



# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

*September 2014*



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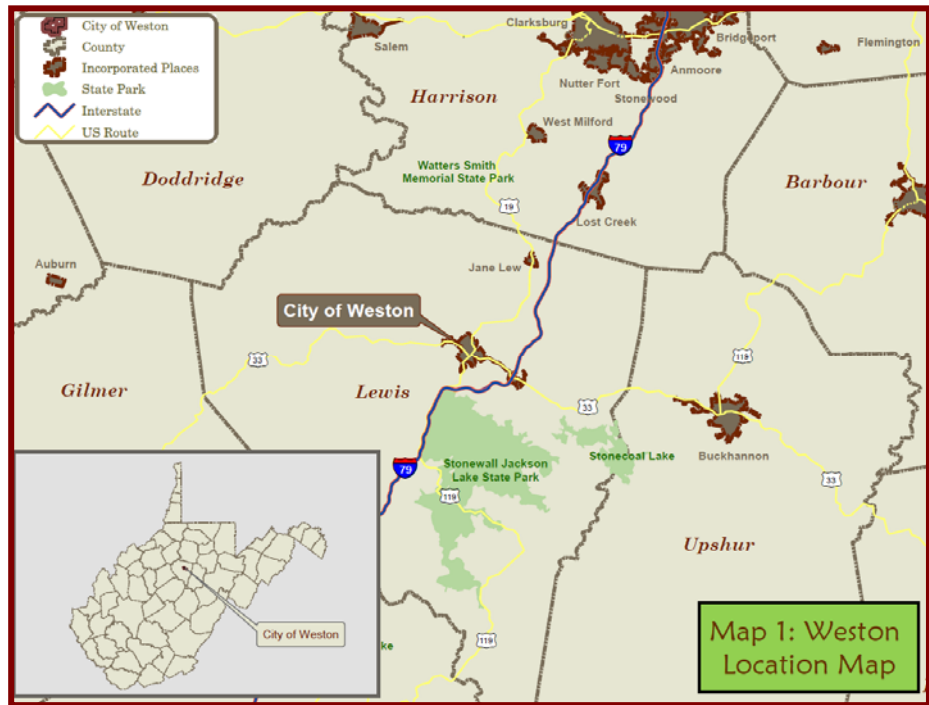
# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

## *Chapter 1: Introduction*

*September 2014*

# Chapter One: Introduction

**W**eston serves as the county seat for Lewis County. The City lies along the West Fork River at its confluence with Stonecoal and Polk Creeks. According to the United States Census Bureau, Weston contains a total area of 1.7 square miles. U.S. Interstate 79 and U.S. Routes 19, 33, and 119 travel through Weston, as shown on *Figure 1: Location map of the City of Weston*.



*Figure 1: Location map of the City of Weston*

The City was founded on January 1, 1818 by an Act of the (then) Virginia Assembly, and originally named Preston in honor of the then governor (James Patton Preston). When a new county was formed shortly thereafter and also named “Preston”, the Assembly acted in early 1819 to change the City’s name to

Fleshersville. That name displeased the now former “Prestonians”, and in late 1819 the Assembly changed the name to Weston. The City was formally incorporated in 1846 when the Assembly adopted the first charter.



Weston can boast more than a few impressive buildings and institutions, and also nearby developments. Within the City, there is first and foremost the former Weston State Hospital, an enormous building built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that served as a state-run psychiatric facility until 1994. It is a National Historic Landmark. Another exceptional structure is the Citizens Bank, whose 50-foot high edifice exemplifies the Art Deco style and whose magnificent interior consists, among numerous exotic furnishings, of original ornamental plasterwork of the Great Seal and map of West

Virginia on the ceiling of its south lobby. Still other notable buildings include the “Riverboat Gothic” mansion that houses the Louis Bennett Public Library, the United States Post Office that features a classical revival architecture, and the imposing Masonic Temple with its modified neo-classic design. Weston also has two museums – the West Virginia Museum of American Glass and the Mountaineer Military Museum.

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Jackson's Mill, childhood home of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, is approximately five miles north of Weston. The Mill has been operated as a 4-H facility since the 1920s and is also the site of a conference center operated by the West Virginia Extension Service.

Established in 1990, the Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park, located ten miles south of Weston, comprises the Stonewall Jackson Lake with its marina and eighty-eight miles of shoreline, and the Stonewall Jackson Resort with its Arnold Palmer Signature golf course. In addition to amenities for families and tourists, the Resort can accommodate business conferences, while the Lake and surrounding land provide for several other recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, and camping.

For the better part of its history, from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Weston had great economic potential and enjoyed a sustained prosperity that was due in no small part to the establishment of the State Hospital, the building of local railroads, the resulting boom of the regional lumber industry, and the discovery of oil and gas deposits. Even more importantly, the subsequent emergence and success of local glass manufacturing – the first factory appearing in 1902 – gained for Weston first a national and then an international reputation for glassware, much of it hand-blown. This local industry reached its zenith in the 1950s and 1960s. But thereafter it began to suffer from increased competition and foreign imports that eventually caused an irreversible decline that saw one glass company after another fail or close. The City's overall economy naturally suffered in tandem. As of the new millennium, its branded commercial enterprise and mainstay was no more.

Today Weston continues to struggle to rebuild its economic potential and restore a much needed prosperity.

## Purpose

Weston established a Planning Commission in 2008 and set out to develop a Comprehensive Plan. In 2011, the Planning Commission developed the city's first ever Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide an official long-range vision for the City of Weston. The plan also provides a basis for policies and ordinances to help facilitate public and private land use within the city of Weston. The 2011 Comprehensive Plan helped provide guidance in decision-making, provided continuity over time, and established a baseline for decisions concerning the community as a whole. The Plan was intended to be implemented as a 10-year program with an update in five years.

In 2012, the Planning Commission decided that it was now time to continue the planning efforts and implement the 2011

In an effort to adopt a new direction and vision for our city, it is vital that the Planning Commission research all the possible resources available to enable the City to capitalize on economic development opportunities along the I-79 corridor.

*- 2011 City of Weston Comprehensive Plan*

# Chapter One: Introduction

Comprehensive Plan by enacting zoning regulations. The Planning Commission contacted the West Virginia University College of Law to see if the law school could provide assistance. The newly formed Land Use and Sustainable Development (LUSD) Law Clinic at the College of Law agreed to assist the City of Weston in developing zoning regulations.

The LUSD Law Clinic first completed a thorough review of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the plan complies with the West Virginia Code. The LUSD Law Clinic updated the plan to include all of the mandatory elements described in Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning. This process started in early 2013 and was completed in 2014.



This Comprehensive Plan simply updates the 2011 plan completed by the Planning Commission. This updated plan contains some substantive revisions and includes mandatory components, as well as mapping. The plan incorporates public input received in 2011, as well as additional input solicited during 2013 and 2014 in accordance with the Code.

## Comprehensive Planning

A Comprehensive Plan is a plan for physical development adopted by a governing body, setting forth guidelines, goals, and objectives for all activities that affect growth and development in the governing body's jurisdiction. A plan sets a realistic action strategy that recommends policies to protect key assets that are important to the community. The plan reflects community values and input from citizens gathered during public participation.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Weston provides the blueprint for guiding the growth of the community through 2023 and the "vision" of the City's future. The Plan seeks to accomplish coordinated, orderly and harmonious development of the City while serving the community's needs in a well-planned manner. Public health, safety, and overall quality of life in the City of Weston form the focus of the plan. One goal involves maintaining Weston's small-town atmosphere. The plan consists of various elements with particular emphasis on beautification and encouragement of arts.

This plan provides the basis for land use planning in the City. The success of this plan depends on the private sector, the dedicated members of the City's staff, and the people who comprise the City's Boards and Commissions.

### *West Virginia Context*



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Local governments in West Virginia receive the authority to plan from the West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning. This chapter gives local governments the authority to develop a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is required if governing bodies want to enact a zoning ordinance, subdivision and land development ordinance, require plans and plats for land development, and issue improvement location permits for construction. Local governments must update plans every ten years.

The tables on the following pages detail the mandatory elements and where they can be found in the City of Weston Comprehensive Plan.

<b>Required Objectives for a Comprehensive Plan</b>	
<i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4</i>	
<b>Code Provision</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
Statement of goals and objectives	Chapter 3 and 4
Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives	Chapter 4
Action plan with implementation strategies	Chapter 4
Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding	Chapter 4 (4-19 to 4-23)
Statement of recommendations concerning future land use and development policies	Chapter 4
A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation	Chapter 4 (4-12, 4-13, 4-19)
Maps, plats, and/or charts- that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses	Chapter 2 and 4

# Chapter One: Introduction

<b>Required Components for a Comprehensive Plan</b>	
<i>W. VA. Code §8A-3-4©</i>	
<b>Code Provision</b>	<b>Page #</b>
<b><i>Land Use</i></b>	
Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, conservation)	2-12, 2-13, 4-12, 4-13
Population density and building intensity standards	2-2, 2-12, 4-12, 4-13
Growth or decline management	2-2, 4-12, 4-13
Projected population growth or decline	2-2
Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas)	2-14, 2-15
<b><i>Housing</i></b>	
Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities)	3-4, 3-5
Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed	3-5
Address substandard housing	3-4, 3-5, 4-3, 4-4, 4-9, 4-10, 4-11
Rehabilitate and improve existing housing	3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 4-3, 4-4, 4-9, 4-10, 4-11
Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing	3-4, 3-5, 4-12
<b><i>Transportation</i></b>	
Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode	2-11, 2-12, 3-8, 3-9, 4-16, 4-17, 4-18
Movement of traffic and parking	2-11, 2-12, 3-8, 3-9, 4-17, 4-18
Pedestrian and bicycle systems	2-12, 3-8, 3-9, 4-16, 4-17
Intermodal transportation	2-11, 2-12, 3-8, 3-9, 4-17
<b><i>Economic development</i></b>	
Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses	2-5, 3-3, 3-4, 4-8, 4-9
Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors	3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6
Identify types of economic development sought	3-3, 3-4, 4-8, 4-9
<b><i>Miscellaneous Components</i></b>	
Infrastructure	2-8, 3-7, 4-12
Public Services	2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-9, 2-10, 4-4, 4-11
Rural	4-12
Recreation	2-12, 3-8, 4-15, 4-16
Community Design	4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-8, 4-9
Preferred development areas	4-10
Renewal and/or redevelopment	4-3, 4-10, 4-11
Financing	Implementation Matrix
Historic preservation	2-16, 2-17, 3-4, 4-6, 4-7



# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

## *Chapter 2: Community Snapshot*

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# Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

## Demographic Profile

### *Population*

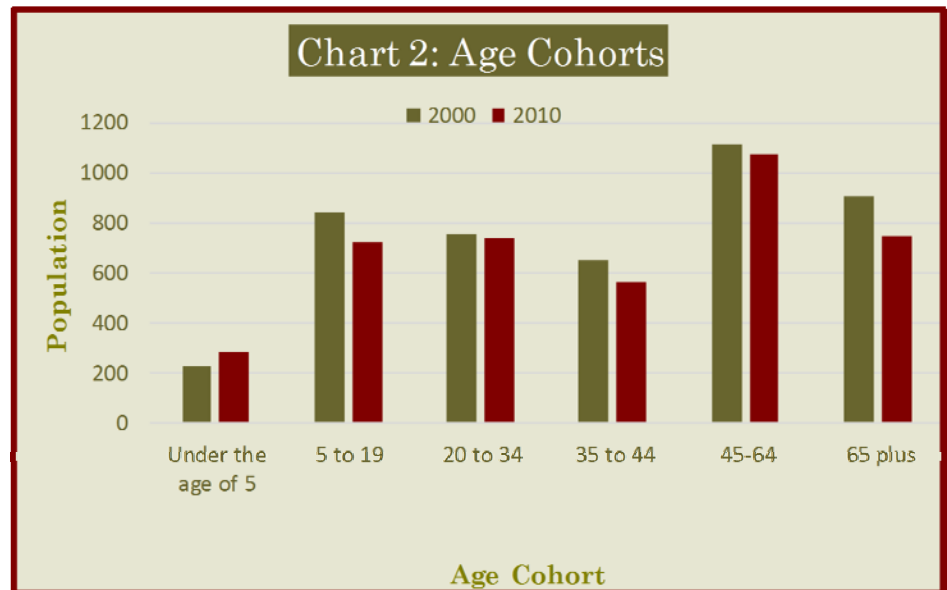
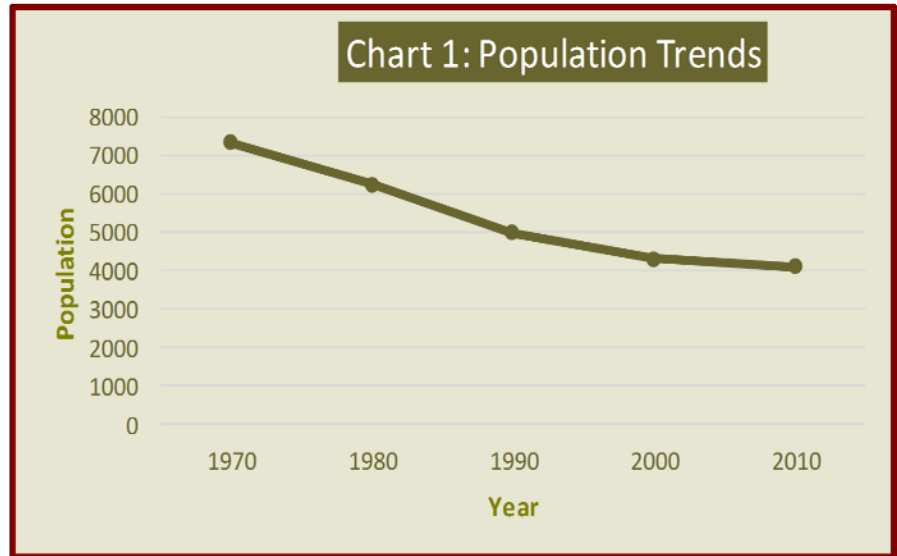
The City has consistently lost population every census year as shown on *Chart 1: Population Trends*. According to the US Census, the City of Weston's population in 2012 was 4,110 people, a significant decrease from the 1970 population of over 7,000.

Projecting population can be difficult as many models do not take into account economic circumstances. Also, West Virginia has not yet developed population projections for incorporated areas. In 2011 the WVU-College of Business and Economics completed population projections for all of the counties. The projections for Lewis County show a decrease over the next 20 years, with a total loss of 5.3 percent by 2030. To develop Weston's population projections, past population counts were examined:

- 1980-1990-20% population loss
- 1990-2000-14% population loss
- 2000-2010-5% population loss

The US Census had predicted minimal population loss in 2012, less than 1 percent. Therefore, a conservative estimate of population change would be a between a 1 and 5 percent loss by 2030.

Weston includes a high number of residents that are in the 45-64 age group, as shown on *Chart 2: Age Cohorts*. These residents are classified as baby boomers and are typically well established in the community with higher incomes and home ownership. Many in this age group have older children, which most likely are leaving the City, as evidenced in the drop of residents in the Age 5 to 19 cohort. The 45-64 age group, as it ages, will require different services, such as public transit, accessible medical facilities, and retirement housing. The 20 to 44 age group is important to the City as well. This group makes up the bulk of the labor force, purchases large items (cars, homes, etc), and are most likely to start a family. Some already have children. Since 2000, the number of people in this age group has been decreasing. This situation further impacts the number of young children in the age 5 to 19 age group. This decrease in school children impacts the Lewis County Board of Education's plans for school district enrollments, as well as the City's plans for services for a younger population.

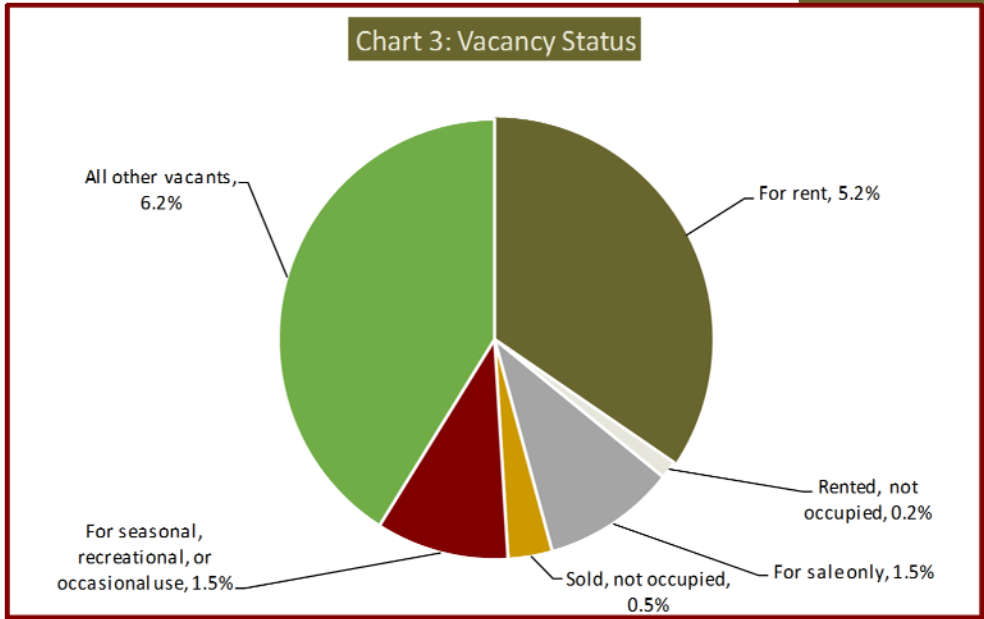


## Housing

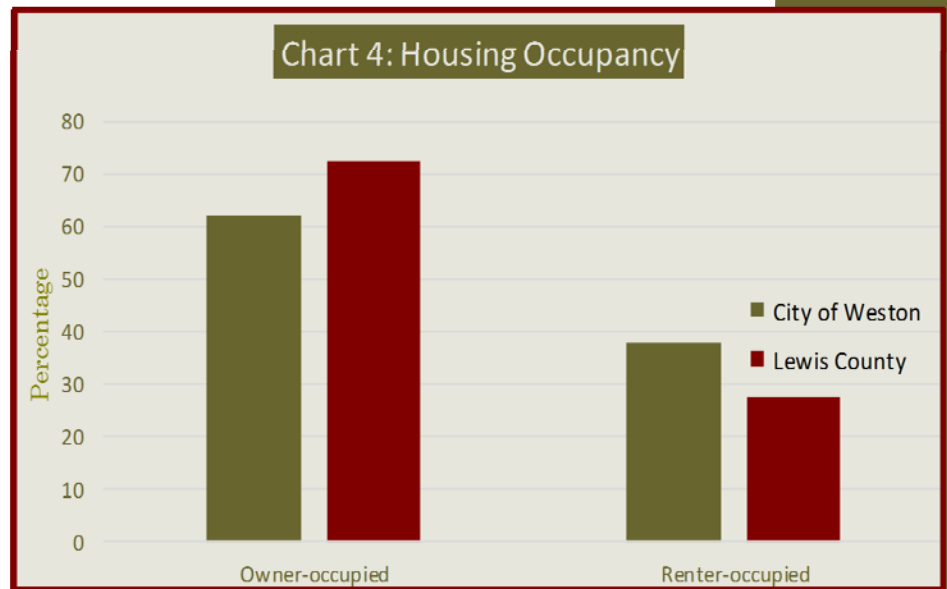
2,135 housing units exist within the City of Weston. Of those units, 85 percent are occupied and 15 percent are vacant. Vacancies can negatively affect residential neighborhoods. The high vacancy rate indicates that economic circumstances and housing type and condition are such that many people choose not to live within the municipal boundaries or move elsewhere. The vacancy rate in 2000 was 12.3 percent, which further illustrates Weston's housing market issues.

The majority of vacant homes fall into the category of "all other vacants" as illustrated on *Chart 3: Vacancy Status*. According to the US Census bureau the term "all other vacants" refers to units held vacant for personal reasons by the owner. Common reasons include:

- No one lives in the unit and the owner is making repairs
- Owner does not want to rent or sale
- Owner using the home for storage
- Owner is elderly and living in a nursing home or elsewhere

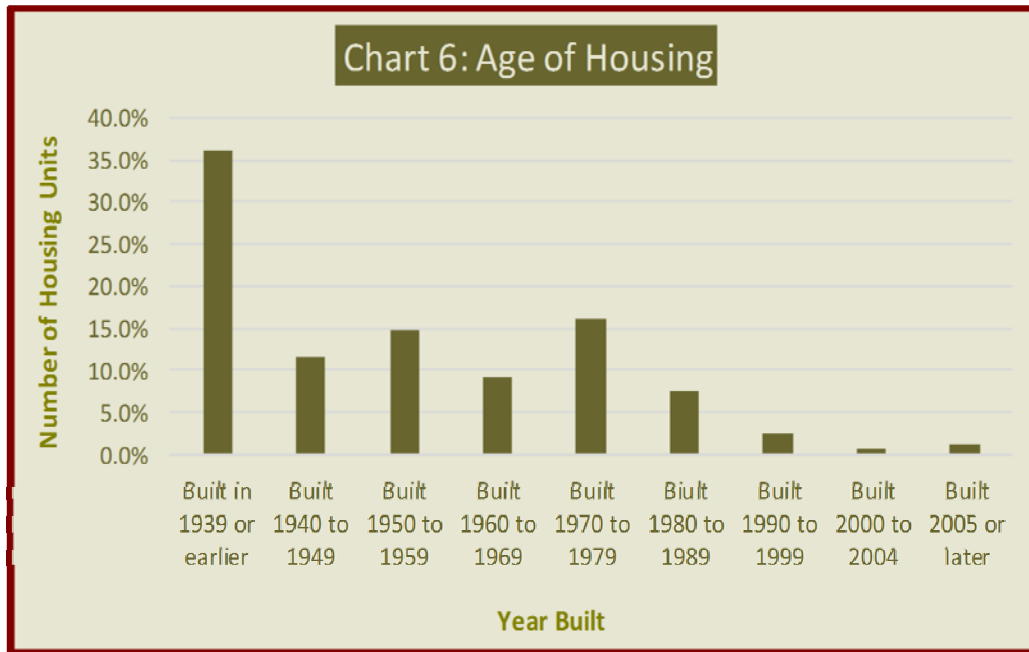
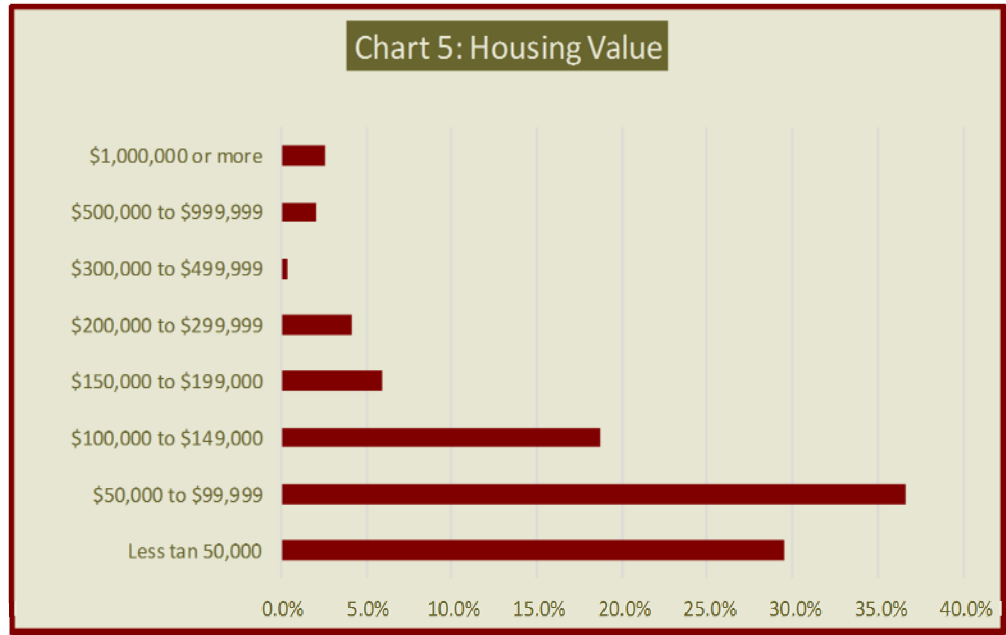


Rentals comprise the next highest level of vacancies. Many factors contribute to vacant rental properties. Too many rental units may exist, the cost of rentals may be too high, or the poor condition of rental units may cause a high vacancy rate. Owners occupy 62 percent of occupied units, with 38 percent renter-occupied units, as shown on *Chart 4: Housing Occupancy*. The percentage of renter-occupied units in the City exceeds the percentage in the County. Home-owners tend to take better care of their home whereas renters may not stay in the community as long, or have a stake in the appearance and quality of the home.



# Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

Housing value in a community gauges overall health of the housing market. The median housing value in Weston is \$76,900 according to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey. This value is significantly lower than the \$96,500 median value for West Virginia. *Chart 5: Housing Value* illustrates that majority of the homes in Weston are valued between \$50,000-\$99,999. A significant portion of the homes are also valued at less than \$50,000.



Weston’s housing stock is also considerably older, with over 35 percent built in 1939 or earlier. Few homes have been built since 1990 as shown on *Chart 6: Age of Housing*. The age, and ultimately condition, of the older homes could explain the lower housing value in Weston.

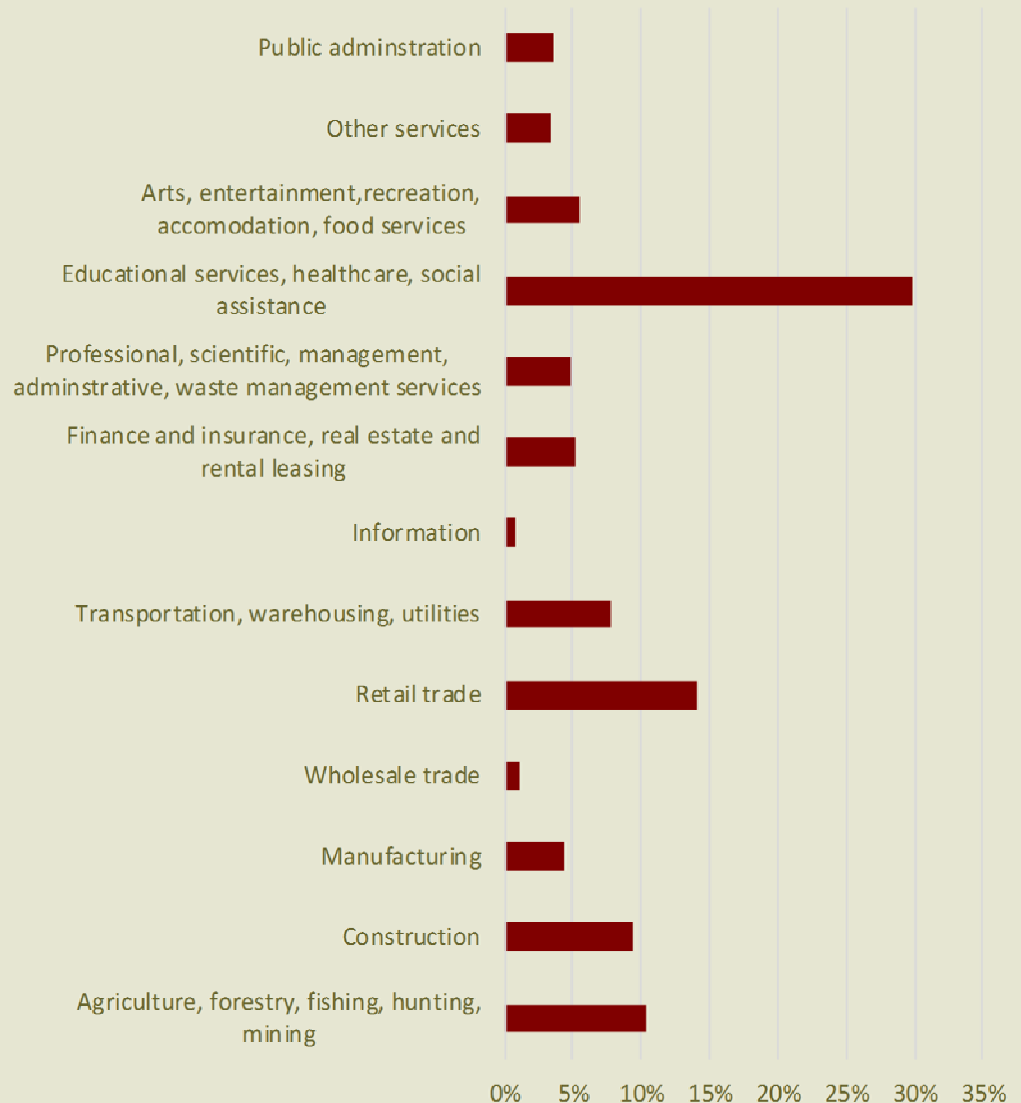
## Economic

Lewis County had a 6.2 percent unemployment rate in March 2012, which is slightly lower than West Virginia's rate of 7.6 percent. Many of the top employers in the County are located within the City of Weston. Healthcare and education seem to be the biggest economic generators within the County and in Weston. Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance industry employ the majority of residents, as displayed on *Chart 7: Employment by Industry*. These types of industries tend to typically pay higher wages than others, such as retail trade. However, median household income in Weston (\$31,359) fails to reflect the leading industries in the area. West Virginia's average income of \$39,550, as well as Lewis County's average income of \$34,617 outpace the City's median household income. The lack of quality housing may contribute to the lower median household income in the City.

### Top 10 Employers in Lewis County

1. Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital
2. Lewis County Board of Education
3. William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital
4. iPacesetters, LLC
5. Benchmark Conference Centers of West Virginia, Inc.
6. Nabors Well Service Company
7. West Virginia Department of Highways
8. Superior Well Services, Inc.
9. Wal-Mart
10. Schlumberger Technology Corporation

### Chart 7: Employment by Industry



# Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

## City Government

**The City of Weston is the Lewis County Seat and the largest incorporated area in the County.**

The City of Weston is governed by the manager-council-manager system. Council appoints a City Manager to administer the day-to-day operations of the City. Council consists of four members that each represent a ward within city limits. The mayor is elected by residents and is a member and presiding officer of Council. Revenue that the City collects includes a municipal fee on residential and commercial buildings, business and occupation tax on businesses and commerce done within the city, excise taxes on utilities, and other miscellaneous charges.

There are three departments within the City of Weston government. These departments include the police department, street department, and fire department. A sanitary board operates independently of the City as the sewage system has been expanded past city limits.

Several volunteer boards also exist within the City. The boards include the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Cemetery Board.

The Planning Commission is charged with creating and updating the Comprehensive Plan for the City. The Commission has also led several planning efforts, such as a city-wide cleanup, renovation of Lively Park, and continued development of parks in each of the four wards. The City presently contains no land use regulations. The Planning Commission, however, is considering developing a zoning ordinance after the update to the Comprehensive Plan is complete.

The Weston Economic Development Authority is charged with promoting and encouraging growth in the City. The main goals of the authority include housing, new business, and annexation.

The Historic Landmark Committee seeks to inform citizens and visitors of the historic value in the city limits. Current projects include a walking tour map and historical signage.

The Cemetery Board sells burial plots for Macpelah Cemetery, which is located on US Route 19 in the northern portion of the City. The board maintains the Cemetery.

## *Public Safety*

The police department and fire department meet the public safety needs of the community. It is the intention of the City of Weston to continue to maintain the current level of service it provides its residents.

## Police Department

The City of Weston Police Department consists of five (5) full-time police officers and one (1) part-time officer. The department patrols and responds to calls only within city limits. In 2012, the Department responded to over 2,000 calls. Most commonly, people call to speak to an officer



for advice. Other calls include traffic accidents and crimes. The department receives funding through the business and occupation tax, the City's general fund, and citations.

## Fire Department

The Weston Fire Department was established in 1921. A total of 38 active volunteers serve 224 square miles. Not only does the fire department serve the City of Weston, but also the entire length of I-79 in Lewis County. In 2012, the fire department received 479 calls, of which one-third were motor vehicle accidents. Other calls include structure fires and

public service calls (downed power lines, gas leaks, etc.). Funding sources include the City of Weston, the state, insurance tax, county fire fee, and fundraising. The department has mutual aid agreements with Buckhannon and Gilmer County. The fire department also serves as the emergency shelter for the City of Weston.



## Lewis County Ambulance Service

The Lewis County Ambulance Service provides emergent pre-hospital care to residents throughout Lewis County, including the City of Weston (Lewis County, 2014).

## Lewis County Office of Emergency Management

The Lewis County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and mitigation. The office is activated during emergencies to respond and coordinate materials and assistance needed by local emergency services (Lewis County Office of Emergency Management, 2014).

## *Street Department*

The Street Department employs 9 full-time and 2 part-time employees. The department maintains approximately 14 miles of roadway. The majority of the budget derives from municipal fees. The department also receives funding from Federal Highways.

Current projects of the department include repairing sidewalks, separating storm water from sewage water, and improvements to all city streets. The department is

# Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

also in the process of tearing down dilapidated buildings and hosting a yearly city-wide clean-up.

## *Utilities*

The City of Weston owns and operates the sewage system for the City and surrounding areas. The system operates in accordance with the rules and regulations governing public utilities. In 2000, a new sanitary plant was built. The 12 million dollar project also extended the system to several out-of-town communities. The sewage system has approximately 4,000 subscribers. The City is also in the process of acquiring Jane Lew's sewage system.

West Virginia Water provides water service to the City. Other utilities include natural gas, provided by Dominion and electric, provided by Mon Power.

Phone service is provided by Frontier and Shentel provides internet and cable.

## Education

School-aged children attend the Lewis County School district. The district includes one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. Three of the schools are located within Weston: Peterson Central Elementary, Robert Bland Middle School, and Lewis County High School. One private school, St. Patrick Catholic School, exists in the City. The school, located on Center Avenue, was built in 1914 and consists of pre-school and kindergarten through sixth grade. The total enrollment is 148 students.

The Lewis County School District employs 370 people. A total of 2,610 students attend the district. Athletic programs offered include wrestling, boys and girls basketball and soccer, volleyball, track, baseball, softball, and football.

Lewis County High School was built in 1994 on Route 19 south of Weston and serves grades nine through twelve.

Approximately 800 students attend the high school. The High School also houses classrooms for Fairmont State College's Lewis County branch.

Robert Bland Middle School serves children grades five (5) through eight (8) and is located on Court Avenue in Weston. The facility underwent a \$3.8 million renovation which doubled the size of the cafeteria and upgraded all classrooms. 746 students attend the middle school.

Peterson Central is located on Berlin Road. Approximately 500 students attend the school, which serves students from pre-kindergarten through fourth grade.



## Healthcare

### *Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital*

Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital is located at 230 Memorial Place, just outside of downtown Weston on Routes 33/119. The hospital employs 500 people, of which 400 are full-time. Five (5) physicians remain on-call at the hospital at all times.

The hospital offers many different types of services, such as general surgery, orthopedics, ENT, family medicine, podiatry, pediatrics, OBGYN, eurology, internal medicine, pulmonology, cardiology, and dermatology. Community outreach programs include smoking cessation programs, new mothers class, free health screenings, women's healthy day, United Way, Relay for Life, and March of Dimes.



### *William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital*

The William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital replaced the old Weston State Hospital in providing psychiatric care. Even though the facility lies outside of city limits, Sharpe hospital employs many Weston residents. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources operates the 150 bed psychiatric facility. The hospital is also known for mental health education, as well as research.

## Community Facilities

### *Louis Bennett Public Library*

The Louis Bennett Public Library is located on Court Avenue in the historical Riverboat Gothic mansion built by Jonathan McCally Bennett in 1874-75. His son, Louis (Sr.), inherited the mansion and it continued as the home for the Bennett family until 1922, when Mrs. Louis Bennett (now widowed) gave the 17-room mansion to the county for use as a public library in honor of their late son, Louis (Jr.), who was killed while serving as a pilot for the British Royal Air Force during World War I.

The library is funded by the West Virginia Library Commission, the Lewis County Board of Education Levy, Lewis County Commission, and local donations. Library services include books for adults and children, audiobooks, large print books, services for the legally blind, videotapes, computer access, and photocopying.

### *West Virginia Museum of American Glass*

The West Virginia Museum of American Glass honors the region's and nation's rich glass heritage. The museum was established in Weston in 1993 as a non-profit

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organization seeking to “discover, publish and preserve” whatever may relate to the glass industry in West Virginia. Located on Main Street in downtown Weston, the museum is open to the public 5 days a week with free admission. The museum strives to share the diverse and rich heritage of glass as a product and historical object as well as to tell of the lives of glass workers, their families and communities, and of the tools and machines they used in glass houses.



### *Mountaineer Military Museum*

The Mountaineer Military Museum is located on Center Avenue and is home to hundreds of pieces of military memorabilia. The museum is housed in the Historic Colored School of Weston. The museum includes a Military Hall of Honors which includes pictures of those that served from all over West Virginia.

### *Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum (Weston State Hospital)*

The Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum lies in the heart of Weston. This quarter-mile-long building with nine acres of flooring and three acres of roof – its construction begun in 1859 and not completed until 1880 – is reputedly the largest hand-cut stone building in America. The state-run facility operated for over a century – its name changing to the West Virginia Hospital for the Insane and then to the Weston State Hospital – and was closed in 1994. Registered as a national landmark, the site was auctioned in 2007 and is now privately owned. The site is operated as a museum and a business that conducts historic and paranormal tours and “ghost hunts”.

### *Lewis County Senior Center*

The Lewis County Senior Center is located in Weston and is the first national accredited center in West Virginia. The center offers many services to seniors, such as transportation, nutrition, in-home personal care, housekeeping, and fitness programs. The center also organizes trips to different places throughout the United States. There are age restrictions and costs to some of the services offered by the center. The center is funded by the United Way, WV Bureau of Senior Services, WV Division of Public Transit, Melvin B. Sprigg Estate, and by donations (Lewis County Senior Citizens Center, 2013).



## Transportation

The City of Weston is conveniently located off of I-79. Other major roadways include US 33. US 33 connects Weston to Ravenswood, Ripley, and Spencer in the West. At the junction of US 33 and I-79, US 33 becomes Corridor H, which connects Weston to Buckhannon, Elkins, and eventually Harrisonburg, VA. Within the City of Weston, US 33 is known as Second and Third Streets and has the most traffic than any other road within city limits.



Other roadways include US 19 and 119. US 19 is Main Avenue and is a one-way street (Southbound) through the downtown business district. Center Avenue serves as a northbound Route 19 until its intersection at Route 33. US 119 is also located within Weston, however it shares the roadway with US 33.

The City does not have access to any ports. River and railroad transportation is also not available within City limits. However, the City does have other modes of transportation available to its residents besides vehicular travel. These modes include air service, public transportation, and a pedestrian network.

### *Air Service*

Weston is within thirty miles of a regional airport. The North Central Regional Airport (formerly the Benedum Airport) is located in Bridgeport. Numerous improvements to the airport have been made over the past several years.

The Upshur Regional Airport (Buckhannon) and Elkins-Randolph County Airport (Elkins) are in close proximity to Weston. These small community airports accommodate small aircrafts.

Louis Bennett Field (formerly the Jacksons Mill Air Strip) is a private airstrip three (3) miles north of Weston. This facility is owned by the West Virginia University and is in poor condition.

### *Public Transportation*

The City of Weston has no public bus transit. The Senior Citizens Center offers transportation for the senior population ages 60 plus and non-senior persons on Medicare. The service operates on a donation basis for in-town locations and a fee for out of town destinations and limits service to weekdays between the hours of 7:30 to 4:30.

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WV Community Action is a non-profit that operates a service for rural transportation. This service is available for any age and operates on a donation and fee basis. WV Community Action provides transportation to in-town locations and also for out of town locations for medical appointments only. These trips must be scheduled in advance.

## *Pedestrian*

Weston is generally a walkable city with sidewalks located throughout the business district and residential areas. Currently, no walking or biking trails exist within city limits. The City Code includes a sidewalk ordinance, which states that the homeowner/business owner must maintain their sidewalk. Currently, no sidewalk program exists. A sidewalk program prioritizes the installation, repair, and maintenance of sidewalks throughout a community.

## *Parking*

The City provides free parking at a parking lot in front of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum and a paid parking lot across from St. Patrick's Church. On-street, metered parking is available throughout the downtown area.

## Existing Land Use

The population density of Weston according to the 2010 Census is 2,107.7 persons per square mile. While this is not as dense as some cities, the city is denser than many rural areas. Weston is primarily a residential community, with mostly single-family homes, as evidenced by *Figure 1: Existing Land Use*. The Weston commercial district spans four streets from east to west – Court Avenue, Center Avenue, Main Avenue, and River Avenue. The district then runs from Fourth Street (north) to First Street (south). Three banks – United Bank, Citizens Bank, and Huntington Bank— lie within the district. Other commercial uses include a CVS, Rite Aid, Go Mart, 7-11, antique store, hair salons, accountant, several lawyers, six restaurants, surveyor, discount clothing store, offices of the weekly newspaper, the historic Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, and two furniture stores. A significant amount of land within the district is classified as public due to the presence of the Lewis County Courthouse, Weston Post Office, Lewis County Board of Education, library, churches and museums.

Few vacant parcels exist within municipal boundaries as the city is mostly built-out. Any new development would most likely consist of infill development due to the lack of available vacant land.

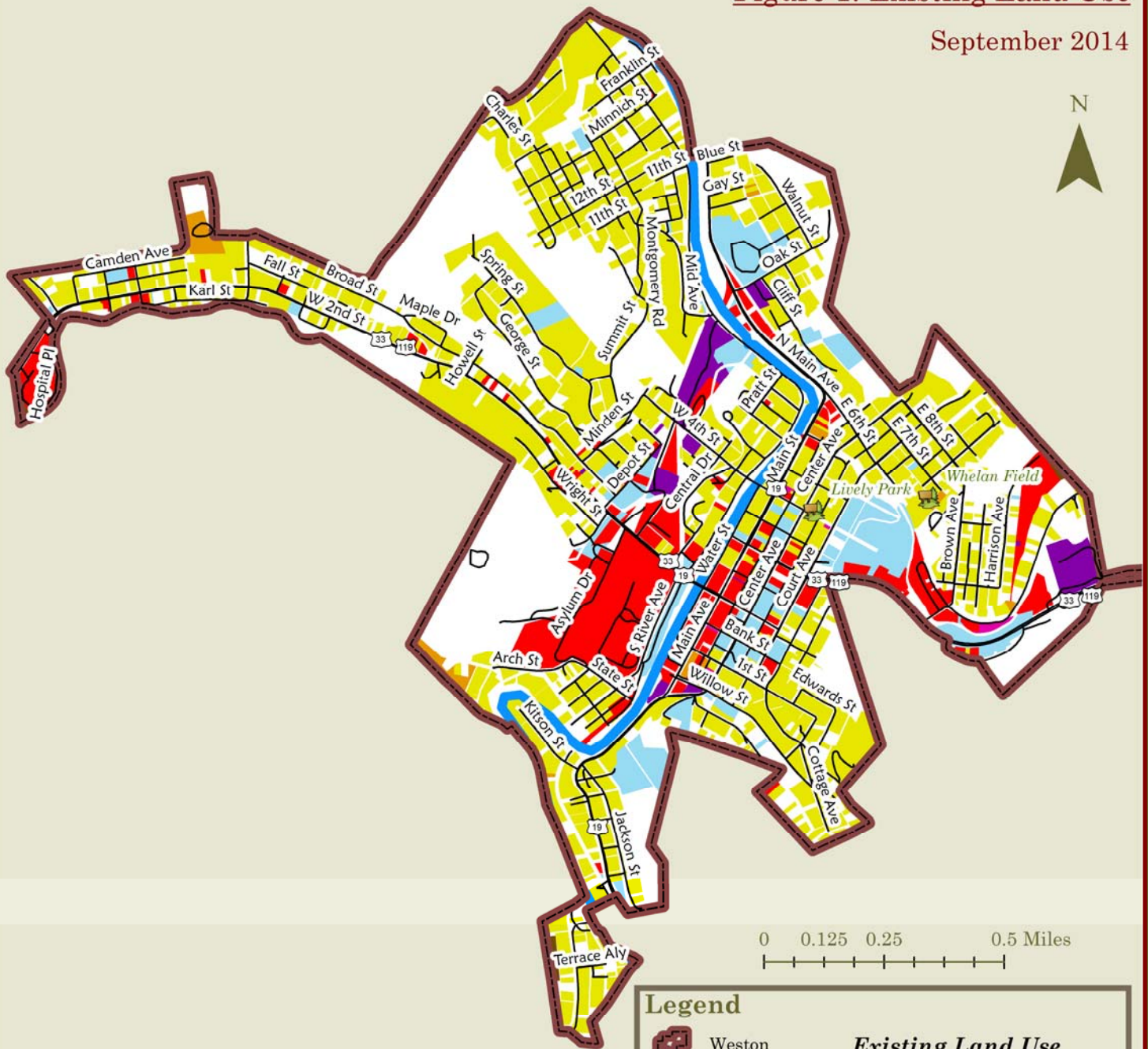
Other uses within the City include agriculture, industrial, mixed use, mining, and multi-family. These uses comprise a very small percentage of the total land use within the City. There are no lands within the City that are classified as conservation.

Recreation uses owned by the City include Lively Park and Whelan Park. Lively Park is located at 4th Street and Center Avenue. The park currently includes benches and picnic tables. The City recently planted trees and flowers. A cornhole tournament and pet show are held at the park. The City recently voted to install water and electric at the park as well.

# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Figure 1: Existing Land Use

September 2014



**Legend**

	Weston		Low Density Residential
	West Fork River		High Density Residential
	Interstate		Agriculture
	Local Roads		Vacant Land
	Parks		Commercial
			Mixed Use
			Industrial
			Mining
			Public/Semi-Public

**WVU LAW**  
LAND USE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LAW CLINIC

Source Data: West Virginia GIS Technical Center,  
WVDOT

## Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

Whelan Park is located on East 7th Street and consists of a basketball court. The basketball court has lights so that residents can use it in the evening. There is also an athletic field next to the middle school that is used for soccer, baseball, and basketball.

Other recreational facilities include the use of the Trans Allegheny Lunatic Asylum for youth soccer practice and the Lewis County Park. While the County Park is located right outside of the municipal boundaries on Smith Run Road, many city residents use the park. Facilities include a pool, pavilions, tennis courts, camping, sand volleyball, basketball court, picnic areas, bike trail, miniature golf, and a playground.



### Natural Resources

Two rivers bisect the City of Weston: the West Fork River, feeding from the Stonewall Lake running east to west; and the Stonecoal, a tributary feeding from the Stonecoal Lake into the West Fork, also running east to west. Polk Creek is also located in Weston and flows into the West Fork River. As Weston lies along several water bodies, parts of the city are located within the floodplain as displayed on *Figure 2: Development Constraints*. During the planning process no subsidence issues were reported in the City. Steep slopes are displayed on *Figure 2: Development Constraints*, however the amount of steep land is minimal and most likely will not affect any future development or redevelopment.

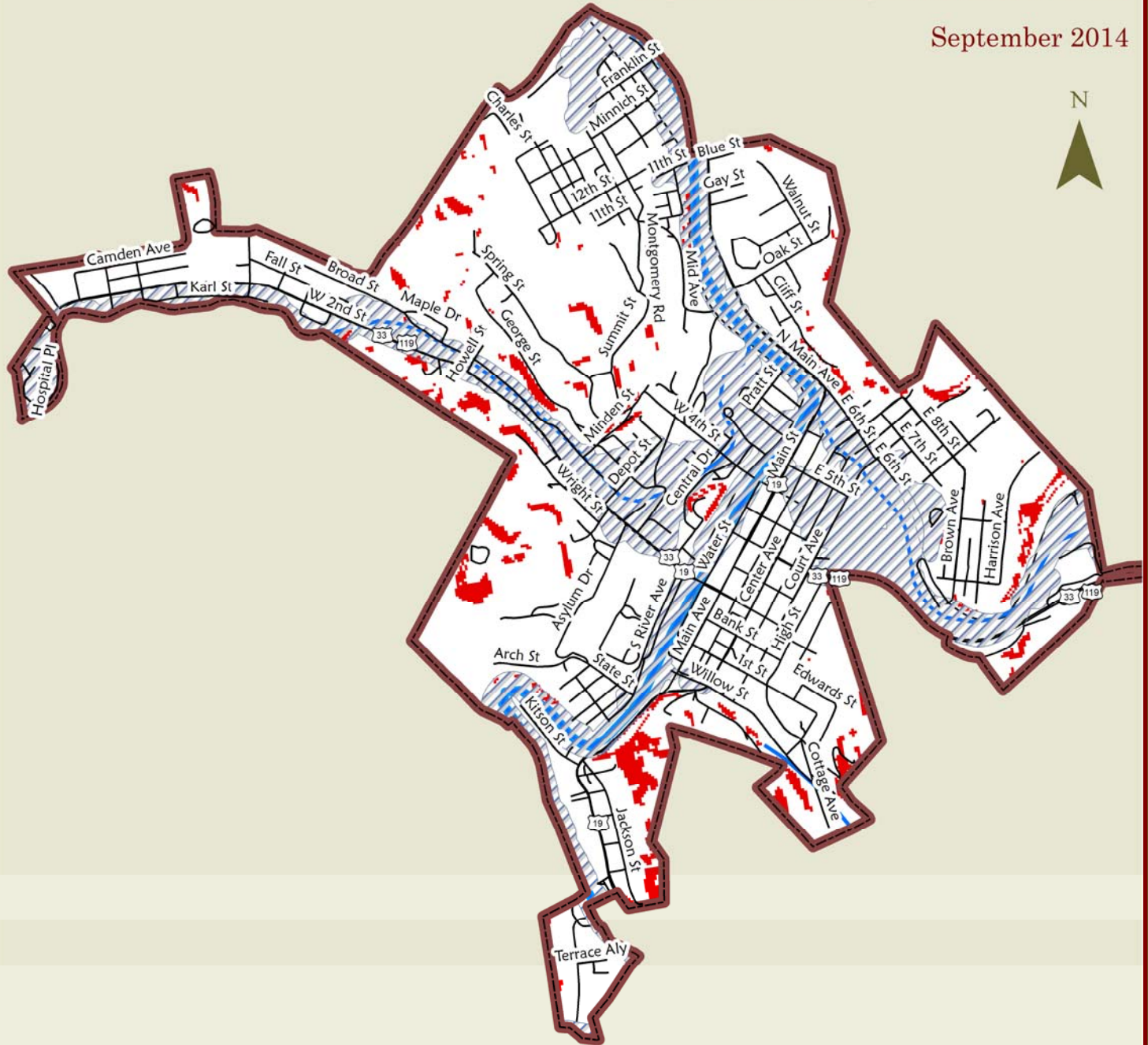
Located on the Allegheny Plateau, Lewis County is known for its livestock, farms, natural gas and oil well and timber operations. Lewis County ranks #3 in the Top WV Counties by Gas Production Volume, and #2 in Top WV Counties by Gas Well Count. In addition, Lewis County ranks # 8 in the top 10 WV Counties by oil well count with more than 420 wells.



# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Figure 2: Development Constraints

September 2014



**Legend**

Weston	West Fork River
Interstate	Streams
Local Roads	Floodplain
Steep Slopes	

**WVU**LAW  
LAND USE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LAW CLINIC  
Source Data: West Virginia GIS Technical Center,  
WVDOT

# Chapter Two: Community Snapshot

## Historical Resources

Weston is home to many historical buildings. In fact, three of the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Also listed is the Weston Downtown Historical District and the Weston Downtown Residential Historic Area. The National Register provides the official list of buildings, structures, objects and sites that are recognized for their importance to the historical development of the nation. The list is managed through the National Park Service and is authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Register is handled in each state through the state's own Historic Preservation Office. In West Virginia, all properties listed on the National Register are automatically listed on the State Register of Historic Places (West Virginia Culture and History, 2013).

The Weston Downtown Historic District includes parts of Main Street, Center and Court Avenues, and Second and Third Streets. The Weston

Downtown Residential Historic District includes portions of Main, Center, and Court Avenues, East First, East Third, East Fourth, East Fifth, and East Sixth Streets. The buildings and historic districts are shown on *Figure 3: Historical Resources*.

Other historic buildings that are not on the National Register include three of the downtown churches; St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1895-96), St. Patrick's Catholic Church (1914-15), and First Baptist Church (1915).

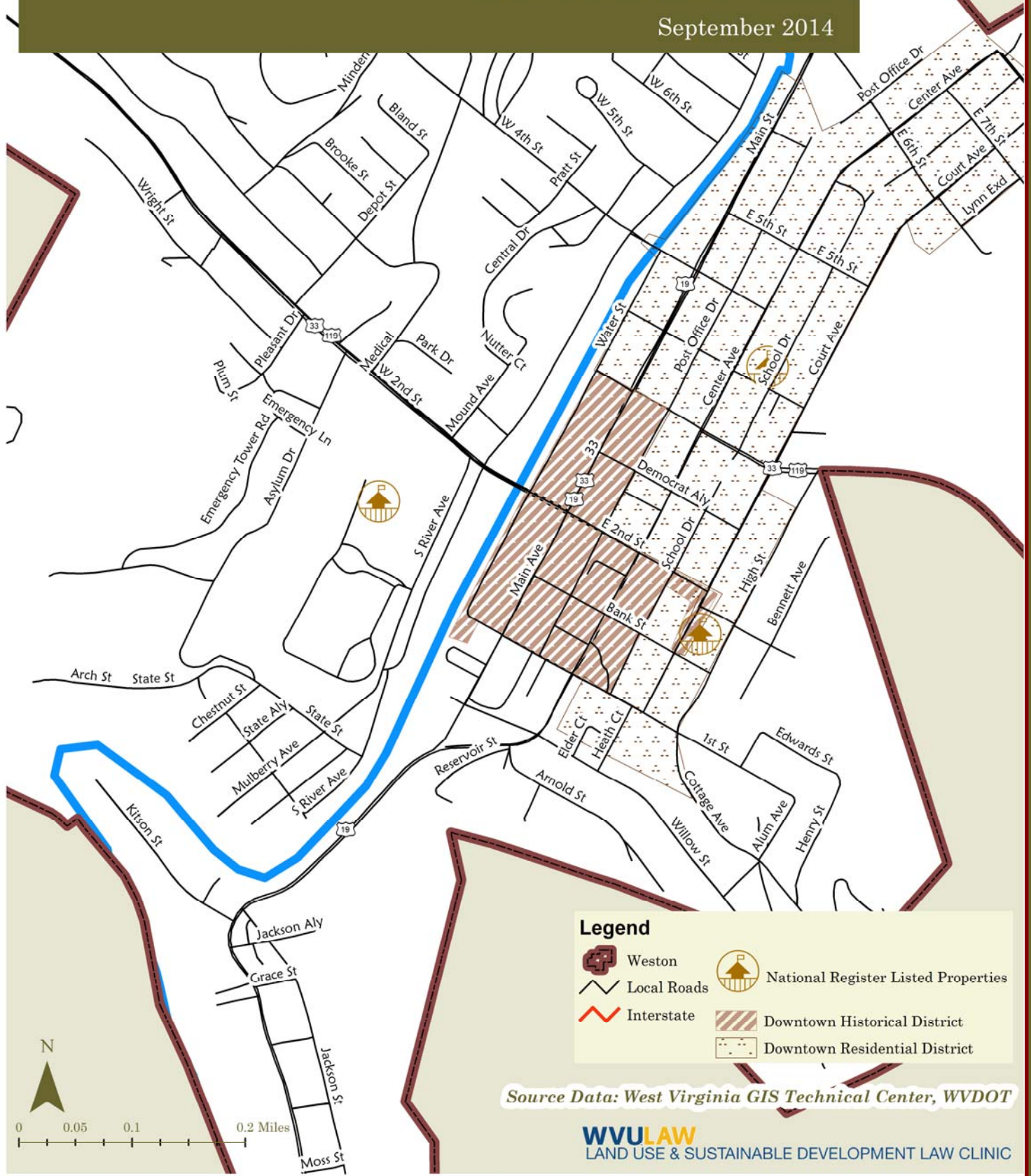


**The Louis Bennett Public Library, Weston Colored School, and Weston State Hospital are listed on the National Register.**

# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Figure 3: Historical Resources

September 2014





# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

## *Chapter 3: Needs Assessment*

*September 2014*

# Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

## Public Participation

It is essential to involve the public during the planning phases of any community project. The public should have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process and provide input into the final product. If the public fails to support a project, then it most likely will never be finished or implemented. Land use planning projects are no different. If community members are well-informed and educated about the benefits of land use planning, a comprehensive plan will be an invaluable tool for local elected officials. The Weston Planning Commission recognized the need for public input in the development of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission



held eight (8) meetings in each of the four wards to solicit input. The Commission asked meeting attendees to voice their concerns about the current condition of Weston, as well as provide suggestions on how to improve Weston. From the meetings the Planning Commission developed goals and objectives that they felt would move the City forward. In the 2013 update to the Comprehensive Plan, the goals and objectives were revised slightly to address issues and recent developments that have occurred in the previous two years. The Planning Commission also held two additional meetings in May of 2013 to obtain input. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted with key organizations in the City to gain insight on issues that they face in Weston. In February of 2014, the City held a final public open house to solicit input from residents on the draft action steps. Residents were asked to prioritize the action steps for each goal. An online survey was also created asking residents to prioritize action steps. Approximately 140 residents completed the survey.

Input received from the various meetings and the online survey can be found in *Appendix 1: Public Input*.

## Needs Assessment

A Comprehensive Plan is a community's vision for the future. In order to achieve that vision an assessment of the needs of the community must first be completed. By documenting the needs upfront, the Comprehensive Plan can address issues and concerns of a community and recommend realistic strategies to fulfill the community's vision. The public meetings were vital in obtaining feedback from the community as to what they think the major issues are facing Weston. Six recurring issues were brought up at Planning Commission meetings, during stakeholder interviews, and at the public meetings. The six issues include:

- Deterioration of the downtown
- Dilapidated and vacant housing
- Poor economic growth
- Land use issues
- Insufficient recreation opportunities
- Transportation problems

## *Deterioration of the downtown*

There are three main issues within the downtown business district:

1. Vacant and dilapidated buildings
2. Lack of business
3. Aesthetics

The City of Weston's downtown business district has steadily declined over the past several years. Many vacant and dilapidated buildings exist that are an eyesore in the community, as well as a safety concern. Property owners are either absentee landlords or simply do not maintain the buildings, which in turn leads to buildings eventually falling into disrepair. Many residents feel that there is also a lack of enforcement of city regulations. An inventory of vacant and dilapidated buildings has never been done. There is also no system for prioritizing buildings for demolition. This makes it difficult to determine which buildings should be condemned and demolished.

Aesthetics of the downtown are also a concern by many in Weston. With so many vacant and dilapidated buildings, the general appearance of the downtown has suffered. In 2003, a streetscape project was initiated on Bank Street. The project included bricking an alley and adding benches, planters, and trash cans. The City would like to continue the streetscape project throughout the downtown. Currently, the City is trying to take small steps to improve the downtown appearance, such as installing trash cans and planting flowers. However, there is no public art, lighting, or banners, which would greatly improve the general appearance of the downtown. The facades of many of the existing buildings are also in poor condition and need to be renovated.

An advantage for Weston is that it is the county seat of Lewis County. The social and cultural amenities in downtown Weston are a great asset to residents. The courthouse and various other county buildings are located within the downtown. Downtown Weston is also home to the library, newspaper, banks, glass museum, and military museum. However, many businesses have closed in recent years. Residents would like more small businesses, especially restaurants.

It is also the opinion of residents that the City does not capitalize upon the tourism opportunities in and around Weston to get more people to visit downtown businesses. One way to bring people into downtown is to hold various events. Weston has recognized this need and has formed the Fairs and Festivals Committee. Part of the committee's mission is to also encourage the development

Three specific vacant and dilapidated buildings within the downtown that are a major concern include:

- Colonial building
- Former Department of Health and Human Services building
- Columbian club



# Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

of the arts, which in turn will bring people into the downtown. Therefore, the Committee has held several different events centered around the arts; such as garden tour, jazz stroll, and Christmas tour. The events have been widely popular and will hopefully continue and expand in the future. In order to promote the arts even further the City would like to paint murals throughout the downtown to highlight the historical qualities of the City. Not only would this further the development of the arts, but would also improve the overall appearance of the downtown business district.



Weston is a very historical community, especially the downtown business district, which is listed on the National Register. However there is a lack of promotion by the City of its historical qualities. There are no signs highlighting various historical resources. The Weston Historic Landmarks Committee is attempting to promote the historic nature of the City more by developing a map and historical walking tour. When finished, the map and tour will need to be publicized. Another problem is that the downtown is listed on the National Register of Historical Places, however there are no regulations in place to protect the historical district. Residents would also like the Old Towne cemetery listed on the National Register.

As part of revitalization efforts in the past, the City of Weston has applied to the West Virginia On Trac program. The City was unsuccessful in its recent attempt to join the program. The City has since continued its efforts in revitalizing the City by establishing various committees and rejuvenating the Planning Commission. Therefore, the City should consider re-applying to the program to help with downtown revitalization. A concern during the previous comprehensive plan effort was the lack of an organization dedicated to improving the City's appearance, specifically in the downtown. Inclusion into the On Trac program would help the City greatly in organization efforts.

## *Vacant and dilapidated housing*



Many residents have lived in Weston all their life and love the small town character. Great pride is evidenced throughout the various neighborhoods in Weston. Historical homes also comprise a good portion of the housing and some neighborhoods are listed on the National Register as a historical district. However, housing conditions are one of the greatest threats to Weston's future. Weston is plagued with a number of dilapidated homes.

### **Areas of housing concern:**

- Arnold Street
- West Second Street
- Broad Street
- Lynn Avenue

Of the homes in Weston, approximately 15 percent are vacant according to the US Census. This is a high vacancy rate when compared to the

entire state. According to city officials the majority of the homes have simply been abandoned. Many people have left Weston even though they still own housing and have failed to keep up the properties. The remainder of the dilapidated homes consist of renter-occupied units. The City has a very high number of these units that are in poor condition. According to residents, there are people that would like to rent a home in Weston, but are unable to find a higher quality rental home. Further compounding the issue is the majority of homes in Weston were built before 1939. This contributes to the low median housing value as well. An additional issue with housing is that some of the aging population and low-income individuals have a difficult time maintaining their homes. Multi-family housing, housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities, assisted living facilities, and retirement communities may be needed to support the aging population in the future. As residents get older, the cost of housing may be too burdensome, therefore the City should consider zoning regulations that allow for a range of housing options.



Some businesses have been converted into housing, mainly apartments, in Weston. If zoning regulations are enacted, the City will have to ensure that this type of development is allowed to continue to occur in appropriate areas.

Demographic information reveals that the City is home to many of the higher-skilled jobs that pay a higher wage than other types of employment. This is in part due to the location of Stonewall Jackson Hospital, various schools, and the County jobs. However, many people that work in the City are not living in Weston but elsewhere in the County. This is due in part because of the lack of higher-end housing, poor condition of housing, and poor housing value in Weston. The City has the opportunity for new residential development in vacant lots or if the City would annex land. However, the amount of new housing units that are needed to meet future population projections is minimal.

Again, the lack of a city-wide demolition program for dilapidated and condemned structures is a huge challenge. Without such a program, the City will never be able to tackle the housing problem to its fullest ability. The City recently enacted a dilapidated and vacant structure ordinance to help with the various housing issues. Enforcement of the ordinance will be key to tackling the housing problems in Weston.

### *Poor Economic Growth*

The City is fortunate to have several well-known tourist attractions. Stonewall Resort, a four-star resort/golf course, is only 15 minutes from Weston. There has been little effort to attract Stonewall Resort visitors to downtown. Bringing other small businesses to





# Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

Main Avenue, which would attract resort guests, would be of great benefit. The Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum (former Weston State Hospital) brings thousands of visitors to Weston, but again, the City has not capitalized on this opportunity. The location of the Asylum within the city limits makes it even more important to have other secondary businesses for these tourists to visit. The current owners have been very creative in their marketing and promotion for the Asylum. Other attractions include the West Virginia Museum of American Glass and the Military Museum. The museums bring thousands of visitors to the area. The City has worked on several events with the West Virginia Museum of American Glass, however more could be done. There is also an opportunity to entice WVU Jackson's Mill visitors to Weston.



One of the issues with attracting visitors to Weston is the lack of secondary destinations for visitors. However, Weston has recently seen an increase in the establishment of new businesses with the opening of several small restaurants and a bakery.

Another issue with attracting people from their specific destination in Weston to the downtown is the lack of knowledge of what Weston has to offer. For instance, visitors to Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum would have no idea of the small restaurants and different attractions because Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum is separated from the downtown by the river. There is also no map or gateway from Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum to the downtown. A kiosk is needed that includes a map of the various destinations. The entire riverfront and pedestrian bridge should be considered in the plans for a gateway.

In order to attract visitors to Weston a city-wide marketing program is needed. As part of this program, a logo and branding campaign needs to be created. Throughout the planning process, the lack of a consistent identity of the City was cited as a major issue when marketing to visitors.

There are many wonderful organizations within Weston and Lewis County that are promoting the City and County. The Lewis County Economic Development Authority, Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Lewis County Convention and Visitors Bureau are all working to improve the economy. The City should make every attempt to encourage partnerships between the City, community organizations, and business owners. By forming partnerships, duplicate efforts will be avoided and specific objectives can be established.

## *Land Use Issues*

The City of Weston currently has no land use regulations in place. This has been an issue for some time, as there are no regulations pertaining to the type, intensity, and location of development within the city limits. Local elected officials feel that now is the time to enact regulations to protect the historical character of the City, as well as to attract new development.

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As the City has never had to enforce zoning regulations before, it is important that education for local elected officials and residents is a vital component of the process.

While the City has a building code and property maintenance ordinance in place, many residents feel that they are not property enforced. This in turn detracts from the appearance of the City. The City should make every effort to enforce ordinances and develop a system to track the status of complaints.

Most of the City of Weston is built out. However, there is room to grow with infill development, especially as many buildings and homes should be demolished due to safety concerns.

There is also the possibility of annexation. Recently the City annexed Routes 33/119 from the town limits to the I-79 interchange. The ultimate goal is to annex the commercial lands surrounding the interchange. The City is currently working with the Lewis County Commission on the annexation of these lands. Annexation is important for new business but also for the financial stability of the City. The City needs to increase the amount of Business and Occupation Tax they receive in order to re-invest into the City. By annexing the existing commercial lands, the City will see increased revenue. The commercial areas will then realize the benefits of city services. There are also other areas for annexation that the City should consider in the future.

In order to attract new development, the City also needs to address old infrastructure issues. The City has received grant money in the past to expand the sewage system and construct a new sewage treatment facility. However, many problems have since occurred with the system. The old system is combined (wastewater and stormwater) and therefore causes problems with the new system. The Weston Sanitary Board is replacing the older parts of the system on the banks of West Fork to repair the issue. This is expected to be completed within the next year. Another issue with infrastructure is that many people are not tied into the system and their sewage is going directly into West Fork River. This is a major concern as it is not only an environmental and health risk but also detracts from the image of the City of Weston, especially when trying to attract new residents and business owners.

Residents would like more development in the City, however they do not want to sacrifice the character and environment. Therefore, the City would like to continue and expand the Pride Campaign to encourage more pride throughout the



# Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

City. Currently this campaign consists of a spring clean-up, as well as signs that say “Weston Pride, Make it Shine.” The hope is to change Weston citizens overall negativity and to bring pride back into the City. Expansion of the program could include awards and recognition to homes that make an effort to clean-up their properties.



Another land use concern of residents is that there are no efforts underway by local elected officials to conserve resources. A green campaign should be explored as it not only saves resources but can help achieve fiscal savings.

## *Insufficient recreation opportunities*

Two recreational facilities exist within city limits; Lively Park and Whelan Field. Lively Park has recently been developed and continues to be expanded. During neighborhood meetings held in spring 2010, many residents suggested that a recreational area be created in each ward. Meetings should be held in each ward to determine location and appropriate recreation needs.

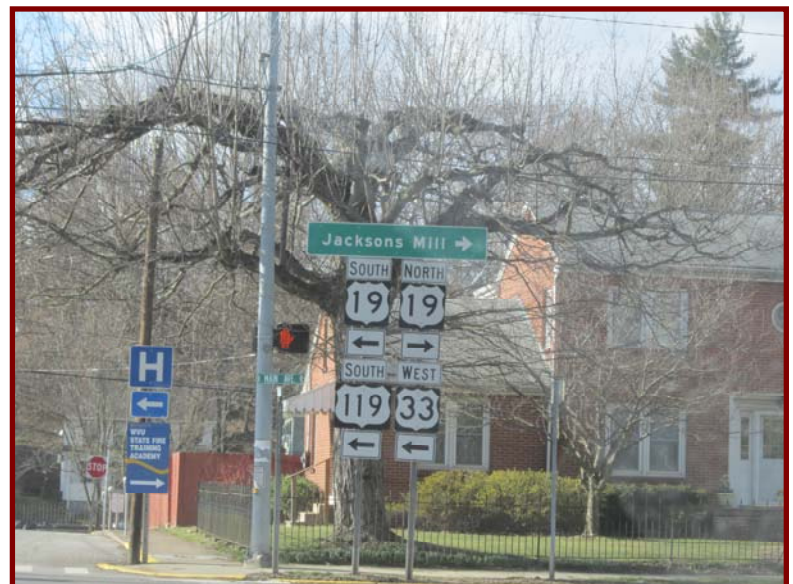
Another recreation need is a dog park where dog owners can let their animals run off-leash. A possible location for this type of park is located right outside of city limits at the old sanitary plant. The City would like to connect this park to Weston by constructing a recreational trail on an abandoned rail line. In the past the City received a grant for the trail but the money had to be returned as the City was unsure of the ownership of the rail line. The City should make an effort to determine if they own the property and if they do not, who does, and if they can purchase or lease the property for the trail.

Another possibility for recreation is in front of TALA near the West Fork River. This area could also be used to construct a permanent structure or pavilion to host events in Weston. Ownership of this land is also a question and needs to be resolved.

Lastly, residents would like to see a community center to hold events, youth gatherings, and special interest activities within the downtown business district.

## *Transportation*

One of the greatest assets of the City is its location off of I-79. Access to major transportation routes is a great benefit to the City, its residents, and current and future businesses.



As with any small town, Weston’s downtown business district struggles with a lack of parking. Weston is the County seat, which

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makes parking difficult on days when Court is in session. There is a need for an additional County parking lot. There is also confusion on where visitors can park when coming into town as there are no signs directing people to public parking lots.

Weston is a very walkable community but many residents would like to see better maintenance of existing sidewalks. The City has no sidewalk plan in place, which makes it difficult to determine priorities. Residents would like priority areas to include Main Street and 4th Street as school children travel these routes.

Local elected officials are also in the process of trying to decide how they can return Main Avenue and Center Avenue to two-way streets in the downtown area. Many years ago the City petitioned the State to make the streets one-way. Over the years, the business district declined and now the City believes the one-way streets are hampering the revitalization of the downtown core. This has also led to motorists traveling through neighborhoods to avoid the downtown traffic. Residents would appreciate more enforcement to stop speeding in neighborhoods.

To determine if there is enough support to change the Main Street routes a public meeting should be held. A traffic study may also need to be completed. The results from the meeting and study could greatly help the City in making the case to the State to change the routes back.

# Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

## Community Vision

### *Vision Statement*

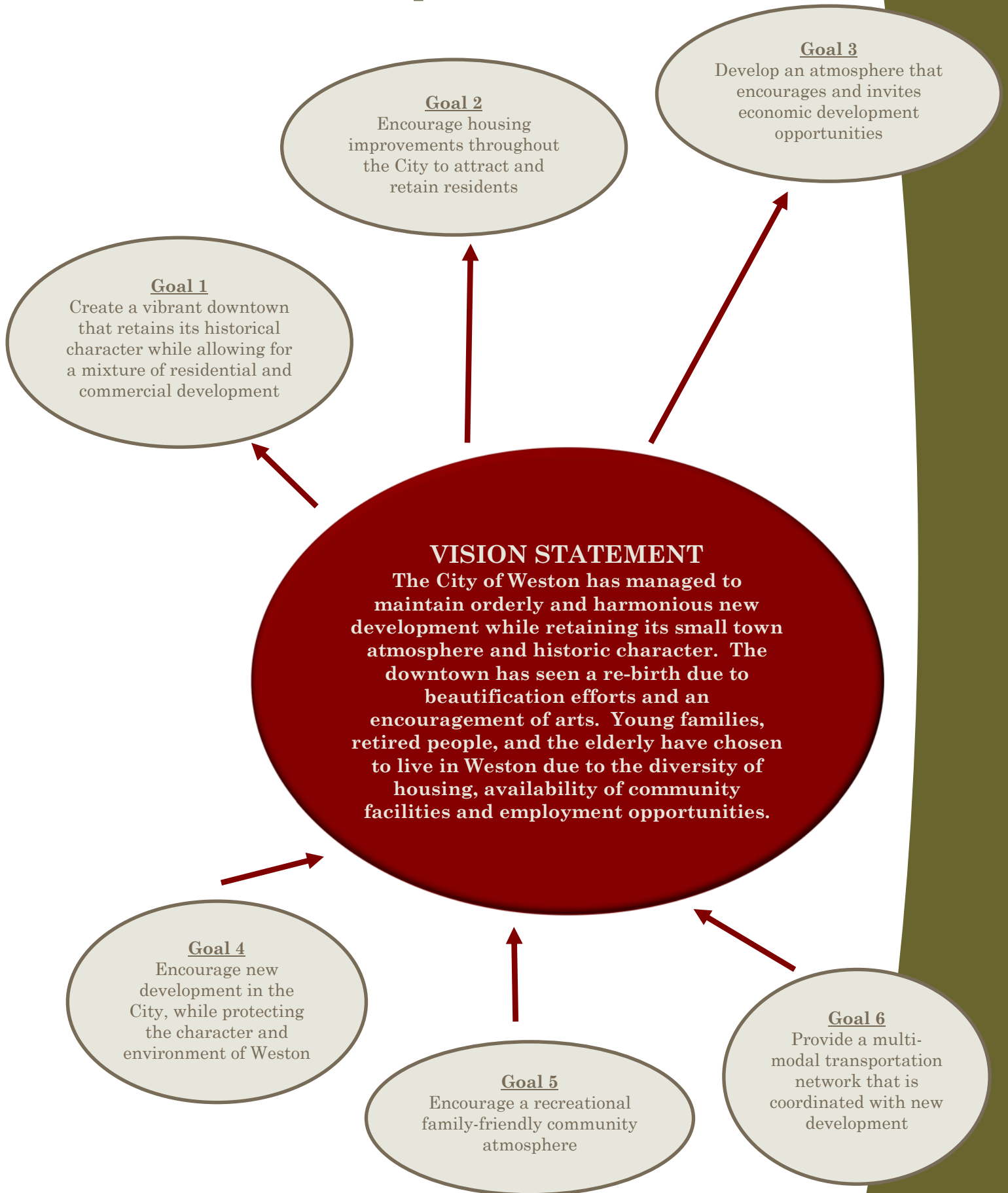
After identifying all of the needs of the community, a vision statement for the future was then created. The vision statement asks the question “If the Weston Comprehensive Plan was implemented and all the needs addressed, what would the City of Weston look like? The plan therefore ultimately revolves around the community’s vision for the future. The action plan (Chapter 4) is then structured so that the action steps and implementation process help achieve the vision for Weston.

### *Goals*

The Planning Commission was instrumental in developing initial goals in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan and revising those goals to reflect recent trends in the update to the plan. The Commission believes that attaining these goals will have a positive effect on the City. During the public input process, community members described what goals were most important to the future vitality of the City. The goals developed are to address the six previous issues that were detailed in the Needs Assessment. Goals are generalized statements on how the City wants to develop over the next ten years.

### *Objectives*

The Planning Commission also developed objectives for the 2011 Comprehensive Plan that were then refined to reflect the specific issues identified during the update. Objectives were also condensed or deleted in order to ensure that Weston was not overwhelmed with too many projects at once. The objectives answer the question “What are we trying to accomplish?” The objectives will assist the City of Weston in the creation of action steps to carry out the goals and ultimately the vision of the comprehensive plan. The objectives are detailed in ***Chapter 4: Action Plan***.





# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

## *Chapter 4: Action Plan*

*September 2014*

# Chapter Four: Action Plan

## Action Plan

The Action Plan will serve as the foundation for future planning actions in Weston. This chapter details specific recommendations that will address the most important needs identified during the planning process. Six critical issues were identified during the planning process and are detailed in *Chapter 3: Needs Assessment*.

The action steps in this chapter revolve around these six critical issues. Goals and objectives were developed to address these needs. Action steps are organized under the pertinent goal and objectives to guide the Planning Commission and City Council with implementation.

To further assist Weston with implementation, case studies are also discussed. The case studies seek to give local elected officials a better idea of how other communities successfully completed similar projects. Local elected officials and citizens are encouraged to further research the case study communities and to even contact the communities to gain a better understanding of what can be done to address the specific issue.

This chapter also includes a future land use plan. The future land use map illustrates the desired vision for future development and conservation in Weston. The future land use plan also includes preferred development areas, which identify areas for growth and annexation.

Staff limitations and budget constraints limit the number of recommendations that can be addressed immediately. Therefore, recommendations are prioritized either as immediate, high, and moderate. Immediate projects are those that Weston should focus on right away and should implement within the next three (3) years. High priority projects are those that should be implemented within three (3) - six (6) years. Moderate priority projects should be implemented within 10 years.

To better illustrate the recommendations and corresponding priority level, an implementation matrix was developed. The matrix includes responsible parties for implementation, potential partners, opinion of probable costs, and potential funding sources.

### Critical Issues

- Deterioration of the downtown
- Vacant and dilapidated housing
  - Poor economic growth
  - Land use issues
- Insufficient recreation opportunities
  - Transportation



## Critical Issue 1: Deterioration of the downtown

Goal 1- Create a vibrant downtown that retains historic character while allowing for a mixture of residential and commercial development

Objective 1: Identify vacant and dilapidated buildings that should be demolished

Objective 2: Encourage the beautification and revitalization of the downtown business district to improve the overall appearance and perception of Weston

Objective 3: Promote the historic character of the City

***Action Step 1: Develop a plan for the demolition of dilapidated buildings that negatively impact the downtown business district and are a safety concern***

There are three specific vacant and dilapidated buildings within the downtown that are a major concern: the Colonial building, the former Department of Health and Human Services building, and the Columbia Club. The City of Weston must first have code officials determine if the structure is dangerous, unsafe, and unfit for human habitation. If this is the case with any of the three (3) buildings, then the planning commission must hold a public hearing in order to give the property owners a chance to respond to any violations. A hearing must be held before the City can issue a demolition order. If the property owner refuses to comply, then the City must take the next step, which would be a fine and then demolishing the property themselves. The City would then place a lien against the property for the cost of the demolition.



# Chapter Four: Action Plan

## Case Study

The City of Wheeling, West Virginia has a successful demolition program in place. If property owners do not maintain or demolish buildings on their own, then the City will issue a Raze or Repair order. City Council has authorized the City's building Inspection Division to raze vacant structures that are unfeasible to rehabilitate. The City uses federal funds to demolish buildings.

The City of Princeton, West Virginia demolition program has demolished 468 structures since it started. City funds, private owners, and grants have funded the demolition program.

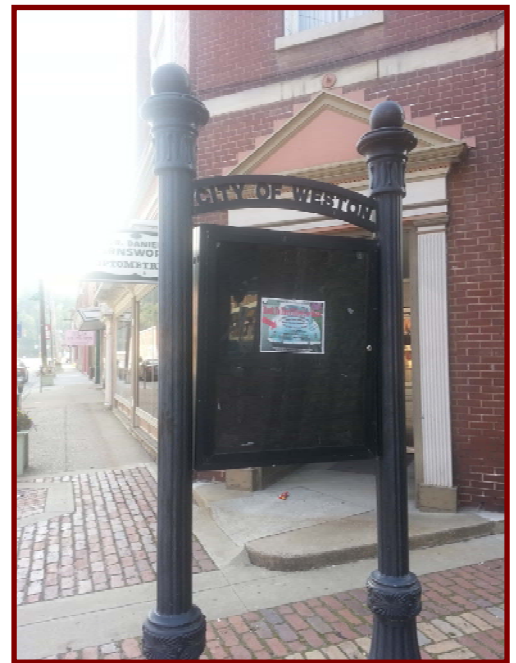
The City of Bluefield, West Virginia has a demolition program in which the Public Works Department demolishes the buildings. As it is expensive to demolish buildings, the City is considering starting an adopt-a-demo program. This type of program would allow citizens and business owners to help remove blighted properties by sponsoring a demolition. The Public Works Department would do the work and interested parties would then reimburse the City for the cost of the demolition.

### ***Action Step 2: Enforce current city regulations regarding vacant buildings within the downtown business district***

The City recently enacted a vacant structure code in order to monitor vacant buildings that present a safety concern and provide fees that will help with the cost of inspecting and monitoring vacant buildings to assess the effects of the condition on nearby structures. Now that the code has been enacted, the City needs to aggressively enforce the ordinance so violators are aware that the City is serious about cleaning up vacant buildings.

### ***Action Step 3: Complete a streetscape plan and extend the project to Main Street***

Weston has initiated streetscape projects in the past. Most recently a project was completed on Bank Street. The City would like to continue the project to Main Street. However, in order to complete the project in a proper fashion a streetscape plan should be developed. A streetscape plan will identify improvements needed on Main Street that pertain to the street, sidewalks, and public spaces. Public art, lighting, and banner placement can also be a component of the plan. The plan will identify projects to tackle first, as well as cost and funding strategies.



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## ***Action Step 4: Develop a façade improvement program***

Many of the facades in downtown Weston are in poor condition and detract from the appearance of the downtown business district. A façade improvement program would identify and prioritize the facades that need to be replaced or remodeled. As this can be a costly undertaking for business owners, a City-run façade improvement program would help property owners defray some of the costs.



### Case Study

Parkersburg, WV has a façade rehabilitation loan program, which finances 50 percent of the total costs of exterior and structure repairs with a maximum loan of \$10,000. The City places a lien against the property for the amount of the loan. Loans are zero-interest, deferred and forgivable. The loan will be forgiven if the building remains under the same ownership and repairs are maintained during a period of five years.

Wheeling, WV also has a façade rehabilitation loan program. Wheeling uses Community Development Block Grant funds to finance zero-interest, deferred and forgivable loans for façade improvements. The City will finance up to \$50,000 and will place a lien on the property in an amount equal to the loan. The City started the program in 2004 and has assisted in completing five (5) façade projections and another 5 are in various stages of construction.

Main Street Fairmont sponsors a sign and façade improvement program for its members. Main Street Fairmont provides grants to members in the Main Street area to improve their façade up to \$5,000. The money must be returned if the business closes within three (3) years of award of the grant or is sold within one (1) year of the award.

## ***Action Step 5: Continue to sponsor events to bring people into the downtown***

The Fairs and Festivals Committee has made great strides in holding events in the downtown. The Committee should continue this effort and promote additional events. The Committee should consider a partnership with Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum (TALA) to host an event together that will bring people not only into the asylum but the downtown. In order to attract as many visitors as possible, the Committee should consider holding a monthly event, such as a First Thursday. The Committee should also work with business owners in the downtown to ensure that they stay open during the events so they can capitalize on the additional

## Chapter Four: Action Plan

people in the downtown. Business owners could distribute coupons, have sales, or offer specials to entice people into their business.

### ***Action Step 6: Install murals at key locations throughout the downtown***

Beautification of the downtown was a key issue for many during the public input process. Therefore, the City should select a blank wall at a key intersection or gateway to paint a mural. Local artists should be contacted to see if they would be willing to donate their time to help paint the mural. Any mural should consider the theme that the City wishes to promote.

### ***Action Step 7: Publicize the historic walking map and tour***

Currently the Historical Landmarks Committee is in the process of developing a historic walking map and tour. Once the map and tour are finalized, the Committee should celebrate by holding a special event inviting residents and other interested parties to participate in the historic walking tour. Press releases should also be utilized to get the word out. The Committee should also publicize the map on the City's website. The map should be distributed to all local businesses. An interpretative kiosk would be a great way for visitors to be made aware of the map and tour. The best location would most likely be at TALA.

### ***Action Step 8: Nominate other historical resources for listing on the National Register***

The Historical Landmarks Committee should first determine if the public is supportive of listing the Old Town Cemetery and Masonic Lodge on the National Register. If there is significant public support, then the Committee should complete a nomination form.



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## *Action Step 9: Install signs to illustrate and bring attention to the historical resources throughout the City*

The City of Weston is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The City should celebrate this and bring attention to the rich history of the City. Signs should be placed on key buildings and locations to tell the story of the history.

The Historical Landmarks Committee could utilize the West Virginia Highway Historical Marker Program to install historical markers at key locations, places, or roadways. The committee would be responsible for the cost of the markers and would have to submit an application to the program. The other option the Committee has is that they could develop their own Historical Marker Program to recognize the City's history. The signs could be small and incorporate the name of the resource and date it was constructed. These types of signs are typically less expensive than a bigger sign found along the roadway.

### Case Study

The Town of Plympton in Massachusetts has developed their own historical marker program through the Historical Commission. The town recognizes historical homes and landscapes throughout the town. A property owner must submit an application to the Historical Commission for approval of a sign.

# Chapter Four: Action Plan

## Critical Issue 2: Vacant and dilapidated housing

Goal 2– Encourage housing improvements throughout the City to attract and retain residents

Objective 1: Institute a city-wide housing program for vacant, dilapidated and condemned structures

Objective 2: Enforce ordinances with homeowners

### ***Action Step 1: Develop an inventory of all vacant and dilapidated structures***

The large amount of vacancies in Weston is a huge problem. As there are so many vacant and abandoned buildings it almost appears to be too huge of a problem for the City to tackle. However, if the City would develop an inventory of all the structures, this would help them in prioritizing which structures should be demolished first. The properties should be rated on their present condition, using a scale of A to F. Information should also be gathered on ownership, code violations, fire and police calls, and tax status. This will help the City gain a better understanding of the location of the vacancies and will help them concentrate their efforts in specific locations.



### ***Action Step 2: Target code enforcement and resources to key investment areas***

In many communities, the vacancy and code enforcement issues are scattered throughout, which can make it difficult for officials to clean up. However, in Weston there are specific areas that have the most significant code violations. Therefore, these areas should be where Weston targets its code enforcement and resources in order to revitalize the City. *Figure 1: Future Land Use Map* displays the key investment areas that were identified during the planning process. These areas include Arnold Street, Broad Street, and West Second Street. The key investment areas also serve as preferred development areas per the West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning.

### ***Action Step 3: Develop a system to track to complaints***

During the planning process, many citizens expressed frustration that their complaints to the City on various issues go unheard. Therefore, the City should invest in a complaint management system. A complaint management system is an online tracking system that would allow residents to enter their complaints via the Internet. A tracking number is then assigned

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to each complaint that allows residents to keep track of the status of their complaint. Local elected officials or city departments then receive the complaints. This type of system will promote transparency in city government and hold the City accountable to addressing complaints.

## ***Action Step 4: Increase enforcement of building codes and property maintenance ordinances to improve appearance of the City***

As mentioned earlier, many residents would like to see increased enforcement of ordinances throughout the City. Therefore, code enforcement officials should canvas the key investment areas weekly to search for code violations. The City should also ask residents to report code violations via a public relations campaign. The police department, city manager, and code enforcement officer should meet at least bi-weekly to discuss various complaints. Police officers spend a great deal of time canvassing neighborhoods and may have a better understanding of where specific problems are occurring. All city employees should be on the look-out for overgrown grass, junk, graffiti, and junk vehicles as they are early warning signs that a property owner cannot keep up with property maintenance, which could then lead to a vacant and dilapidated property.

Many residents are unaware of code violations or how to fix them. Therefore, the City should develop a guide for citizens on how they can remedy the violation. The guide should contain listings for lawn and tree companies, towing services, junk removal services. The guide should list all the specific property maintenance codes for the City. The guide should also detail the legal process of what happens when a property owner violates codes.

Another option the City could explore is adopting a policy that publicizes the most notorious property violators and repeat offenders. The hope is that it will force the property owner to clean the property up.

# Chapter Four: Action Plan

## Critical Issue 3: Poor economic growth

Goal 3– Develop an atmosphere that encourages and invites economic development opportunities

Objective 1: Continue efforts to develop a city-wide marketing program to encourage more people to visit Weston

Objective 2: Encourage partnerships between local elected officials, community organizations, and business owners

Objective 3: Actively recruit business opportunities

### ***Action Step 1: Create a logo and branding campaign for the City that can be used for marketing purposes***

Weston suffers from a lack of community identity. Many people throughout the state still think of Weston as the place where the mentally-ill live. This misconception could be remedied by Weston creating a logo that emphasizes their community identity. The logo should be used to help brand the City as a place that people want to visit.

### ***Action Step 2: Provide brochures about Weston at all local and regional attractions***

Within a few minutes of Weston are many tourist destinations that attract thousands of visitors a year. The City itself has several attractions too. At all of these attractions, a brochure about Weston should be displayed. The brochure should include information about Weston's history, the historical walking tour and map, and location and hours of operation of all local businesses. The City should also work with local businesses to provide coupons in the brochure as an extra incentive to attract people to visit the City.

### ***Action Step 3: Update the City of Weston's website***

The internet is a vital method to reach residents, as well as visitors. It is most often the first glimpse a person has of a community. The City of Weston should update their website to make it more user-friendly. The website presently contains a great deal of information. However the visual design of the website should be updated. The City should also include the web address of the website on all mailings, letter head, and emails and otherwise publicize the website.



## ***Action Step 4: Develop a gateway and interpretive kiosks at TALA to invite visitors into the downtown***

Thousands of people visit TALA every year. However, many of these people do not visit Weston. These visitors may be unaware of the many attractions and businesses in the downtown district, as the downtown is separated from TALA. Therefore, the City should develop a gateway and interpretive kiosk that invites visitors into the downtown. The gateway and kiosk should be located near the pedestrian bridge. A kiosk would include a map and provide information on various attractions throughout Weston. The picture on the right was taken in Elkins, West Virginia of an interpretive kiosk located at the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad Train Station.



## ***Action Step 5: Partner with various organizations to promote the City to visitors***

In order to gain as much publicity as possible, the City of Weston should work with the Lewis County Economic Development Authority, Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Lewis County Convention and Visitors Bureau to advertise all the events and local businesses and attractions in Weston. Any brochures and marketing materials that Weston creates should also be given to these organizations to distribute to their members and visitors.

## ***Action Step 6: Consider waiving business and occupation taxes to encourage businesses to locate in the downtown business district***

To entice more businesses to move into the downtown, the City should consider waiving business and occupation taxes for the first two years for any new business.

## ***Action Step 7: Market vacant buildings on the City's website***

There are many vacant buildings located in the City that should be publicized on the City's website. This information could potentially help interested parties wanting to locate in Weston determine if any buildings meet their needs. The listing on the website should include a photo and property information, as well as contact information.

# Chapter Four: Action Plan

## Critical Issue 4: Land use issues

Goal 4– Encourage new development in the City, while protecting the character and environment of Weston

### Objective 1:

Enact land use regulations that are vital to sustain future growth and development

### Objective 2:

Identify areas for future growth and revenue

### Objective 3:

Continue and expand the “Pride Campaign” to enhance more pride throughout the City

### ***Action Step 1: Develop a zoning ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan***

During the planning process an immediate need that was mentioned numerous times was the need for land use regulations. Therefore, the City of Weston should enact a zoning ordinance to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. ***Figure 1: Future Land Use*** should be the basis of the zoning ordinance. The following future land use classifications have been developed:

*Residential– this classification provides for residential development throughout the city*

*General Commercial– this classification would accommodate larger-scale commercial uses*

*Downtown Business District– this classification includes smaller businesses in the downtown core as well as residential uses. Regulations in this area would have to take into consideration the dense nature of the downtown*

*Parks– these are areas intended for future recreation*

No lands are classified as rural in Weston. The city plans to continue to grow with the possible annexation of lands and therefore will continue a more urban, built-out land use pattern with any new development. The zoning ordinance will also consider flexible regulations that allow for affordable housing, housing for persons with disabilities, and adaptive reuse.

### ***Action Step 2: Annex lands to provide opportunities for additional commercial development***

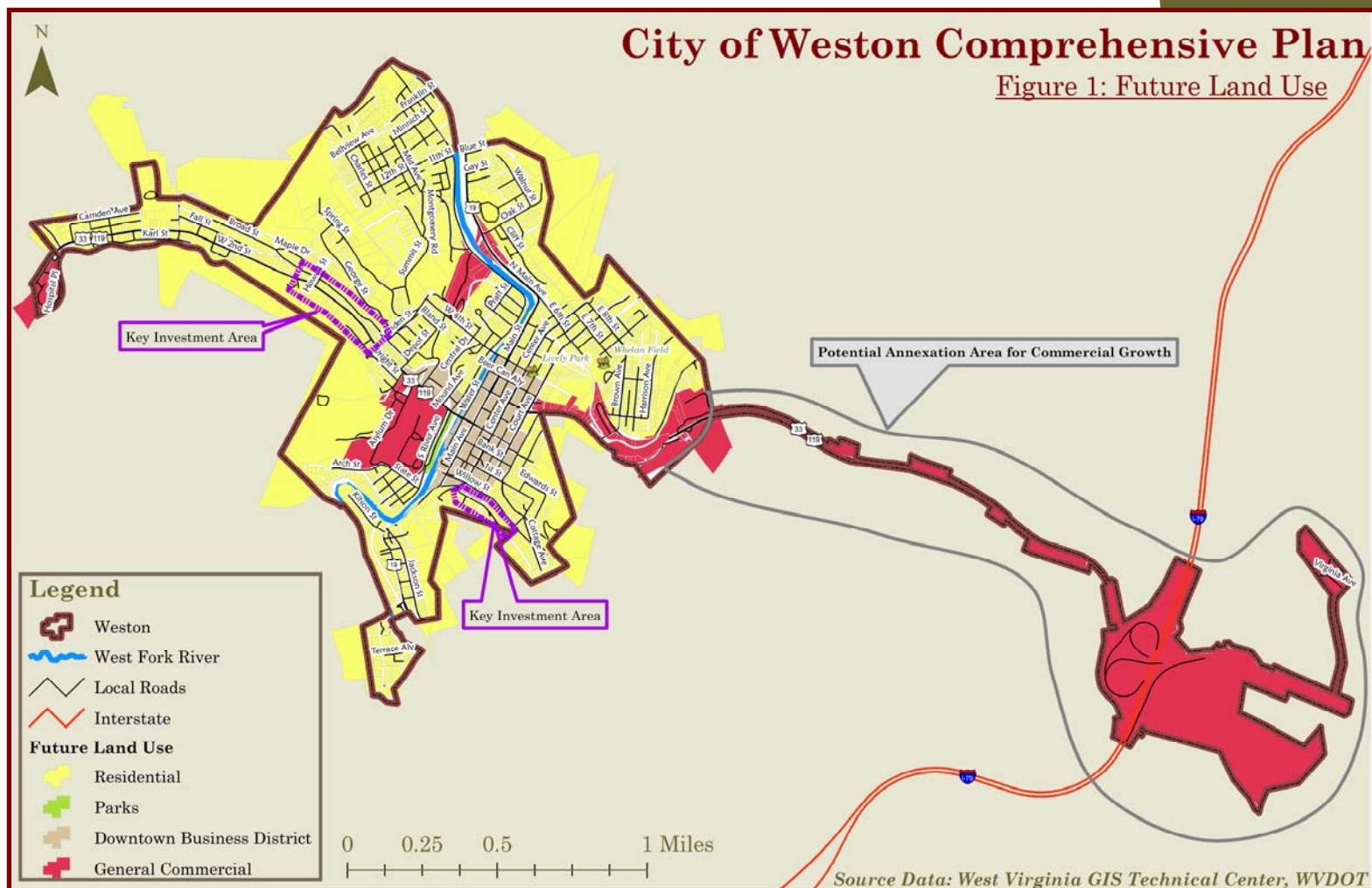
To accommodate new development and increase the tax base the City of Weston would like to annex lands. High priorities for annexation are shown on ***Figure 1: Future Land Use*** and include the areas surrounding:

- US Routes 33/119
- I-79 Interchange

These areas are already served by water and sewerage, therefore the infrastructure needs of any future development would be met. The City should coordinate with Lewis County on the

## City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Figure 1: Future Land Use



annexation of lands. This would be a great opportunity to promote regional planning between the County and City.

### ***Action Step 3: Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation***

The Lewis County Commission must approve any annexation requests made by the City of Weston. While it seems that the Commission is favorable towards annexation, it would be beneficial for the City to develop a public relations campaign promoting the benefits of annexation to current and potential residents once annexation occurs. A public relations campaign could include mailings to city residents and editorials in the local newspaper highlighting the benefits of annexation for the City. Success stories on annexation in West Virginia should also be included.

### ***Action Step 4: Sponsor a monthly yard and home contest***

The Pride Campaign was initiated by the City to increase the pride of local residents and business owners in their homes, as well as the general overall appearance of the City. As part of this campaign the City should sponsor a monthly yard and home contest where residents can enter and win a prize. This type of contest will provide motivation for residents to get their properties in good

## Chapter Four: Action Plan

condition. The City should only pick those homes that have no outstanding code violations. The City could ask local businesses to sponsor the contest by donating prizes, free meals to area restaurants, gifts, etc. While this type of contest would typically be only held in the summer, the City could extend it into the holiday season by sponsoring a community Christmas decorating contest as well.

### *Action Step 5: Develop community gardens in vacant lots*

Weston has many vacant lots that could be made more attractive by the planting of community gardens. The City should provide start-up materials and assistance to local groups that are willing to sponsor a garden. One possible location for a community garden is on City-owned property on Willow Street.

## Critical Issue 5: Insufficient recreation opportunities

Goal 5– Encourage a recreational family-friendly community atmosphere

### Objective 1:

Explore areas for new city parks, recreation trails, and green space

### Objective 2:

Research a feasible location for a downtown facility for holding events, youth gatherings, and special interest activities within the City

### *Action Step 1: Develop a park in each of the four wards*

During the public participation process, many residents stated that they would like to see additional recreational opportunities in the City. Therefore, the City should develop a park in each of the four wards. Before development occurs, public meetings should be held in each ward to determine what the recreation needs are of each specific ward, as they may be different. Locations also need to be identified for new park and recreation facilities.

During the planning process, the Planning Commission identified the following potential locations in three out of the four wards. The Planning Commission was unsure about a location in Ward 3, therefore a public meeting with residents of that ward would be very beneficial.

- Ward 1– Willow Street
- Ward 2– Old Polk Creek School
- Ward 4– Continue to develop Lively Park



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## ***Action Step 2: Develop a dog park at the old sanitary plant***

The City owns land that was once the location of the old sanitary plant. While this land is right outside of city limits, it would be a perfect location for a dog park. There is a great deal of grassy, open space for dogs to run and play, as well as a fence. Dog owners will also be utilizing the park with their dogs, so the City should consider benches, trash cans, and shade trees. Water and tools to pick up dog's waste should also be included within the dog park. Public education for dog owners will also be critical.

### Case Study

Huntington, WV in 2012 constructed a dog park in Ritter Park. The City won a Bark for your Park grant sponsored by PetSafety for \$100,000 to construct the park. The dog park consists of 3 acres with separate areas for different size dogs. The park is also ADA accessible. Future plans include dog runs, and obstacle courses.

## ***Action Step 3: Develop a trail to connect the downtown to the dog park***

A connection between the downtown and the dog park could be constructed with the acquisition of an abandoned railroad right-of-way. The right-of-way is about 0.5 miles in length and could be developed as a bike/pedestrian trail. The City should secure funding to purchase the abandoned right-of-way from the railroad company.

## ***Action Step 4: Explore the feasibility of purchasing or leasing a building to serve as a community center***

At this time there is no community center in Weston for residents to enjoy group activities, special events, and recreational facilities. The first step the City should take is to determine the cost and location for a community center. Community centers can be costly undertakings, therefore the City has to plan accordingly.

## Critical Issue 6: Transportation

Goal 6– Provide a multi-modal transportation network that is coordinated with new development

### Objective 1:

Address parking concerns in the downtown

### Objective 2:

Offer a safe pedestrian network

### Objective 3:

Explore the feasibility of changing Main Street back to a two-way street

#### **Action Step 1: Conduct a parking study to determine if additional on-street parking is feasible**

As Weston is the County Seat, the City often has parking issues, especially when court is in session. One possible solution would be additional on-street parking spaces around the Court House. The City should contact the West Virginia Department of Transportation to determine if this action would be feasible.

#### **Action Step 2: Install signs throughout the City to direct visitors to public parking lots**

There is a perceived lack of parking for those working or visiting Weston. However, the City provides free parking in front of TALA and paid parking in the downtown. The issue may be the lack of signs directing motorists to the parking lots. Therefore, the City should install parking directional signage, which would be installed on traffic lights or poles with arrows pointing to public parking lots or spaces.

#### **Action Step 3: Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize improvements needed**

During the planning process many residents stated that sidewalks were in need of repair. The City should develop a sidewalk program to help facilitate such repairs as well as the construction of new sidewalks. A point system could prioritize and

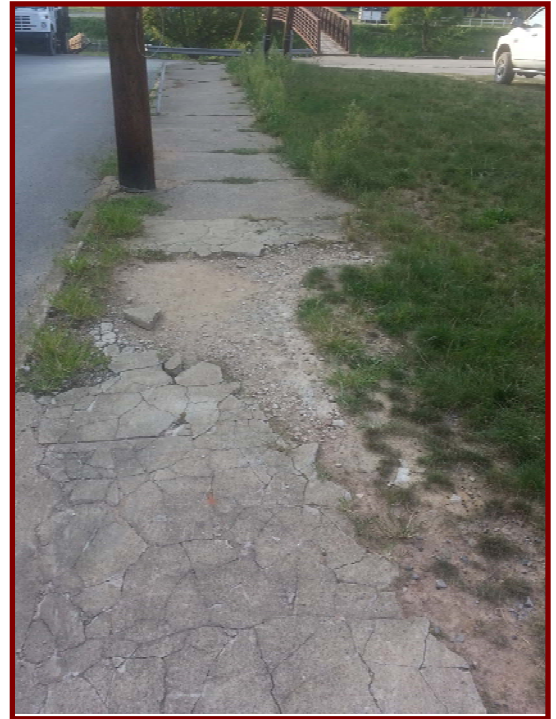


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establish which sidewalks should be repaired or constructed first. The point system would take into account the following factors:

- Street's proximity to parks, local government facilities, schools, businesses, etc.
- Topography of the street
- Connectivity with other sidewalks
- Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
- Street Width
- Conflicts with other utilities
- Available right-of-way

The City should then repair and/or construct sidewalks on the streets that received the highest amount of points based on the factors above. The City should also utilize their GIS system to make maps that show existing sidewalks, sidewalks in need of repair, and potential areas for new sidewalks.



## ***Action Step 4: Increase enforcement of speeding in neighborhoods***

Many residents are concerned about the large amount of traffic on local neighborhood streets. Many motorists are using local streets as short-cuts around the busier state roads. However, motorists are driving too fast which constitutes a safety concern. The City should have the police department increase enforcement of speeding in neighborhoods. The police department could also set up radar signs that show motorists how fast they are traveling.

## ***Action Step 5: Conduct a survey of local businesses to determine if there is support for changing Main Street to a two-way street***

Main Street was once a two-way street and was changed to a one-way street by the state by request of the City. The City now though feels that the one-way street network is hampering economic development in the downtown business district. State officials have told the City that they must first have public support before approaching the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT). The City should conduct public meetings with business owners to determine if there is support for the proposal. Representatives from the WVDOT should be invited to these meetings.



## Implementation

The development of a comprehensive plan is often easier than actually implementing the plan and incorporating the plan's vision into everyday government functions. The departments and committees must use the plan when preparing budgets and planning for future projects. The comprehensive plan should also be considered when developing the annual budget. Weston should also publish the plan and use the plan as a marketing tool.

## Regional Planning

Intergovernmental cooperation is essential in land use planning. Communities don't exist in a vacuum and should plan with surrounding jurisdictions as much as possible. Therefore, several of the recommendations in the Action Plan involve partnerships and cooperation between various organizations and forms of government. The City of Weston realizes the importance of regional planning and has already established working relationships with other governments and organizations. The City has worked with Lewis County on the Make it Shine Day and other events (jazz events, Weston's Amazing Week, etc.). The City holds its Make it Shine Day on the same day as Jane Lew's cleanup to help facilitate cleanup of both communities. The City is also currently discussing parking issues in the downtown and annexation with the County Commission.

The City should continue their working relationships with Lewis County and other organizations to help with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The City should also consider working relationships with other communities in Lewis County. Other communities can provide key insights on how they have implemented planning projects.

## Financial Implications

Many of the projects detailed in the Action Plan will be costly for the City of Weston to implement. However, there are many other funding sources the City should consider when budgeting for implementation. Below is a list of funding opportunities that should be considered when implementing the plan.

The City should also continue to work with the Region 7 Planning and Development Council to determine if there are grants that would be available to help with implementation of the plan.

### ***Appalachian Regional Commission***

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provides federal grant funds for the support of economic and community development in West Virginia. The goal of ARC is to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

Projects approved for ARC assistance must support one of the four general goals:

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- Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy.
- Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation.
- Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.
- Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.

Activities generally eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, projects that:

- Improve infrastructure for community and economic development.
- Improve educational opportunities and workforce skills.
- Increase civic and leadership capacity.
- Increase entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Improve health care resources.

## ***Benedum Foundation***

The mission of the Benedum Foundation is to encourage human development in West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania through strategically placed charitable resources. The foundation gives two types of grants: education and economic development.

## ***Flex-E-Grant***

Flex-E-Grant is a small grant, up to \$10,000 total project cost, that may be used to support local leadership, civic engagement and capacity building.

Flex-E-Grant is a joint effort of the West Virginia Development Office (WVDO), the ARC and the Claude W. Benedum Foundation. WVDO continues to collaborate with many other organizations on the Flex-E-Grant project.

## ***Governors Community Participation Grant Program***

The Governor's Community Partnership program provides state grant funds for community and economic development projects throughout West Virginia. The program enables communities to expand, build and improve a variety of public facilities and services.

Eligible activities include but are not limited to permanent public improvements related to the following:

- City hall and courthouse facilities
- Community centers
- Construction and renovation of public facilities
- Demolition
- Economic development
- Emergency services and law enforcement
- Flood and storm drainage
- Business and industrial parks

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- Land and property acquisition
- Libraries
- Parks and recreation
- Parking facilities
- Preservation and beautification
- Street and sidewalk repair
- Technology
- Water and wastewater facilities and services

## ***KaBOOM***

KaBoom is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to creating play spaces for children throughout the United States. KaBoom often administers grant programs by matching communities with funding partners. Their most popular program is the Community Partner Program. This program matches either non-profits or municipal governments with funding partners to provide funding for building playgrounds.

## ***Land and Water Conservation Fund***

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides supplemental federal funding for the acquisition and/or development of high-quality, public outdoor recreational areas throughout West Virginia. Proposed projects must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Park renovations, expansions to promote active lifestyles, innovation in community cores, attracting or retain visitors to an area, development of trailheads or preservation of other natural areas to impact community health objectives and brownfields renewal efforts will receive funding priority.

Eligible activities include but are not limited to the development of outdoor recreation resources related to the following:

- ◆ Land acquisition for parklands
- ◆ Development or renovation of the following types of outdoor recreational facilities:
  - ◆ Campgrounds
  - ◆ Picnic areas
  - ◆ Sports and playfields
  - ◆ Golf courses
  - ◆ Swimming facilities
  - ◆ Boating facilities
  - ◆ Fishing facilities
  - ◆ Hunting areas
  - ◆ Trails
  - ◆ Winter sport facilities
  - ◆ Support facilities (walks, utilities, bathrooms, etc.)
  - ◆ Amphitheaters
  - ◆ Lake impoundments
  - ◆ Visitor information centers
  - ◆ Interpretive centers

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## *Neighborhood Investment Program*

The Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP) increases charitable giving to local nonprofit organizations. The program allows 501(c)3 designated charitable organizations to apply for tax credit vouchers. These organizations distribute the vouchers to contributing businesses and individuals. By donating to approved NIP organizations, contributors can support their communities and earn credits to reduce certain West Virginia taxes.

The West Virginia Legislature sets aside \$2.5 million annually in state tax credits for the NIP. To participate, a 501(c)3 charitable organization must apply to the West Virginia Development Office. Upon meeting program requirements and obtaining approval from the NIP Advisory Board, organizations are awarded tax credit vouchers. Businesses and individuals that contribute to NIP-approved organizations are eligible to receive up to 50 percent of the contributed amount in the form of state tax credits. Donors may use the credits to reduce liability for the Corporate Net Income Tax, the Business Franchise tax or the Personal Income Tax.

Projects generally eligible for program participation include but are not limited to the following:

- Health clinics
- Homeless shelters
- Educational programs
- Housing programs
- Preservation/revitalization activities
- Domestic violence shelters
- Children's shelters
- Meal delivery programs
- Senior citizens' centers
- Community foundations
- Scholarship programs
- Hospice care
- Transportation programs
- Day care centers
- Counseling services
- Services for the disabled

## *Preserve America*

The Preserve America grant program supports activities related to heritage tourism and the use of historic properties as economic and educational assets.

## *Small Cities Block Grant Fund*

The Small Cities Block Grant program (SCBG) provides federal funds for community and economic development projects throughout West Virginia. The program supports job creation and retention efforts, local government efforts to provide affordable infrastructure systems and community efforts to improve the quality of life for low- to moderate-income citizens. Eligible units of local government may receive SCBG funds if they are documented to fulfill one of three

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national objectives:

- Activities benefiting low- and moderate-income people.
- Activities that aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight.
- Activities designed to meet community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

Activities generally eligible for funding include but are not limited to permanent public improvements related to the following:

- Community centers/senior citizen centers
- Construction and renovation of public facilities
- Demolition
- Economic development
- Flood and storm drainage
- Acquisition
- Parks and recreation
- Preservation and beautification
- Technology
- Water and wastewater facilities and services
- Community facilities renovation/construction

## ***Smart Growth Implementation Assistance***

The Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program provides assistance from national experts to help communities explore barriers to smart growth implementation and pilot innovative ideas that create more sustainable communities. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) will provide technical assistance to successful applicants.

## ***Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)***

TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

The TAP program now funds projects that would have previously been considered under the Transportation Enhancement and Safe Routes to Schools Programs.

Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
<b>Goal 1: Create a vibrant downtown that retains historic character while allowing for a mixture of residential and commercial development</b>						
Develop a plan for the demolition of dilapidated buildings that negatively impact the downtown business district and are a safety concern	Immediate	4-3	City of Weston	BAD Buildings Program	Dependent on scope of project	BAD Buildings Program; Other grant sources; General fund
Enforce current City regulations regarding vacant buildings within the downtown business district	Immediate	4-4	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	General fund
Complete a streetscape plan and extend the project to Main Street	Moderate	4-4	City of Weston	N/A	Dependent on scope of project	General fund; Grant sources
Develop a façade improvement program	Moderate	4-5	City of Weston	Business Owners	Dependent on scope of project	General fund
Continue to sponsor events to bring people into the downtown	Immediate	4-5	City of Weston	Weston Fairs and Festivals Committee; Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum; Lewis County Chamber of Commerce	Dependent on scope of project	General fund; donations; grant sources
Install murals at key locations throughout the downtown	Moderate	4-6	City of Weston	Weston Arts Council	Dependent on size of mural and artist	General fund; donations; grant sources
Publicize the historic walking map and tour	Immediate	4-6	City of Weston	Historical Landmarks Committee	Dependent on scope of project	General fund; Grant sources
Nominate other historical resources for listing on the National Register	Moderate	4-6	City of Weston	Historical Landmarks Committee	Staff time	General fund
Install signs to illustrate and bring attention to the historical resources throughout the City	Immediate	4-7	City of Weston	Historical Landmarks Committee	\$1500-\$2500 for West Virginia Highway Historical Marker Cost for Weston to have their own signs depends on size and type of marker	General fund; donations
<b>Goal 2: Encourage housing improvements throughout the city to attract and retain residents</b>						
Develop an inventory of all vacant and dilapidated structures	Immediate	4-8	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	General fund
Target code enforcement and resources to key investment areas	Immediate	4-8	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	General fund
Develop a system to track complaints	High	4-8	City of Weston	N/A	Dependent on scope of project	General fund
Increase enforcement of building codes and property maintenance ordinances to improve appearance of the City	Moderate	4-9	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	General fund

Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
<b>Goal 3: Develop an atmosphere that encourages and invites economic development opportunities</b>						
Create a logo and branding campaign for the City that can be used for marketing purposes	Immediate	4-10	City of Weston	West Virginia University	Dependent on scope of project	General fund
Provide brochures about Weston at all local and regional attractions	Immediate	4-10	Mountain Lakes CVB and Lewis County CVB	West Virginia University	Cost of brochures	General fund
Update the City of Weston's website	Immediate	4-10	City of Weston	N/A	Dependent on the number of updates needed	General fund
Develop a gateway and interpretive kiosks at TALA to invite visitors into the downtown	Immediate	4-11	City of Weston	Lewis County CVB, Mountain Lakes CVB, TALA	Interpretive kiosk- \$3,000-\$5,000	General fund, grant sources
Partner with various organizations to promote the City to visitors	Immediate	4-11	City of Weston	Lewis County Economic Development Authority, Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Lewis County Convention and Visitors Bureau	Staff time	N/A
Consider waiving business and occupation taxes to encourage businesses to locate in the downtown business district	High	4-11	City of Weston	N/A	B&O tax revenue for each businesses	General fund
Market vacant buildings on the City's website	Moderate	4-11	City of Weston	Local realtors	Staff time	N/A
<b>Goal 4: Encourage new development in the City, while protecting the character and environment of Weston</b>						
Develop a zoning ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan	Immediate	4-12	City of Weston	WVU Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic	Simple amendment to zoning ordinance- staff time and attorney fees. Total update to zoning ordinance- \$20,000-\$30,000	General fund
Annex lands to provide opportunities for additional commercial development	Immediate	4-12	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time and attorney fees	General fund
Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation	Immediate	4-13	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	N/A
Sponsor a monthly yard and home contest	Moderate	4-13	City of Weston	Fairs and Festivals Committee; Weston Arts Council; local businesses	Staff time	General fund, donations from local businesses
Develop community gardens in vacant lots	Moderate	4-14	City of Weston	N/A	\$500	General fund, local business, residents

Recommendation	Priority	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Funding Sources
<b>Goal 5: Encourage a recreational family-friendly community atmosphere</b>						
Develop a park in each of the four wards	Moderate	4-15	City of Weston	Fairs and Festivals Committee	Dependent on size and type of park	General fund; Grant sources
Develop a dog park at the old sanitary plant	Moderate	4-16	City of Weston	N/A	Dependent on size and amenities at park	General fund; Grant sources
Develop a trail to connect the downtown to the dog park	Moderate	4-16	City of Weston	N/A	Dependent on acquisition and construction costs	Grant sources
Explore the feasibility of purchasing or leasing a building to serve as a community center	Moderate	4-16	City of Weston	Lewis County	Dependent on scope of project	General fund; Grant sources
<b>Goal 6: Provide a multi-modal transportation network that is coordinated with new development</b>						
Conduct a parking study to determine if additional on-street parking is feasible	Immediate	4-17	City of Weston	West Virginia Department of Transportation; Lewis County	Dependent on scope of project	General fund
Install signs to direct visitors to public parking lots	High	4-17	City of Weston	Mountain Lakes CVB, Lewis County CVB	Parking directional signage-\$300-\$1,000	General fund
Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize improvements needed	Moderate	4-17	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	N/A
Increase enforcement of speeding in neighborhoods	Immediate	4-18	City of Weston	N/A	Staff time	N/A
Conduct a survey of local businesses to determine if there is support for changing Main Street to a two-way street	Immediate	4-18	City of Weston	West Virginia Department of Transportation	Staff time	N/A



# APPENDICES

# **APPENDIX 1: PUBLIC INPUT**

# WESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## *FIRST PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS*

### Strengths Station

- Historic homes
- Library
- TALA tours
- Proximity to county attractions (Jackson's Mill)
- Proximity to I-79 and Route 33
- Lewis County High School
- People (friendliness)
- Lewis County Park (pool)
- Historic character
- River
- Nice museums (glass museum, military museum, TALA)
- Centrally located

### Opportunities Station

- Art galleries and studios
- Restaurants (unique)
- Music
- Special events
- Collaborations between local agencies (shared calendars)
- Need for community center
- Recreational opportunities not realized
- Proximity to Stonewall Jackson Lake
- Tourism (lakes, TALA, Glass Museum)
- More rental properties
- More museums
- Make Weston a "museum tour" destination
- Develop parks in wards
- Develop a brand
- Helping owners of buildings secure grants
- Two-way traffic on Main Street

### Challenges

- Need to save the DHR building
- Dilapidated housing
- Lack of City Staff to enforce ordinances
- Lack of rental homes
- Lack of pride
- Lack of good paying jobs
- Absentee landlords
- Lack of good renters
- Policy informing of demolition by neglect
- Getting building owners to maintain buildings
- Re-use of small buildings and homes
- Owners of buildings lack means to demolish and maintain/rehab buildings
- Need for community center

### Threats Station

- Negative attitude
- Quality of Roads
- Drugs
- Demolition of historic buildings
- Graffiti
- Loss of trees
- Over-reaching regulations that infringes on private property rights
- Lack of regulation
- Lack of enforcement of existing regulations
- Lack of property maintenance
- Loss of Colonial Restaurant and Building
- Commercialization of downtown causing loss of charm
- Poor turnout at public meetings
- Liability issues prevent volunteer action
- Losing quiet neighborhoods due to noise

# WESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## *FIRST PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS*

### Mapping Station

- Make High Street One Way
  - Dilapidated structures on Bennett Avenue
  - More large shade trees needed along 33/119, especially in the neighborhoods
  - Change town's name back to Still Horse Run
  - Develop lot at the corner of Heath Court and Willow Street to a park (City property)
  - Dilapidated structure at the corner of 1st Street and Main Avenue
  - Dilapidated structure on South Rt.19 near Grace Street
  - Erosion problems along the river and Water Street
  - 3 lots on Shady Drive and Catherine Street could be developed into a playground
  - Park could be located in Ward 3 along the River near North Route 19 near boundary line (DOT may own it)
  - Large wooded parcel in Ward 3 near 5th Street and Pratt—who owns it? Does the City? Could it be a park? Could it be timbered?
  - Brown Avenue in Ward 4— too much traffic and drainage problems. Road also needs repaired.
  - McGary Avenue needs traffic enforcement
  - Need swings, sliding boards at park in Ward 4— younger kids in the neighborhood
  - Speeding on Court Avenue in Ward 4
  - Vacant homes with trash on Locust Avenue
  - Vacant homes along Brown Avenue
  - Dilapidated housing on Arnold Street
  - Falling debris and boulders on Court Avenue at the municipal line in Ward 4
-

# WESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

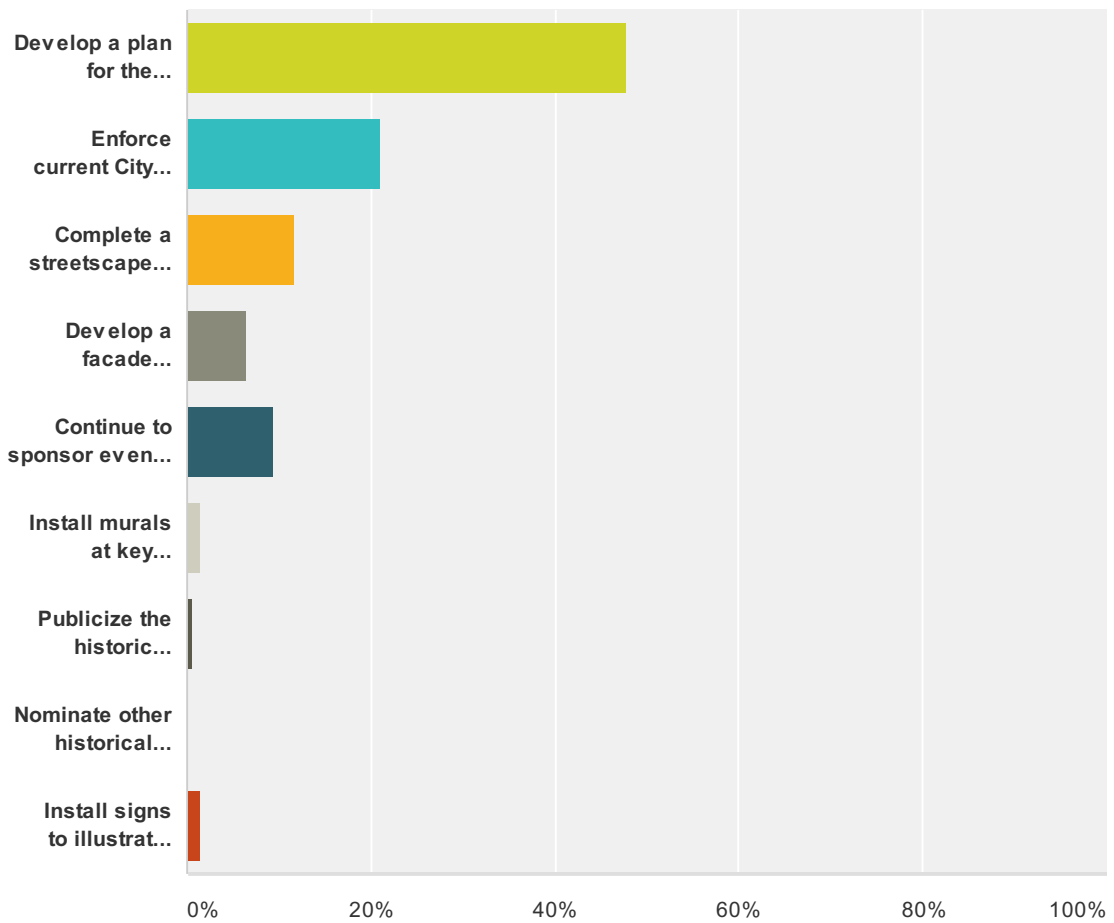
## *FINAL PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS*

### Highest Priority should be:

- Clean up the city (2)
  - Enforce all existing ordinances (2)
  - Waive B&O Tax
  - Continue with this process, hold more public input meetings. Work on publicizing the meetings. Communicate clearly the timetable on a best and worse case scenario regarding demolition.
  - Create a vibrant downtown
-

**Q1 GOAL One: Create a vibrant downtown that retains its historic character while allowing for a mixture of residential and commercial development. Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal One.**

Answered: 138 Skipped: 2



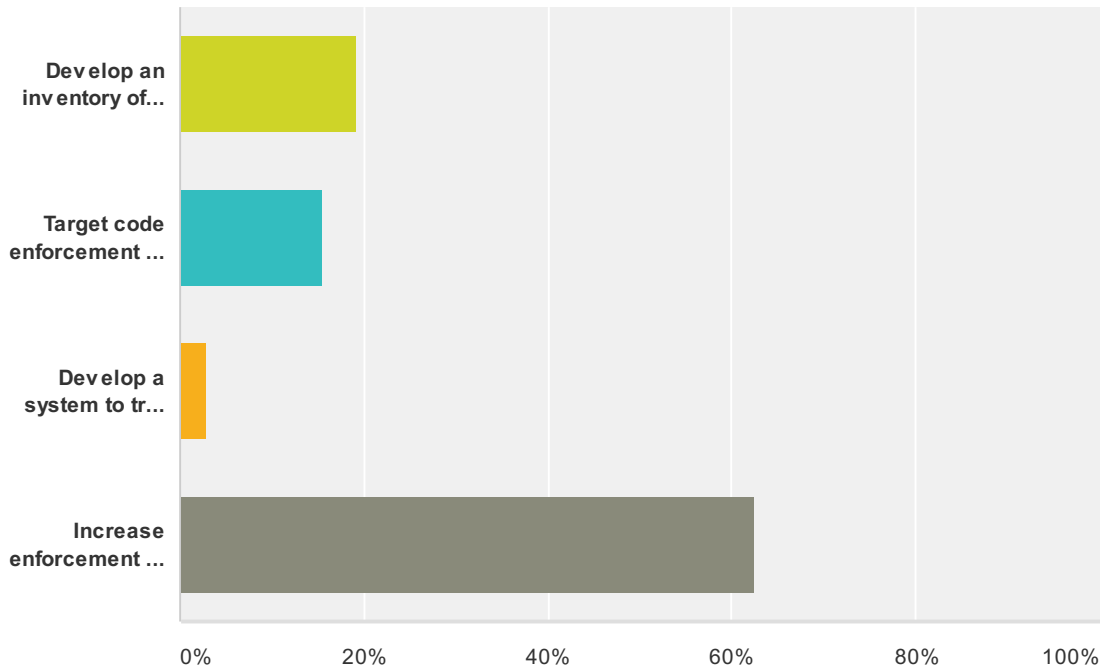
Answer Choices	Responses
Develop a plan for the demolition of dilapidated buildings	47.83% 66
Enforce current City regulations regarding vacant buildings within the downtown business district	21.01% 29
Complete a streetscape plan and extend the project to Main Street	11.59% 16
Develop a facade improvement program	6.52% 9
Continue to sponsor events to bring people into the downtown	9.42% 13
Install murals at key locations throughout the downtown	1.45% 2
Publicize the historic walking map and tour	0.72% 1
Nominate other historical resources for listing on the National Register	0% 0

# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Install signs to illustrate and bring attention to the historical resources throughout the City	1.45%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>138</b>

**Q2 Goal Two: Encourage housing improvements throughout the city to attract and retain residents Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal Two.**

Answered: 136 Skipped: 4

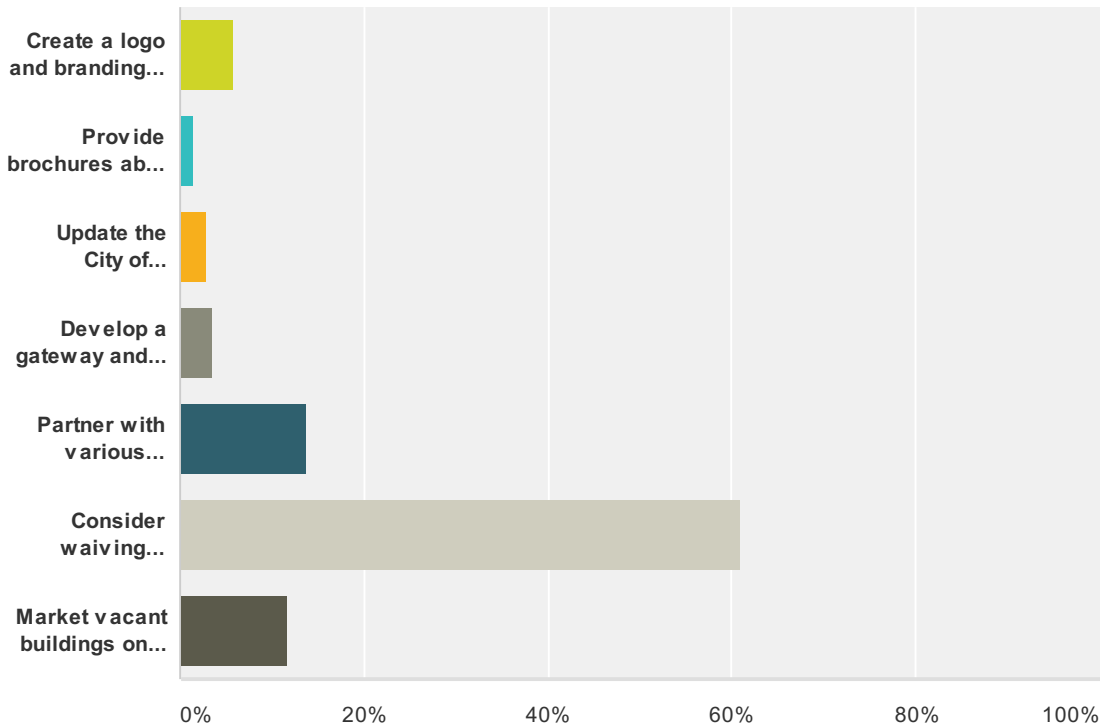


Answer Choices	Responses
Develop an inventory of all vacant and dilapidated structures	19.12% 26
Target code enforcement and resources to key areas (Arnold Street, Broad Street, and West Second Street)	15.44% 21
Develop a system to track complaints	2.94% 4
Increase enforcement of building codes and property maintenance ordinances to improve appearance of the City	62.50% 85
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>



**Q3 Goal Three: Develop an atmosphere that encourages and invites economic development opportunities Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal Three.**

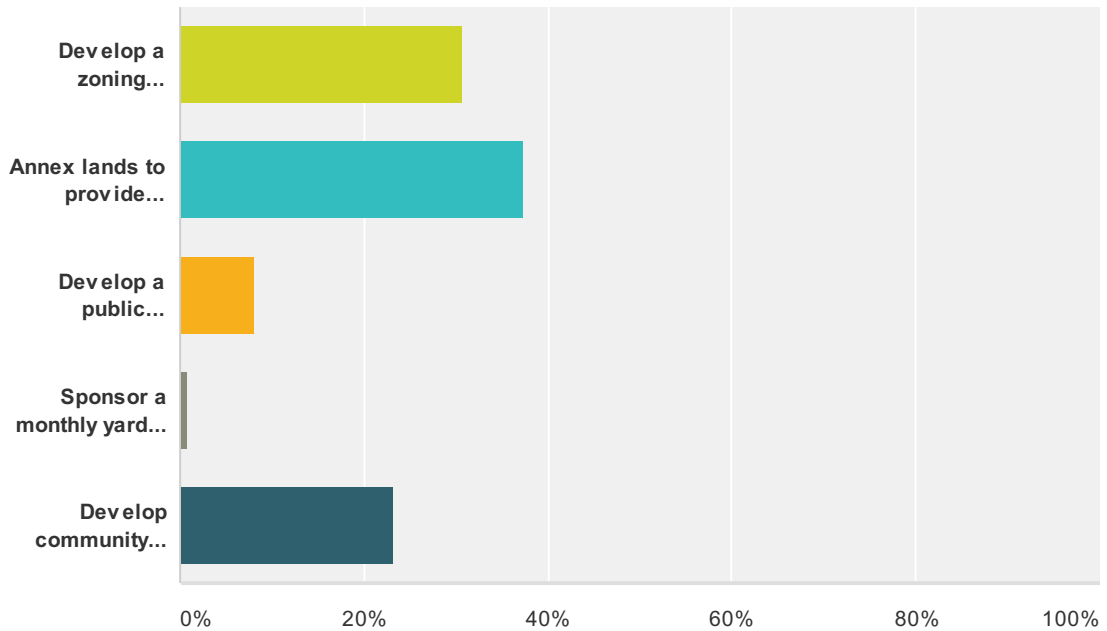
Answered: 138 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Create a logo and branding campaign for the City that can be used for marketing purposes	5.80% 8
Provide brochures about Weston at all local and regional attractions	1.45% 2
Update the City of Weston's website	2.90% 4
Develop a gateway and interpretive kiosks at TALA to invite visitors into the downtown	3.62% 5
Partner with various organizations to promote the City to visitors	13.77% 19
Consider waiving business and occupation taxes to encourage businesses to locate in the downtown business district	60.87% 84
Market vacant buildings on the City's website	11.59% 16
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>

**Q4 Goal Four: Encourage new development in the City, while protecting the environment of Weston Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal Four.**

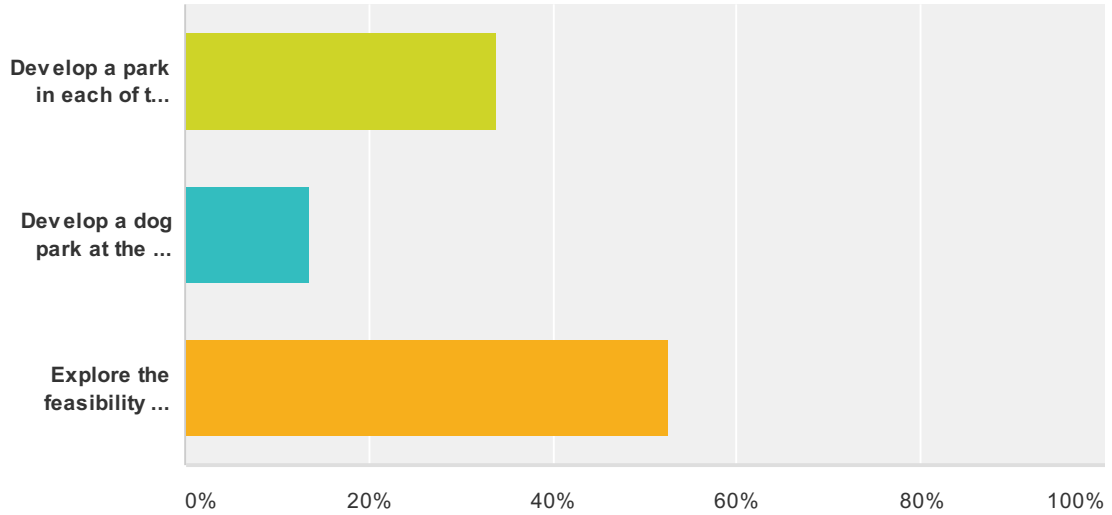
Answered: 134 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses
Develop a zoning ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan	30.60% 41
Annex lands to provide opportunities for additional commercial development. High priorities for annexation include the areas surrounding US Routes 33/119 and the I-79 Interchange.	37.31% 50
Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation	8.21% 11
Sponsor a monthly yard and home contest	0.75% 1
Develop community gardens in vacant lots	23.13% 31
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>

**Q5 Goal Five: Encourage a recreational family-friendly community atmosphere**  
**Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal Five.**

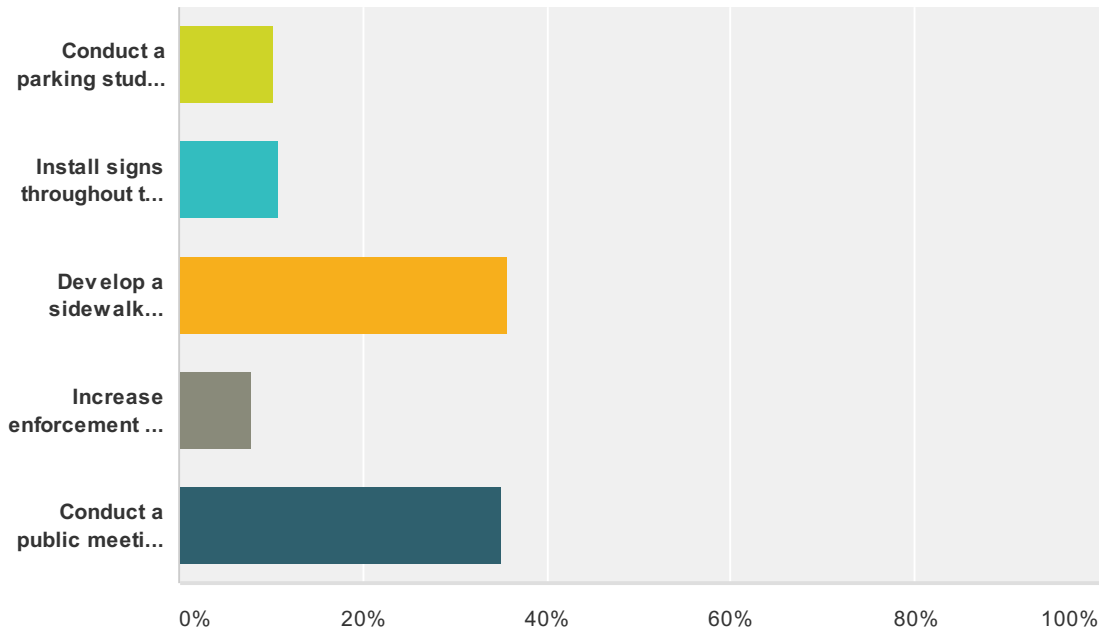
Answered: 133 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses
Develop a park in each of the four wards	33.83% 45
Develop a dog park at the old sanitary plant	13.53% 18
Explore the feasibility of purchasing or leasing a building in the downtown to serve as a community center	52.63% 70
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>

**Q6 Goal Six: Provide a multi-modal transportation network that is coordinated with new development Please choose the ONE action step which you feel is the most important to implement to achieve Goal Six.**

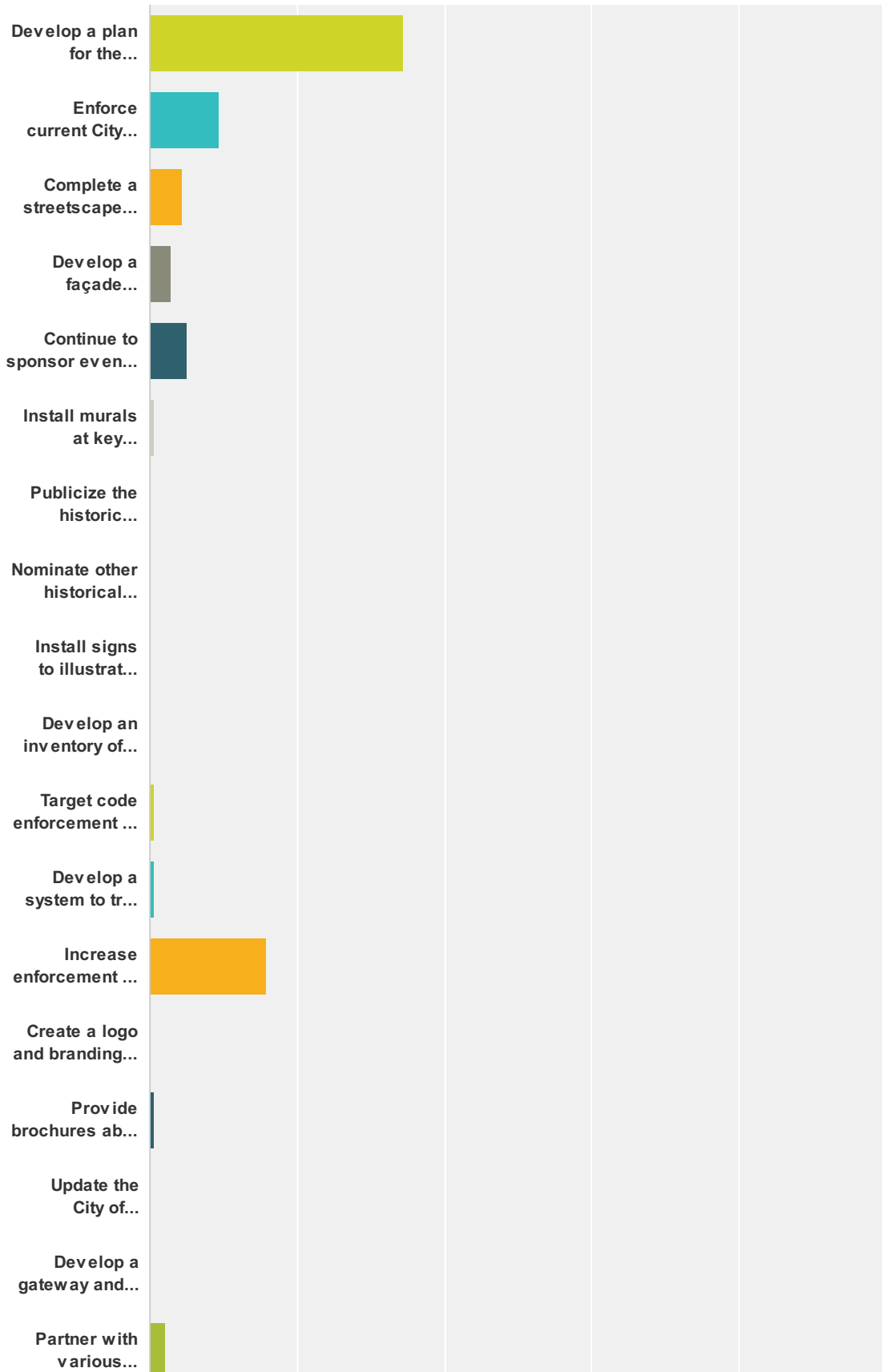
Answered: 137 Skipped: 3



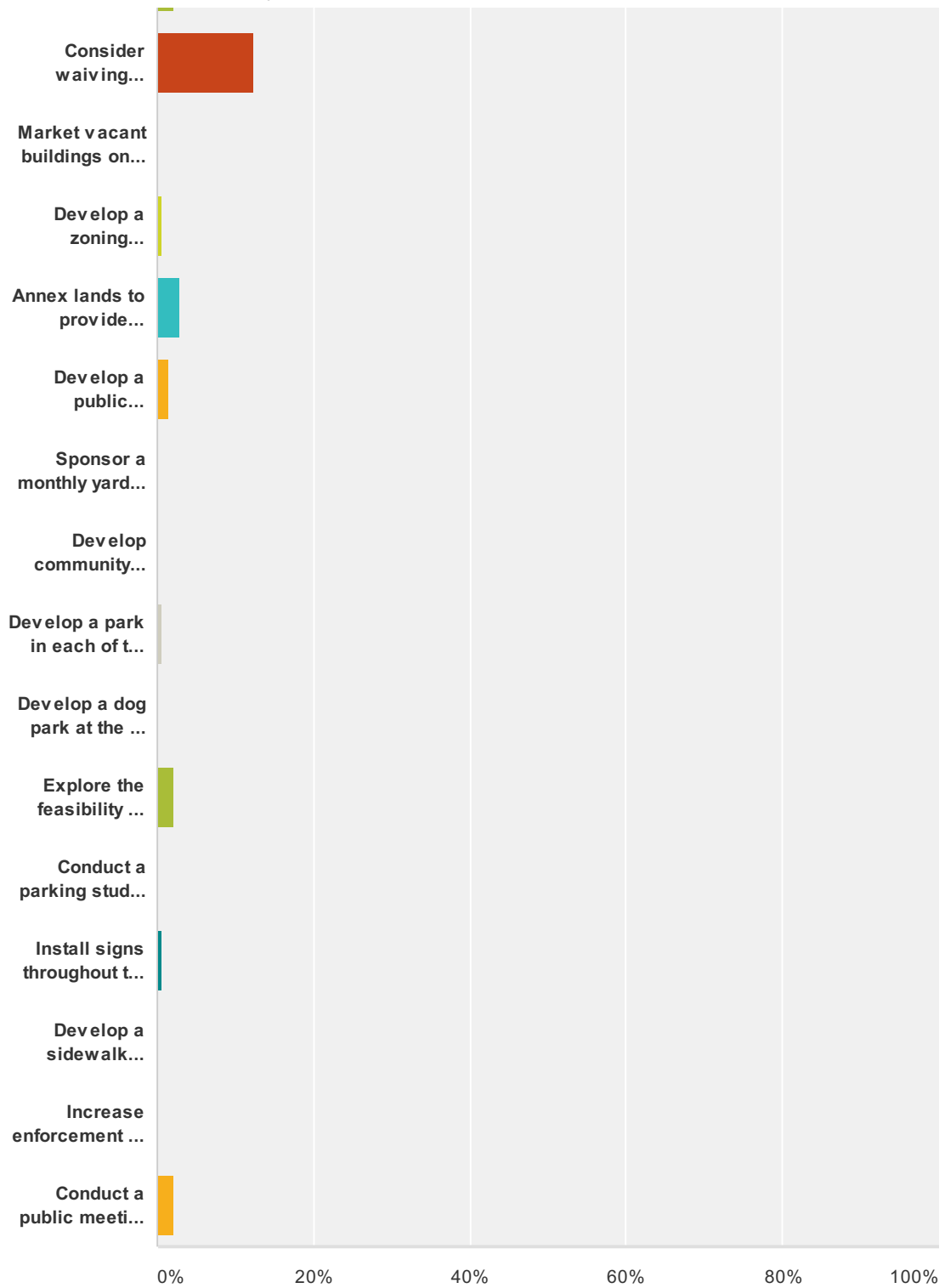
Answer Choices	Responses
Conduct a parking study to determine if additional on-street parking is feasible	10.22% 14
Install signs throughout the City to direct visitors to public parking lots	10.95% 15
Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize improvements needed	35.77% 49
Increase enforcement of speeding in neighborhoods	8.03% 11
Conduct a public meeting to determine if there is support for changing Main Street to a two-way street	35.04% 48
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>

### Q7 Of all the action steps listed, which one do you feel should be the highest priority overall for the City?

Answered: 139 Skipped: 1



# City of Weston Comprehensive Plan



Answer Choices	Responses
Develop a plan for the demolition of dilapidated buildings	34.53% 48
Enforce current City regulations regarding vacant buildings within the downtown business district	9.35% 13
Complete a streetscape plan and extend the project to Main Street	4.32% 6
Develop a façade improvement program	2.88% 4
Continue to sponsor events to bring people into the downtown	5.04% 7

## City of Weston Comprehensive Plan

Install murals at key locations throughout the downtown	0.72%	1
Publicize the historic walking map and tour	0%	0
Nominate other historical resources for listing on the National Register	0%	0
Install signs to illustrate and bring attention to the historical resources throughout the City	0%	0
Develop an inventory of all vacant and dilapidated structures	0%	0
Target code enforcement and resources to key investment areas	0.72%	1
Develop a system to track complaints	0.72%	1
Increase enforcement of building codes and property maintenance ordinances to improve appearance of the City	15.83%	22
Create a logo and branding campaign for the City that can be used for marketing purposes	0%	0
Provide brochures about Weston at all local and regional attractions	0.72%	1
Update the City of Weston's website	0%	0
Develop a gateway and interpretive kiosks at TALA to invite visitors into the downtown	0%	0
Partner with various organizations to promote the City to visitors	2.16%	3
Consider waiving business and occupation taxes to encourage businesses to locate in the downtown business district	12.23%	17
Market vacant buildings on the City's website	0%	0
Develop a zoning ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan	0.72%	1
Annex lands to provide opportunities for additional commercial development	2.88%	4
Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation	1.44%	2
Sponsor a monthly yard and home contest	0%	0
Develop community gardens in vacant lots	0%	0
Develop a park in each of the four wards	0.72%	1
Develop a dog park at the old sanitary plant	0%	0
Explore the feasibility of purchasing or leasing a building in the downtown to serve as a community center	2.16%	3
Conduct a parking study to determine if additional on-street parking is feasible	0%	0
Install signs throughout the City to direct visitors to public parking lots	0.72%	1
Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize improvements needed	0%	0
Increase enforcement of speeding in neighborhoods	0%	0
Conduct a public meeting to determine if there is support for changing Main Street to a two-way street	2.16%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>139</b>

# **APPENDIX 2:**

## **SOURCES**



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**APPENDIX 3:  
ADOPTION  
MATERIALS**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PREPARED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF WESTON, WEST VIRGINIA**

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission for the City of Weston, West Virginia, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, has prepared a comprehensive plan for the City;

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has adopted procedures for public input throughout the comprehensive plan process;

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has identified and addressed all required objectives and components pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-6, notice was published in the Weston Democrat on May 21, 2014;

**WHEREAS**, further pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-6, a public hearing was held before the City of Weston's Planning Commission on July 7, 2014;

**WHEREAS**, no written comments were received by the planning commission;

**WHEREAS**, no oral comments were presented to the planning commission pursuant to the notice of public hearing;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Planning Commission for the City of Weston, West Virginia, that, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, the comprehensive plan prepared by the Planning Commission for the City of Weston, West Virginia, bearing the date of May 2014 is made a part of this resolution by reference and is hereby recommended to the City Council without any amendments thereto entered into the official minutes of the Planning Commission.

**PASSED and APPROVED** at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Weston, West Virginia, held on July 7, 2014.

**ATTEST:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
President, City of Weston Planning Commission

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WESTON, WEST VIRGINIA**

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission for the City of Weston, West Virginia, pursuant to Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, has prepared a recommended comprehensive plan for the City;

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has recommended that the City Council adopt the comprehensive plan;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-7, a public hearing was held before the City of Weston's Planning Commission on July 7, 2014;

**WHEREAS**, the planning commission presented the comprehensive plan to the City Council on August 4, 2014;

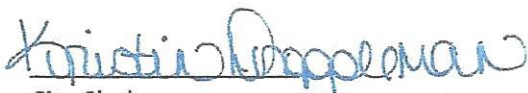
**WHEREAS**, pursuant to §8A-3-7, a public hearing was held before the City Council on September 8, 2014;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED** by the City Council for the City of Weston, West Virginia, that, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-8, the comprehensive plan prepared by the Planning Commission for the City of Weston, West Virginia, bearing the date of May, 2014, is made a part of this resolution by reference and is hereby adopted without any amendments thereto entered into the official minutes of the City Council.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this adopted comprehensive plan shall, pursuant to West Virginia Code §8A-3-9, be filed in the office of the clerk of the county commission for Lewis County, West Virginia

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Weston, West Virginia, held on September 2, 2014.

**ATTEST:**



City Clerk