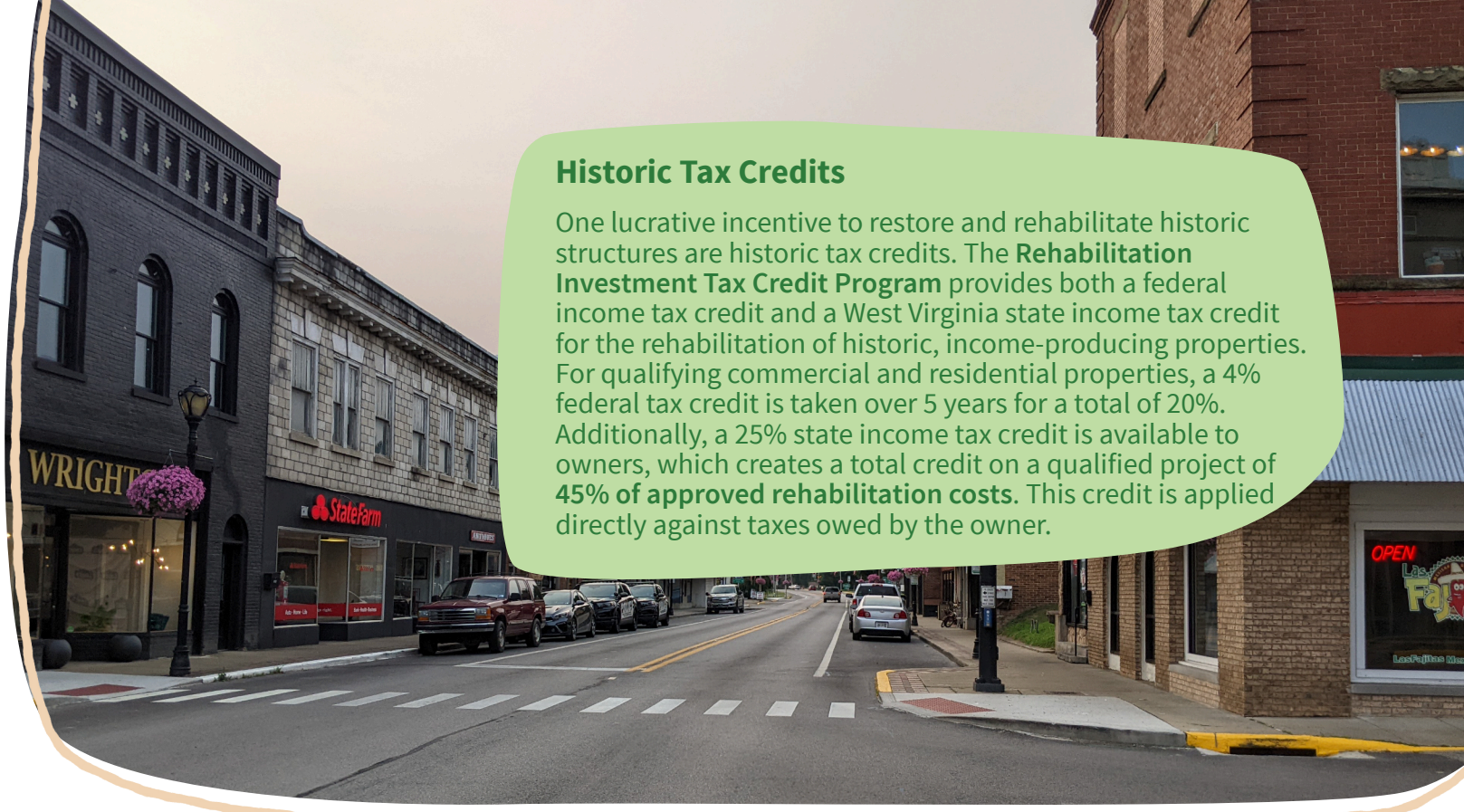
Today, many of the buildings in Old Town Ravenswood are historically significant and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, there are rewarding incentives to restore and rehabilitate these buildings. Benefits to revitalizing and rehabilitating downtown buildings include:

- Creating more local economic benefits than new construction.** Rehabilitation projects costs are on average 60/40 labor-to-materials compared to 40/60 labor-to-materials for new construction. Rehabilitation projects are also more likely to source materials locally for more economic benefits for the community.
- Facilitating greater affordability.** Historic tax credits enable lower rents by subsidizing the cost of the project and reducing any costs that would be passed to tenants.
- Activating a thriving downtown.** Traditional financial institutions view rehabilitation projects as financial risks with increased costs compared to new construction. Financial incentives close funding gaps to rehabilitate otherwise vacant buildings.
- Enhancing property values.** Rehabilitation projects also encourage investment in the surrounding area and provide revenue for local services.¹

¹National Trust for Historic Preservation. State Historic Tax Credits: Maximizing Preservation, Community Revitalization, and Economic Impact. November 2018.

Historic Tax Credits

One lucrative incentive to restore and rehabilitate historic structures are historic tax credits. The **Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program** provides both a federal income tax credit and a West Virginia state income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing properties. For qualifying commercial and residential properties, a 4% federal tax credit is taken over 5 years for a total of 20%. Additionally, a 25% state income tax credit is available to owners, which creates a total credit on a qualified project of **45% of approved rehabilitation costs**. This credit is applied directly against taxes owed by the owner.



Quality of life

Ravenswood is packed with several amenities that are not commonly offered in a community of its size. Enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, the city takes advantage of two of its greatest assets: its natural environment and friendly community. Ravenswood's largest asset, the Ohio River, offers multiple fishing tournaments, boating, and a beautiful backdrop for walks and outings at Riverfront Park. Sandy Creek, a tributary to the Ohio River, also provides a different fishing experience and a new marina with boating slips and a site for overnight camping. In addition, Ravenswood offers biking and hiking at the Kevin Clegg Trail System by Ravenswood Grade School and swimming at the renovated city pool.

For a fun-filled time with the community, Ravenswood also offers large community outings. Residents and visitors from all over enjoy the Big Bend Bassmasters fishing tournament and the Ohio River Festival from June through September and close out the summer by participating in the Harvest in the Wood Festival.



VISION

A vision is a view into the future. It serves as a compass for consistent and compatible decision making. Why does it matter? As a compass, it aids in evaluating whether an action aligns with what the city believes and is striving for.

RAVENSWOOD'S VISION

After many interviews with community and development stakeholders and through reviewing the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and other documents, the following vision statement was created and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

In 2033, Ravenswood is a community that forges its bright economic future with its past by cultivating its historic character and the natural beauty of the Great Bend that encourages economic prosperity by supporting the robust and carefully planned growth of its high-quality neighborhoods, schools, and local businesses.



Economic development

Ravenswood enjoys a healthy, thriving economy. The community builds on its industrial foundation by leading the way with state-of-the-art manufacturers and industries and nurtures homegrown small businesses that provide goods and services for the community and beyond.



Downtown revitalization

Old Town is an active and vibrant downtown area that serves as the focus of community life in Ravenswood. It contains significant places and events that attract both residents and visitors. Old Town also maintains a strong link to the past through its historic architecture and connections to the Ohio River.



Natural resources

Ravenswood values its natural environment and beauty of the Great Bend — the Ohio River, Sandy Creek, Turkey Run Lake, and surrounding hills. The riverfront will be designed for boating, fishing, and entertainment. Wooded areas behind the Ravenswood Grade School will host scenic trails, and Riverfront Park will tell the story of the Great Bend and Ravenswood.



Housing

Ravenswood is a city with diverse housing types and a range of housing costs. New moderate- and upper-value single-family homes are being constructed and make use of locations, designs, and amenities throughout town. Apartments, townhouses, duplexes, and innovative housing styles are constructed to house younger families, seniors, and adults without children. Code enforcement is pursued to eliminate or upgrade substandard housing.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

As Ravenswood encounters new challenges, the vision statement will help match actions to the community's goals; provide an overlay for new plans, policies, and decisions; and act as a guide for concrete actions in the community. As a guide, it should be consulted first as part of any policy or decision. This includes zoning decisions where applications should be consistent with the vision and land use regulations.

PREPARING FOR GROWTH

As Ravenswood prepares for growth over the next ten years, there are three foundational elements to build on: housing, downtown revitalization, and connectivity.

- **Accelerate the housing supply with diverse housing types.** The Land Use Regulations need to be updated to allow a variety of housing types that will increase the number of housing units to better match Ravenswood's neighborhoods. Ravenswood should also foster partnerships to begin a program that will address vacant and substandard housing.
- **Revitalize and activate downtown.** Fulfilling Ravenswood's vision for downtown requires focus to establish and maintain the Main Street Programs approach, fill and polish storefronts with active uses and businesses, and leverage the historic district's buildings and incentives.
- **Improve and connect open spaces.** Ravenswood features many parks, recreational opportunities, and amenities that could benefit residents and visitors. Connecting these assets with street and path improvements and clearly marked wayfinding signage could further improve residents' quality of life and provide economic benefits.

ACCELERATE THE HOUSING SUPPLY WITH DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES

Why it matters

Like many places in America, Ravenswood suffers from housing supply issues. To leverage the job growth in the area, it is critical for the community to provide adequate housing. Increasing the housing supply with diverse housing types helps homes remain affordable in the community and provides options for young families, seniors, and adults without children.

Growing labor and material costs and especially burdensome land use policies make it increasingly difficult to construct new housing. In addition, Ravenswood is running out of developable land due to its location nestled between the Ohio River and sloping hills and limited alternatives to expand the corporate limits. Increasing the housing supply with multiple building products like townhouses and patio homes benefits the whole community with:

- increased tax base for services,
- support for local jobs,
- opportunities for new economic development projects, and
- increased job growth and productivity in the area.



How to move forward

Increasing Ravenswood’s housing supply will require addressing: 1) the types of housing that are permitted in the city, and 2) vacant and substandard housing. First, **updating the City’s Land Use Regulations will allow the construction of various housing types** that are desired both by existing and future residents. A range of housing types will also help accommodate homebuyers with evolving housing needs at different stages of life, highlighting the versatility in variety. Additionally, updating the regulations will allow for better use of the limited land available within the city limits.

Second, the City should **address the growing number of vacant and substandard houses** by keeping an active inventory of vacant and dilapidated homes, conducting periodic exterior inspections of housing, and implementing a proactive code enforcement strategy.

Table 10. Housing goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Build diverse housing types at a range of housing cost			
1. Review and update the zoning code to allow for a mixture of housing types like townhouses, apartments above commercial buildings, and accessory dwelling units.	Short term	WV Land Use Clinic, Consultant	New products like townhomes are built in Ravenswood.
2. Establish a fund to help cover closing costs for families wishing to purchase a house in Ravenswood.	Medium term	WV Housing Development Fund, Jackson County Housing Authority	Help cover closing costs of two families per year.
3. Apply to become a BUILD WV District to incentivize housing development in Ravenswood.	Medium term	Jackson County Development Authority	Become a certified BUILD WV District within two years.
4. Establish and fund a neighborhood rehabilitation fund to guarantee the repayment of loans made by private lenders with a focus on properties close to downtown, Ravenswood’s core asset.	Long term	RDA, Main Street, WV Housing Development Fund	Rehabilitate at least two homes a year using neighborhood rehabilitation funds.
Goal 2. Address vacant and substandard housing			
1. Maintain a citywide inventory of vacant and dilapidated homes.	Medium term	Jackson County Housing Authority	Update the inventory at least annually.
2. Conduct an exterior inspection of all owner- and renter-occupied housing every two years.	Medium term	RDA, Jackson County Housing Authority	Designing and executing an exterior inspection of housing within two years.
3. Survey residential property conditions for outwardly visible signs of neighborhood health like sagging porches and peeling paint to plan for appropriate neighborhood interventions.	Long term	Jackson County Housing Authority	Conducting a windshield survey of each house in the city for future neighborhood planning.

REVITALIZE AND ACTIVATE OUR DOWNTOWN

Why it matters

Downtowns are more than just a collection of retail, commercial, personal service, and employment centers. Downtowns are what people associate with the essence of a town and a rallying point for communities. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, the traditional downtown started to diminish as people preferred chain retail stores along highways. However, in the past two decades, many places have seen a resurgence in downtowns as the trend reverses and customers are favoring small, independent retail experiences where it is easy to stroll about and enjoy each other’s company.

This movement back towards main streets and downtowns matters because it provides an economic opportunity for communities like Ravenswood. Specifically, it matters to the marketability of Ravenswood. It matters in creating an active and vibrant downtown to attract and retain talented people and companies. It matters in expanding economic opportunities for small, local businesses. And it matters in creating a unique Ravenswood culture where residents are a community.



How to move forward

Downtown revitalization takes a high degree of cooperation. Building a partnership between City leadership, business owners, and stakeholders is critical to downtown’s success. Cultivating this partnership will take a vision for downtown. The long-term vision for downtown depicts four goals—a downtown that is:

- active and vibrant,
- the focus of community life,
- contains significant places and events, and
- maintains a strong link to the past.

At this time, Ravenswood should focus on developing its partnerships through the Main Street Approach and the four goals of the revitalizing downtown visions statement.

Downtown revitalization principles

- Create a long-term vision for downtown
- Build partnerships with City leadership, business owners, stakeholders, and the community
- Initiate incremental progress
- Mix land uses
- Create an attractive, walkable place
- Build on local assets

Figure 5. A potential gateway landmark on the Ritchie Bridge welcoming residents and screening the industrial uses below



Figure 6. A potential catalyst project downtown that activates the under used lot behind the J.A. McIntosh Building



Figure 7. A Bird's eye view of catalyst project at J.A. McIntosh (Hardware) Building



Table 11. Downtown revitalization goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Create an active and vibrant place			
1. Encourage temporary use of vacant lots downtown. For example, transform the lot next to Las Fajitas to a pocket park or outdoor café.	Short term	RDA, Main Street	The vacant lot becomes occupied or redeveloped.
2. Support redevelopment efforts downtown by eliminating regulatory barriers that inhibit growth downtown.	Short term	WVU Land Use Clinic, Consultant	Redevelopment projects are successfully completed.
3. Coordinate with DOH and invest in the streetscape along Washington Street to provide features like tree boxes, planters, and park benches.	Medium term	WV DOH, RDA, Main Street	Survey residents about the success of achieving downtown's vision.
4. Establish and invest in a façade improvement program by providing financial incentives to property owners and business owners to visually improve building frontage.	Medium term	RDA	Improve at least one façade per year.
5. Create shared parking and flexible parking minimums.	Medium term	WVU Land Use Clinic Consultant	Survey business owners and customers.
Goal 2. Serve as the focus of community life			
1. Allow a mix of uses within the downtown land use district and in the same building to allow commercial and residential uses in the same building.	Short term	WVU Land Use Clinic, Consultant	Provide additional housing in the community.
2. Encourage small businesses to open downtown by providing information and matchmaking services that help fill vacancies and establishing a loan fund.	Medium term	MOVRC	Relocate or start at least one new business downtown per year.
3. Redevelop 50% of 2nd and 3rd floors as residential lofts and offices	Long term	Private contractors, RDA	Residential units are occupied by long-term tenants or owners.
4. Carve out space downtown to create a pocket park as a central community space that encourages residents and visitors to congregate.	Long term	BOPARC, RDA	Survey visitors and residents about the entertainment and enjoyment of the park.
Goal 3. Host significant places and events			
1. Host kick-off events for festivals and other community events downtown	Short term	RDA, Main Street	Survey attendees and residents about the success of achieving downtown's vision.
2. Install public art at the corner of Washington and Walnut streets near the Ravenswood mural.	Medium term	Ravenswood High School, Ravenswood Landmark Commission	Survey residents and visitors about a potential demonstration project.
3. Carve out space for public gathering spaces, outdoor dining, and a gateway landmark to downtown behind the J.A. McIntosh building on the corner of Washington and Walnut streets.	Long term	BOPARC, RDA, Main Street	Survey residents and visitors about potential activities on the property.
Goal 4. Maintain a strong link to past			
1. Inform potential developers of properties within the Old Town Historic District that are eligible for tax credits and grants.	Short term	Ravenswood Landmark Commission	A complete inventory of eligible properties and property owners.
2. Leverage historic buildings downtown with tax credits to help cover costs of redevelopment.	Medium term	WV State Historic Preservation Office, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Ravenswood Landmark Commission	Secure funding to redevelop one historic property within 7 years.

19 ²Important: count how long spaces are being used. For example, determine whether they are empty most of the day except during peak hours.

IMPROVE AND CONNECT OUR OPEN SPACES

Why it matters

Parks provide a host of environmental, aesthetic, and recreational benefits as well as a space for meaningful social interaction for the community. The Ohio River and Riverfront Park in particular, provide economic development, recreational, and cultural benefits to the community, but they are not connected to downtown. By connecting these assets, Ravenswood can increase economic development by increasing the time visitors spend downtown and, ultimately, increase the money they spend downtown. Recreational benefits are increased as residents and visitors do not need to get in a car to visit another park or business. Parks also improve cultural benefits as access to local heritage attractions like the Great Bend Museum and historic downtown are enhanced.

How to move forward

For Ravenswood to fully leverage its parks, downtown, and recreational amenities, it needs to develop connections between these community assets. The accessibility and interconnectivity to these outdoor spaces will dictate how often they are used by residents and visitors. Many of these connections are currently in place, but additional work is required to increase the connections' visibility and use. Ravenswood should prioritize connecting downtown with Riverfront Park with a well-designed and marked path, as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 8. A potential sidewalk connection along Sand Street from downtown to South Point Park



Figure 9. A potential connected parks and community assets system



Table 12. Natural resources and connectivity goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Create a fully connected parks system that bridges community assets			
1. Improve streetscape along Sand Street to connect pedestrians between downtown and South Point Park.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey business owners, residents, and visitors about the improved connection.
2. Restripe residential streets to provide marked bike lanes and encourage connections between downtown, Ravenswood pool, and Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School.	Medium term	BOPARC	Reduced vehicular traffic at school.
3. Design a safe bike route from downtown to Ravenswood Grade School and the Kevin Clegg Trail System.	Long term	WV DOH, BOPARC	Increased mountain bike ridership and use of the Kevin Clegg Trail System.
Goal 2. Create easy to read wayfinding maps, signs, and landmarks			
1. Design and install easy-to-read signs that direct visitors to popular locations like parks, schools, parking, and downtown businesses.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey downtown customers and visitors about finding destinations.
2. Install a landmark and mark paths from downtown to the new pedestrian connection to South Point Park on Sand Street.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey pedestrians on the safety and convenience to walk downtown to Riverfront Park.
3. Install a gateway sign that can screen industrial uses from the Ritchie Bridge.	Long term	WV DOH, RDA	Survey residents and visitors about the attractiveness and welcoming along the bridge.



APPENDIX A: ACTION PLANS

Table 10. Housing goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Build diverse housing types at a range of housing cost			
1. Review and update the zoning code to allow for a mixture of housing types like townhouses, apartments above commercial buildings, and accessory dwelling units.	Short term	WV Land Use Clinic, Consultant	New products like townhomes are built in Ravenswood.
2. Establish a fund to help cover closing costs for families wishing to purchase a house in Ravenswood.	Medium term	WV Housing Development Fund, Jackson County Housing Authority	Help cover closing costs of two families per year.
3. Apply to become a BUILD WV District to incentivize housing development in Ravenswood.	Medium term	Jackson County Development Authority	Become a certified BUILD WV District within two years.
4. Establish and fund a neighborhood rehabilitation fund to guarantee the repayment of loans made by private lenders with a focus on properties close to downtown, Ravenswood's core asset.	Long term	RDA, Main Street, WV Housing Development Fund	Rehabilitate at least two homes a year using neighborhood rehabilitation funds.
Goal 2. Address vacant and substandard housing			
1. Maintain a citywide inventory of vacant and dilapidated homes.	Medium term	Jackson County Housing Authority	Update the inventory at least annually.
2. Conduct an exterior inspection of all owner- and renter-occupied housing every two years.	Medium term	RDA, Jackson County Housing Authority	Designing and executing an exterior inspection of housing within two years.
3. Survey residential property conditions for outwardly visible signs of neighborhood health like sagging porches and peeling paint to plan for appropriate neighborhood interventions.	Long term	Jackson County Housing Authority	Conducting a windshield survey of each house in the city for future neighborhood planning.

Table 11. Downtown revitalization goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Create an active and vibrant place			
1. Encourage temporary use of vacant lots downtown. For example, transform the lot next to Las Fajitas to a pocket park or outdoor café.	Short term	RDA, Main Street	The vacant lot becomes occupied or redeveloped.
2. Support redevelopment efforts downtown by eliminating regulatory barriers that inhibit growth downtown.	Short term	WV Land Use Clinic, Consultant	Redevelopment projects are successfully completed.
3. Coordinate with DOH and invest in the streetscape along Washington Street to provide features like tree boxes, planters, and park benches.	Medium term	WV DOH, RDA, BOPARC	Survey residents about the success of achieving downtown's vision.
4. Establish and invest in a façade improvement program by providing financial incentives to property owners and business owners to visually improve building frontage.	Medium term	RDA	Improve at least one façade per year.
5. Create shared parking and flexible parking minimums.	Medium term	WV Land Use Clinic Consultant	Survey business owners and customers.
Goal 2. Serve as the focus of community life			
1. Allow a mix of uses within the downtown land use district and in the same building to allow commercial and residential uses in the same building.	Short term	WV Land Use Clinic, Consultant	Provide additional housing in the community.
2. Encourage small businesses to open downtown by providing information and matchmaking services that help fill vacancies and establishing a loan fund.	Medium term	MOVRC	Relocate or start at least one new business downtown per year.
3. Redevelop 50% of 2nd and 3rd floors as residential lofts and offices	Long term	Private contractors, RDA	Residential units are occupied by long-term tenants or owners.
4. Carve out space downtown to create a pocket park as a central community space that encourages residents and visitors to congregate.	Long term	BOPARC, RDA	Survey visitors and residents about the entertainment and enjoyment of the park.
Goal 3. Host significant places and events			
1. Host kick-off events for festivals and other community events downtown	Short term	RDA, Main Street	Survey attendees and residents about the success of achieving downtown's vision.
2. Install public art at the corner of Washington and Walnut streets near the Ravenswood mural.	Medium term	Ravenswood High School, Ravenswood Landmark Commission	Survey residents and visitors about a potential demonstration project.
3. Carve out space for public gathering spaces, outdoor dining, and a gateway landmark to downtown behind the J.A. McIntosh building on the corner of Washington and Walnut streets.	Long term	BOPARC, RDA, Main Street	Survey residents and visitors about potential activities on the property.
Goal 4. Maintain a strong link to past			
1. Inform potential developers of properties within the Old Town Historic District that are eligible for tax credits and grants.	Short term	Ravenswood Landmark Commission	A complete inventory of eligible properties and property owners.
2. Leverage historic buildings downtown with tax credits to help cover costs of redevelopment.	Medium term	WV State Historic Preservation Office, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Ravenswood Landmark Commission	Secure funding to redevelop one historic property within 7 years.

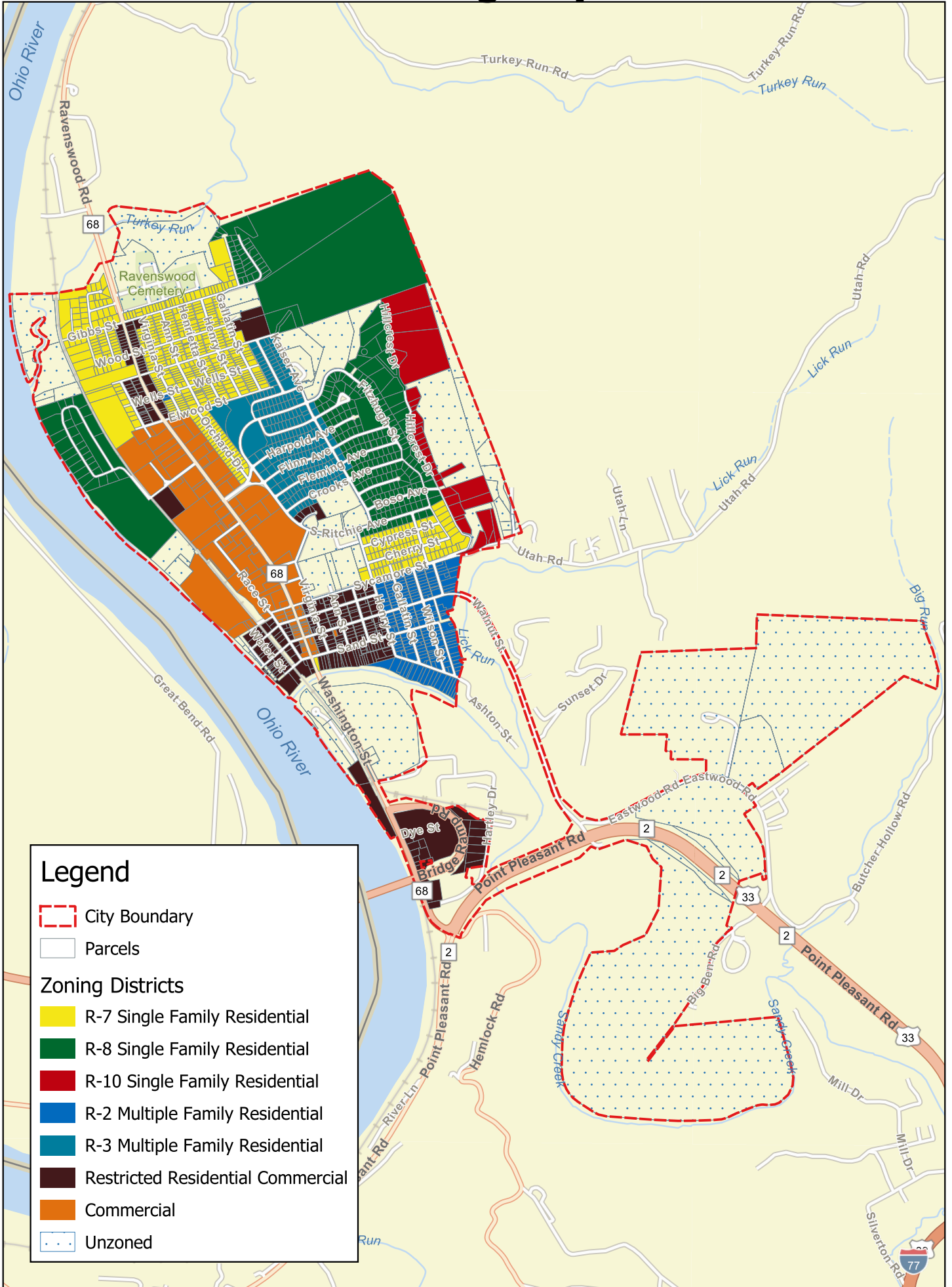
Table 12. Natural resources and connectivity goals

Goals and action items	Timeframe	Potential partners	Success indicator
Goal 1. Create a fully connected parks system that bridges community assets			
1. Improve streetscape along Sand Street to connect pedestrians between downtown and South Point Park.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey business owners, residents, and visitors about the improved connection.
2. Restripe residential streets to provide marked bike lanes and encourage connections between downtown, Ravenswood pool, and Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School.	Medium term	BOPARC	Reduced vehicular traffic at school.
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Goal 2. Create easy to read wayfinding maps, signs, and landmarks			
1. Design and install easy-to-read signs that direct visitors to popular locations like parks, schools, parking, and downtown businesses.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey downtown customers and visitors about finding destinations.
2. Install a landmark and mark paths from downtown to the new pedestrian connection to South Point Park on Sand Street.	Medium term	RDA, Main Street, BOPARC	Survey pedestrians on the safety and convenience to walk downtown to Riverfront Park.
3. Install a gateway sign that can screen industrial uses from the Ritchie Bridge.	Long term	WV DOH, RDA	Survey residents and visitors about the attractiveness and welcoming along the bridge.

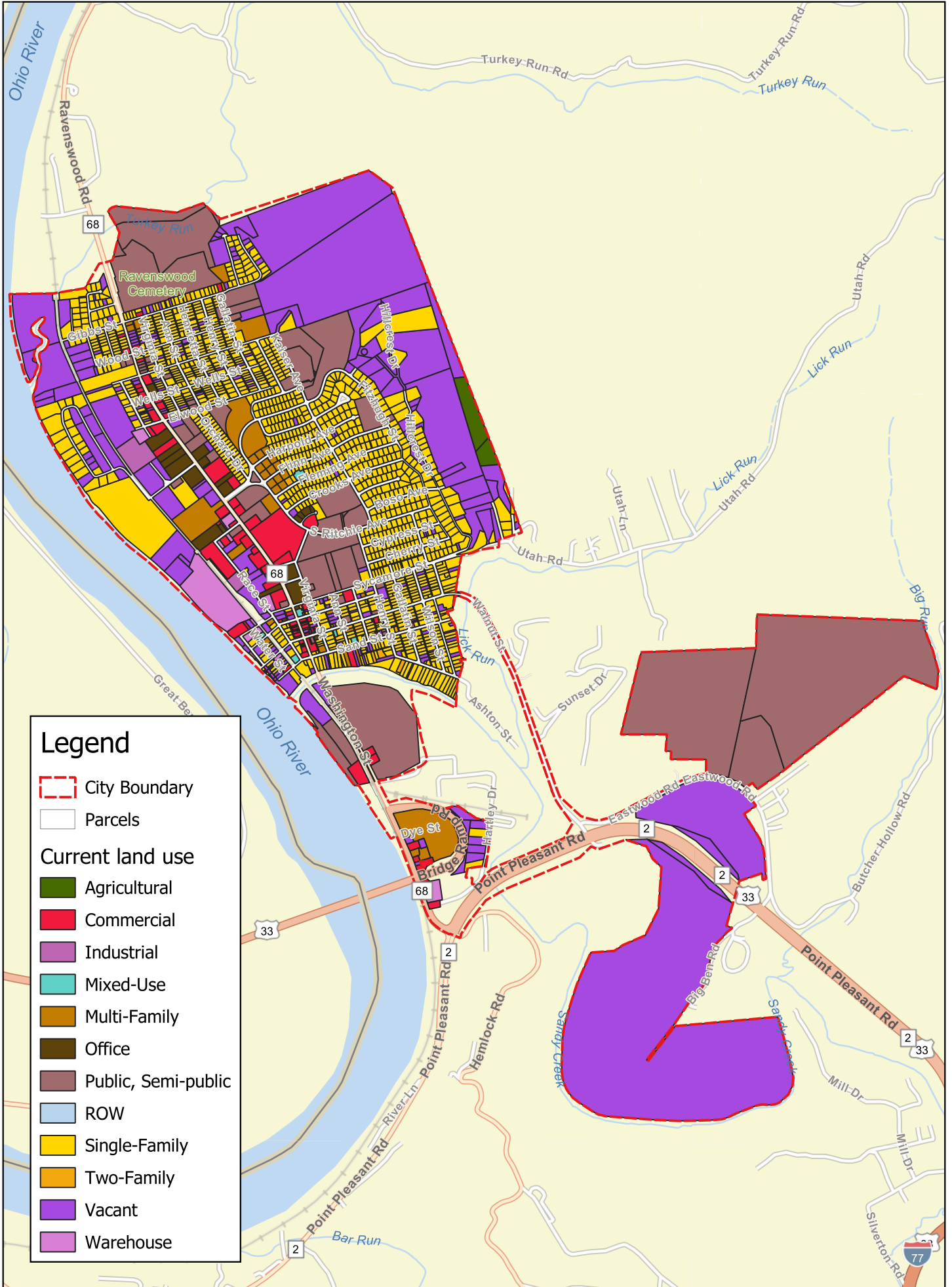
APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL MAPS

See following pages.

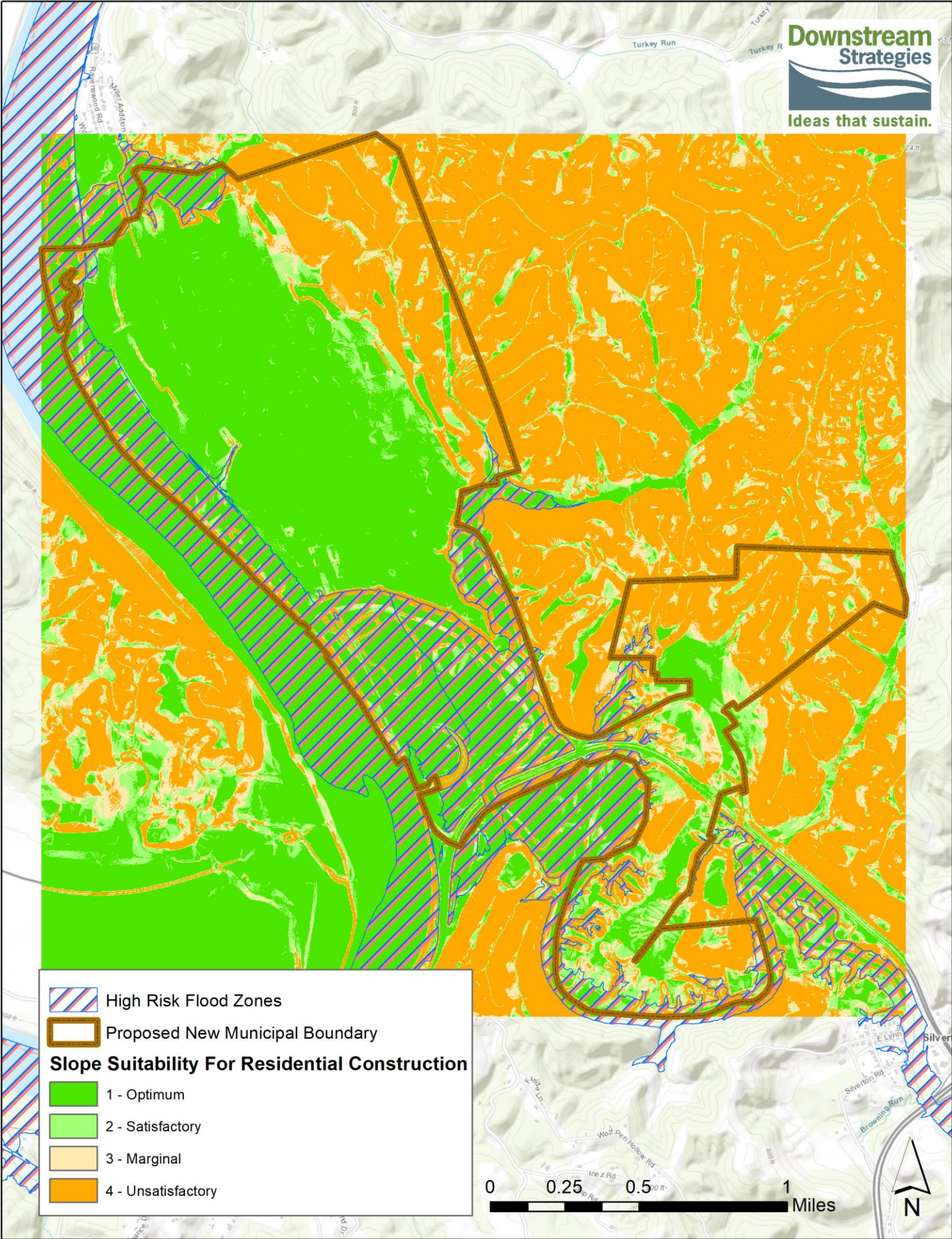
Zoning Map



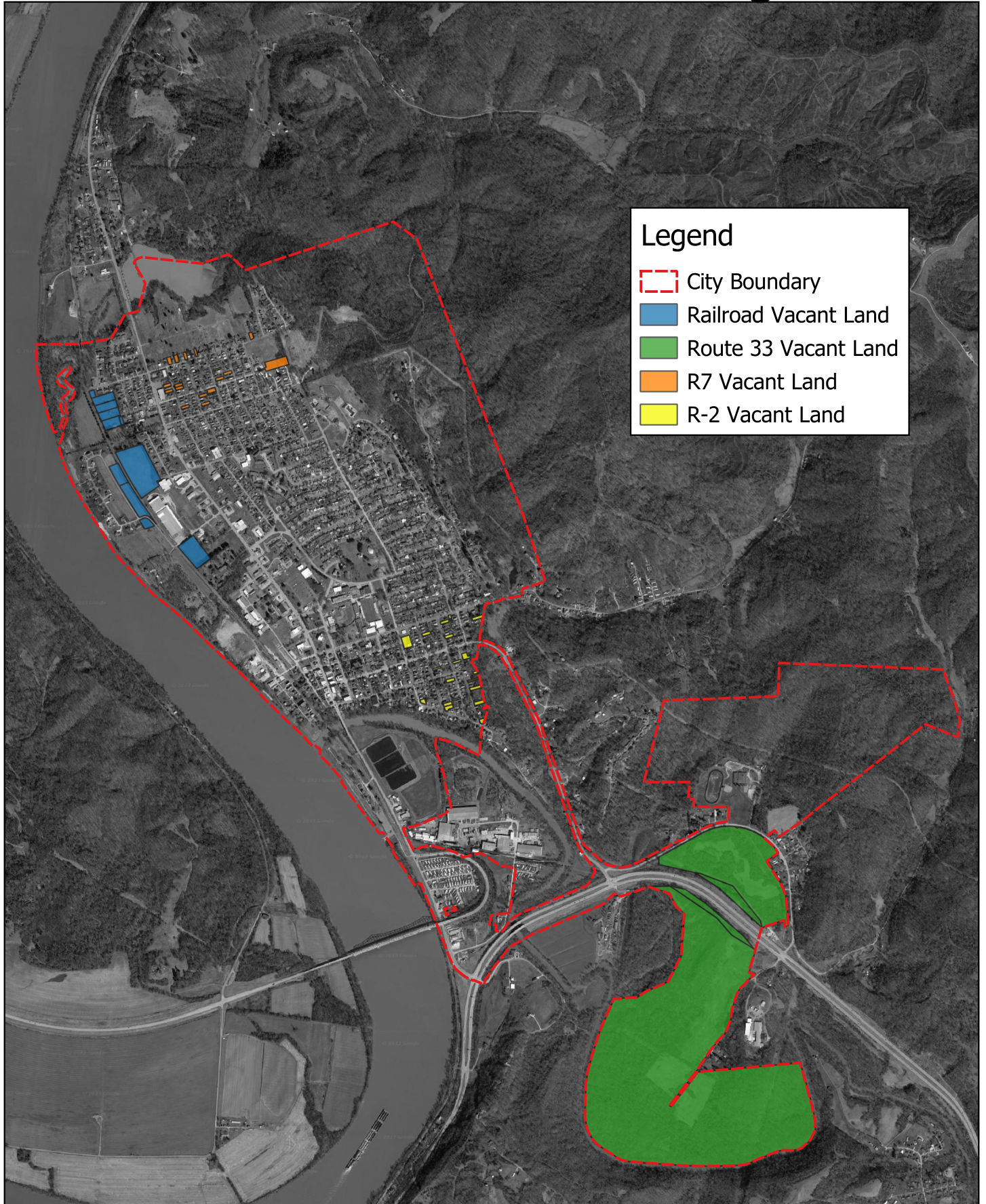
Current Land Use



Environmental Constraints



Suitable Land for Housing

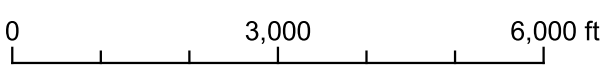


Legend

- City Boundary
- Railroad Vacant Land
- Route 33 Vacant Land
- R7 Vacant Land
- R-2 Vacant Land

Suitable land means land that is not located on either the 100-year Floodplain as defined by FEMA or steep slopes of 12% or greater.

Vacant land means land that is designated for residential use or unzoned with a market improvement value of less than \$10,000 according to the Jackson County Assessor Office.



APPENDIX C: HOUSEHOLD SPENDING ANALYSIS

See following pages.

Additional households and household spending analysis

Prepared by:

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September 20, 2023

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BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2022, BHE Renewables and Precision Castparts announced the construction of a modern titanium melt facility powered by a first-of-its-kind solar energy microgrid with other large manufacturers coming to the area. Then, in 2023, another large manufacturer, Our Next Energy, announced it would locate its battery storage system manufacturing facility outside Ravenswood. Together these manufacturing facilities will bring 1,000 full-time jobs to the surrounding area.

This analysis forecasts the number of households and spending in the city of Ravenswood because of these 1,000 full-time jobs.

Households locating in Ravenswood

Downstream Strategies developed a model to estimate the regional geographic distribution of households from 1,000 additional jobs at the new Berkshire Hathaway Energy project located outside of Ravenswood. The model incorporated commuter metrics and population estimates for the towns and cities within a one-hour drive time using the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and the relative drive time and the population size of each city or town interacting in locational choices.

Table 1: Estimated households, employment, and population from 1,000 jobs at new Berkshire Hathaway Energy project

	Low	High
Total households	70	117
Second jobs from new households	41	68
Employment from new households	111	185
Total population	162	271

Source: Downstream Strategies analysis

The scenarios developed from the model estimated that between 70 and 117 new households could locate within the city of Ravenswood. This analysis assumes that households would adjust their preferences for housing based on the region's housing market. The total population associated with these new households is estimated to be between 175 and nearly 300. Additionally, with second jobs and other income sources, the total annual income associated with these new households is estimated to be between \$7.5 and \$12.5 million.

Spending from new households within a 30-minute drive

For this phase of the analysis, Downstream Strategies developed a scenario to estimate the total new spending from the new households located within a 30-minute drive time of the city of Ravenswood. According to the existing commuting patterns of regional households surveyed by the U.S. Census Bureau, the modeled scenario estimates that more than 42 percent, or 420, of the workers would find housing within a 30-minute commute of the city of Ravenswood.

A total income of nearly \$45.5 million is estimated to accrue to the households within a 30-minute drive time of the Berkshire Hathaway Energy project. This amount includes income from additional jobs in some households as noted above. Adjusting this total income to account for taxes, purchases of goods and services not produced or provided in the region, and household savings results in 59 percent of the total income, or \$26.6 million being spent in the local economy.

The distribution of spending in this analysis is derived from consumer spending surveys by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. This distribution, shown below in Table 2, includes both the estimate for the total regional spending of \$26.6 million, and the \$13.5 million of total spending for selected sectors that are relevant for a vibrant downtown. Based on the spending patterns for households with an income between \$100,000 and \$150,000, Downstream Strategies’ analysis estimates that \$7.2 million of the new household spending will be spent on health care and social services, \$3.7 million will be spent on retail trade, and \$2.2 million will be spent at restaurants, catering, and other food services. Also, the number of additional jobs generated from this spending is based on ratios of spending to employment in the industry sectors. However, these ratios will vary depending on the specific types of business models entrepreneurs pursue and the sub-sectors those businesses fill. The types of business models as well as the specific focus of the business activity will also determine the square feet needed and number of businesses.

Table 2: Total potential spending from new households within a 30-minute drive of Ravenswood

Sector	Total sales	Additional Jobs	New square feet needed	New businesses
Total Local Spending	\$26,600,000			
Total (Selected Sectors)	\$13,500,000	130		
Retail	\$3,700,000	41	12,000 - 18,500	4 - 8
Professional Services	\$300,000	3	400 – 600	1 - 2
Health Care and social services	\$7,200,000	56	8,400 – 11,200	1 - 2
Restaurants etc.	\$2,200,000	30	11,200 – 15,000	5 - 7

Source: US Census County Business Patterns (2020), IMPLAN, Downstream Strategies analysis

Potential void in restaurant services

Downstream Strategies explored the potential for restaurants in the Ravenswood area to capture additional business activity. Additional revenues may be generated from increased spending from new households in the area, capturing more of the revenues from the spending of existing local households, and from people visiting the region.

The results in Table 2 indicate a void associated specifically with the restaurant spending potential new households within the 30-minute drive time of downtown Ravenswood. This void could be filled with an increase in the number of restaurants or in the square feet of space currently used by existing restaurants.

A scenario modeled from this void suggests that 20 employees in the restaurant business could be added. This scenario is based on ratios of restaurant sales per employee in West Virginia. Additionally, the addition reflects an increase in 10,000 square feet of restaurant space. This could be achieved by expanding the seating space of the existing restaurants or by adding one to three additional restaurants.

Another scenario, using estimates of the total dollars spent on eating-out by households, suggests even more activity than the sales per employee rate. Specifically, if restaurants in Ravenswood can match the metrics of some other cities in West Virginia in its ability to capture interest from additional out-of-town patrons, the restaurant sector could capture additional revenues. Based on current estimates, restaurants in Ravenswood appear to be serving about one out of every five non-





local patrons. Some tourism focused cities in West Virginia appear to be able to capture two or even three out of five of their patrons from outside the region.



If restaurants in Ravenswood have the same average rate of sales to visitors observed from the higher tier of tourism focused cities in West Virginia, the restaurant sales in Ravenswood area could increase their revenues by more than \$7 million. This increase in activity could support 70 or more restaurant jobs. An alternative measure would suggest four or five additional restaurants could be added to the region with the increase in visitors.

Available real estate

As noted above in Table 1, there are opportunities for additional commerce and health care services in Ravenswood and the immediate area. In this final section of the economic analysis, Downstream Strategies provides a summary of the existing real estate available for these businesses. A thriving and walkable downtown is a valuable resource, and this analysis focuses on three or four potential buildings that could be adapted to fill the region’s needs for health services, dining opportunities, and in-person shopping.

Table 3: Available real estate for new businesses downtown

Health Care and Social Services			
Health care and social service facilities create activity and will introduce people to the downtown. In addition, people coming in for appointments may purchase goods, other services, or enjoy a meal.			
	Square Feet	Description	Address
	4,590	Three floors. Main floor for appointment rooms. Additional floors for offices and material storage, or apartments on upper floors.	240 Washington Street
	9,112	The main floor has a large open space and could be used for an open waiting room with appointment rooms in the back. Second floor could hold office space or be converted to apartments	241 Washington Street
Restaurants and drinking establishments			
	9,112	The main floor has a great open space for eating. Kitchen and food prep space in the back is possible.	241 Washington Street
	937 1,378	Space with views of Washington Street. Potential for an intimate eating environment.	229 Washington Street

Retail or other commerce			
	9,112	This building has an appealing facade and with large open windows could create a comfortable shopping environment.	241 Washington Street
	937 1,378	These spaces could be modeled to provide small in-person shopping or community building opportunities. An outside the box opportunity for these spaces could include escape rooms.	229 Washington Street