



Connecting Assets in Vicksburg, MI

MSU Practicum 2020

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Executive Summary

Michigan State University's Planning Practicum is a course designed for undergraduate seniors and graduate Urban and Regional Planning students. The purpose of the course is to engage the students in a real-life project while providing a municipality, private company or non-profit client with a report, poster and presentation to achieve a planning goal. The course builds upon all previous planning courses and expands the accumulated knowledge further.

The practicum team worked with Paper City Development LLC and the Village of Vicksburg to enhance connectivity within the village. The purpose of this project is to identify assets within the Village of Vicksburg and make recommendations that will enhance non-motorized connectivity by applying placemaking concepts for a new non-motorized path that strategically connects village assets. Moreover, this report has involved the Village of Vicksburg residents in the non-motorized pathway planning processes and recommends additional future public participation.

The report highlights Vicksburg's community profile and suggests recommendations built upon the existing master plan goals, current zoning, and land use. The village's existing conditions are evaluated through a socio-economic profile analysis and a retail gap analysis, and the village assets are grouped into four nodes based on responses from the Vicksburg Community Survey and the Vicksburg Stakeholder Survey conducted in February 2020. The Vicksburg Community Survey was posted on the Village of Vicksburg Facebook page and collected 100 responses from residents in 2 weeks. The Vicksburg Stakeholder Survey identified strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities within the Village. The practicum team received 5 responses for the Vicksburg Stakeholder Survey from village representatives and members of The Mill. Planning recommendations for the non-motorized path are based on a methodology that evaluates the existing conditions of Vicksburg, stakeholder and community input, and a series of case studies of successful non-motorized paths used to create a sense of place in similar communities.

It was discovered through the Stakeholder Survey that the strengths of the community include the small businesses, historic buildings and an involved community. The Community Survey identified the most important aspects of Vicksburg to be the downtown area, the small-town atmosphere, and the proximity to Kalamazoo. The survey also reveals that the community would like a vibrant downtown, enhanced parks, and increased connectivity. Furthermore, Vicksburg residents currently report a high probability of using a future non-motorized path. Based on qualitative and quantitative research, the practicum team recommends constructing a non-motorized path that connects four asset nodes within the village. These include the core downtown area, the Historic Village, The Mill, and the Business Park.

The proposed non-motorized path will be designed for bicyclists, pedestrians and will be handicap accessible. In this report, the proposed path is referred to as the Vicksburg Trail and will connect to the existing trail that runs north of the village. The proposed Vicksburg Trail includes forms of placemaking such as wayfinding signs that incorporate a defined logo and are strategically placed along the path. The proposed path will also increase foot traffic and create economic opportunity for Vicksburg's small businesses. The enhanced connectivity will improve non-motorized travel

for village residents while offering a regional asset that draws in visitors from the surrounding areas.



Acknowledgements

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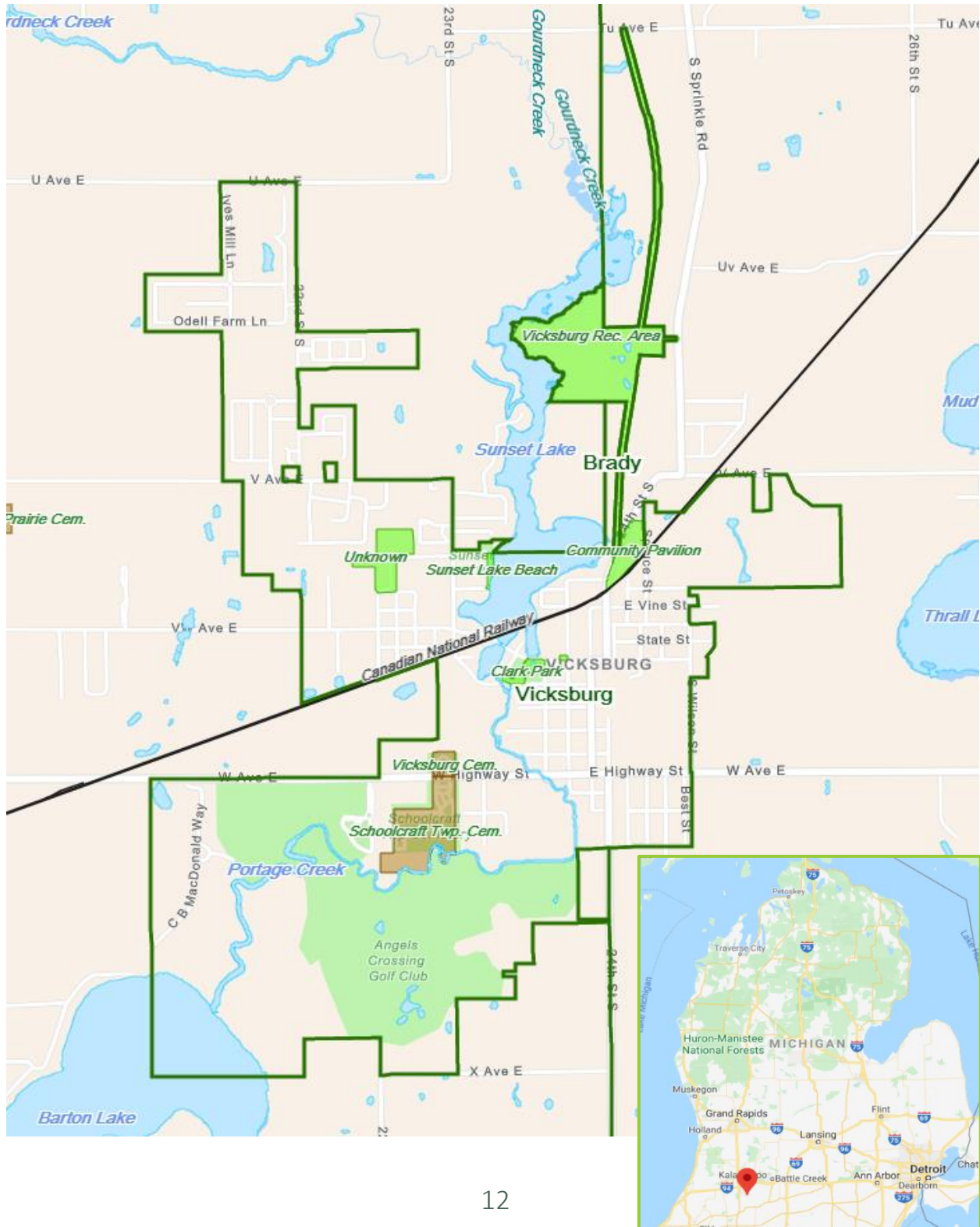
Introduction

The Village of Vicksburg encompasses approximately 3.15 square miles and has a population of 3,419 people as of 2018. Vicksburg is located 15 miles south of the City of Kalamazoo, Michigan. A railway bisects the village from east to west and the village is not connected to any major highways or interstate routes as seen in Figure 1.1.

The Village of Vicksburg originated in 1831 when John Vickers built a brush dam over the waterfall on Portage Creek, creating the modern-day Sunset Lake. In 1905, the Lee Paper Company constructed a rag-content paper mill in the village. At the time, Vicksburg was centrally located to paper markets and had access to clean water and railroads. Historically, the paper mill was the largest employer in the Vicksburg area. Jobs at the mill were attractive and drew people from all over the area to Vicksburg for work. This led to an increase in the housing demand within the village limits and surrounding townships. In 1996, the paper mill was purchased by Fox River Paper Company and closed in 2001 due to the declining demand for rag-based paper. The 416,000 square-foot structure remained abandoned for over a decade. In 2019, the Vicksburg paper mill was approved for a Transformational Brownfield Plan (TBP) by the Michigan Strategic Fund. The paper mill is now known as The Mill at Vicksburg and is managed by the development company, Paper City Development, LLC. The revitalization project for The Mill is projected to create 220 additional jobs for the Village of Vicksburg along with attracting 15,900 visitors during

the first year after project completion, and 55,200 visitors in the following year based on the Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment of the TBP submitted by Paper City Development, LLC.

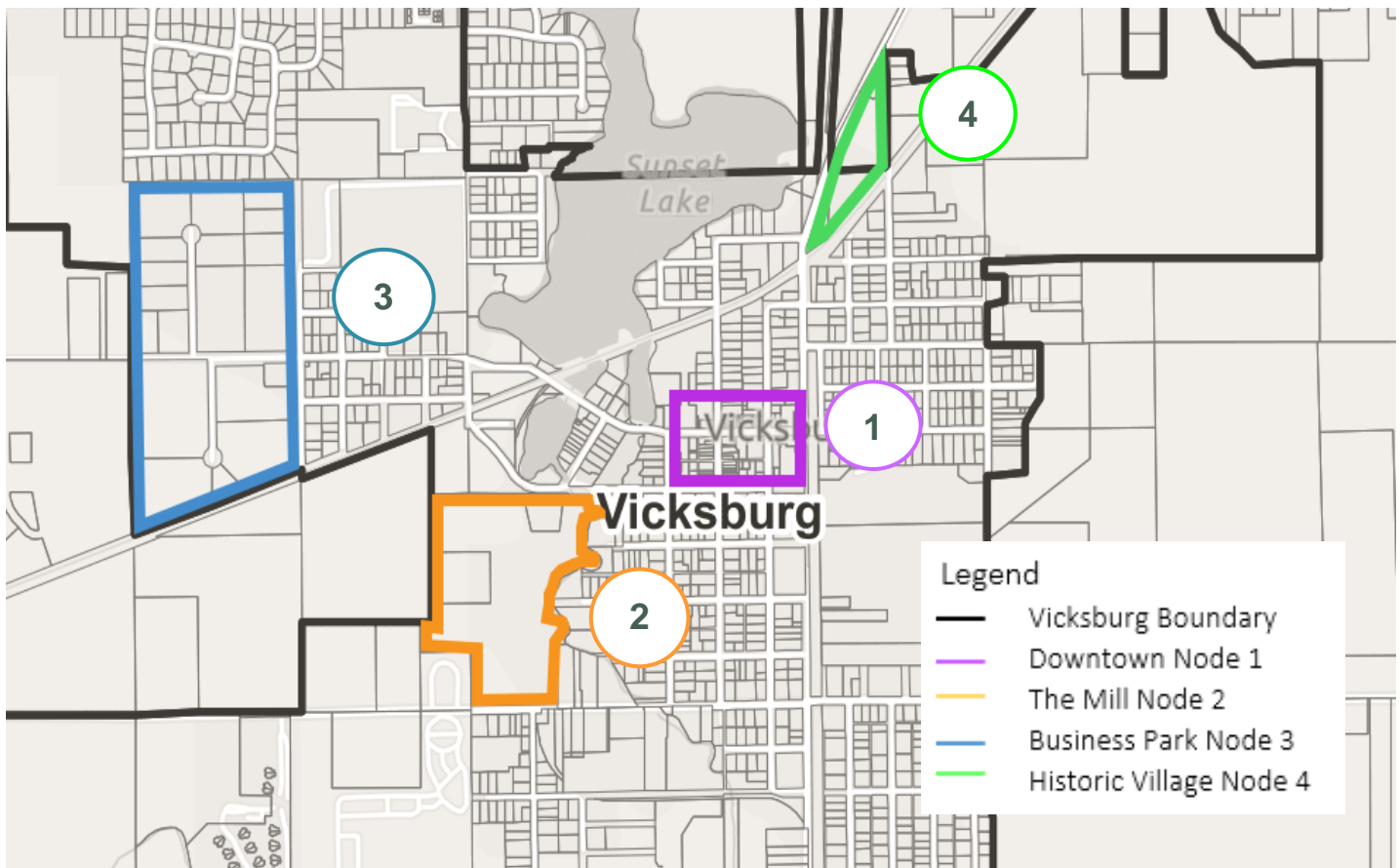
Figure 1.1 Boundary of the Village of Vicksburg, MI



An improved circulation route or trail is proposed to improve the non-motorized connections between the main destination centers or nodes in Vicksburg. The non-motorized trail should be sensitive to natural and cultural resources and will contribute to economic sustainability in Vicksburg.

Each asset node contains one major entity that defines the area. Figure 1.2 shows a map of Vicksburg’s asset nodes. These nodes establish a network of location connections necessary for a well design non-motorized path. On the west edge of the village and left side of the map, highlighted in blue, is the Business Park node where the Henry A. Leja Business Park is located. The node towards the south, outline in orange, is where The Mill redevelopment project is located. The third focus area is located towards the east, highlighted by the purple boundary, is the Downtown core of Vicksburg. The fourth node located in the northeast part of the village, and outlined in green, is the Vicksburg Historic Village.

Figure 1.2 Map of Vicksburg’s Asset Nodes



Vicksburg Community Profile

Based on the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan, the village plans to focus on retaining talent and incentivizing new and innovative ideas. Plans to attract an educated and talented workforce include 1) offering physical and cultural amenities and 2) by maintaining its small-town characteristics and limiting large growth. The village also plans to attract visitors by promoting Vicksburg as a vibrant destination with accessible amenities. The 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan provides a list of goals and objectives and are shown in Table 1.1. These objectives will be used in this report to develop placemaking concepts and asset management recommendations

Table 1.1 Village of Vicksburg Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
Development & Planning	<p>Attract new residents and businesses while still preserving the Village’s small-town character.</p> <p>Enhance positive perceptions of Vicksburg by improving public communications between the village and residents, and to identify major events to create awareness for Vicksburg.</p>
Commercial	<p>Ensure new development and redevelopment are consistent with the Village’s historic Victorian architecture by adopting design guidelines.</p> <p>Provide incentives and other economic tools for commercial business owners and tenants to upgrade existing commercial sites.</p> <p>Promote existing business and create programs to attract additional businesses.</p> <p>Concentrate commercial development in the downtown core while providing low-intensity commercial opportunities in existing commercial nodes outside of downtown core.</p>

<p>Industrial</p>	<p>Encourages owners of industrial property to create buffering and screening to protect nearby residential properties.</p> <p>Plan for future redevelopment or reuse of existing and/or vacant industrial areas by creating regulations that will permit diverse industrial bases, such as knowledge based, research, and technology-oriented uses. (ability to adjust to ever-changing market).</p> <p>Promote creative-workshop and artist-oriented uses, consider allowing small-scale workshops in the downtown core and other workplace areas.</p>
<p>Recreation, Culture, & Leisure</p>	<p>Develop facilities for non-motorized transportation (bike lanes, NM Trail connections) through the downtown, recreational facilities, and other focal points to tie into the portage trail system.</p> <p>Develop a public art plan for downtown Vicksburg as well as other public places.</p> <p>Encourage active participation of adjoining neighborhoods in the development, operation, and support of new parks, programs, pathways/sidewalks.</p>
<p>Historic Preservation</p>	<p>Work with Historical Society to maintain an accurate listing of historic sites and a corresponding map to document important structures, determine the supply of historic resources, and create a public awareness of their importance.</p> <p>Use historic styles and features on new buildings, encourage investment in historic resources.</p> <p>Develop design guidelines that reflect the unique character/scale of Vicksburg.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Provide safe and efficient non-motorized pathway and sidewalk system that provides connectivity, access, and mobility to various land uses, including parks and recreation, civic institutions, commercial, and residential developments.</p> <p>Adopt complete streets policies.</p>

Progress on Master Plan Goals & Objectives



Development and Planning: The Village of Vicksburg has adopted design guidelines for new development and redevelopment projects within the downtown core. Design guidelines are important for retaining the village's unique characteristics while allowing economic growth. Economic incentives encouraging business owners or tenants to upgrade existing commercial and residential buildings within the downtown core. There is currently a Facade Grant Program from the Village of Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority. The \$24,000 grant is supported by the Vicksburg Foundation and provides financial resources for business and commercial property owners to renovate the facade of buildings and revitalize the existing Victorian architecture. This is an effort to aid property owners in the downtown to improve the building appearance while adhering to Vicksburg DDA's design guidelines. The Vicksburg DDA also offers a RePaint Program that reimburses the painting costs for commercial property owners and also offers loan programs used for the rehabilitation or improvement of downtown properties.



Commercial: Vicksburg recognizes the importance of adjusting and adapting to new markets and industries and hopes to redevelop or reuse old and vacant industrial sites by creating regulations that allow for a diverse industrial base. This includes the development of research and technology-oriented uses. There is currently an industrial business park located west of the village. Although the business park is mainly comprised of manufacturing industries, there are several knowledge and technology-based industries in the area such as MLC Research and Development, and A & O Mold & Engineering. The Mill at Vicksburg is another redevelopment project taking place at an industrial property. The old paper mill is being redeveloped into a mixed-use campus which includes event and music spaces, craft beverage and food production, and a residential space. The Mill will benefit the Village as both a tourist destination for visitors and a multi-generational amenity expected to improve youth retention and attract new talent to Vicksburg.



 Culture: In addition to retaining Vicksburg’s small-town characteristics, another goal is to enhance the quality of life in the Village by using placemaking concepts and smart growth principles and increasing community engagement. One of the proposals from the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan is to use public art in the downtown core. Figure 1.3 shows an image of Vicksburg’s downtown main street. The Mill at Vicksburg currently hosts an artist residency program and a music residency program in two of the buildings purchased in Downtown. The artist residency program invites artists from around the world to Vicksburg to stay anywhere from four to seven weeks and offers participants a generous stipend and free lodging. The music residency program attracts new musicians to stay in the village, and the building will serve as a small venue for music performances. These residency programs increase the arts and music culture within the village and allow new artists to familiarize themselves with the village and the southwest Michigan region.

Figure 1.3 Vicksburg Main Street



 Engagement: The village has recently revamped its website and has been using social media as a method of interacting with the community. The Village of Vicksburg, MI Facebook Page has been the main form of communications that the village uses online to inform the

community of ongoing or upcoming events, promoting local businesses, and posting announcements such as weather hazards, public meetings, or police investigations to name a few. The page has a following of 3,438 people with 3,319 likes as of February 2020. There is active engagement from commenters expressing their opinions on the Facebook posts made on the page from both residents and former residents of the village. The Village has recently streamed their council meeting for the first time online, and the full meeting is posted on their YouTube channel. This is another method to engage community members who cannot attend in person or watch the meeting when it is on television but have access to the internet through computers or phones.

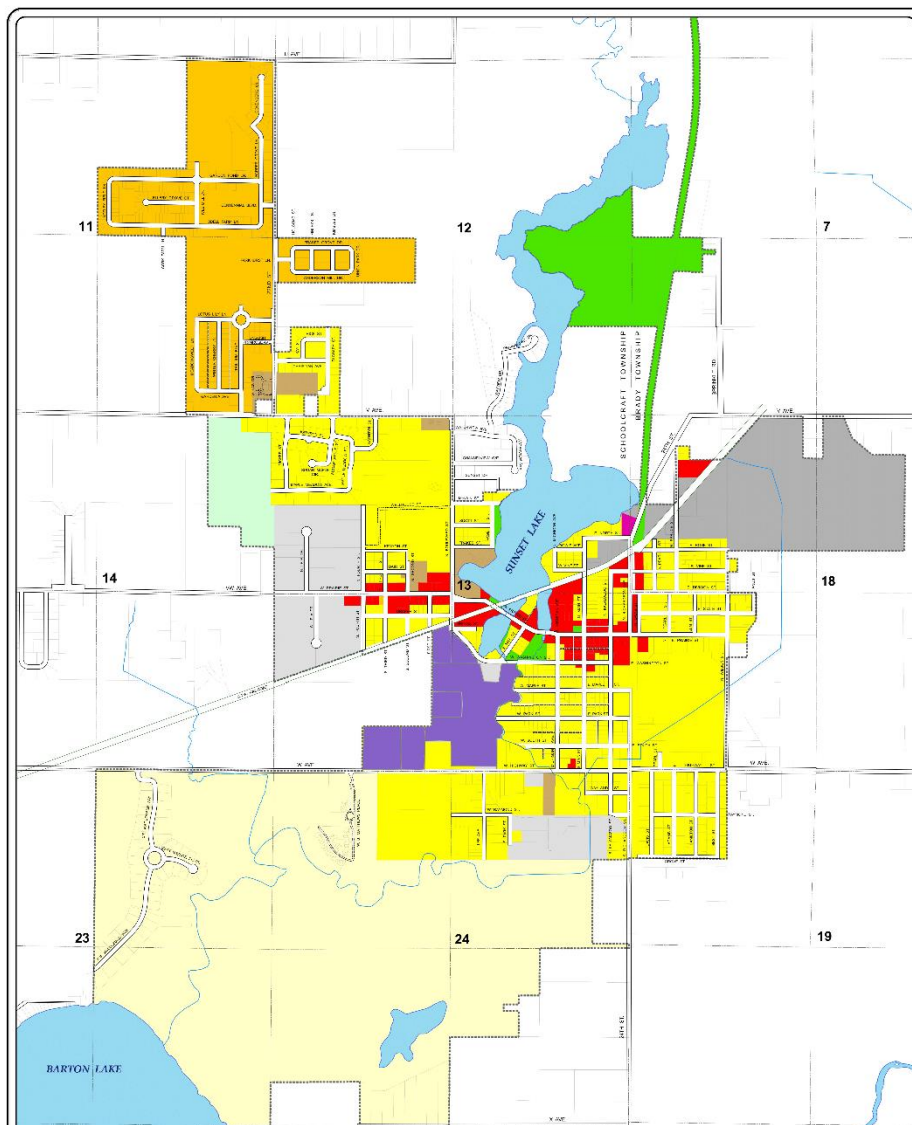


Recreation: The 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan seeks to improve circulation of vehicular traffic within the village and create a comprehensive pedestrian system throughout the village that connects to existing trails from neighboring communities. Vicksburg currently has a 2-mile trail system called the Vicksburg Nature Trail located north of the village. The trail is connected to the pedestrian sidewalk of the village and leads up to the Vicksburg Recreation Area. An extension of the trail is currently under construction and is expected to provide a connection to Portage and Kalamazoo. There are a number of recreational areas within a ½ mile of Vicksburg's downtown core area. These include the Vicksburg Recreation Area and the Vicksburg Trail, the Community Pavilion, the Historic Village, Sunset Lake Beach, Veterans Park, Clark Park, Oswalt Park, Angels Crossing Golf Club, and the Community Garden.















Zoning and Land Use

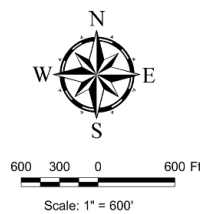
The Village of Vicksburg currently has fifteen zoning districts listed under the village ordinance, however the zoning map from 2015 shown in Figure 1.4 includes ten zones.

Figure 1.4 Zoning Map of Vicksburg



LEGEND

- | | |
|---|--|
|  AG-1 Agricultural Preservation |  C-1 Commercial Local |
|  CP Conservation Preservation |  C-2 Commercial |
|  R-1 Residential Single Family |  C-3 Commercial Shopping Center |
|  R-2 Residential Single Family |  C-4 Commercial |
|  R-3 Residential Single and Two Family |  I-1 Industrial Restricted |
|  R-4 Residential Multiple Family |  I-2 Industrial Manufacturing / Service |
|  R-5 Residential Mobile Home Park |  I-3 Industrial Manufacturing |



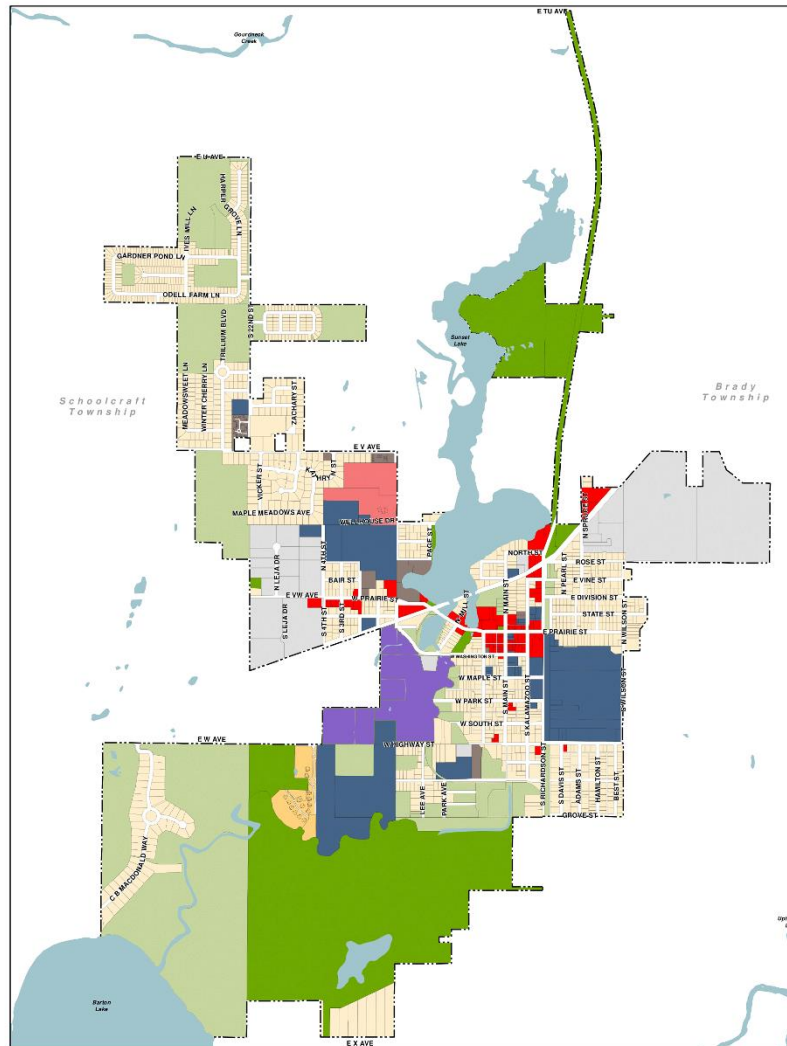
Village of Vicksburg
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

Zoning Map

Effective: May 20, 2015
Printed: May 2015

Figure 1.5 shows the existing land use map for The Village of Vicksburg. The total acreage is 1,729 and there are currently nine different land use categories.

Figure 1.5 Land Use Map of Vicksburg



LEGEND

Existing Land Use

Village of Vicksburg
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Single Family Residential |  Industrial |
|  Single Family Residential Attached |  Public Parks & Recreation Facilities |
|  Multiple Family |  Public / Quasi Public |
|  Commercial |  Undeveloped Land / Open Space |
|  Medical |  Village Boundary |

Analysis of the four asset nodes is helpful for understanding contradictions in the land use function and zoning regulations. The downtown core of Vicksburg is located along the intersection of North Main Street and East Prairie Street and is made up of C-2 Commercial Zoning as shown on Figure 1.6 and 1.7. The current land use of the downtown core is mostly commercial with some public/quasi-public uses. There is also a small parcel zoned as CP Conservation Preservation within the downtown core. Surrounding parcels are R-2 single family residential. While the downtown core is convenient for surrounding residents, the area is mainly used for commercial purposes. Mixed Use facilities were recently added to the Zoning Ordinance after the creation of the land use map.




Figure 1.6 Downtown Node Zoning Map



Figure 1.7 Downtown Node Land Use Map



The non-motorized path crosses through the Vicksburg’s downtown node to attract foot traffic and increase accessibility of the local commercial district. The following 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan goals and objectives that are relevant to connectivity at the downtown node include:

-  **Commercial:** Promote existing business and create programs to attract additional businesses.
-  **Recreation:** Develop facilities for non-motorized transportation (bike lanes, Non-motorized Trail connections) through the downtown, recreational facilities, and other focal points to tie into the portage trail system.
-  **Transportation:** Provide safe and efficient non-motorized pathway and sidewalk system that provides connectivity, access, and mobility to various land uses, including parks and recreation, civic institutions, commercial, and residential developments.

The Mill is currently zoned for Planned Unit Development (PUD). As shown in Figure 1.8 there are six parcels zoned for PUD, and one parcel zoned I-2 and on Figure 1.9 one parcel is identified as industrial use and six parcels for PUD. The parcels zoned for PUD has allowed uses for Multi-Family Residential (R-4), Commercial (C-2, C-3, and C-4), and Industrial/Services (I-2 and I-3). There are undeveloped spaces located east and west of The Mill and some single-family residential units to the east and south of the paper mill. There are currently eight parcels around the paper mill that are unused open spaces according to the land use map. A Public/Quasi Public parcel is also located on the southwestern corner of the mill. Based on the zoning and land use maps of The Mill node, the land use conforms to the zoning.

Figure 1.8 The Mill Node Zoning Map

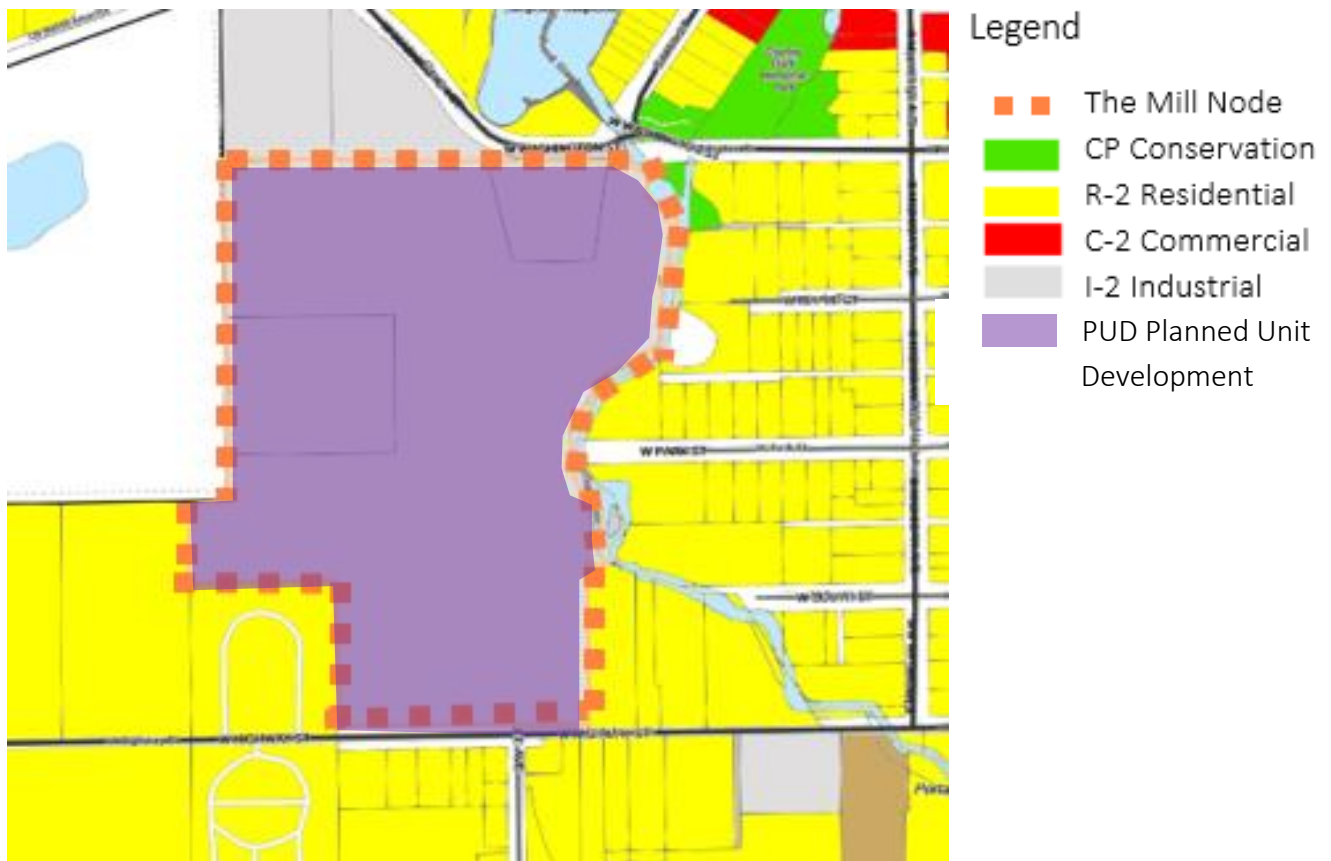


Figure 1.9 The Mill Node Land Use Map



The non-motorized path connects to the paper mill property. The proposed mixed-use development for The Mill will attract visitors and a non-motorized path will alleviate the increase in vehicular traffic. The following 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan goals and objectives are relevant to connectivity at The Mill node include:



Development and Planning: Attract new residents and businesses while still preserving the Village’s small-town character.



Industrial: Plan for future redevelopment or reuse of existing and/or vacant industrial areas

There are eighteen I-2 parcels within the business park and one C-2 Commercial zoned parcel. West Prairie Street intersects the middle of the park and commercial uses are located along each side of the street towards the east side of the industrial park. There are 31 parcels zoned as C-2 Commercial along West Prairie as shown in Figure 1.10, however only 10 parcels are shown to be commercial uses in Figure 1.11. There are also R-2 Single Family Residential and R-4 Multiple Family Residential zones located north and east of the industrial park.

Figure 1.10 Business Park Node Zoning Map



Figure 1.11 Business Park Node Land Use Map



The non-motorized path connects to the business park. Providing an alternative modality will likely encourage local employees to walk or bike to work. The following 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan goals and objectives are relevant to connectivity at the Business Park Node include:



Transportation: Provide safe and efficient non-motorized pathway and sidewalk system that provides connectivity to various land uses.

2

Existing Conditions

Implementing a successful non-motorized path requires an analysis of the existing conditions of Vicksburg within a regional context. Increasing connectivity in Vicksburg will impact the physical infrastructure and transportation needs, influence the social culture of walkability, and create new points of access to natural and recreational areas. The capacity and location of the proposed non-motorized path should meet the existing needs of resident and future needs of visitors.

Socio Economic Profile

The socio-economic profile identifies developing trends for the Village of Vicksburg through a comparative analysis of regionally significant areas. These areas include Schoolcraft Township, Kalamazoo County, and the state of Michigan. A nationwide profile references the most current data and analyzes the growth in Vicksburg during 2000-2018. The socio-economic profile reviews population data, regional age structure, racial distribution, education status, and employment opportunities. The data can be used to better understand the current condition and trends of development in Vicksburg and its relevant regions.

The population in the Village of Vicksburg has been steadily increasing since 2010 as shown in Figure 2.1, the total population reached 3,419 in 2018 with 53% male and 47% female. The population is likely to continue increasing in the foreseeable future due to strategic planning initiatives laid out in Vicksburg’s 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan.

Figure 2.1 Population Growth in Vicksburg 2010-2018 (U.S. Census Data)

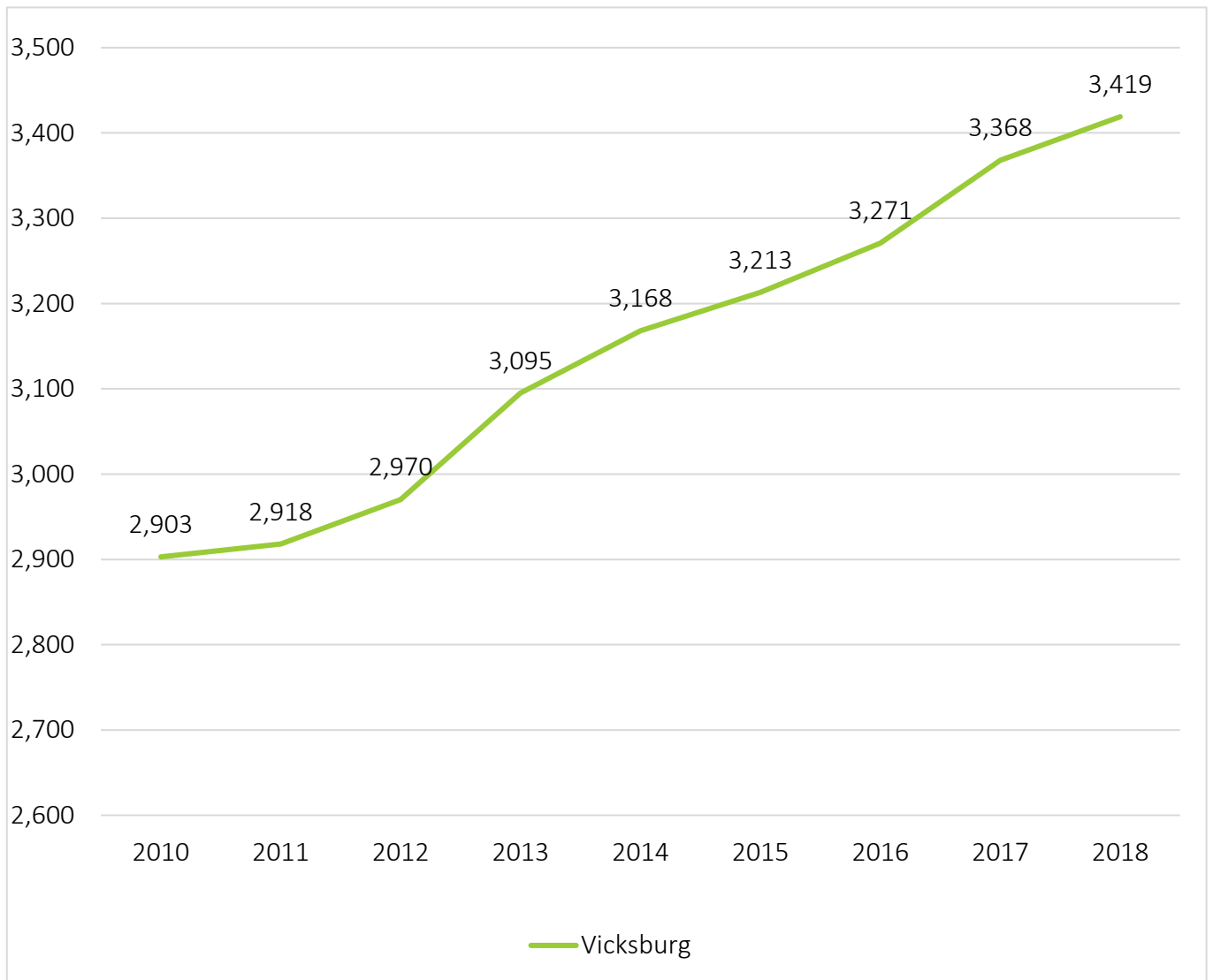
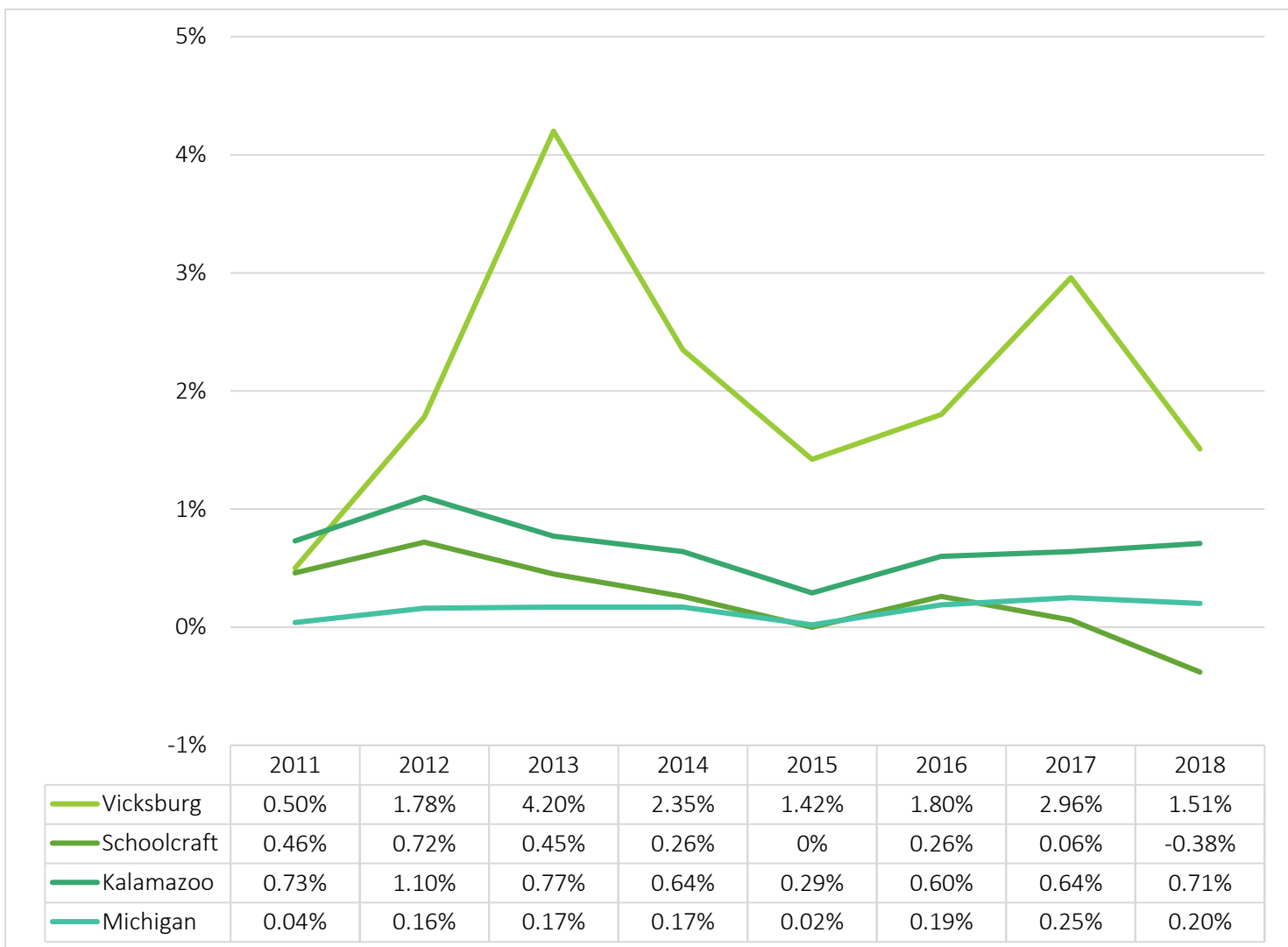


Figure 2.2 compares population changes in the geographic areas surrounding the Village of Vicksburg. The significant growth in Vicksburg during 2013 directly reflects the village’s initiative to attract residents. The Village of Vicksburg’s population increase is regionally significant and is advantageous for local economic development. Kalamazoo County and Michigan follow slower population growth trends during 2010– 2018 while Schoolcraft experiences a slight population decrease in 2016-2018.

Figure 2.2 Population Change 2010- 2018 (U.S. Census Data)



The racial composition for the Village of Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo County, and Michigan in 2015 are shown in Figure 2.3. Comparing Vicksburg to its parent regions (Kalamazoo County and the state of Michigan), white population dominates the racial distribution more in Vicksburg, which means this area is more racially homogenous. The high white population is regionally consistent with Schoolcraft. From the changing trend of time (2000-2015), the racial diversity in Vicksburg slightly increased (3.6% to 4.1% in 15 years), and this tendency is consistent with the change of other samples.

Figure 2.3 Racial Distribution in 2015 (U.S. Census Data)

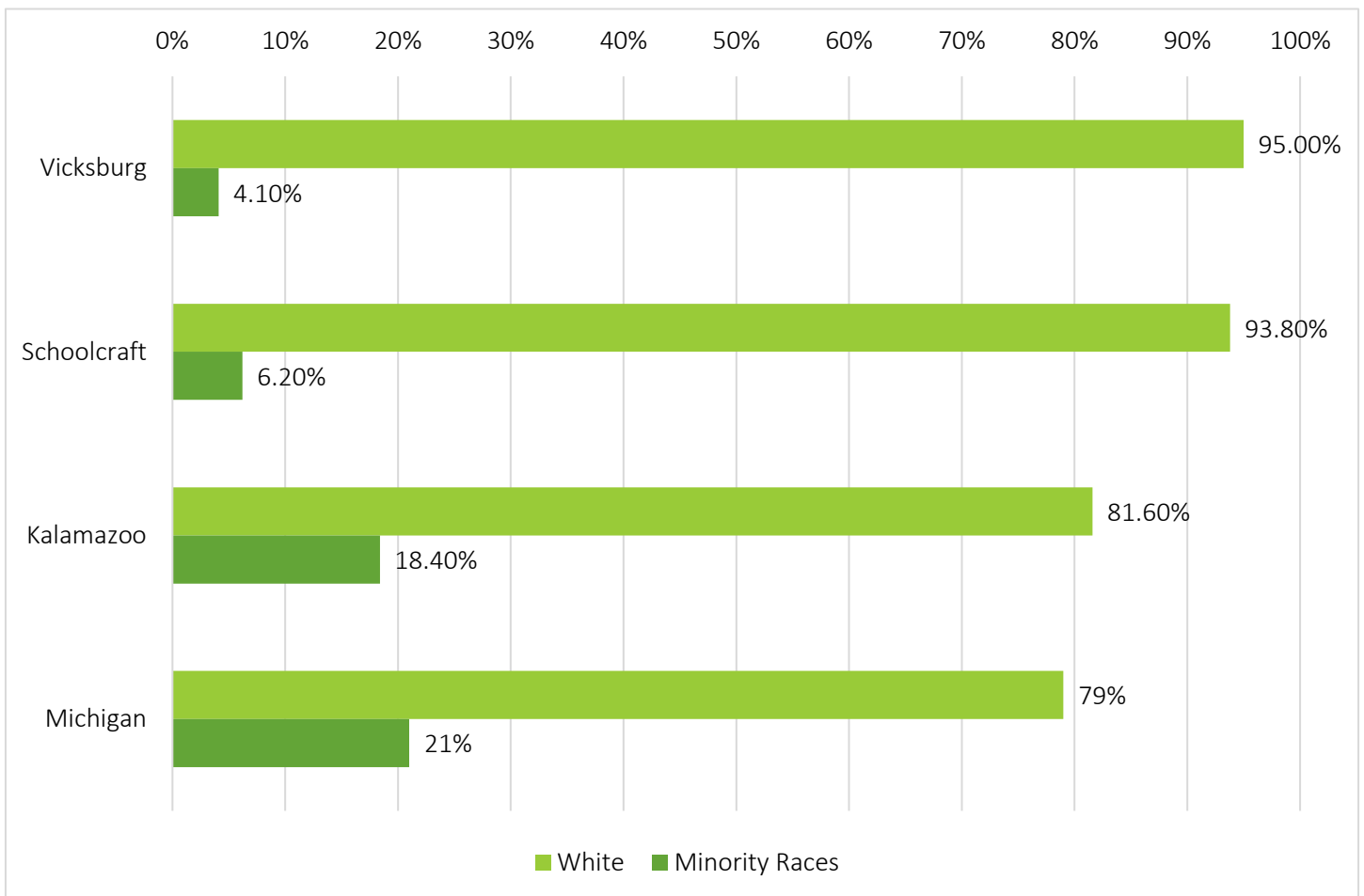


Figure 2.4 shows the median age for Vicksburg and three other samples during 2000-2017. The median age of Vicksburg had remained relatively steady, decreasing from 35 to 33 over 17 years while the state’s median age has increased by 5 years, from 35 to 40. The current age structure in Vicksburg reflects an increase in young adults.

Figure 2.4 Median Age Change 2000-2017 (U.S. Census Data)

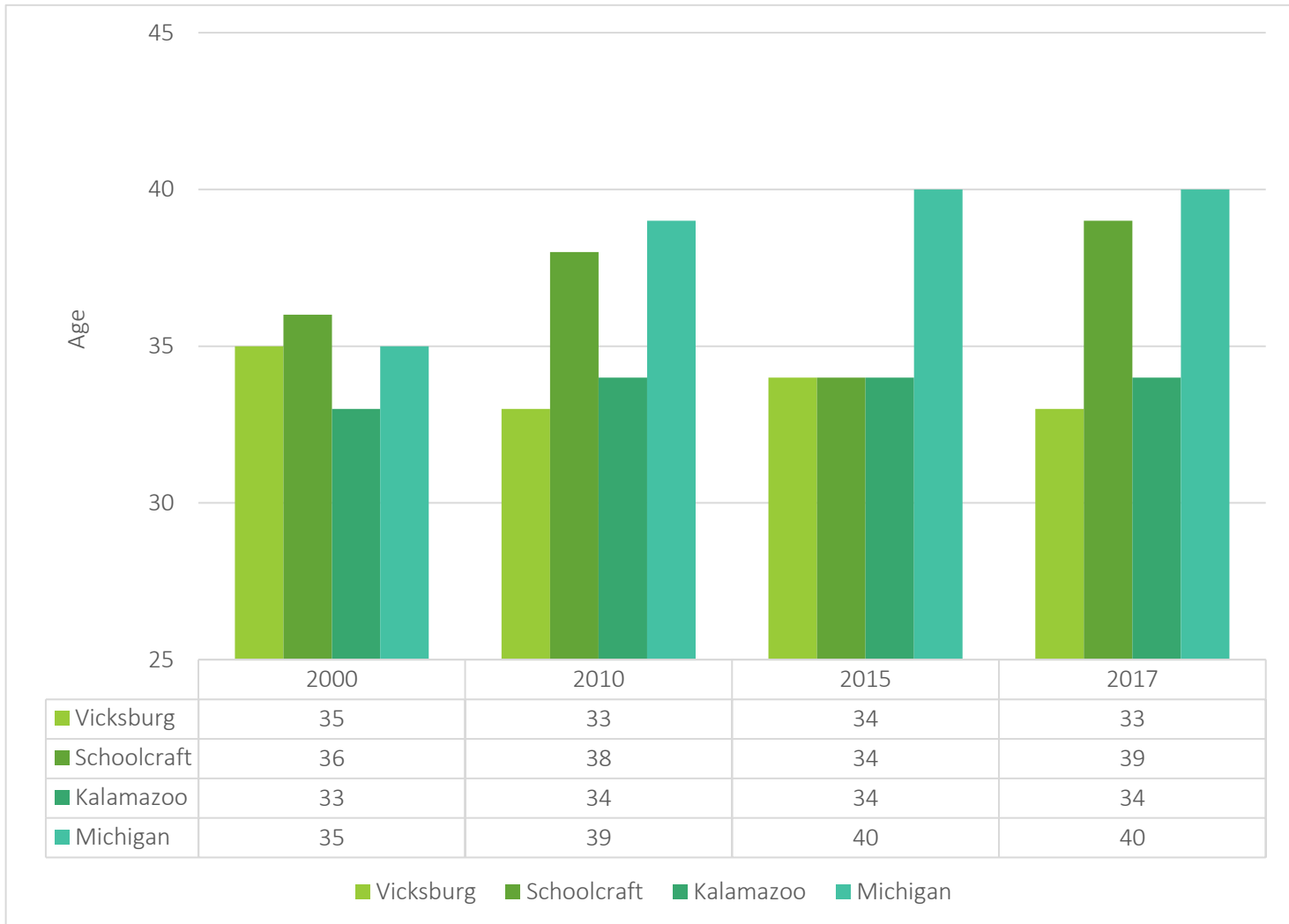


Table 2.1 shows the college education with a bachelor’s degree during 2000-2015 in Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo County, and Michigan. The level of education for Vicksburg has not changed significantly in the past 15 years. In regional comparisons, Vicksburg is at a lower level of educational attainment with less than 15% of people holding a bachelor’s degree. In 2015,

21% of the local population over 25 years old in Kalamazoo County had obtained a bachelor's degree.

Table 2.1 Bachelor's Degree Attainment 2000-2015 (U.S. Census Data)

County	2000	2010	2015
Vicksburg	13.9%	14.8%	13.8%
Schoolcraft	16.5%	16.6%	15.5%
Kalamazoo County	19%	20.7%	21%
Michigan	13.7%	15.5%	16.5%

Figure 2.5 shows the level of population in the labor force (over 16 years old) of Vicksburg and three other areas in 2015, as well as the regional unemployment rate of the labor force populations. The percentage of the labor force in Vicksburg dropped roughly 2 percent in 15 years, which is generally consistent with the trend of other samples, and is still higher than the level of Michigan, which is an advantage in economic development. The unemployment rate in Vicksburg is higher than other samples, especially in the profile of 2017, which increased sharply from 2010.

Table 2.2 shows the industry classification change for Vicksburg in 2013-2017. The leading industries in Vicksburg are manufacturing and commerce. However, there has been a shift in local occupation and employment after the Vicksburg Paper Mill closed in 2001. Overall, Vicksburg is following regional trends in employment shifts towards knowledge-based services. Developing industries include local food industries, transportation, health care services, and office/administration jobs. The top 2 employers are health care and office/administration jobs.

Table 2.2 Industry Classification Statistics Change in Vicksburg




















Industry	2013	2017	
Management	8.2%	7.8%	
Health Care	11.4%	12.9%	
Business and Finance	2.7%	3.2%	
Architecture and Engineering	3.7%	2.9%	
Education	2.4%	4.7%	
Computer and Math	1.7%	3.2%	
Community Service	1.9%	2.1%	
Legal Occupation	0.7%	0.7%	
Art, Design and Entertainment	1.1%	N/A	
Social Science	0.3%	1.8%	
Office and Administration	12.8%	15.6%	
Sale	13.8%	7.1%	
Production	9.8%	7.7%	
Transportation	5.2%	7.2%	
Materials Moving	2.3%	5.7%	
Building and Maintenance	4.9%	5.1%	
Food Service	1.3%	5.3%	
Construction	9.4%	6.3%	
Agriculture	1.4%	0.7%	
Other Services	0.6%	0.6%	

Figure 2.5 shows the change in median household income for Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo County, and Michigan during 2000-2015. The median household income for the Village of Vicksburg has increased at a higher rate than its regional cohorts.

Figure 2.5 Median Household Income Change of 2000-2015 (U.S. Census Data)



Table 2.3 shows housing profiles in Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo County, and Michigan. It is regionally significant that home ownership is rising in Vicksburg and rental occupied units are decreasing. Vicksburg also has slightly higher vacancy rates for rental units. Table 2.3 also include the median house value and rent comparisons for Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo County, and Michigan from 2010 to 2012. The median house value in Vicksburg has decreased about 7% and the median gross rent increased about 9%. The data shows regional housing markets in Michigan generally follow this pattern. Schoolcraft shows both a decrease of gross rent and a low median house value. However, housing in Vicksburg is more affordable than in Kalamazoo County and Michigan.

Table 2.3 Housing Profile Comparison 2010-2012 (U.S. Census Data)

	Vicksburg		Schoolcraft		Kalamazoo		Michigan	
	2010	2012	2010	2012	2010	2012	2010	2012
Housing Units	1,233	1,322	624	705	110,007	109,871	4,532,233	4,531,958
Owner Occupied Units	73.5%	74%	72%	70%	64%	63%	72%	73%
Rental Occupied Units	26.5%	25.7%	28.1%	30.2%	36.1%	34%	28%	27%
Vacant Units	9.2%	11.5%	7.5%	7.4%	8.5%	9.2%	14.6%	15.7%
Median House Value	\$129,500	\$125,300	\$127,200	\$113,500	\$145,000	\$141,200	\$144,200	\$128,600
Median Gross Rent	\$633	\$678	\$567	\$595	\$675	\$707	\$723	\$755

Figure 2.6 shows how residents commute to work in Vicksburg. The most common mode of transport is driving alone. The mode shift in 2015 of people who choose biking, public transit and other methods could be attributed to the population increase in Vicksburg. Figure 2.7 shows the regional average commuting time of workers (over 16 years old) going to work (one-way trip). From 2013- 2017, the commuting time in Vicksburg reduced more than 2 minutes. The average commute time for Vicksburg is 22.9 minutes, Schoolcraft is 18.9 minutes, Kalamazoo is 19.3 minutes, and Michigan is 23.2 minutes.

Figure 2.6 Means of Commuting in Vicksburg 2013-2018

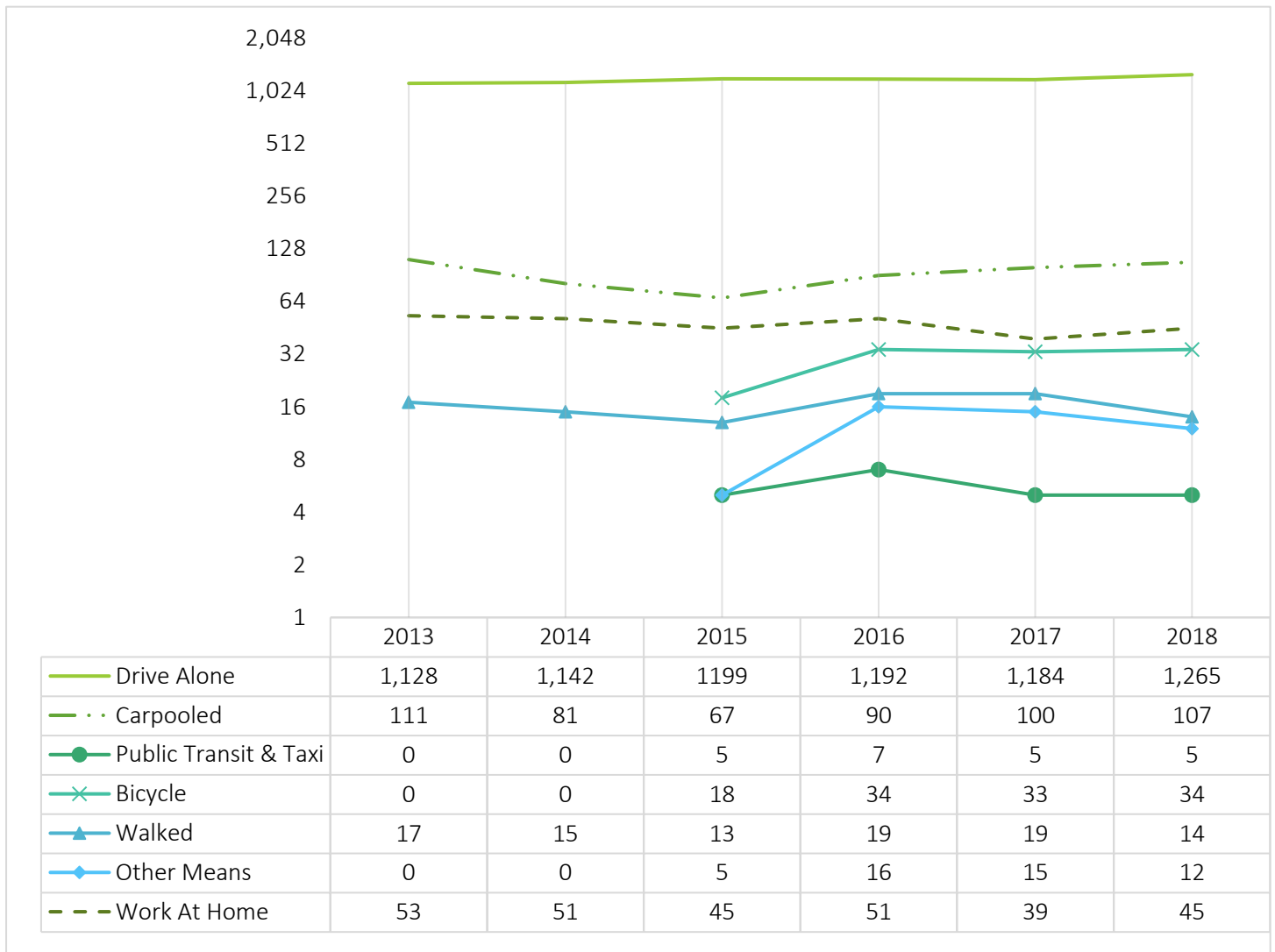
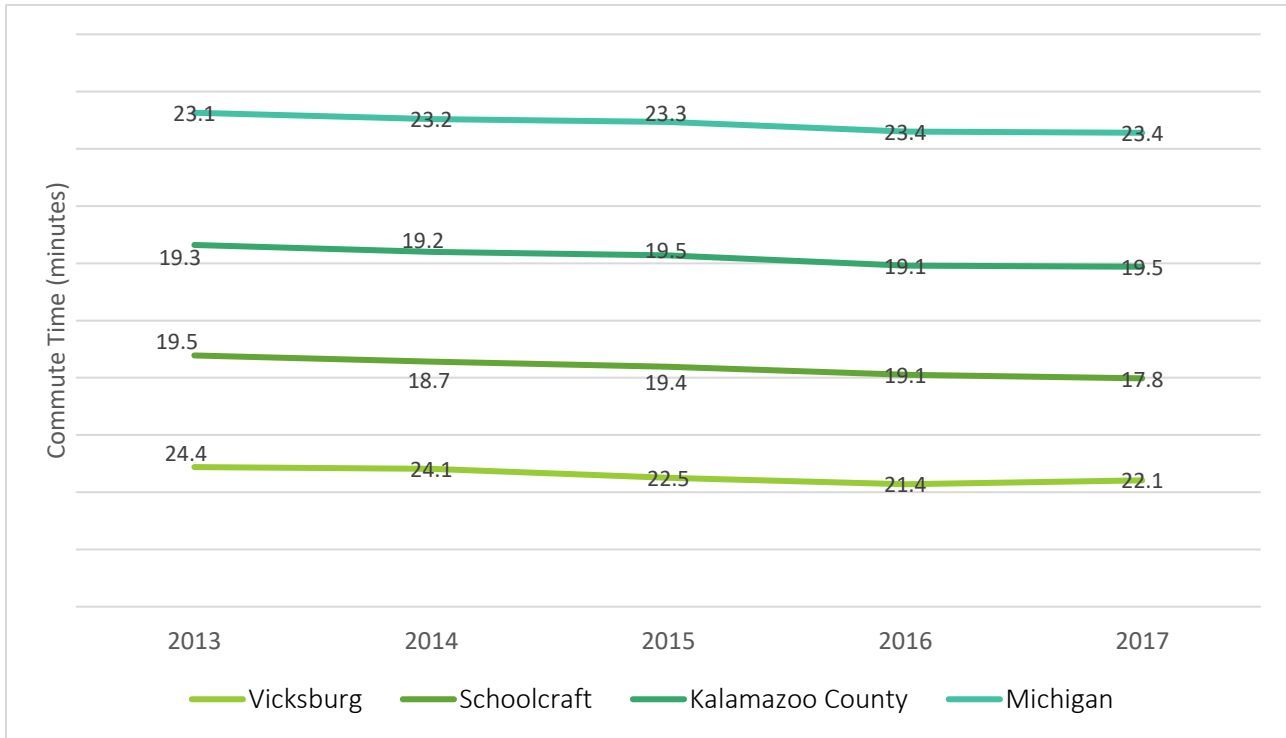


Figure 2.7 Regional Commute Times 2013-2017

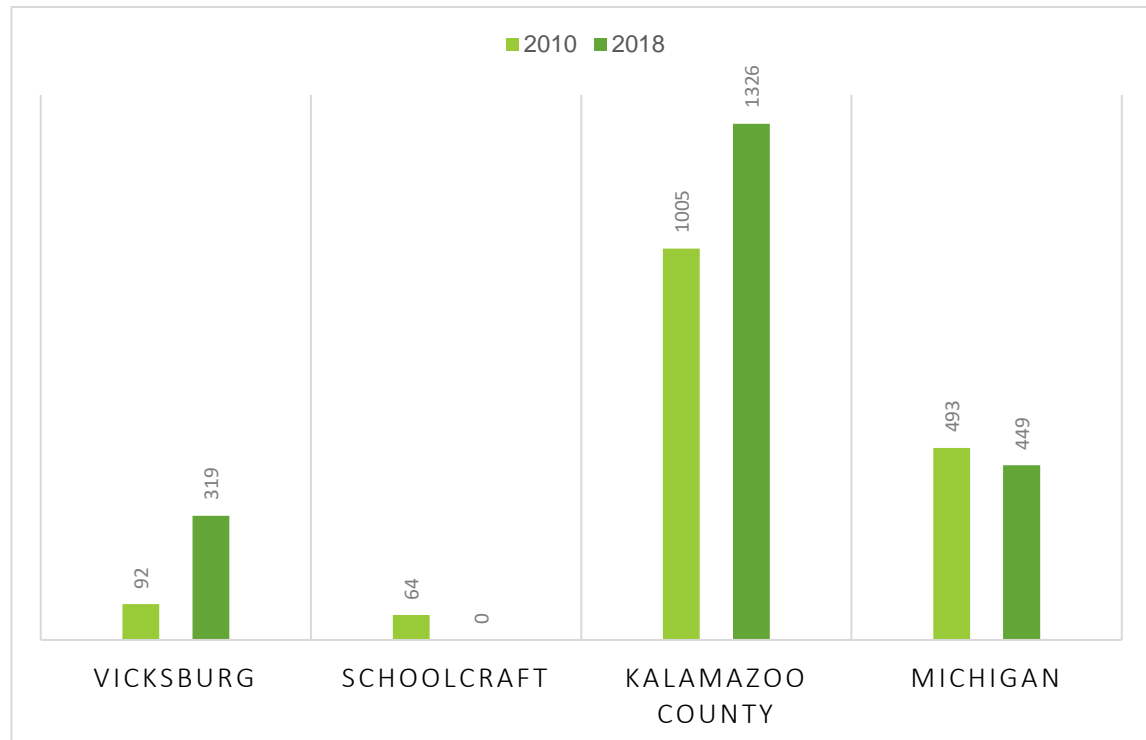


The regional trends of violent crime rate change are shown in Figure 2.8.

Between 2010-2018

Figure 2.8 Violent Crime Rate (per 100k people) of 4 Samples

Vicksburg has an increased violent crime threefold. Compared to other regions, Vicksburg still has a lower violent crime rate than the state level, and much lower than the county level.



Business Profile and Retail Gap Analysis

A business area profile was analyzed for the one and three mile rings as shown in Figure 2.10. Within one mile of Vicksburg there are 144 businesses that employ almost 1500 people and about 2800 people are employed within three miles of Vicksburg. Within the one mile ring, 37.5% of businesses fall within services summary which includes health services, education institutions and libraries and other services. Retail trade makes up 22.2% of the businesses in the one mile ring with eating and drinking places, auto dealers, gas stations and miscellaneous retail. Within the three mile ring 37.3% of businesses fall within services summary with the same areas being the strongest as the one mile ring. Retail trade then makes up 18.9% of the businesses in the three mile ring.

A retail gap analysis was conducted on the Village of Vicksburg using the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Business Analysis to determine the area's industry makeup, employment strengths and weaknesses, as well as population, number of employee's, total households and median household income. The Village of Vicksburg is a small area that will be dramatically affected by development of the Mill and future non-motorized connectivity, further affecting the job opportunities in the area. The data was collected through creating three rings around the center of the Village as shown in Figure 2.10. A one-mile ring encompasses the first ring and three mile encompassing the second and a ten-mile ring encompassing the third. The ten-mile ring goes beyond the village boundaries and reaches the city of Portage. Data was compared and analyzed between the three rings. A market profile was also conducted to determine the area's leakage/surplus factor to identify retail market opportunity. A positive, green value within the leakage/surplus analysis means that demand is exceeding supply and the industry is experiencing a leakage. A leakage means that retailers outside the market area are fulfilling the demand for a retail product. A leakage shows a demand for new retailers to enter the trade area or existing retailers can expand their outreach. A negative, red value means that supply exceeds demand leading to a surplus in the market. A surplus refers to an excess in the market supply, with sales being extended to a larger market area.

Figure 2.9 Business Summary 1-mile and 3-mile radius of Vicksburg

Longitude: -85.53042

Data for all businesses in area	1 mile		3 miles					
Total Businesses:	144		228					
Total Employees:	1,472		2,815					
Total Residential Population:	2,295		8,075					
Employee/Residential Population Ratio (per 100 Residents)	64		35					
by SIC Codes	Businesses		Employees		Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining	4	2.8%	29	2.0%	10	4.4%	55	2.0%
Construction	12	8.3%	48	3.3%	24	10.5%	91	3.2%
Manufacturing	11	7.6%	277	18.8%	20	8.8%	473	16.8%
Transportation	3	2.1%	17	1.2%	4	1.8%	29	1.0%
Communication	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utility	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	4	2.8%	16	1.1%	8	3.5%	38	1.3%
Retail Trade Summary	32	22.2%	492	33.4%	43	18.9%	600	21.3%
Home Improvement	2	1.4%	8	0.5%	3	1.3%	12	0.4%
General Merchandise Stores	1	0.7%	6	0.4%	1	0.4%	8	0.3%
Food Stores	5	3.5%	198	13.5%	6	2.6%	223	7.9%
Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket	6	4.2%	101	6.9%	10	4.4%	131	4.7%
Apparel & Accessory Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.4%
Furniture & Home Furnishings	1	0.7%	5	0.3%	1	0.4%	7	0.2%
Eating & Drinking Places	10	6.9%	148	10.1%	11	4.8%	173	6.1%
Miscellaneous Retail	6	4.2%	26	1.8%	9	3.9%	34	1.2%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary	13	9.0%	45	3.1%	17	7.5%	56	2.0%
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	3	2.1%	13	0.9%	3	1.3%	14	0.5%
Securities Brokers	2	1.4%	9	0.6%	2	0.9%	10	0.4%
Insurance Carriers & Agents	6	4.2%	19	1.3%	7	3.1%	22	0.8%
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices	2	1.4%	5	0.3%	5	2.2%	9	0.3%
Services Summary	54	37.5%	477	32.4%	85	37.3%	1,391	49.4%
Hotels & Lodging	1	0.7%	1	0.1%	3	1.3%	40	1.4%
Automotive Services	3	2.1%	9	0.6%	5	2.2%	19	0.7%
Motion Pictures & Amusements	3	2.1%	18	1.2%	6	2.6%	40	1.4%
Health Services	14	9.7%	163	11.1%	17	7.5%	186	6.6%
Legal Services	2	1.4%	5	0.3%	2	0.9%	6	0.2%
Education Institutions & Libraries	4	2.8%	155	10.5%	7	3.1%	259	9.2%
Other Services	27	18.8%	128	8.7%	45	19.7%	841	29.9%
Government	4	2.8%	70	4.8%	6	2.6%	83	2.9%
Unclassified Establishments	8	5.6%	0	0.0%	12	5.3%	0	0.0%
Totals	144	100.0%	1,472	100.0%	228	100.0%	2,815	100.0%

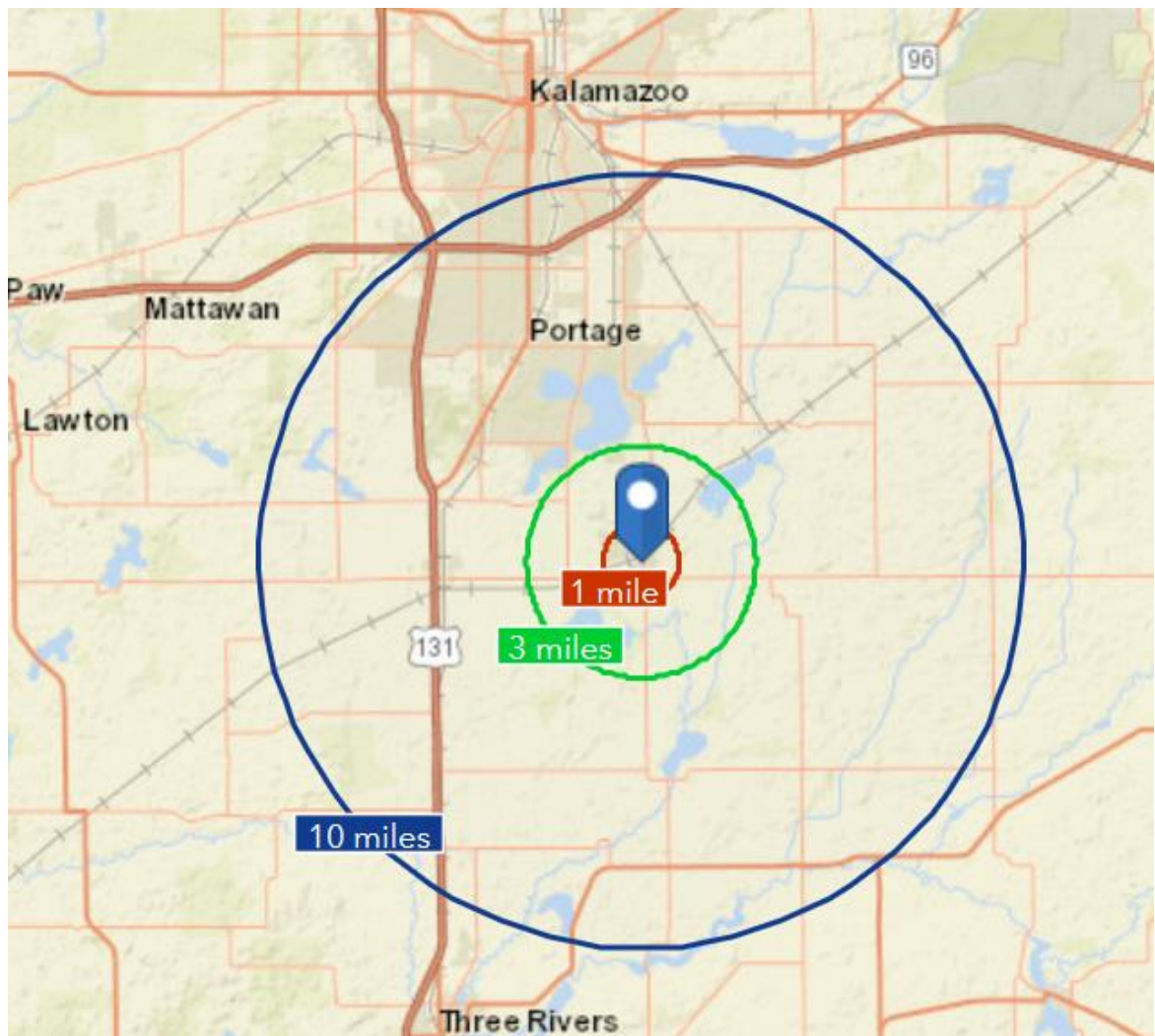
Source: Copyright 2019 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2019.

Date Note: Data on the Business Summary report is calculated using **Esri's Data allocation method** which uses census block groups to allocate business summary data to custom areas.

February 02, 2020

The data and its analysis will allow members of the Vicksburg community to determine which product types are in demand in the area and what business types might be needed. By understanding what businesses are needed, the community can create a focused business attraction plan to fill any vacant storefronts or commercial lots in the village. Data was collected using 2017 reports.

Figure 2.10 Retail Gap Analysis 1-mile, 3-mile and 10-mile radii



Ring One: 1 Mile

The one-mile area of the first ring includes a population of about 2,295 people and 930 households. The median household income for ring one is \$63,904. About 1500 people are employed within the ring one. As seen in Figure 2.11, the industry groups of automobile dealers, grocery stores, specialty food stores and drinking places (alcoholic beverages) experienced the largest surpluses. While furniture stores, lawn and garden equipment supply stores, clothing stores and special food services experienced large leakages. The industry groups experiencing leakages within the one-mile radius of Vicksburg have an opportunity to expand industry by creating new businesses or having existing businesses expand their outreach territory.

Table 2.4 shows the total leakage/surplus factor scores in the industries of retail trade, food and drink and a combined score. Retail trade experienced a retail gap of \$58,422,976 with a leakage/surplus factor of -51.0 in 2017. Food and drink experienced a retail gap of -\$2,763,730 with a leakage/surplus factor of -34.3. Combined the two industries had a retail gap of -\$61,186,707 and factor or -49.9 due to supply exceeding demand. The two industries and their combined factors all showcase surpluses occurring in the main industries in Vicksburg. Supply is exceeding demand within the one-mile radius. Although a lot of industry groups are experiencing retail leakages as noted in Figure 2.11, the overall industries of retail trade and food and drink are experiencing large surpluses, meaning the businesses selling these products are attracting customers from outside of the one mile radius.

Figure 2.11 Industry Leakage >0 and Surplus <0 (1 mile from Vicksburg) 2017

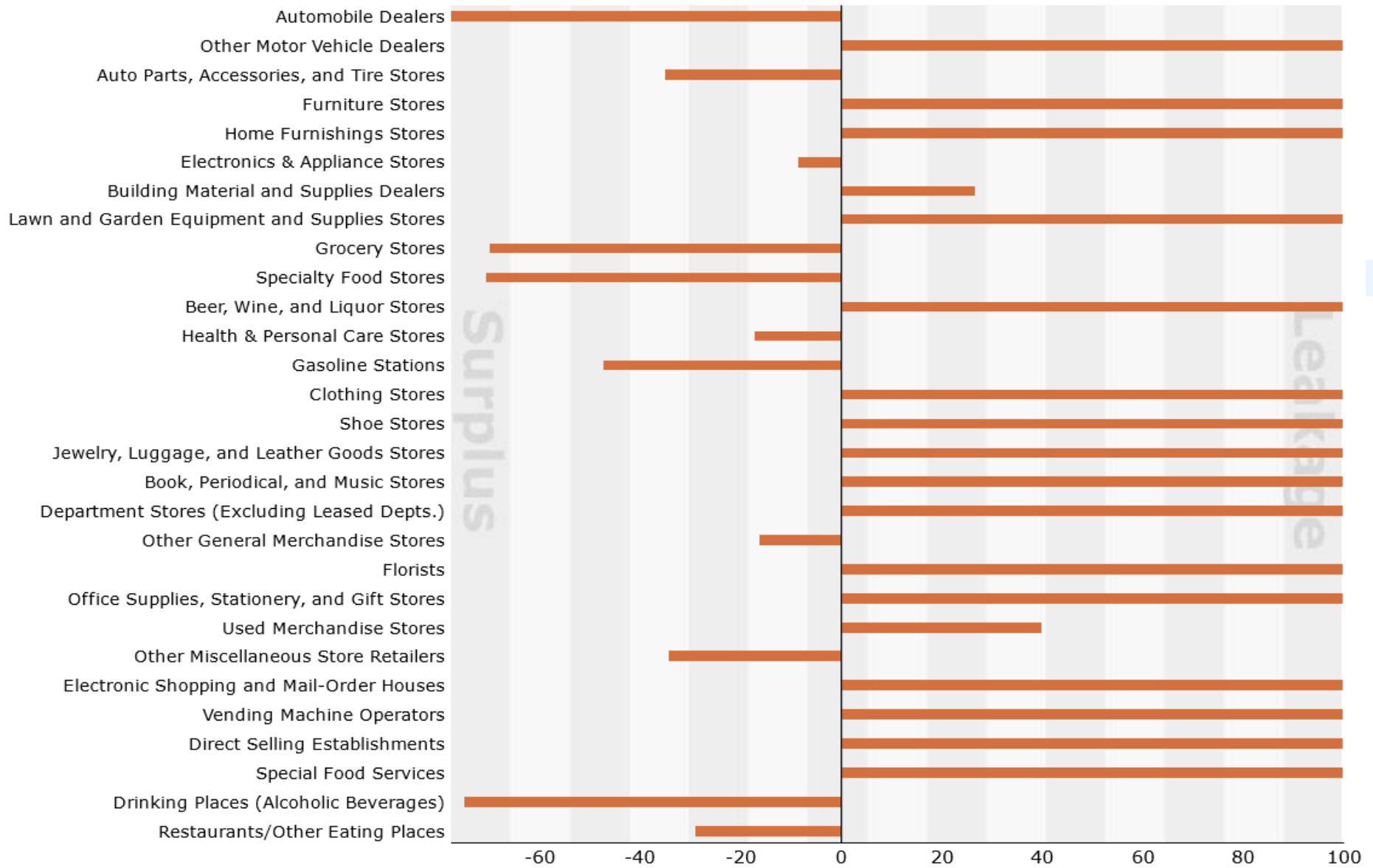


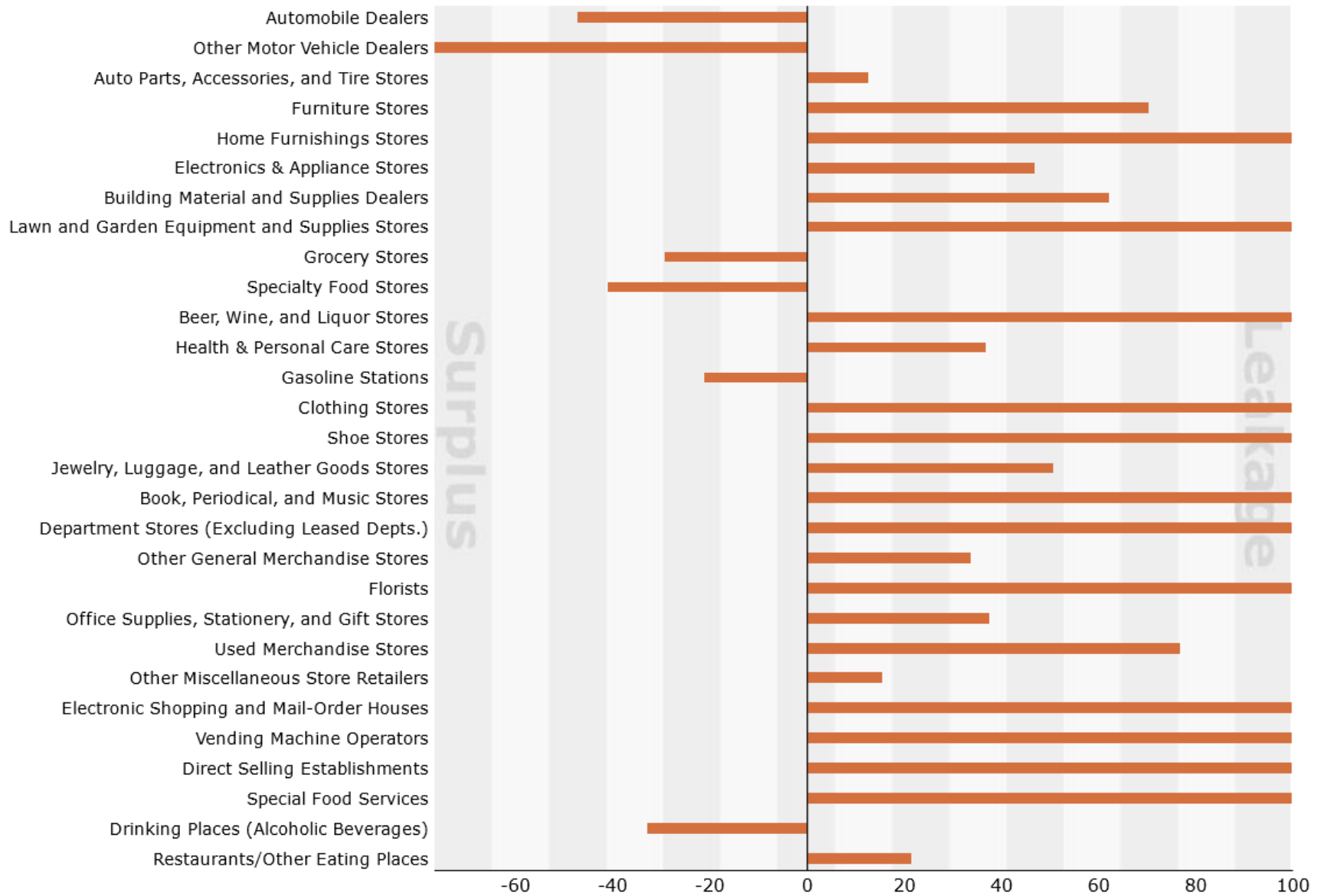
Table 2.4 Leakage/Surplus Factor Industry Summary- 1 mile from Vicksburg

2017 Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45, 722	\$30,767,264	\$91,953,971	-\$61,186,707	-49.9	32
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$28,121,741	\$86,544,717	-\$58,422,976	-51.0	23
Total Food and Drink	722	\$2,645,524	\$5,409,254	-\$2,763,730	-34.3	9

Ring Two: 3 miles

The three-mile ring includes a population of 8,075 people and 3,099 households. The median household income for ring two is \$68,676 per year while 2800 people are employed. As seen in Figure 2.12, the only surpluses within the three-mile radius included automobile dealers, other motor vehicle dealers, grocery stores, specialty food stores, gas stations, and drinking places. The largest leakages included home furnishing stores, lawn and garden supply stores, clothing stores and special food stores. The industry groups located within ring two, a three-mile radius are currently experiencing more leakages than surpluses, meaning that residents in this ring are typically purchasing products from businesses outside of the ring. Table 2.5 shows the leakage/surplus factor scores for retail trade and food and drink and combined score within the three-mile radius. In the industry of retail trade, a retail gap totaled -\$25,032,718 with a leakage surplus/factor of -11.4 in 2017. In food and drink, a retail gap totaled a positive number of \$2,928,838 with a leakage/surplus factor of 17.8. The combined industries had a retail gap of -\$22,103,880 with a factor of -9.4. Although many of the industries experience a leakage as seen

Figure 2.12 Industry Leakage >0 and Surplus <0 (3 miles from Vicksburg) 2017



in 3.7, including food and drink, the overall industry score is a -9.4 meaning a surplus is occurring and supply is exceeding demand.

Table 2.5 Leakage/Surplus Factor Industry Summary- 3-mile radius

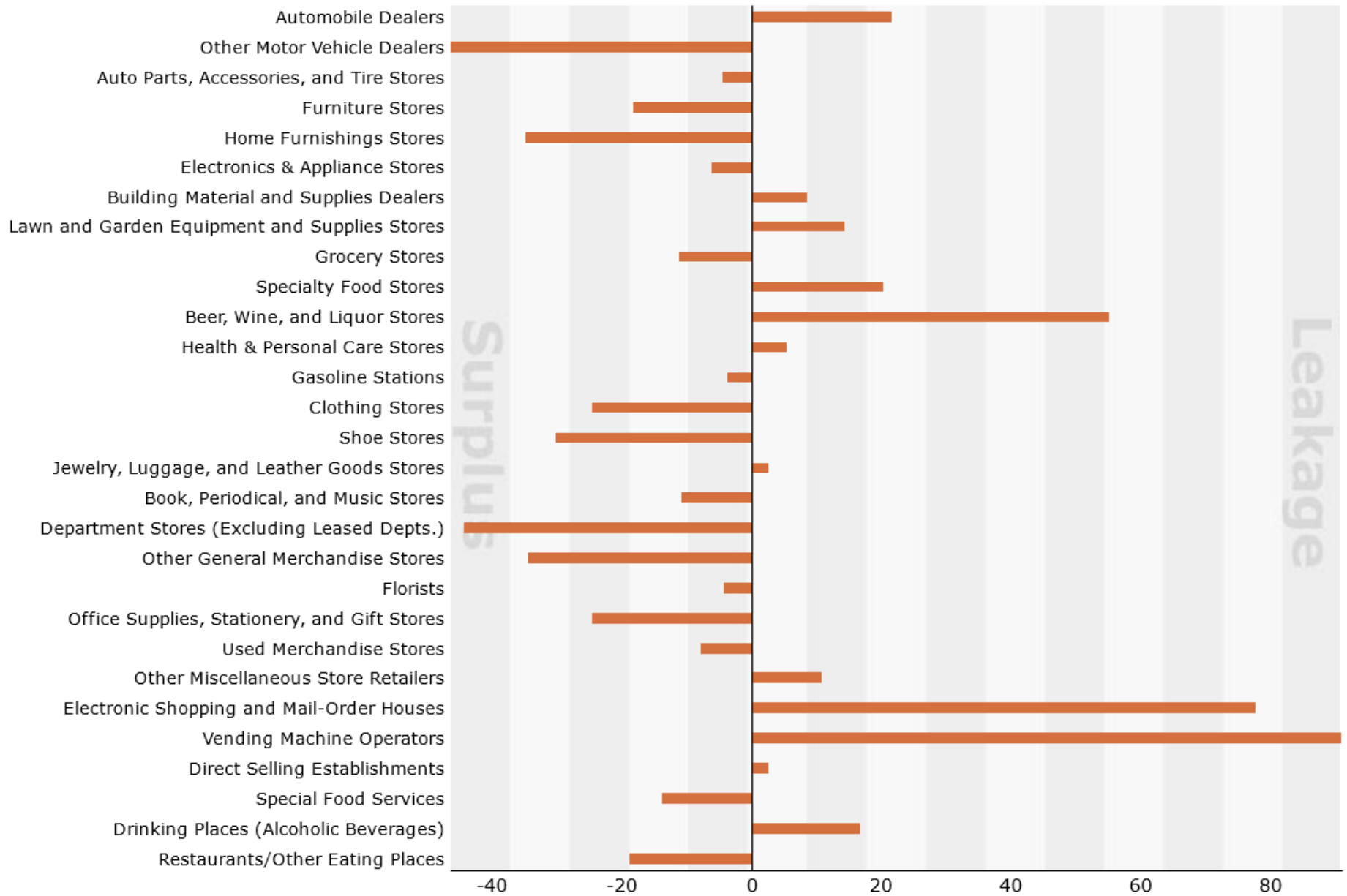
2017 Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45, 722	\$106,851,412	\$128,955,292	-\$22,103,880	-9.4	44
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$97,148,628	\$122,181,346	-\$25,032,718	-11.4	33
Total Food and Drink	722	\$9,702,784	\$6,773,946	\$2,928,838	17.8	11

Ring 3: 10 Miles

Within the ten-mile radius of ring three there is a population of 94,367 people which includes 37,942 households. The median household income for ring three is \$65,417 per year. Within the ten-mile radius about 54,000 people are employed. As seen in Figure 2.13, many industries are experiencing surpluses, 17 industries in total. The industries experiencing the largest surpluses include other motor vehicle dealers, department stores, general merchandise stores and home furnishing stores. The ten-mile radius also experienced leakages. Vending machine operators, electronic shopping and mall-order houses and beer, wine and liquor stores experienced the largest leakages. The industries with leakages can expand beyond the retail trade area.

Table 2.6 shows the leakage/surplus factor scores for the industries of retail trade, food and drink and a combine factor score. In retail trade a retail gap totaled -\$358,733,444 with a leakage/surplus factor of -12.6 in 2017. In the industry of food and drink a retail gap totaled -\$54,503,970 with a leakage/surplus factor score of -17.2.

Figure 2.13 Industry Leakage >0 and Surplus <0 (10 miles from Vicksburg) 2017



The combined industries had a retail gap of -\$413,237,414 with a score of -13.1. Both the industries and their combined factor score demonstrate surpluses. Supply is exceeding demand in the main industries within the ten-mile radius of Vicksburg.

Table 2.6 Leakage/Surplus Factor Industry Summary- 10-mile radius

2017 Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45, 722	\$1,374,312,392	\$1,787,549,806	-\$413,237,414	-13.1	761
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$1,243,077,445	\$1,601,810,889	-\$358,733,444	12.6	547
Total Food and Drink	722	\$131,234,947	\$185,738,917	-\$54,503,970	17.2	215

It is important to understand that the Village of Vicksburg can attract people outside of the village limits to its businesses. This is evident due to one and three-mile rings having a large number of leakages, meaning that people who live ten miles away are willing to drive into Vicksburg for specific services. Due to the outside draw, Vicksburg should encourage new businesses to develop within the one and three-mile rings, specifically in the downtown area. Vicksburg's downtown has many buildings that are currently vacant. If businesses are to fill the vacancies downtown, economic activity can continue to grow due to more business and shopping opportunities. These increased opportunities can further be enhanced with the development of a non-motorized pathway. Encouraging development within the one mile and three-mile rings, specifically downtown will allow for the most economic growth, increased activity and opportunities while limiting sprawl.

3

Vicksburg Assets

The assets identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan for Vicksburg include: central downtown location, quality schools, diverse housing stock, nearby recreational facilities and natural features, and the existing non-motorized pathway. Within this report, these assets are incorporated into a set of four nodes that can be used to expand the Vicksburg Trailway to ensure asset connectivity.

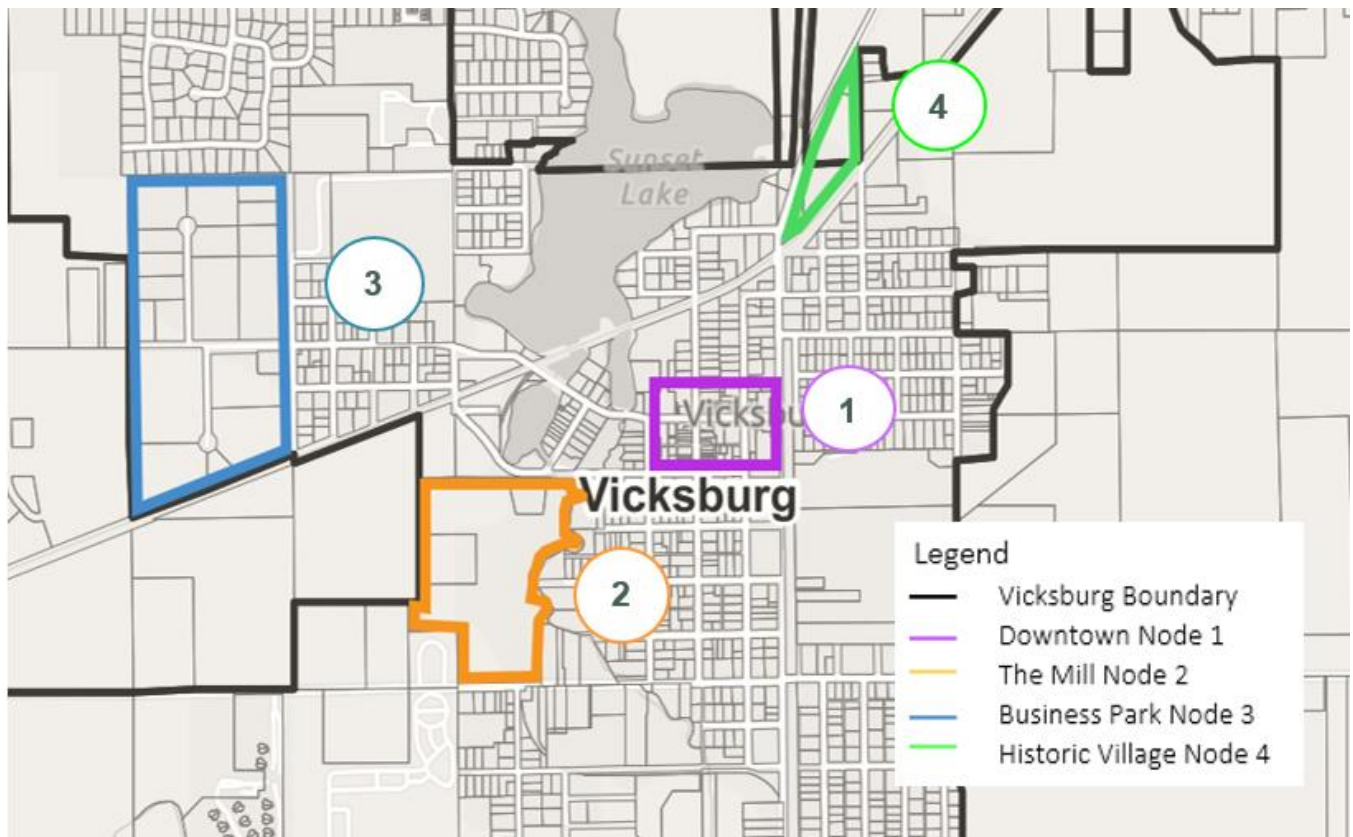
Identifying Assets

Identifying assets is essential to creating a unique sense of place. Vicksburg offers residents a historical essence of scalability and walkability that is attractive to multiple generations. The small-town Victorian style architecture, affordable housing, and elements of regional connectivity provide a unique combination of assets. The assets and amenities in the Village of Vicksburg can be categorized into four nodes based on their location, service offered, or characteristic element. These nodes include the Downtown area, The Mill, the Historic Village, and the Henry A. Leja Business Park. The assets and amenities for each node are shown in Table 3.1. The Village of Vicksburg's assets are mapped by nodes as shown in Figure 3.1. *The assets listed for The Mill are proposed assets to be completed by 2023.* Furthermore, the proximity of these nodes (all within 1 mile of each other) create an asset of connectivity and accessibility.

Table 3.1 Categorizing Vicksburg’s Assets in Nodes

Node 1: Downtown	Node 2: The Mill	Node 3: Business Park	Node 4: Historic Village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Center ○ Cultural Arts Center ○ Studio spaces for artists ○ Music Residency buildings ○ Local restaurants (Rise n Dine, Jaspere’s Pizza, Main St. Pub) ○ Local shops (Do it Hardware, Fred’s Pharmacy, Silo chic boutique) ○ Services (Trip-T’s Screen Printing, Munn Agency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdoor Event Space ○ Open space alongside Portage Creek ○ Music Residency Program ○ Exhibition space ○ Office spaces ○ Craft food and beverage Production ○ Beer Gardens ○ Hotel units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manufacturing companies ○ Research and development company ○ Other Industrial plants ○ Vicksburg’s Little League ○ Local Restaurant and Cafe ○ Doctor’s Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Depot Museum ○ Farmer’s Market ○ Vicksburg trail ○ Connecting to the Vicksburg Bible Church ○ Recreation Area ○ Prudential Nursery ○ South County Community Services ○ Denney veterinary Services

Figure 3.1 Map of Vicksburg’s Asset Nodes



Node 1 incorporates 93 parcels in the downtown area and is located at the intersection of N Main St., Prairie St. and Kalamazoo Ave as shown in Figure 3.2. This area of mixed-use development includes local businesses and restaurants as well as arts and cultural centers. The Vicksburg DDA lists specific standards and design elements for renovating buildings to preserve the historical character. Establishments are required to provide shared parking *behind the buildings* to grow foot traffic, provide aesthetic value, and ensure environmentally conscious design. The downtown area is considered an asset because it is one of the most vibrant areas of the village where festivals and events take place during the holidays. These events attract visitors from neighboring towns and create a sense of place for residents. Connecting the downtown area to other assets in the village is essential to enhancing pedestrian mobility and providing access to community the resources and local amenities.

Figure 3.2 Downtown Vicksburg Corridor



Figure 3.3 Parcel Map of Downtown Node

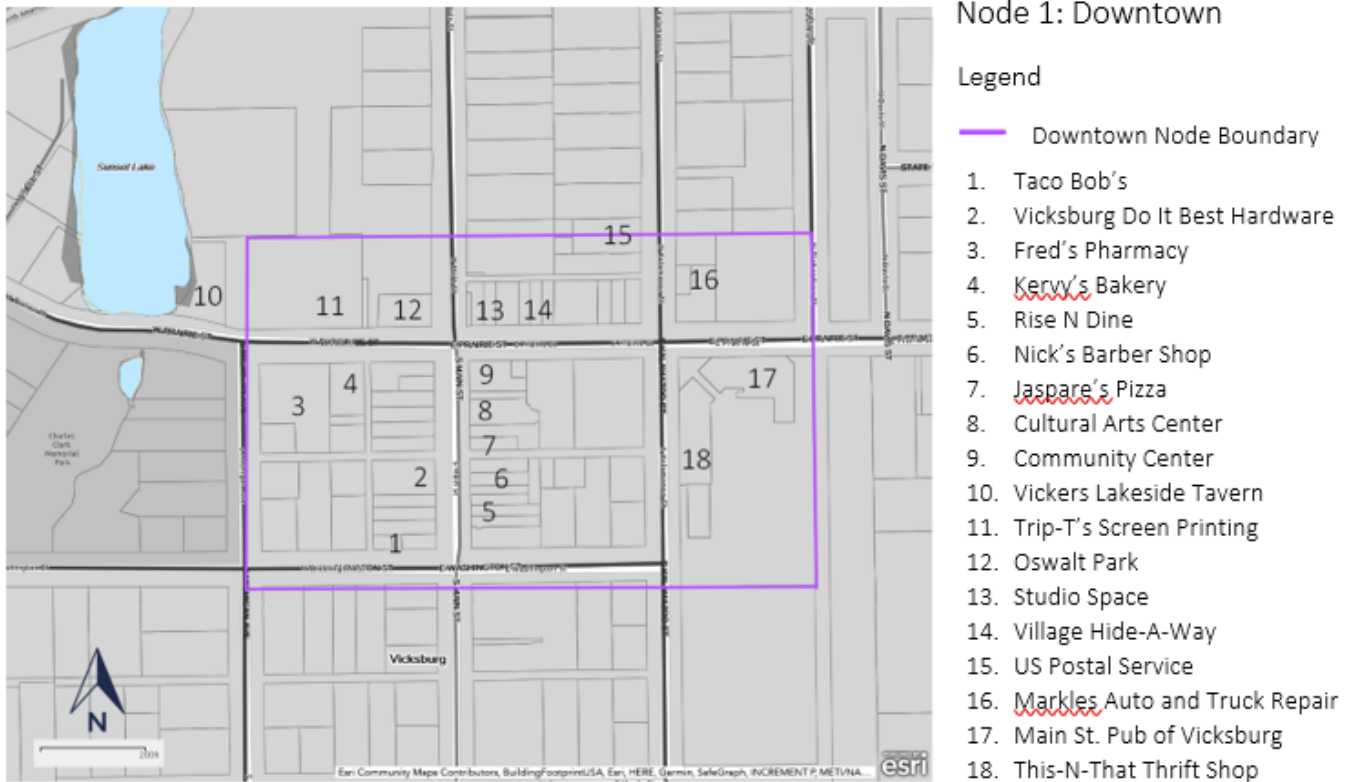


Figure 3.4 Vicksburg's Assets and Amenities Downtown Node 1



The Mill at Vicksburg is a large redevelopment project covering over 120 acres as shown in Figure 3.6. The Mill consists of 3 parcels that are zoned as I2 Industrial manufacturing/service. One parcel is owned by Bridge Organics Co. and the other two parcels are owned by Paper City Development LLC. The 7 parcels west of The Mill Node are owned by Paper City LLC but only two of them are in the village boundary and are zoned as underdeveloped/open space. The paper mill is considered as asset because it is one of the landmarks of the village. The revitalization of The Mill will reestablish it as a multi-purpose resource for the community and residents. The Mill will bring additional jobs and entertainment venues to the area and attract many new visitors after its completion in 2023. Furthermore, The Mill accentuates the importance of arts and culture by creating residency programs for artists and musicians. This adds a unique element to the small-town character that currently exists in the downtown and can be incorporated into Vicksburg’s placemaking efforts.

Figure 3.5 Paper Mill in Vicksburg



Figure 3.6 Parcel Map of The Mill Node 2

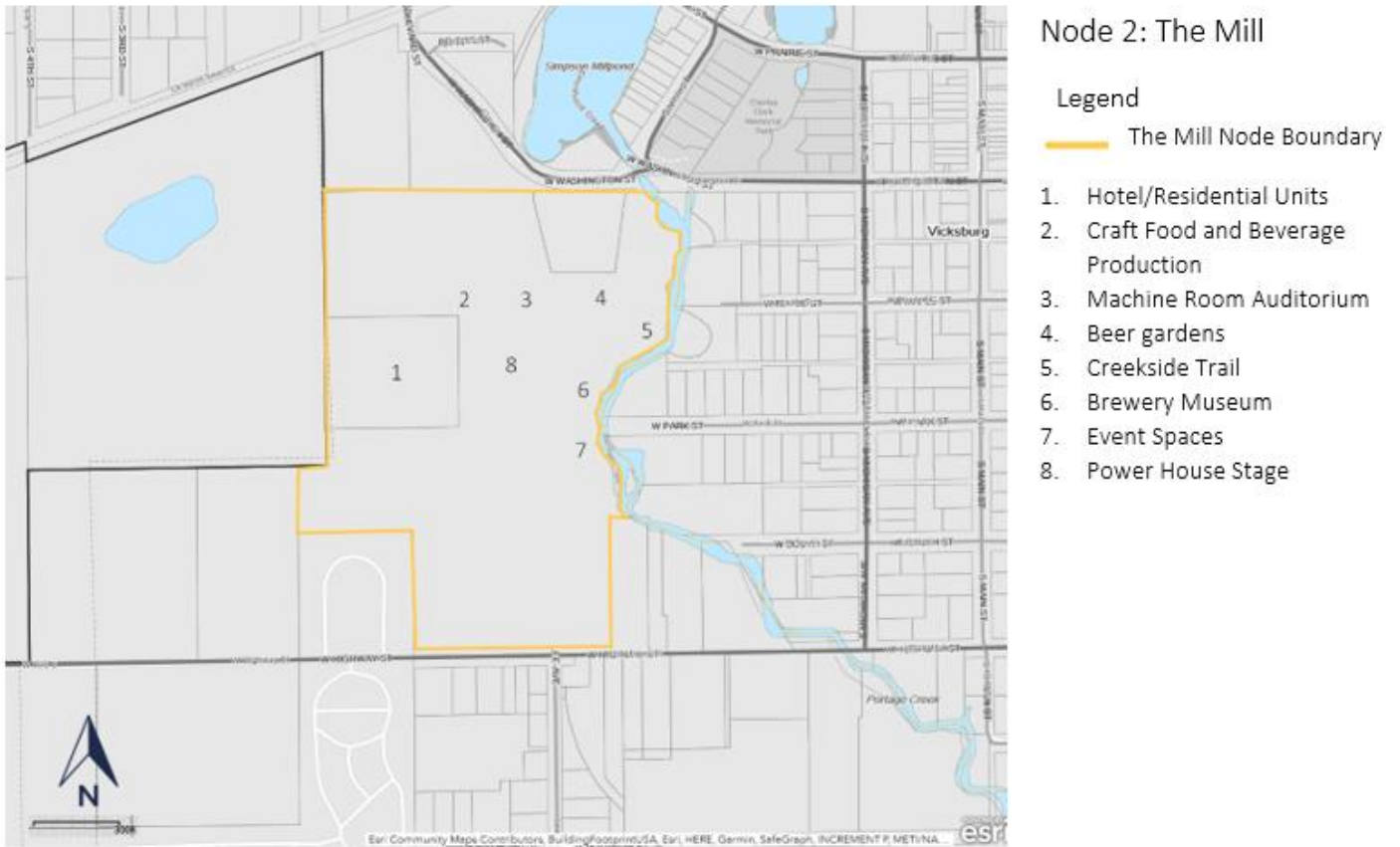


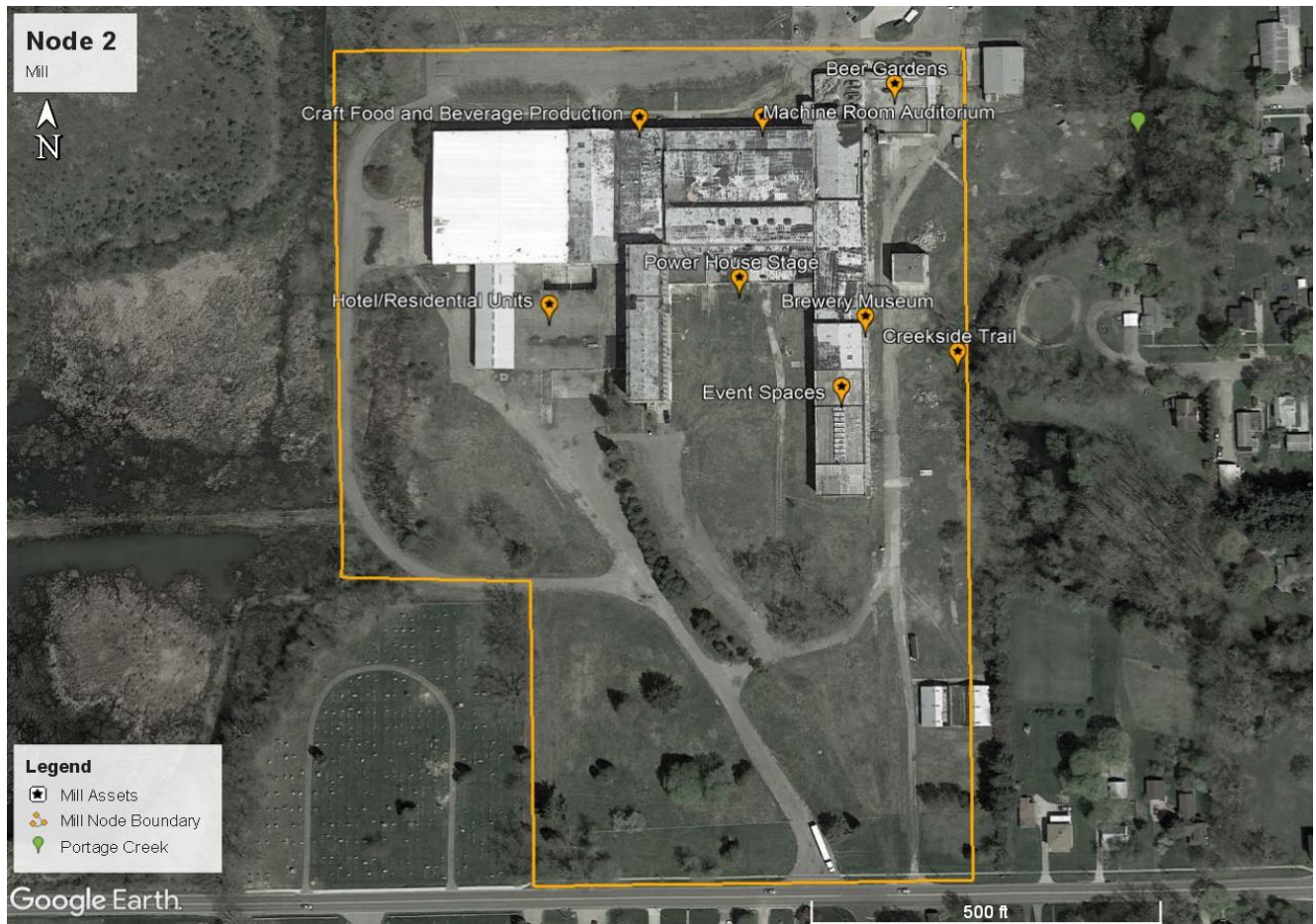
Figure 3.7 Paper Mill Renovation Site

The Mill will become a destination area in 2023 when construction of proposed assets is complete. The Mill will enhance the livability and desirability of Vicksburg. It is estimated that the demand for residential units could double. Moreover, The Mill will likely spur development in Vicksburg and attract a higher skilled workforce. The village



is already trending towards residential growth as shown in the Socio-Economic Profile. This growth will likely be accelerated by the attractive new amenities at The Mill. It will be essential for Vicksburg to connect existing amenities and resources in the village to the new amenities offered by The Mill. These amenities include concert and event spaces, indoor/outdoor brewery spaces, artisanal food, and exhibition spaces. A non-motorized path will enhance local and regional accessibility to Vicksburg’s newly established asset.

Figure 3.8 Vicksburg’s Assets in The Mill Node 2



The Business Park Node consists of the Henry A. Leja Business Park located north and south of W Prairie St as shown in Figure 3.9. This node includes 18 parcels (64.56 acres) and houses research and development firms and manufacturing industries. The Business Park Node is essential to residents as it provides local jobs and strengthens the tax base of the village, thus

supporting public services. The employees that work in the Business Park do not commute long distances out of Vicksburg for work and are more likely to shop local due to their geographic location. Furthermore, the Business Park is an economic hub that will likely retain youth by offering skilled labor employment. The Business Park should be connected to the other asset nodes via a non-motorized path due to the proximity to the village’s downtown area and residential districts. Enhancing connectivity to the downtown resources can potentially increase economic vitality through enabling workers in the business park to more easily be customers in the downtown.

Figure 3.9 Parcel Map of Business Park Node

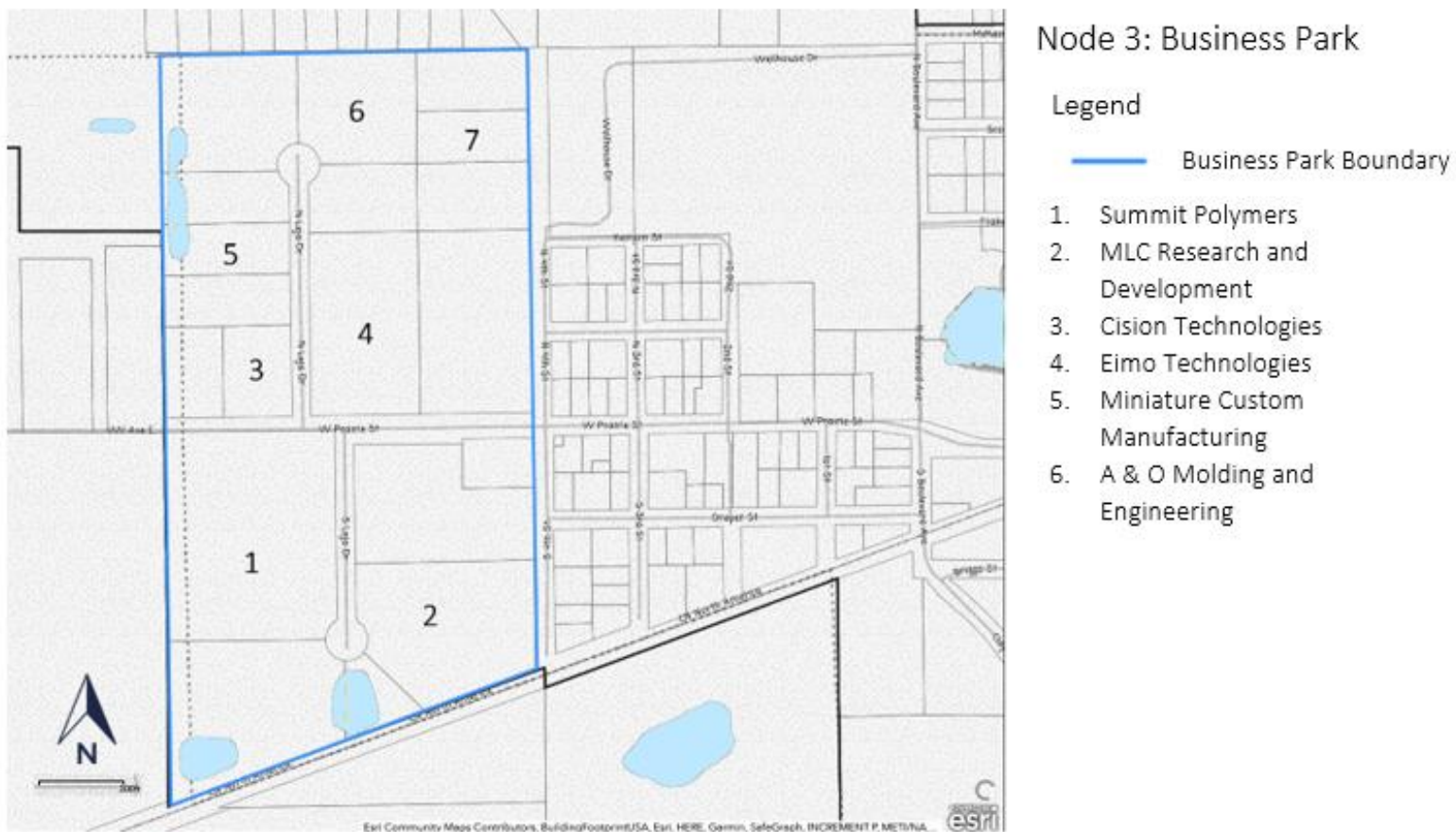


Figure 3.10 Vicksburg’s Assets in The Mill Node 3



The Historic Village Node incorporates 5 parcels on 10.3 acres as shown in Figure 3.11. The Historic Village houses artifacts and records that commemorate the history of Vicksburg. The community pavilion space is where the Farmer’s Market is held, and this parcel is owned by Brady Township. The remaining 4 parcels in the Historic Village Node are owned by the Village of Vicksburg. The Historic Village Node includes important historical landmarks including the Newspaper Office, Print shop, Railway Express, Union Depot Museum and other exhibits important to Vicksburg’s history. Historic preservation is valuable to the village and is outlined, regulated, and promoted throughout the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan. The Historic Village is an asset to the community because it offers educational resources to residents, visitors,

Figure 3.11 Parcel Map of Historic Village Node 4



Node 4: Historic Village

Legend

 Historic Village Boundary

1. Union Depot Museum
2. General Store & Dorris
3. Lee's Sweet Shop
4. Print Shop
5. Township Hall
6. Village Garage
7. Community Garden
8. Community Pavilion

Figure 3.12 Sunset Lake Park in Vicksburg, MI

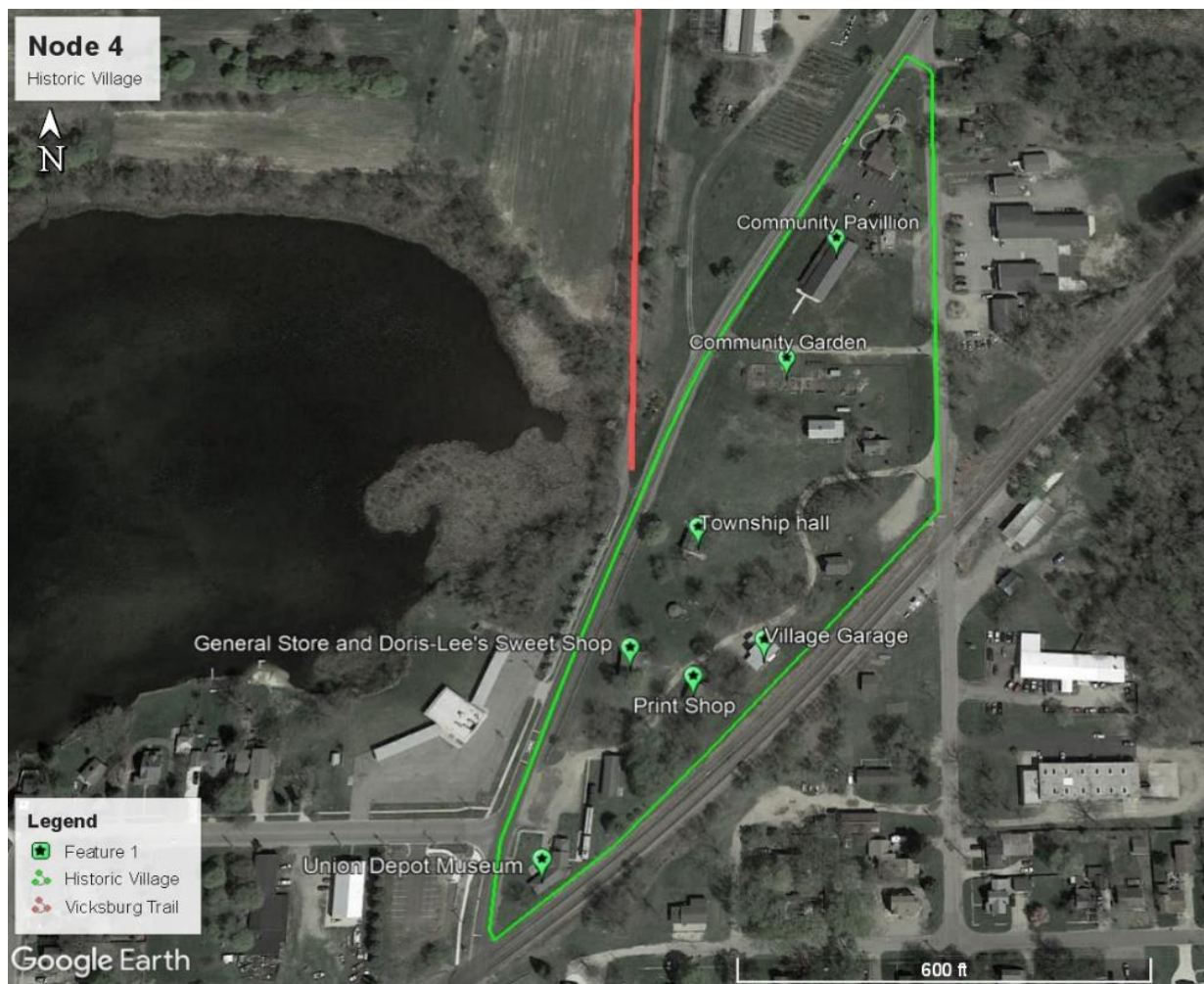
and students. The Historic Village partners with the Vicksburg school district to host events such as Ready to Read in the park. Moreover, the community pavilion space provides an outdoor area that can be used for local gatherings and events during the summer months. The Vicksburg trail currently connects to the



Historic Village and provides access to the Vicksburg Recreational Area and Sunset Lake.

Linking the four asset nodes in Vicksburg will create resource awareness among residents and visitors. Enhancing connectivity among these nodes will also create a network of assets that are visible and accessible via a non-motorized path and will promote a healthier and a more environmentally conscious community. Connectivity in Vicksburg is also expected to attract more visitors and stimulate economic activity in the downtown area, The Mill, the Business Park, and the Historic Village. The proposed path will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

Figure 3.13 Vicksburg’s Assets in Historic Village Node 4



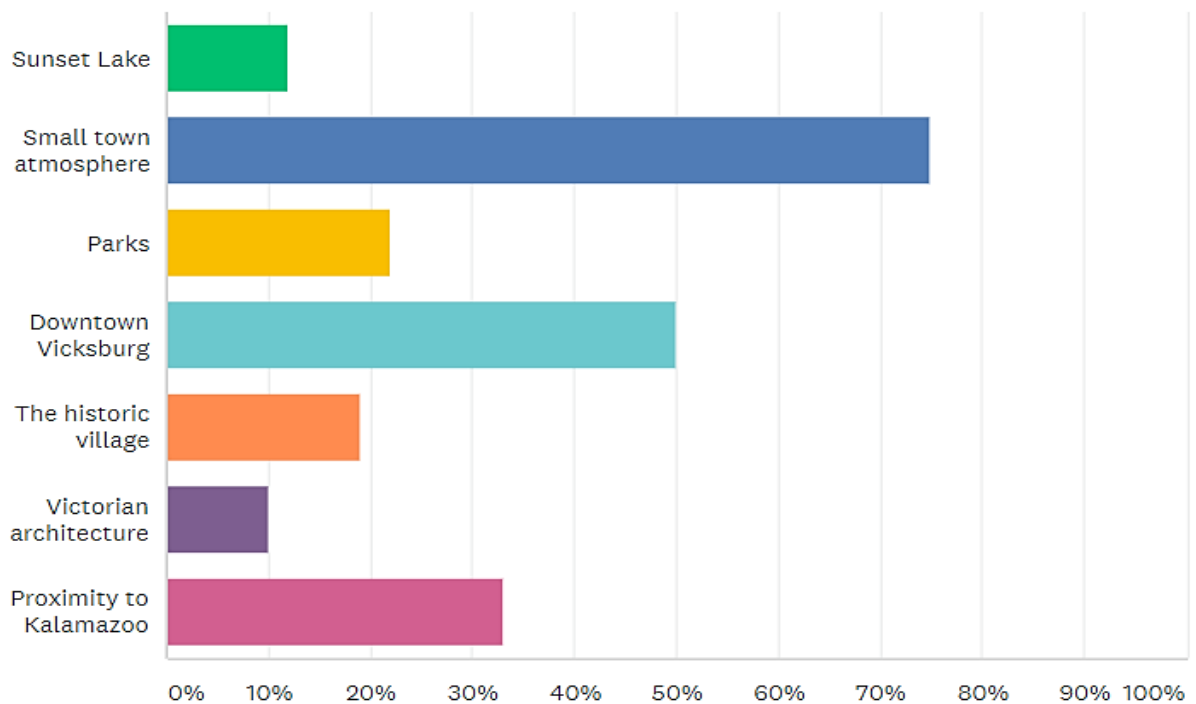
Stakeholder Outreach

The MSU Practicum students conducted two surveys to further understand the goals of the residents and Village of Vicksburg representatives as they relate to implementing a non-motorized path. Understanding what assets are most important to Vicksburg residents and stakeholders provides the information necessary to 1) identify the location of a non-motorized path and 2) increase connectivity between the village assets. The Community Survey was posted on the Village of Vicksburg’s Facebook page and is intended for residents of Vicksburg. Within a two week period the survey collected 100 responses, 86% of responses were residents of Vicksburg. The purpose of the Community

Figure 3.14 Top assets in Vicksburg

What aspects of Vicksburg are most important to you?
Select your top two (2).

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



Survey is to understand what areas and assets of the village are most important to

residents, as shown in Figure 3.14. The top being the small-town atmosphere and the downtown. Figure 3.15 shows the future asset development most valued by Vicksburg residents, the top being a vibrant downtown, park enhancement and increased walkability.

Figure 3.15 Future Asset Development in Vicksburg

What would you like to see in Vicksburg in the future? Select your top three (3).

Answered: 99 Skipped: 1

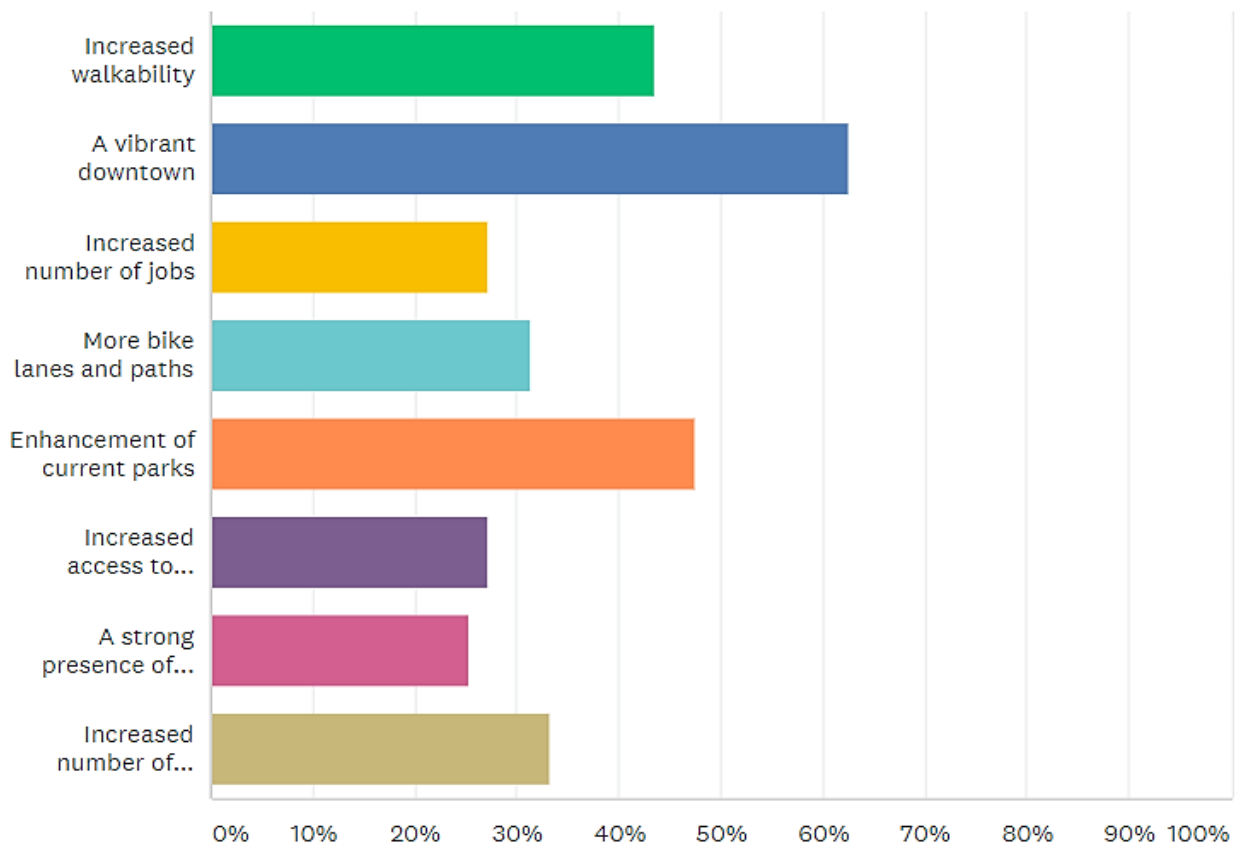
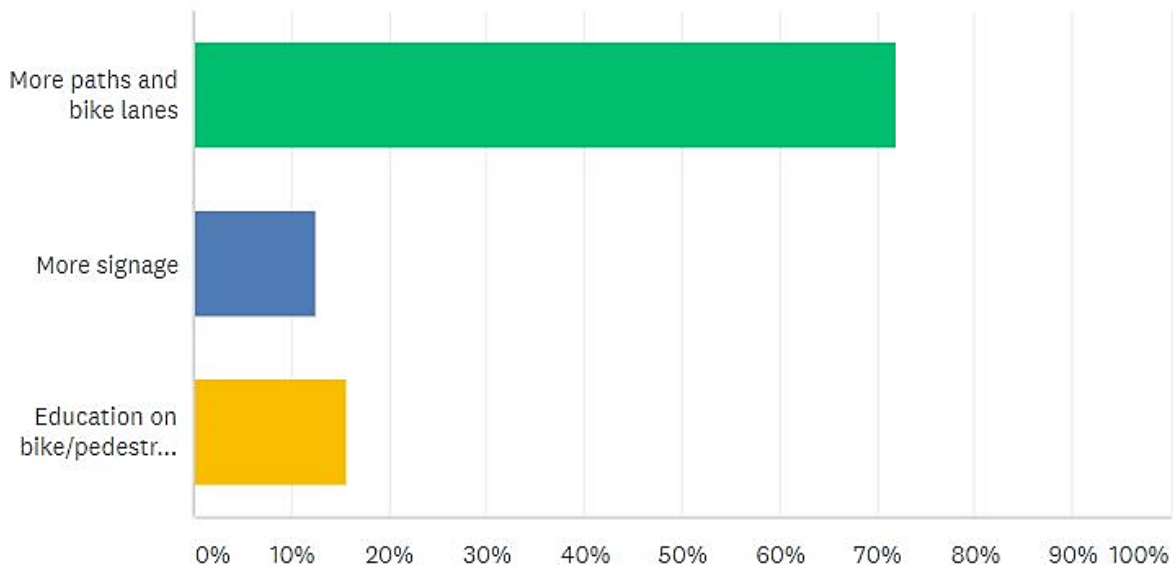


Figure 3.16 shows the physical and cultural elements that would enhance the walkability of Vicksburg. The top response was more walking/biking paths and bike lanes.

Figure 3.16 Elements of Walkability in Vicksburg

What could be changed to make Vicksburg more walkable?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More paths and bike lanes	71.88%	69
More signage	12.50%	12
Education on bike/pedestrian safety	15.63%	15
TOTAL		96

Based on the Community Survey results, majority of respondents want to increase walkability in Vicksburg and 53% of respondents are highly likely to use a non-motorized path. The full list of questions and responses from the Community Survey can be found in Appendix 1.

The Stakeholder Survey consists of seven questions that are for village representatives and members of the Paper City LLC. The purpose of the Stakeholder Survey is to gather information about current planning initiatives, to better understand how a non-motorized path can be incorporated into the village’s existing infrastructure, and evaluate the local perceptions of Vicksburg’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Five surveys were collected and analyzed. The results for the SWOT analysis are shown in Figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17 Stakeholder SWOT Analysis



The full list of questions and answers for the Stakeholder Survey are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Stakeholder Survey results

Question	Answer
<p>1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the Vicksburg downtown area?</p>	<p><u>Strengths:</u> the community’s willingness to save and restore old buildings and adept to new ideas, strong small businesses, Downtown Development Authority involvement, façade program for building owners, quaint historical charm, involved citizens and village leaders, natural resources and the sense of community.</p> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u> infrastructure, lack of funding, lack of communication, lack of parking downtown and empty buildings.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u> good rental buildings, affordable buildings and homes, the ability to develop a plan to grow the downtown area and create new retail opportunities, the ability to set standards to control growth and the ability to attract new residents and businesses.</p> <p><u>Threats:</u> the small town dying</p>
<p>2. How does the proposed bike path fit into the village community?</p>	<p>connection to surrounding area, region and Lake Michigan, drive traffic/people to the downtown and allows for enjoyment of the area’s natural resources</p>
<p>3. What is the current status of public and private partnership in Vicksburg?</p>	<p>private companies sponsor community events, currently working well together but there could be big challenges ahead and strong communication between the village and its people allow for growth</p>
<p>4. What changes would you like to see in the future of downtown Vicksburg?</p>	<p>more businesses, better parking, corner signage stating businesses, encouraged investment, increased retail, complete street/landscape at Main St and Prairie St, grow the chamber of commerce, revitalize the downtown and increased activity that allows for more culture, social opportunities and economic capital</p>
<p>5. What do you want to maintain in downtown Vicksburg?</p>	<p>historic charm, safe and welcoming area, new and maintain current streetscapes.</p>
<p>6. Does your organization (Paper City LLC) plan to expand its capacity in Vicksburg?</p>	<p>yes, gradually while partnering with the village to have unified growth.</p>
<p>7. How will the village manage growth sustainability and offer adequate resources (social and economic) to residents?</p>	<p>careful, sound planning with noteworthy practices, address zoning and resident needs, partner together to develop a plan for sustainability, social and economic needs/opportunities and transparencies of projects.</p>

Based on the Stakeholder Survey, it is important for the non-motorized path to connect to parks and the downtown area. The Stakeholder Survey identifies the strengths of Vicksburg to be its historical charm, small businesses and involved citizens. The opportunities include affordable buildings and homes, the ability to increase retail and the ability to attract future businesses and residents.

To appreciate the historic buildings and increase economic activity for the area’s small businesses, the path will need strong DDA and community involvement to create a trail that is utilized by the community. The non-motorized path should improve Vicksburg’s weaknesses identified in the Stakeholder Survey, including degraded infrastructure and empty buildings. Resolving these issues will require additional activity around the downtown area and increased revenue. The non-motorized path will facilitate movement through the village and provide an opportunity to capitalize on the existing and proposed assets at The Mill and the Business Park. It will also connect to popular regional trails attracting bicyclists and other trail enthusiasts from surrounding areas. Furthermore, it is important that the non-motorized path creates new opportunities economically, socially, and recreationally. A successful trail system requires community involvement and stakeholder support.

Figure 3.18 Key Stakeholders in Vicksburg



4

Case Studies

The following case studies were chosen based on the criteria that the non-motorized path 1) connects a revitalized industrial property to a historic downtown district or 2) the community embraces connectivity as a methodology to positively influence the social and urban assets. Furthermore, these case studies incorporate public involvement within the planning process to facilitate placemaking concepts while contributing to economic growth and sustainable development.

Analysis of these case studies outline challenges of constructing a non-motorized path that range from economic hardship to geographic limitations; and showcase the communities' ability to establish partnerships and utilize external funding resources to build a non-motorized path that paved the way to a new sense of community and revived urban vitality. Each case study will be evaluated based on the following sub-topic categories: location and attributes, stakeholder involvement, funding sources and cost, operation and maintenance, amenities, trail usage, and trail limitations. Furthermore, the lessons learned from these case studies will be applied to the development of the non-motorized trail in the Village of Vicksburg.

S-Line Urban Greenway and the Emerald Trail

Location: The S-Line Urban Greenway started as a 3.3 mile rails-to-trails path in Jacksonville, Florida. The City of Jacksonville obtained possession of the abandoned "S" shaped railroad right-of-way shown in Figure 4.1. The multi-use pathway weaves through industrial sites and

brownfields and connects residents to recreational areas and schools. Affordable housing and youth facilities were among the first developments to occur after the trail was built. Groundwork has since expanded the S-Line path to downtown. The southward portion is called the Emerald

Figure 4.1 Map of S-Line Urban Greenway

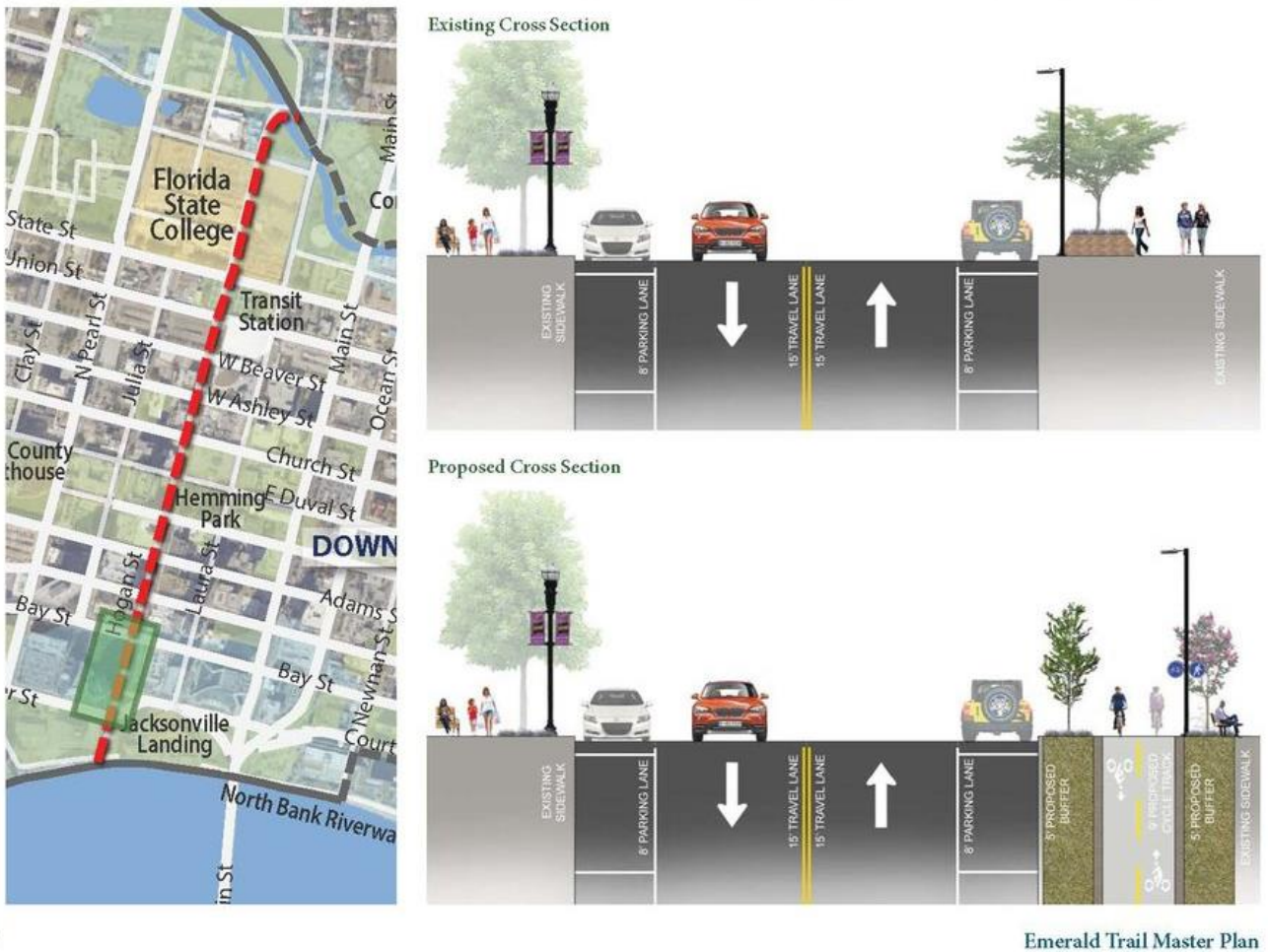


Trail. In 2018, plans for a 1.3 mile extension of the S-Line path were developed. The expansion will be incorporated into the beginning of the Emerald Trail that will connect Jacksonville’s assets including McCoy’s Creek and the recreational track along Park Street. Figure 4.2 shows a proposed cross section along the S-Line expansion from the Emerald Trail Master Plan.

Stakeholders: In 2010, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) partnered with Jacksonville to create street crossings and trail connections in neighborhoods. RTC collaborated with the community to understand the level of interest in walking and biking. By 2014, Groundwork Jacksonville was established as a community non-profit organization that is an essential element for the development of both the S-Line Urban Greenway and the Emerald trail. Other partners include

the City of Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department, the Blue Foundation for Healthy Florida, the Kresge Foundation, and the Durkeeville Historical Society (Metro Jacksonville, 2013).

Figure 4.2 Emerald Trail Cross Section



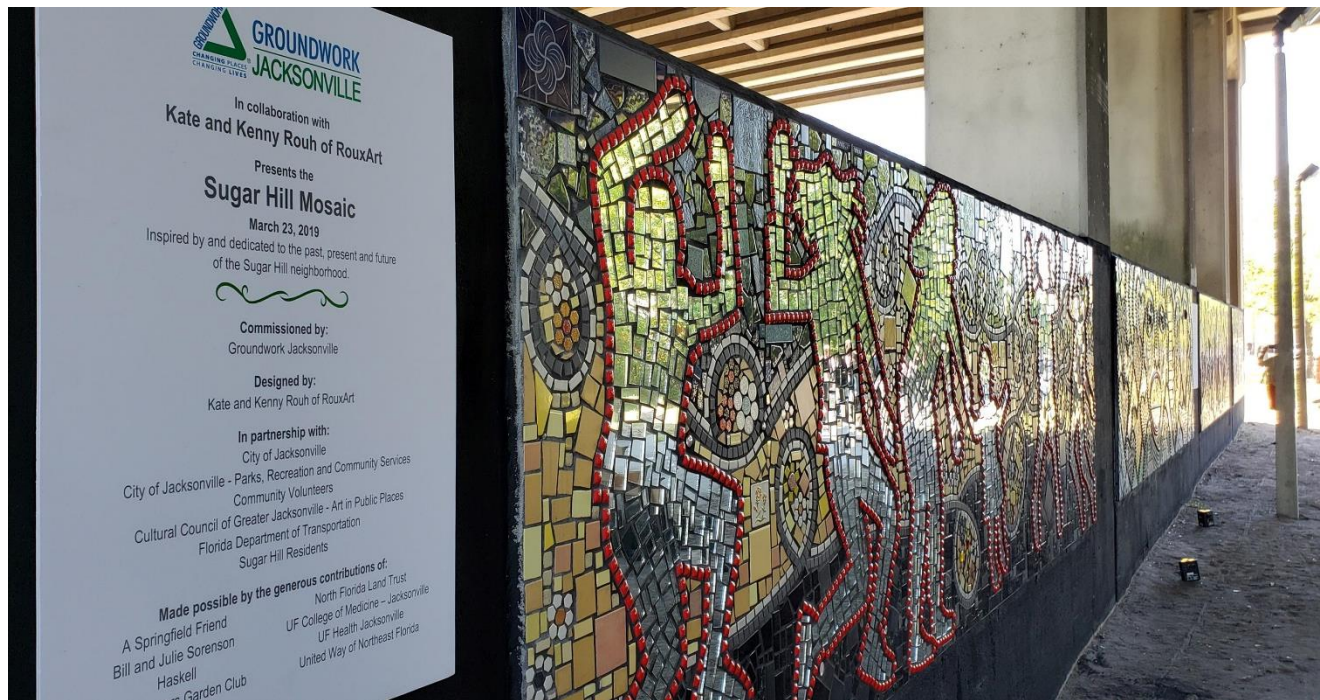
Funding & Costs: The S-Line Urban Greenway was constructed in 2000 and funded by Blue Foundation and the Kresge foundation to promote a Healthy Florida initiative. The 1.3 mile S-Line expansion costs in 2018 were \$196,160 for planning and engineering and \$3,475,451 for construction with a September 2021 completion date (Emerald Trail Master Plan). Groundwork is responsible for raising 25% of those costs. The City has identified several vacant parcels adjacent to the trail that will be utilized for greenspace along the S-Line expansion shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Artist rendering of greenspace along S-Line expansion



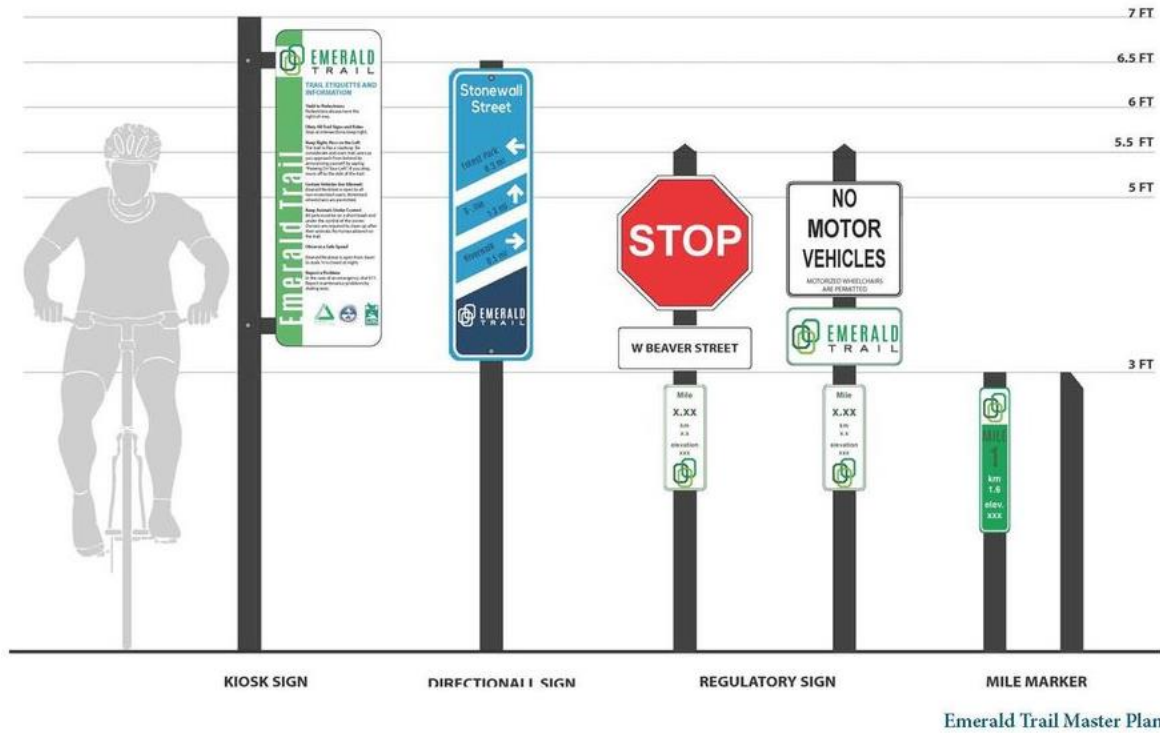
Operations: Groundwork evaluates the linkages between trails and spurs community volunteers to become active in the maintenance of the S-Line Urban Greenway. For example, Groundwork hosts monthly rides and events on the S-Line to engage locals and encourage participation in trail maintenance programs that include tree plantings, brownfield redevelopment, and storm water management. The Groundwork’s Green Team Youth Corps has planted the longest continuous bioswale in Jacksonville along the S-Line path. In addition, the Green Team actively participates in volunteer events at Sugar Hill Mosaic (Groundwork Jacksonville, 2019). These public mosaic art pieces reach 5 feet tall and are placed along the S-Line path where an estimated 41,000 pieces of mosaic tiles have been laid out to honor the past, present, and future of cultural prosperity in Northeast Florida as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Sugar Hill Mosaic Art



Amenities: Wayfinding and trail signage direct residents to green space and public art venues. The signs used along the S-Line Greenway and Emerald Trail are shown in Figure 4.5. The four types of signs (kiosk, directional, regulatory, and mile marker) help locals and visitors feel confident and safe while they navigate through the city. The color schemes and design elements of the signs are unique identifiers of Jacksonville’s vision. Signage ensures access to the built, natural, and societal assets, and is the foundation to developing a sense of place. A set of branding and design standards were developed as part of the Emerald Trail Master Plan to provide consistency and visibility along the trail. The trail signage follows the AASHTO Guide to Development of Bicycles 2007, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices 2009, the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide 2014, and the City of Jacksonville Standard Specifications.

Figure 4.5 Emerald Trail Signage



Usage: The S-Line Urban Greenway and the Emerald Trail represent a community initiative to introduce connectivity, facilitate neighborhood revitalization, and encourage economic growth. The community stakeholders, business leaders, City of Jacksonville, and private investors have developed an Emerald Trail Implementation Strategy to build an additional 19.7 miles of new trails that connect 14 historic neighborhoods to 18 schools, 2 colleges, and 28 parks (Emerald Trail Master Plan). The trail network will also connect to the downtown urban core offering a destination hub for retail, restaurants, and businesses. The Jacksonville Steering Committee believes the trail system will be a catalyst for development and offer accessibility to community assets and amenities for residents and visitors. The Emerald Trail will be constructed in multiple years and completed in 2030.

Applicability to Vicksburg: The S-Line Greenway in Florida provides an exceptional story of a community involved in the design of a non-motorized path. The non-profit group, Groundwork Jacksonville originated during the pathway development. This group helped take the 4.8 mile

and \$3 million path to an additional 19.7 miles and \$30 million path that connects industrial areas, schools, and residential districts. Locals incorporated wayfinding signs and elements of art and culture along the non-motorized path to accentuate community assets. Vicksburg should incorporate elements of local art to spark local participation and interest in the development of the non-motorized path. Residents are more likely to feel a

sense of ownership and pride if they are involved in the planning process. Furthermore, community involvement can grow and expand the current non-motorized path in unforeseeable ways. The path in Vicksburg should represent creativity by expressing the village’s historical elements and culture. The path should also bring to light an element of health, vitality, and walkability.

Figure 4.6 A view of Prairie St. Vicksburg, MI



Derby Greenway and Naugatuck Greenway

Location: The Derby Greenway started as a 2 mile paved trail following along the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers in Connecticut. The 10 ft. wide Derby Greenway is built on the US Army Corps of Engineers Floodwall as shown in Figure 4.7 and follows Division Street, N. Division Street, Bridge Street, and Main Street. During the development of the Derby Greenway, the City of Derby approved high-density and mixed used development along the Main Street downtown corridor. The path connects three cities and was resurrected by two local groups to attract visitors and incentivize local economic prosperity. Furthermore, the Derby Greenway connects to the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail, a proposed 44 mile multipurpose trail system.

Figure 4.7 Derby Greenway on Flood Walls



Stakeholders: The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and Olde Birmingham Business Association (OBBA) partnered with Healthy Valley 2000 on a grant funded community planning initiative to revitalize the historic infrastructure along Main Street downtown (Downtown Trails as Community & Economic Development Engines, 2018). Previously a seaport site for shipbuilding, Derby was founded in 1675 and the community is determined to avoid post-industrial decline. HVA and OBBA proposed a non-motorized path that would accentuate critical assets including the rivers and the historical rail bridge shown in Figure 4.8.

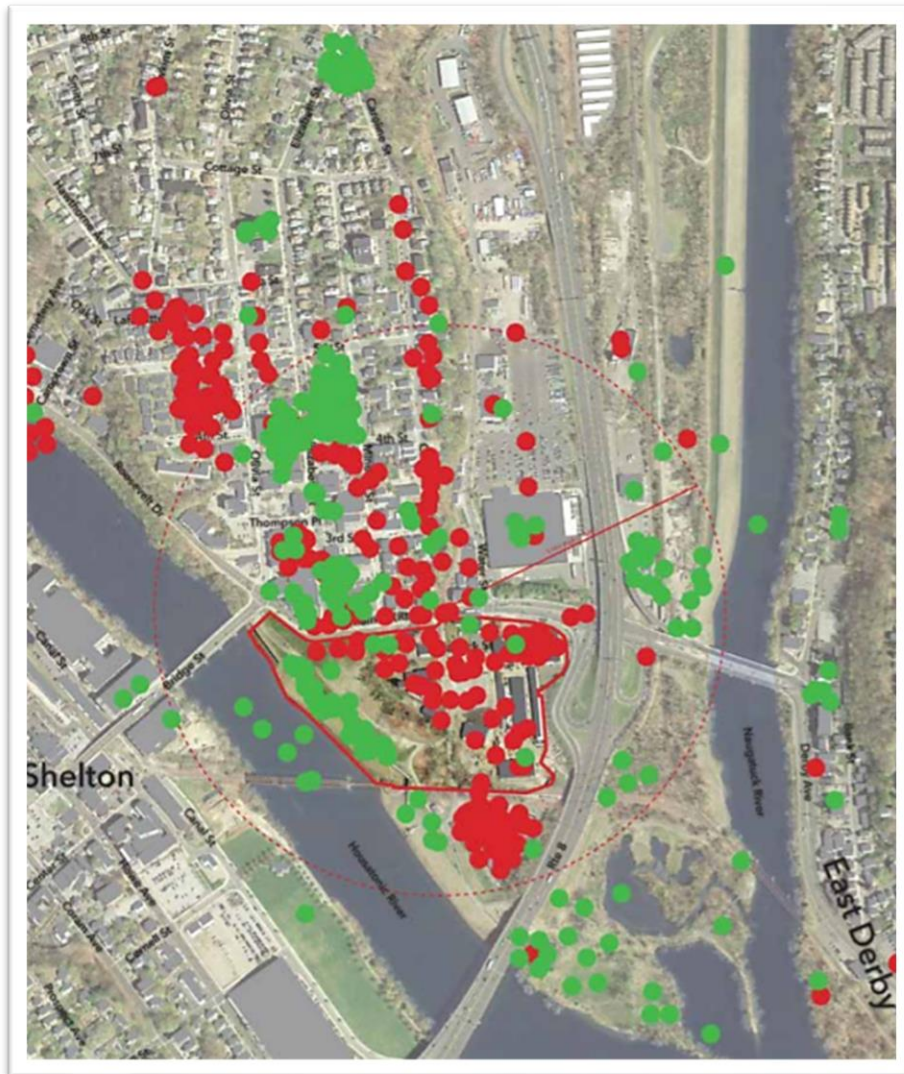
The city's plan to connect industrial sectors and park spaces to downtown was critical to economic development. In a public survey, the community agreed that downtown was one of the most underutilized areas. Figure 4.9 shows Derby's publicly perceived strengths in green and weaknesses in red. Planning and Zoning in Derby approved the reconstruction of historic buildings on Main Street to promote an attractive pedestrian corridor.

Figure 4.8 Historical Rail Bridge in Derby, CT



Funding and Cost: The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Municipal Grant Program awarded the Derby Main Street project \$200,000 to conduct necessary assessment activities (NVCOG, Brownfields: Derby Main Street South). The proposed plan for the Derby Greenway was developed during this assessment phase. The Derby Greenway received federal transportation funds to build the path along all the existing floodwalls. The City of Derby received \$5 million from an Urban Act grant to fund the construction of local roads and improvements to the built infrastructure. Since the construction of Derby Greenway in 2015, the City has received additional funding to develop assets along the non-motorized path. The Connecticut Housatonic Natural Resource Trustee Council awarded the municipal council of governments \$325,000 on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to build fishing and viewing platforms along recreational areas that connect to the Derby and Naugatuck Greenway Trail systems (Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, 2019).

Figure 4.9 Derby Strengths and Weaknesses



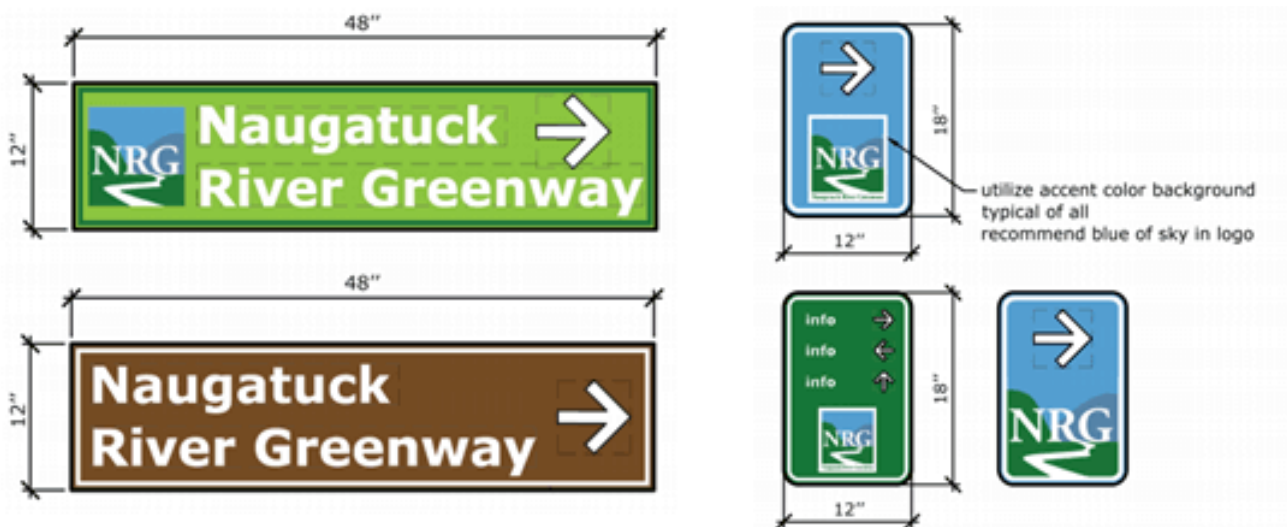
Operations: In 2019, plans were approved to reconstruct the Derby-Shelton Bridge to enhance access for pedestrians and bicyclists. The project will widen the sidewalks to provide an attractive linkage between the downtown areas of Derby and Shelton and will be administered through the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The city will utilize infrastructure funds to maintain Derby Greenway connections. Figure 4.10 shows the bridge improvement plan proposed for construction in 2021.

Figure 4.10 Derby-Shelton Bridge Reconstruct Plan



Amenities: The Naugatuck River planning community is incorporating a number of critical elements that will contribute to the success of the Derby and Naugatuck paths. The first being the development of the Naugatuck River Greenway Uniform Signage and Wayfinding Design Manual. The color coded and themed signage assists with wayfinding and direct trail users to the Three B’s: bike racks, benches, and bathrooms (NVCOG, NRG Signage Program). Examples of the Naugatuck themes signs are shown in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11 Naugatuck Theme for Wayfinding Signs



Usage: The 2 mile path in Derby accounts for 300,000 annual trips taken, roughly half of the trips are from visitors (Naugatuck River Greenway Trail Thomaston to Torrington Comprehensive Routing Study, 2019). The Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study revealed that direct spending on travel, meals, retail, and activities will reach \$42 million in annual revenue by 2031. Since Derby is the starting point of the Naugatuck River Greenway, the city is estimated to reap 15.1% of the revenue. The Naugatuck River planning community believes that trails should start in the heart of the downtown with allocated parking for visitors. This provides the perfect opportunity for locals and guests to experience all that the community has to offer. The trail will represent and fully embrace the culture of each community.

Applicability to Vicksburg: The Derby Greenway also used partnerships to culminate support and community interest in the development of a non-motorized path. The Derby Greenway brought revitalization to the historical downtown while adding modern design elements and attracting visitors. Similar to Vicksburg, a primary focus of connecting industrial sectors and park spaces to the downtown core is to increase economic revenue. Derby posted a survey to gather resident

Figure 4.12 Vicksburg Community Event



opinions on asset management in the community and then mapped the publicly perceived strengths and weaknesses. Connecting these focus areas created a sense of place and community ownership in Derby. The Village of Vicksburg could follow a similar methodology and connect the asset nodes identified within this report. Furthermore, overlaying the community values and asset priorities can influence future development trends and investment.

Beerline Trails

Location: The Beerline Trail started as a 3 mile long path in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and was part of a Neighborhood Development Project that established creative place making concepts to foster engagement with adjacent communities. Figure 4.13 shows the modern industrial theme that is incorporated throughout the trail. The Beerline Trail runs along the abandoned railroad right-of-way in the city downtown area that separates some of Milwaukee's most racially and economically diverse communities. As shown in Figure 4.14, the trail starts north of downtown between the Riverwest and UWM/North Shore suburban neighborhoods and near old breweries.

Figure 4.13 Beerline Trail Industrial Sign



The City of Milwaukee’s Comprehensive Plan and the Riverworks Community Development Corporation encouraged the development of the Beerline Trail to improve community health and facilitate local interaction.

Figure 4.14 Beerline Trail in Milwaukee, WI



Stakeholders: The Riverwest Neighborhood uses art to engage locals in the development of the Beerline Trail, as shown in Figure 4.15. As a result, the non-motorized path has become a catalyst for positive change in Milwaukee. Creative place making strategies encourage a collaborative approach to define art (from painting and dance to creative work and entrepreneurship). In 2012, the ARTery was created as a space for artist and graduate students to experiment with paving materials (Vásquez-Noriega, 2018). The group proposed to pave the Beerline Trail with old tires. The ARTery quickly became an incubator hub for innovation, philanthropy, and economic development. Other stakeholders in the community include the Milwaukee County Park Department, Greater Milwaukee Committee, the River Revitalization Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation.

Funding and costs: The Milwaukee County Park Department received \$320,000 of federal transportation funding to convert the rail line to the Beerline Trail as shown in Figure 4.16. The River Revitalization Foundation raised 20% matching funds to fund part of the rails-to-trails delineation. Additional funding from the Kresge Foundation provided support for neighborhood charrettes to continue planning future development, and Milwaukee County facilitated conversations with property owners to ensure proper trail linkages to recreational amenities. The River Revitalization Foundation received a DNR Stewardship grant of \$200,000 to apply towards the costs of land acquisitions necessary for connecting the Beerline Trail to the existing Milwaukee County Oak Leaf Trail that is located on the east side of the Milwaukee River (River Revitalization Foundation: Beer Line Trail Loop). More recently, in 2018, the Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project received \$50,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts to support ongoing development and to recognize the “power of art” in culture and local communities (Urban Milwaukee, 2018).

Figure 4.15 Riverwest Neighborhood painting at the Beerline Trail



Operations: The Riverwest Neighborhood has established a local presence in maintaining the Beerline Trail. A local team of artists, students, activists, and neighborhood leaders paint murals and regularly clean up graffiti. The Holton Youth Center provides art from Riverwest youth and the 2015 “Clean the Hood Initiative” was established in partnership with volunteers from the Riverwest communities to create awareness of trash clean up along the Beerline Trail (Spark Resolution: 2015). The neighborhood efforts have positively shifted perceptions of safety and health in Milwaukee.

Figure 4.16 Beerline Trail alongside old rail line



Amenities: In 2015, an additional 3 miles of the Beerline Trail was paved. The cement barricades and boarded windows that are along the Beerline Trail have been painted and incorporated into wayfinding and colorful signage. Figure 4.17 shows a 7ft tall wayfinding guide at one of the Beerline Trailheads. The Beerline Trail also strategically connects assets and amenities identified during a community charrette exercise hosted by the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee School

of Architecture and Urban Planning: Community Design Solutions. The charette identified design elements that would highlight business diversity and provide neighborhood access to jobs.

Usage: The Beerline Trail extends from the Oak Leaf Trail that has an average annual use of 500,000 bicyclists and pedestrians. The elements of creative place making were formed by local communities that 1) incorporate art and culture with economic development, 2) prioritize neighborhood development, 3) increase safety, 4) strengthening public and private partnerships, and 5) support artists to facilitate neighborhood engagement (Vásquez-Noriega, 2018). The Beerline Trail has attracted investments in commercial spaces along the trail and is a place of social interaction and cultural richness. It has improved the economic conditions of nearby businesses and decreased blight. The creative placemaking concepts and trail development promotes inclusion and community cohesion in an area that was experiencing gentrification and displacement. Figure 4.18 shows the assets incorporated along the Beerline Trail to accentuate placemaking concepts that incorporate the community’s vision.

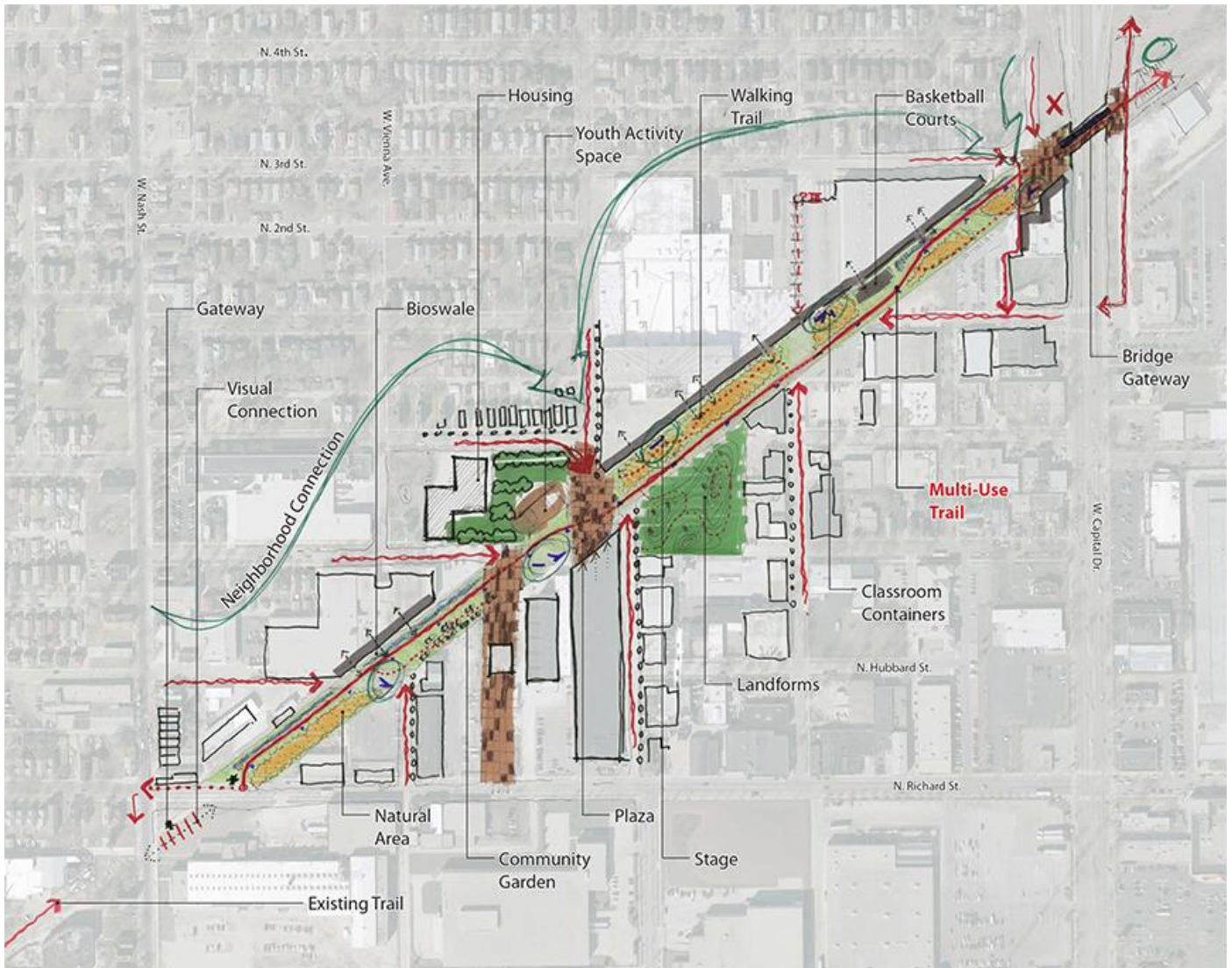
Figure 4.17 Beerline Trail Signage



Applicability to Vicksburg: The Beerline Trail group identified necessary stakeholders and categorized them by resource elements that range from advisory committees, outreach and engagement specialists, funding organizations, and local partners. Each stakeholder set roles and responsibilities that contribute to the desired vision and outcome for the trail. The Beerline Trail’s outcomes closely relate to goals identified in Vicksburg’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan. For

example, the Beerline Trail will positively influence the housing market, offer economic sustainability, and increase income diversity in Milwaukee.

Figure 4.18 Beerline Trail Assets



Lessons Learned

These case studies represent connectivity in multiple forms. Table 4.1 shows a comparative analysis for each case study. For some communities, connectivity means startup organizations and incubator hubs, environmental remediation projects, society-based partnerships,

neighborhood revitalization, and economic development. However, each case study started by proactively planning for a non-motorized path. A successful path requires a strategic and sustainable planning model that leverages the momentum of change. Figure 4.19 shows current plans for asset development at The Mill in Vicksburg. This will bring the potential for positive and expansive change to the regional area. And similar to these case studies, the village stakeholders have the opportunity to identify what connectivity means to them. Placemaking will be at the forefront of Vicksburg’s planning efforts to retain the small-town historical character while welcoming artists and visitors.

Figure 4.19 The Mill Redevelopment Plan



Table 4.1 Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

	S-Line Urban Greenway and the Emerald Trail	Derby Greenway and Naugatuck Greenway	Beerline Trails
Local Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3 mile rails-to-trails path in Jacksonville, Florida Multi-use pathway weaves through industrial sites and brownfields and connects residents to recreational areas and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 mile paved trail alongside the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers in Connecticut Revitalize the historic infrastructure along Main Street downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 mile long path in Milwaukee, Wisconsin Neighborhood Development Project that established creative place making concepts and fostered community engagement
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundwork Jacksonville- community non-profit organization Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Jacksonville Steering Committee City of Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department Blue Foundation for Healthy Florida Kresge Foundation Durkeeville Historical Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) Olde Birmingham Business Association (OBBA) Healthy Valley 2000 Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Connecticut Housatonic Natural Resource Trustee Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milwaukee County Parks Department Greater Milwaukee Committee ARTery was created as a space for artist and graduate student Kresge Foundation Riverwest Neighborhood
Funding & Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018 costs for planning and engineering \$196,160 2021 construction phase costs include \$3,475,451 Groundwork Jacksonville is raising 25% of costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal transportation funds to build the path on top of the old flood control walls Municipal council of governments \$325,000 Derby Main Street project \$200,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milwaukee County Parks Department received \$320,000 River Revitalization Foundation raised 20% matching funds DNR grant of \$200,000 National Endowment for the Arts awarded \$50,000
Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locals participate in trail maintenance programs, tree plantings, brownfield redevelopment, and storm water management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance access for pedestrians and bicyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident volunteers paint murals and clean up graffiti

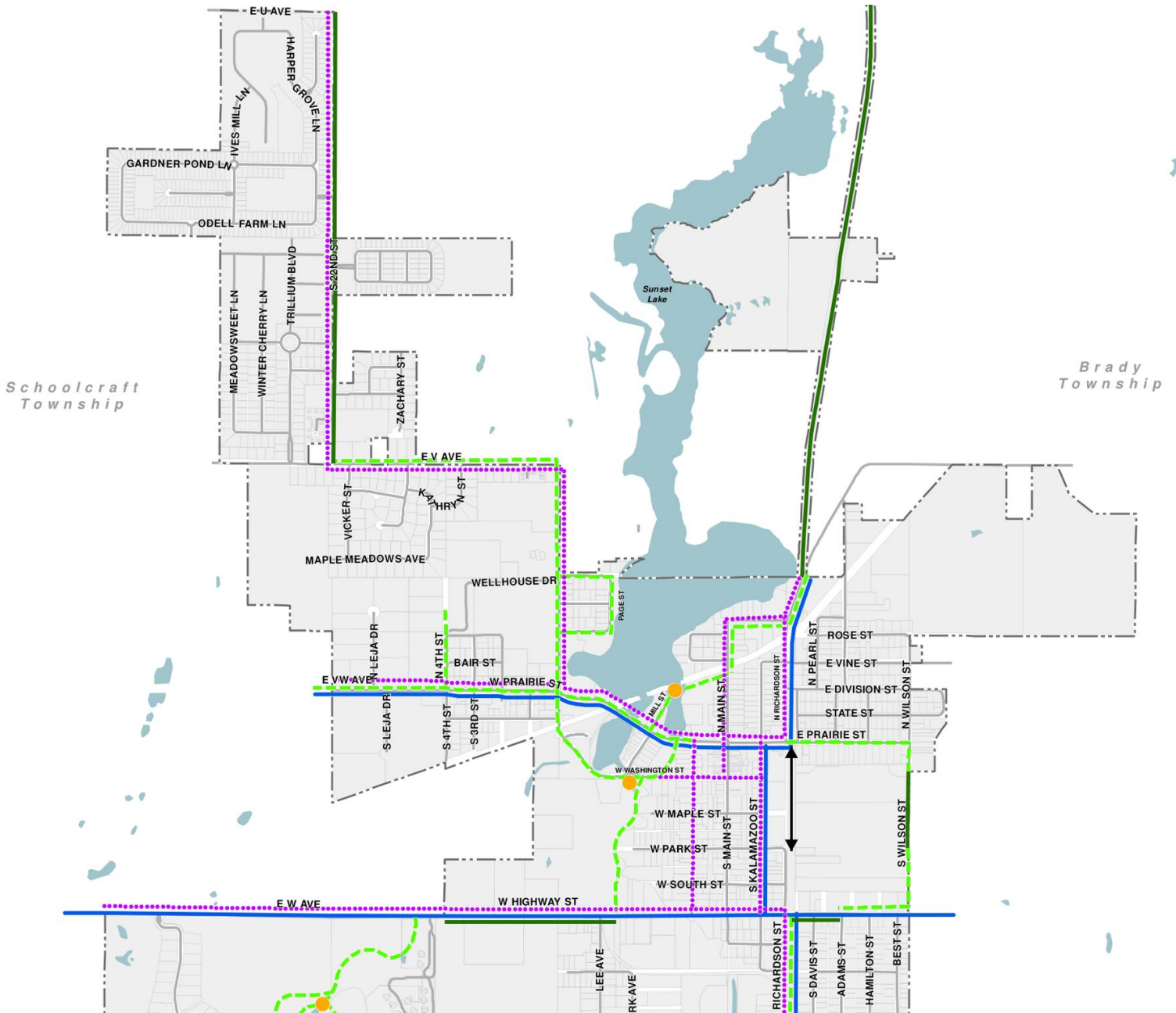
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwork’s Green Team Youth Corps volunteer to maintain trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations of Derby connections are administered through the Connecticut Department of Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean the Hood Initiative established in 2015 to pick up trash and debris along trail • Holton Youth Center provides art from Riverwest youth
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding and trail signage direct residents to green space and public art venues • Signage ensures access to the built, natural, and societal assets • 4 types of wayfinding signs: kiosk, directional, regulatory, and mile marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Color coded and themed signage to assist with wayfinding • Three B’s: bike racks, benches, and bathrooms • Naugatuck River Greenway Uniform Signage and Wayfinding Design Manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7ft tall wayfinding guide at the Beerline Trailheads • Colorful and bright signs that are visible in an urban setting • Signage that directs residents to businesses in Milwaukee
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents to access downtown urban core (retail, restaurants, businesses, and schools) • Catalyst for development of community assets and amenities for residents and visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300,000 annual trips taken and visitors account for 50% • Trailheads in the heart of downtown with allocated parking for visitors • Placemaking emphasis on history and development of local assets for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,000 local residents and visitors use the Beerline Trail to access the Oak Leaf Trail in Milwaukee County that includes two linear sections of mainline that travel North and South along Lake Michigan
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing linkages in the “S” line connections as shown in Figure 4.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific location of Derby trail fixed to the flood walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portions of the Oak Leaf Trail have disconnected and scattered branches
Applicability to Vicksburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement in the design and location of the non-motorized path • Locals incorporated wayfinding signs and elements of art and culture along the non-motorized path to accentuate community assets • Represent creativity by expressing the village’s historical elements and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of historical downtown while adding modern design elements and attracting visitors • Primary focus of connecting industrial sectors and park spaces to the downtown core is to increase economic revenue • Survey to gather resident opinions on asset management in the community and then mapped the publicly perceived strengths and weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively influence the housing market, offer economic sustainability, and increase income diversity • Identified necessary stakeholders and categorized them by resource elements • Each stakeholder has set roles and responsibilities that contribute to the desired vision and outcome for the trail

5

Proposed Non-Motorized Path

Improving the circulation of motorized and non-motorized traffic within the village is one of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan goals. A non-motorized pathway is an essential element of improving connectivity through the village. Vicksburg's current non-motorized path proposal is shown in Figure 5.1 and connects the current sidewalk system to the existing village trail system as well as regional trails in the area. The path includes non-motorized shared use paths. The current proposed non-motorized path begins at East TU Avenue and travels south until it reaches Townline Street and then transitions into North Richardson Street. The Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority plans to extend the existing 1.8-mile trail north to East S Avenue and south through the center of the village near Sunset Lake. To ensure non-motorized access to all asset nodes, this report proposes modifications to the current proposed non-motorized path. The path revisions take into consideration the Vicksburg Community and Stakeholder Survey responses and the non-motorized path best practices as identified by the Michigan Department of Transportation. These revisions include the addition of wayfinding signs, benches and appropriate lighting along the Vicksburg Trail. The path location revisions focus solely on creating a mixed-use loop through the village with connections to the current Vicksburg Trail head.

Figure 5.1 Vicksburg Circulation Map



Circulation & Transportation Plan



Village of Vicksburg
Kalamazoo County, Michigan

LEGEND

- ⋯⋯⋯ Proposed Bicycle Lane
- Existing Non-Motorized Path
- - - Proposed Non-Motorized Path
- Truck Route
- ↕ Potential Road Extension
- Potential Bridge Connection

The non-motorized path revisions focus on creating a vibrant destination for all residents and visitors based on the trail's location and enhanced access to assets through wayfinding and placemaking. The revised trail route extends from the existing trailhead that ends at Townline Street and travels throughout Vicksburg, reaching each of the four asset nodes: Downtown Node, the Historic Village, the Business Park, and The Mill. The authors of this report are also proposing a bog path through Clark Park to connect The Mill to the Downtown Node. A non-motorized path connecting Vicksburg's assets will ensure that residents and visitors have the necessary infrastructure in place to access parks, businesses, local art, restaurants, and breweries downtown without adding vehicular traffic or parking lots.

The proposed route is shown in Figure 5.2. The components of the non-motorized path include:

-  a mixed path (blue) which allows for pedestrians and bicycles
-  existing path (dark green)

The proposed revisions to the non-motorized path are listed in detail on Table 5.1 and 5.2. In addition to the path infrastructure modifications, the following components have been added to offer wayfinding and provide elements of placemaking:



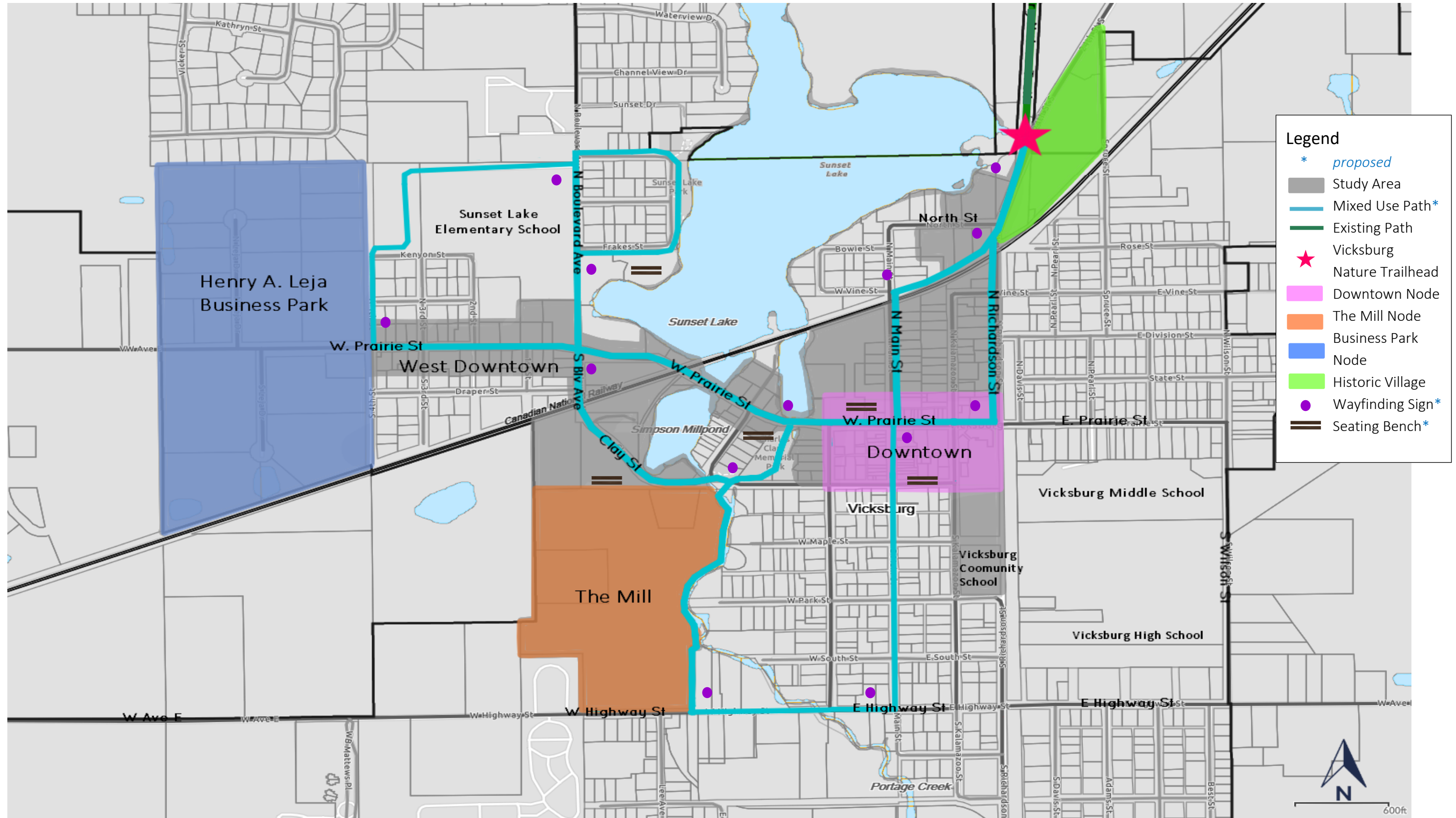
-  Wayfinding with Vicksburg Trail logo
-  Seating Benches along non-motorized paths

Figure 5.2 Proposed Non-Motorized Path



The proposed modifications to the Business Park Node include extending the mixed-use path through Wellhouse Dr. and connecting south to West Prairie St. as shown in Table 5.1. The additional mixed-use path will serve local residents that travel to the Business Park, Elementary School, Vicksburg Little League, or Family of Doctors Vicksburg. The mixed-use path near the Business Park Node exposes users to the lakeside view of Vicksburg and the western commercial downtown area. The path also invites users to walk or bike along the edge of Sunset Lake and Simpson Millpond. The mixed-use path crosses through downtown where local restaurants and shops are located. The proposed path on West Prairie St. south of the Business Park Node splits into two mixed-use paths that lead to The Mill as shown in Table 5.2.

The proposed modifications to the non-motorized path near the Mill and Downtown Nodes include adding a mixed-use path that connects West Ave to West Prairie St and wraps around the east side of The Mill property. The mixed-use path will offer connectivity to the northern trail system and will incentivize non-motorized travel to The Mill. The proposed mixed-use path to the east of The Mill will follow along Portage Creek and is currently included in The Mill's redevelopment proposal to be completed in 2023.

The authors of this report are also proposing a bog trail through Clark Park connecting West Prairie to West Washington and dropping to S Clay St. as shown in Figure 5.3. The bog trail will connect to a mixed-use path located on the east side of The Mill that runs along Portage Creek. The bog path will offer pedestrians and bicyclists an entry point to The Mill while offering a scenic view of nature. Furthermore, Clark Park is naturally a floodplain, and an elevated bog trail would provide an eco-friendly option that is less invasive than a paved trail and will allow the natural habitat to occur. The bog trail would connect to the existing wooden platform in Clark Park shown in Figure 5.4. Expanding the trail from existing infrastructure will minimize cost and create a recreational asset for the community. The bog trail would also incentivize walkability through the village and spur activity between the Downtown Node, The Mill, and the Business Park Node.

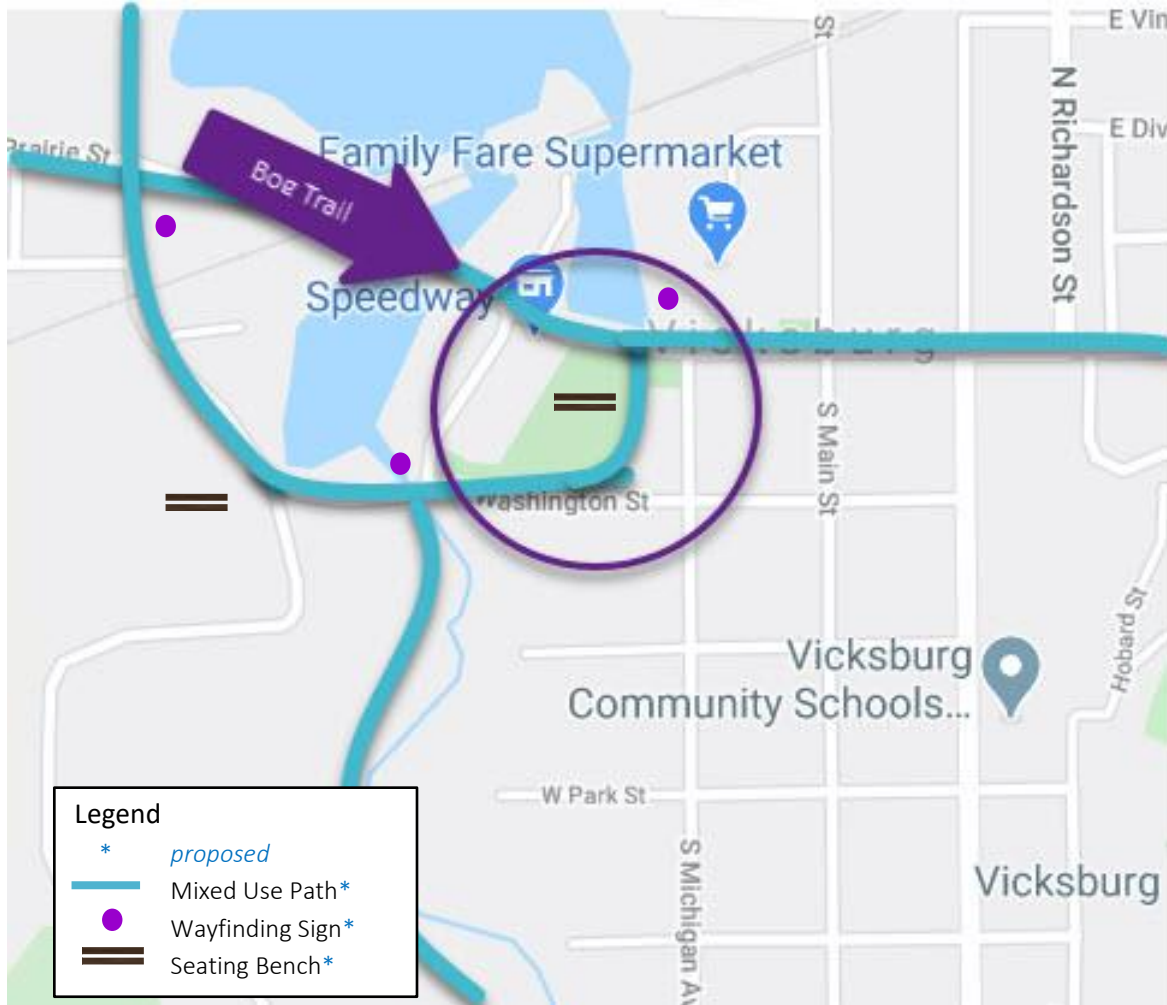
Table 5.1 Modifications to the Business Park Non-Motorized Path

Current Business Park	Modified Business Park
<p>LEGEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Bicycle Lane ———— Existing Non-Motorized Path - - - - Proposed Non-Motorized Path ———— Truck Route 	<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>proposed</i> ■ Business Park Node — Mixed Use Path* ■ Seating Bench* ● Wayfinding Sign*

Table 5.2 Modifications to The Mill and Downtown Non-Motorized Path

Current Mill & Downtown Node	Modified Mill and Downtown Node
<p>LEGEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Bicycle Lane ——— Existing Non-Motorized Path - - - Proposed Non-Motorized Path ——— Truck Route ● Potential Bridge 	<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>proposed</i> ■ The Mill Node ——— Mixed Use Path* ● Wayfinding Sign* = Seating Bench*

Figure 5.3 Clark Park Bog Trail Connections



An example of the proposed bog walk is in Figure 5.5. However, there are many designs that include railings or do not include gaps in between the wooden planks. The additional investment into the bog path can create another recreational asset. Improving recreational areas was ranked among the top priorities for residents in the Vicksburg Community Survey. Other amenities that community members find important include more paths and bike lanes, more signage, increased access to downtown Vicksburg, and maintaining the small town character.

Figure 5.4 Clark Park Existing Infrastructure



Figure 5.5 Big Bog Boardwalk in Minnesota



Wayfinding

The proposed changes to the location and modality of the non-motorized path through Vicksburg offers access to each of the asset nodes. It is essential to incorporate proper trail surface, rest spots with benches, lighting, crosswalks, signage, and bike parking to increase the attractiveness and functionality of the trail system and the four nodes. Lookout points, informational signs and trail destinations provides the opportunity to educate visitors and residents about all of Vicksburg's assets. This report also proposes a logo for the Vicksburg Trail that can be used for branding and wayfinding. Consistent wayfinding signs directing users to asset nodes and nearby local amenities will add to the user experience. Strategically placing wayfinding signs will likely increase foot traffic through the downtown corridor and potentially increase economic vitality in the village. Branding the Vicksburg Trail promotes local ownership which can contribute to sustainable management and maintenance of the trail. An example of wayfinding signs using the Vicksburg Trail logo is shown in Figure 5.6. Wayfinding signs should provide specific information to users. The 2011 Trail Tows and the Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan recommend:

- Directional Signs are necessary to inform pedestrians and cyclists where and how far they are traveling on the path. Directional signs should also inform path users about destinations, rest spots and restrooms.
- Welcome Signs should be present at the trailhead to inform users about the path. Signs should include a trail map and routes.
- Trail Map must be present to showcase trail routes, rest areas and destinations.
- Community Information on signage can be placed along the trail and at trailheads to inform path users about the area they are in. The information about the area can be historical, recreational, businesses within the area or nature based.

Figure 5.6 Vicksburg Logo Wayfinding



Figure 5.7 Vicksburg Logo on paved path

Wayfinding is recommended along the non-motorized path at intersections to direct users to the asset nodes. The Vicksburg Trail logo can also be used on paved bike paths as shown in Figure 5.7. Using colored paint such as green increases visibility and promotes branding.

The report recommends placing informative signs at each asset node that educates users about Vicksburg history, highlights local amenities, and identifies natural resources that are specific to that location within the village. Wayfinding signs should also be placed intermittently through the trail system to direct users through Vicksburg and also list nearby seating, restrooms, and water bottle fill up stations. The Vicksburg Trail logo can also be used on seating amenities such as benches placed throughout the trail as shown in Figure 5.9.

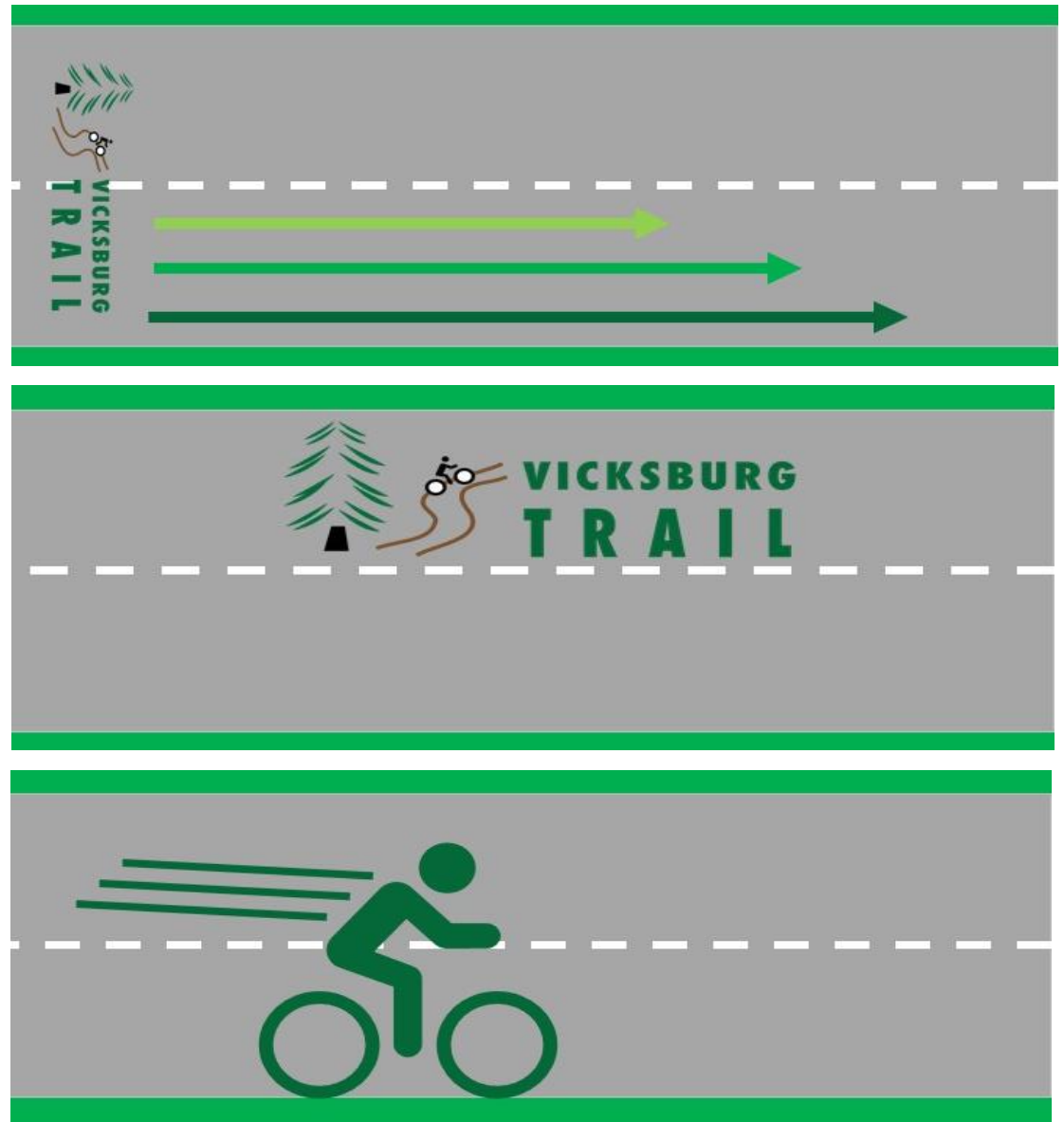


Figure 5.8 Wayfinding Sign at Intersection of Vicksburg Trail



Figure 5.9 Vicksburg Trail Seating Bench with logo



Placemaking

The MSU Team used the methodology outlined in the *Placemaking Guide as An Economic Tool* from the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University to identify placemaking concepts unique to the Vicksburg Trail. The proposed non-motorized path incorporates strategic placemaking values by highlighting goals from the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan. These placemaking strategies include:

Increase Walkability

The proposed path accentuates the historic character and increases the walkability of Vicksburg. The Vicksburg Community Survey shows that increasing connectivity and walkability is among the most valued improvements that residents would like to see in Vicksburg. Research from the Land Policy Institute suggests that higher housing values are more likely to occur in areas that are walkable and pedestrian-oriented in comparison to areas that are auto-centric. The Vicksburg Comprehensive Master Plan identifies economic vitality as highly valuable to the village to attract new residents and visitors. Best practices identified by the Michigan Department of Transportation to increase walkability along all parts of the Vicksburg Trail include the following trail infrastructure standards:

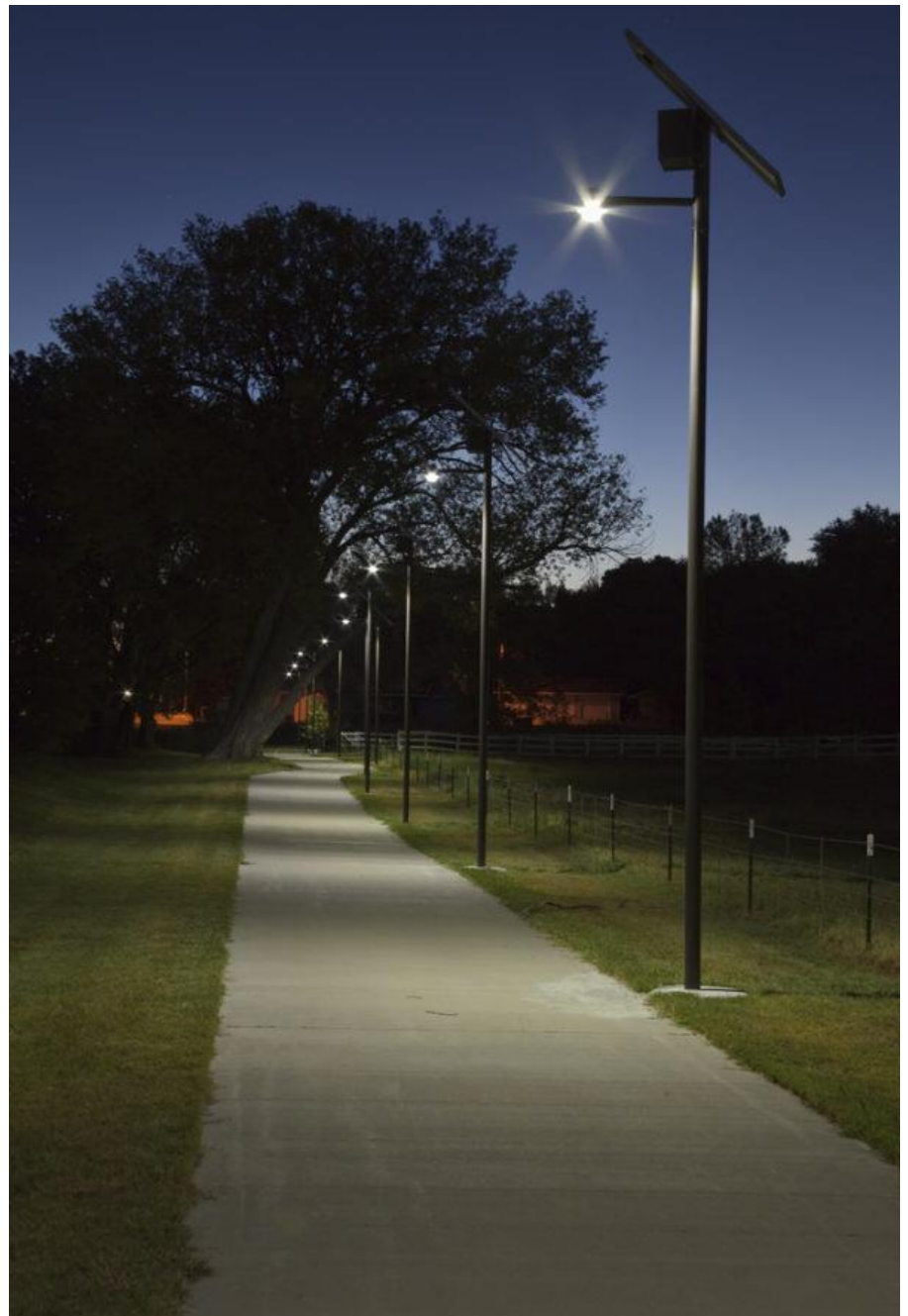
- Trail Surface: The surface of a trail should be paved or crushed stones. The path must be between 10 and 14 ft. wide. There should be a 2 ft. clearance on each side of the path.
- Crosswalks: should have clear signage and markings to ensure safety for pedestrians and bikers from motorists.
- Landscaping. Trees, shrubs, and plants will have to be cleared from the trail. Trees and plants that come onto the trail will have to be removed and maintained.
- Safety features: use LED lighting to ensure the safety of the users during early morning/evening hours.

Figure 5.10 Street Lights at Wellhouse Dr.

Figure 5.10 shows an example of proposed lighting for the non-motorized path near the Business Park Node along the Wellhouse Dr. for workers and students.

Increase Connectivity

The proposed path increases connectivity in the village by connecting the existing Vicksburg Trail to the downtown corridor and residential neighborhoods. Connecting assets offers a reliable trail system that is human scale and provides access to amenities that residents and visitors frequent regularly. The proposed path is designed to be safe, identifiable, well lit, and connected to community resources. The following amenities that increase connectivity along the non-motorized path proposed in Vicksburg include:



Benches

- Enable pedestrians and bikers to rest and refresh, especially young children and senior citizens
- Encourage senior residents and people with disabilities to utilize the path more often.
- Encourage users to spend more time outside which promotes a healthy lifestyle.



Figure 5.11 Example of a bench alongside a trail

Bike racks

- Enable bicyclists to easily lock their bikes near a safe place while they take a break
- Low-cost amenity that can be highly utilized by the path users.
- Utilized as a functional structure, with a fitting design and color bike racks can add an artistic element to the streetscape.
- Promote bicycling as a viable form of transportation for the village residents.



Figure 5.12 Example of a bike rack

The Michigan department of Transportation requires that bike lanes meet the following requirements:

- Clear pavement markings should be present on the street.
- Signage should also notify motorists of bike lanes.
- Bike lanes must be a minimum of 4 ft. wide when there is not a curb present.
- Bike lanes must be a minimum of 5 ft. wide when there is a curb and on-street parking present.
- 6.5 ft. bike lanes are preferred to allow for bicycles to pass each other.
- If possible, provide a buffer between motorists and bicyclists. The buffer can be made of physical barriers such as curbs, sidewalks or landscaping.

Increases Accessibility

The non-motorized path increases accessibility in the village of Vicksburg for people who do not own or cannot operate a motor vehicle like children, some senior citizens, and certain people with disabilities. The mixed-use paths and pedestrian paths can be used by children in residential neighborhood to walk or bike to school. Increasing accessibility creates an equitable environment and provides another opportunity to reach village amenities within the community. The Vicksburg Trail should follow all design standards that ensure accessibility from the Americans with Disabilities Act and include the following guidelines:

1. Access Routes along the path and near facilities should ensure access for those who are handicapped and should include:
 - Connections between arrival points so that travel is possible. Connections must be made to each facility along the path.
 - The access routes should coincide with the circulation path.
 - Access routes should allow access to all elements within the path and the facilities. Access to entryways, drinking fountains, tables and benches should all be possible.

2. Ramps must be implemented in areas with steep slopes and should include:
 - The running slop should not exceed 1:12.
 - The ramp should be a minimum of 36" wide.
 - The ramp should include handrails.
3. Handrails should be present along buildings where there are access routes.
4. Parking should include handicap parking spaces. The spaces should include:
 - Signage: signage must be present to notify people that it is a handicap space.
 - The number of handicap spaces is determined by the number of total spaces in the parking area.
 - The handicap parking spot must have access to the path or sidewalk and should be at the same elevation of the path or sidewalk.
5. Grade of slope of the trail should change at a low a rate. Intense changes in elevation will prevent the path from being handicap accessible. Changes in slope should be gradual.
6. Public restrooms along the trail should also be handicap accessible

Increases Economic Vitality

The non-motorized path connects to the downtown corridor where most of the local businesses are located. The path facilitates movement throughout the village and circulates people to the asset nodes where they are more likely to purchase goods and services. The potential increase in commercial activity is sustainable for Vicksburg's economy. The Vicksburg Stakeholder Survey reports that integrating complete streets and landscaping along Main St. and Prairie St. would help attract more customers and encourage investment in the surrounding area. Figure 5.13 is a complete street concept provided by the City of Birmingham, Alabama.

Figure 5.13 Complete Streets in Birmingham, AL



Additional path amenities recommended by the 2011 Trail Tows and the Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan include:

- Water Fountains should be available along the path at rest points, trailheads, and restrooms to ensure proper hydration and safety for path users.
- Trash Cans and Recycling are to be present along the path to prevent trash from littered onto the trail and into nature. Bags within trash and recycling cans will have to be regularly replaced.
- Picnic Tables provide additional rest spots, dining and event spaces for path uses.
- Shelters can be helpful to pedestrians and bikers along the path in times of intense weather. Shelters can also be used to cover picnic and dining areas.

- Parking should be provided at trailheads for those traveling in motorized vehicles to the trail.
- Dog Waste Bags should be provided along the trail to prevent waste along the trail. Bag stations will have to be regularly replaced.
- Warnings should be clear along the path. Warnings about street-crossings, changes in elevation and other should be included.

Highlights Community Identity

The non-motorized path in Vicksburg acts as a community asset in of itself which can be used to facilitate events. Figure 5.14 is an image from a chalk art festival in Denver, Colorado. Non-motorized path events can attract tourists from nearby towns and cities. The proposed Vicksburg Trail connects the historical elements of the village including the Historic Village, the paper mill, and the historic architecture downtown. The wayfinding signs provide information on the other assets in the village and directs users along the trail system. This would educate visitors and ensure they feel welcome and safe navigating through Vicksburg. The Vicksburg Community Survey reports that ‘keeping the small-town atmosphere’ is the most important aspect of Vicksburg. The proposed pedestrian path downtown retains the original infrastructure and does not require a large footprint for sidewalk expansion to accommodate mixed-use path requirements. The community of Vicksburg will need to collectively identify their unique identity through public involvement such as a visioning session.

Funding Recommendations

The Vicksburg DDA and village have been successful in landing important grants, including a \$170,000 Vicksburg Foundation matching grant that is still in progress, MEDC crowdfunding matching grant of \$50,000 for Liberty Lane East, \$33,100 for site preparation at the Vicksburg Nature Trailhead, \$32,500 from MEDC for the trailhead construction, and \$21,800 from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. The village also received a \$10,000 grant from West Michigan Trails and Greenway.

The report recommends the following potential funding sources:

1. Financial appropriation from local government of Vicksburg Village, it comes from fiscal revenue and will need an approval from Vicksburg Village Council.
2. Apply for a special grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) since this project will support local and regional non-motorized transportation.
3. Apply for a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant for the construction of the Bog Walk, from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The construction of the proposed trail project through this import ecosystem is highly relevant to local natural resource protection and providing public access to natural resources.
3. Explore possible partnerships with non-profit organizations, like Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, because this non-motorized project benefits public health, children, and communities.
4. Seek intergovernmental cooperation with communities around the region that will benefit from a strong trail network.
5. Attract private grants and gifts through a capital development campaign. Beneficiaries and stakeholders of this trail project are also encouraged to provide funding support, like the Mill and business park. This campaign could include naming opportunities on portions of the pathway, seating areas and special landscaped areas.

Conclusion

A series of steps are recommended for the proposed Vicksburg Trail to be implemented successfully. The most essential step is to incorporate public participation during the entirety of the Vicksburg Trail planning and development processes. After acquiring the necessary funding to construct a non-motorized path, the public should help identify the best and final routes for the Vicksburg Trail. The public should also assist with identifying placemaking elements such a

signage, logos, and local artwork along the trail. Public input is essential because it creates local ownership and ensures the path will be built in a way that is desired by the community.

Figure 5.14 Chalk Art Festival in Denver, CO



The Village of Vicksburg will want to ensure that the zoning and traffic ordinances allow for the development and use of a non-motorized path throughout the village limits. Vicksburg should also encourage public and private partnerships to assist with continuous improvements at the four asset nodes. Improvements can include revitalization of built infrastructure, investment into social resources such as a community meeting space, incubator hubs for entrepreneurship, or the development/enhancement of recreational assets. These continuous improvement activities will be led by an active and engaged community and will ensure the village is offering a vibrant, connected, and sustainable destination for residents and visitors for years to come.

Annotated References

Capturing Trail Based Tourism: 20130 from Trail Tows and the Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan 2011

City of Ann Arbor Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update 2013

Prepared for City of Ann Arbor Planning and Development Services and the Alternative Transportation Program on November 18, 2013. This document is intended to help Ann Arbor once again become a national leader in high quality nonmotorized transportation and contribute to keeping Ann Arbor one of the best places to live and work in the country.

Downtown Trails as Community & Economic Development Engines. November 16, 2018. The BRIDGE Series. Retrieved from: <https://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2046/2018/12/Downtown-Trails-as-Community-Economic-Development-Engines-1.pdf>

Emerald Trail Master Plan and Implementation Strategy.

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Litman, Todd & Blair, Robin & Demopoulos, Bill & Eddy, Nils & Fritzel, Anne & Laidlaw, Danelle & Maddox, Heath & Forster, Katherine. (2002). Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning: A Guide to Best Practices.

This guide covers all aspects of pedestrian and bicycle planning. It is intended for policy makers, planners and advocates who want the best current information on ways to make their communities better places for walking and cycling.

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Spark Resolution: 2015. Design & Visual Communication program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Retrieved from: <https://uwm.edu/resolution/projects/riverwest-2/>

Vásquez-Noriega, Carla. September 2018. A Pathway to Connect Communities A Case Study of the Beerline Trail Extension in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Urban Institute.

Village of Vicksburg 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan

Adopted by the Vicksburg Planning Commission on March 18, 2015, Adopted by the Vicksburg Village Council on April 6, 2015. Prepared by McKenna Associates, Community Planning and Design. This Master Plan is intended to capitalize on what is currently working for the Village, identify areas of improvement, and aspire to create a greater community for its residents and destination for visitors. It is an opportunity to connect and combine efforts in the Village for meaningful reinvestment in the community.

Village of Vicksburg Downtown Redevelopment and Design Plan

Adopted on December 10, 2014. Prepared by McKenna Associates, Community Planning and Design. The Vicksburg Downtown Redevelopment + Design Plan is the plan to define and express what the urban form and pedestrian areas in the Downtown District look like, where redevelopment opportunities are, and how those elements can be united with beautiful urban design and solid infrastructure.

Urban Milwaukee. May 10, 2018. NEA Awards \$50,000 Grant to Support Development of Beerline Trail. Retrieved from: <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/pressrelease/nea-awards-50000-grant-to-support-development-of-beerline-trail/>

Appendix 1 – Community Survey Results

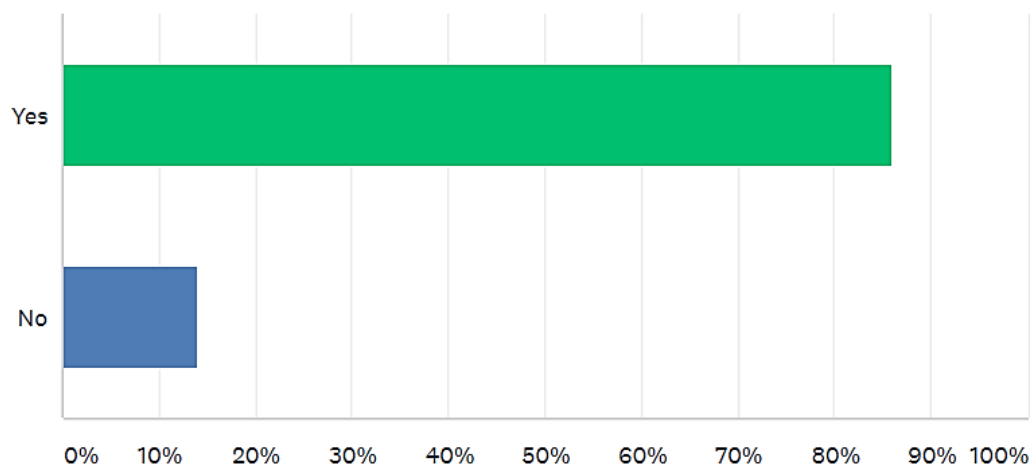
The following survey was posted on the Village of Vicksburg’s Facebook page in February 2020 on Survey Monkey. During this time, the public answered the 10 questions specific to Vicksburg, MI. The survey collected a total of 100 responses that are listed below. Further analysis of the survey results will be provided at the time of the final draft.

Q1



Are you a resident of Vicksburg?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



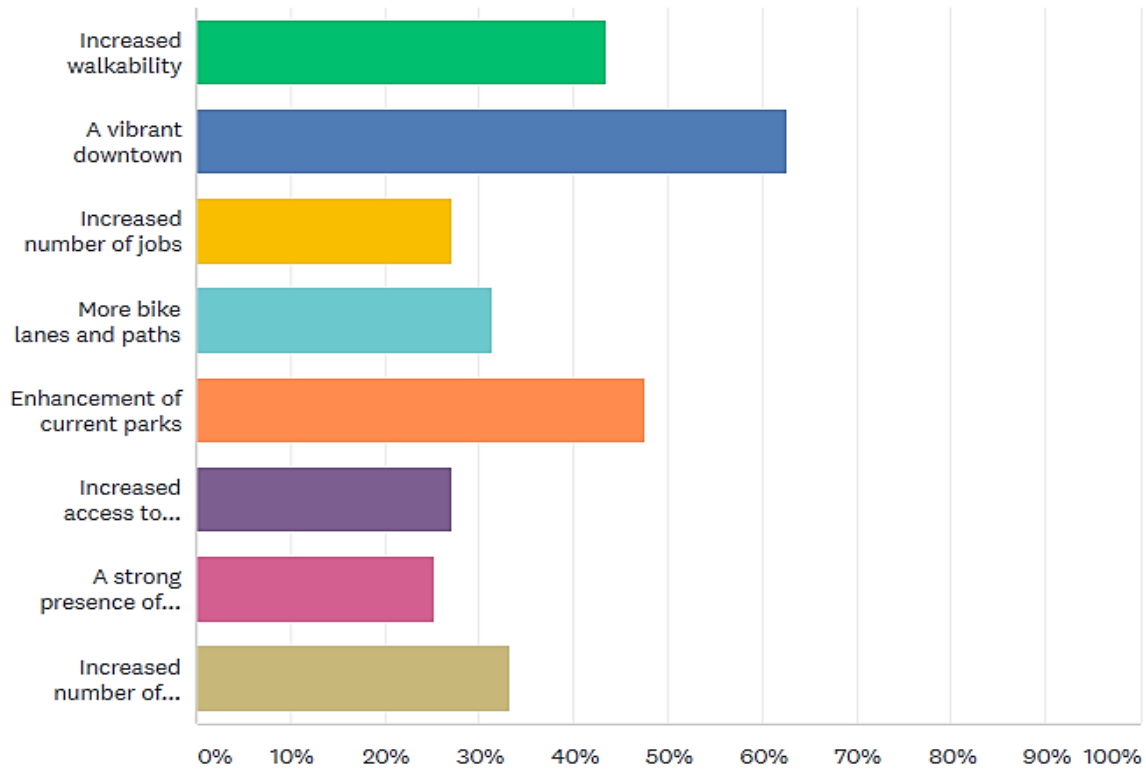
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.00%	86
No	14.00%	14
TOTAL		100

Q2



What would you like to see in Vicksburg in the future?
Select your top three (3).

Answered: 99 Skipped: 1



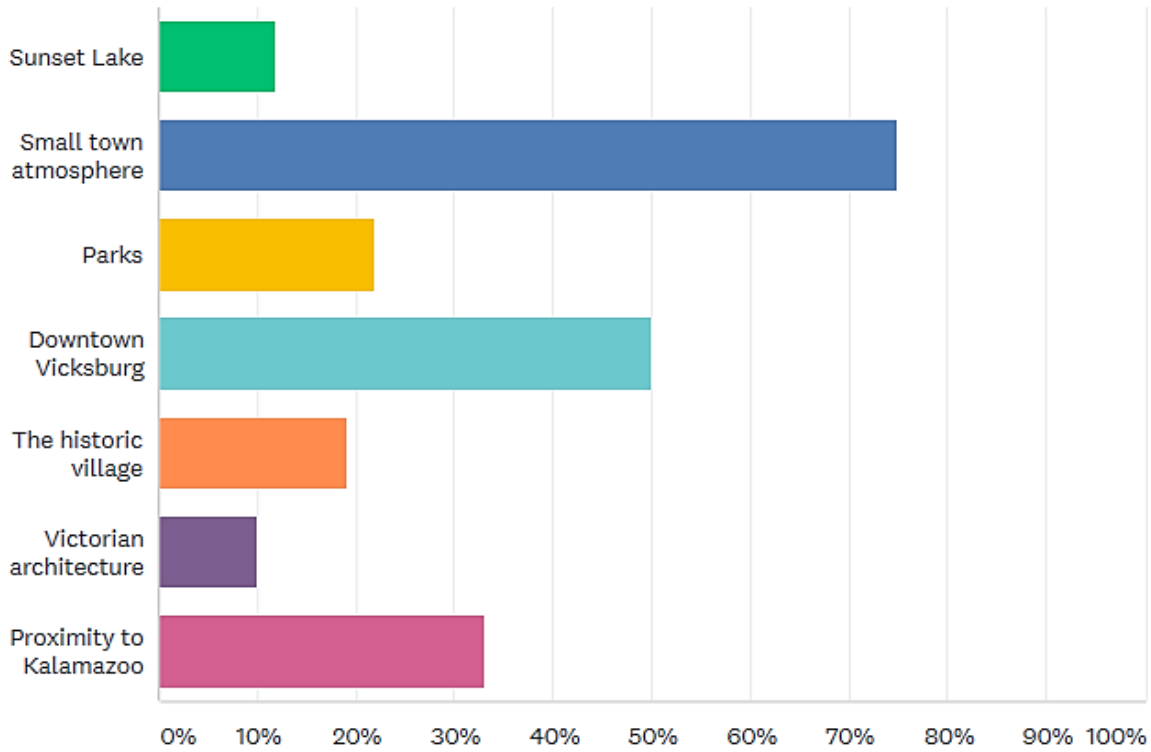
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increased walkability	43.43%	43
A vibrant downtown	62.63%	62
Increased number of jobs	27.27%	27
More bike lanes and paths	31.31%	31
Enhancement of current parks	47.47%	47
Increased access to Sunset Lake	27.27%	27
A strong presence of arts and culture	25.25%	25
Increased number of community events	33.33%	33
Total Respondents: 99		

Q3



What aspects of Vicksburg are most important to you?
Select your top two (2).

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



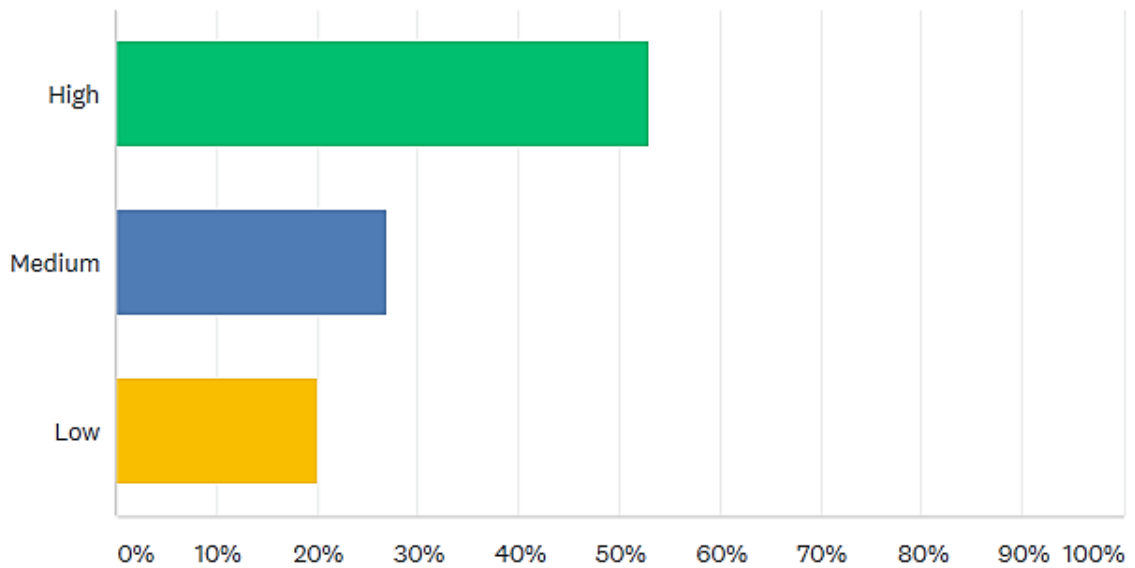
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sunset Lake	12.00%	12
Small town atmosphere	75.00%	75
Parks	22.00%	22
Downtown Vicksburg	50.00%	50
The historic village	19.00%	19
Victorian architecture	10.00%	10
Proximity to Kalamazoo	33.00%	33
Total Respondents: 100		

Q6



How likely are you to utilize a non-motorized (walking, biking) path through Vicksburg?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



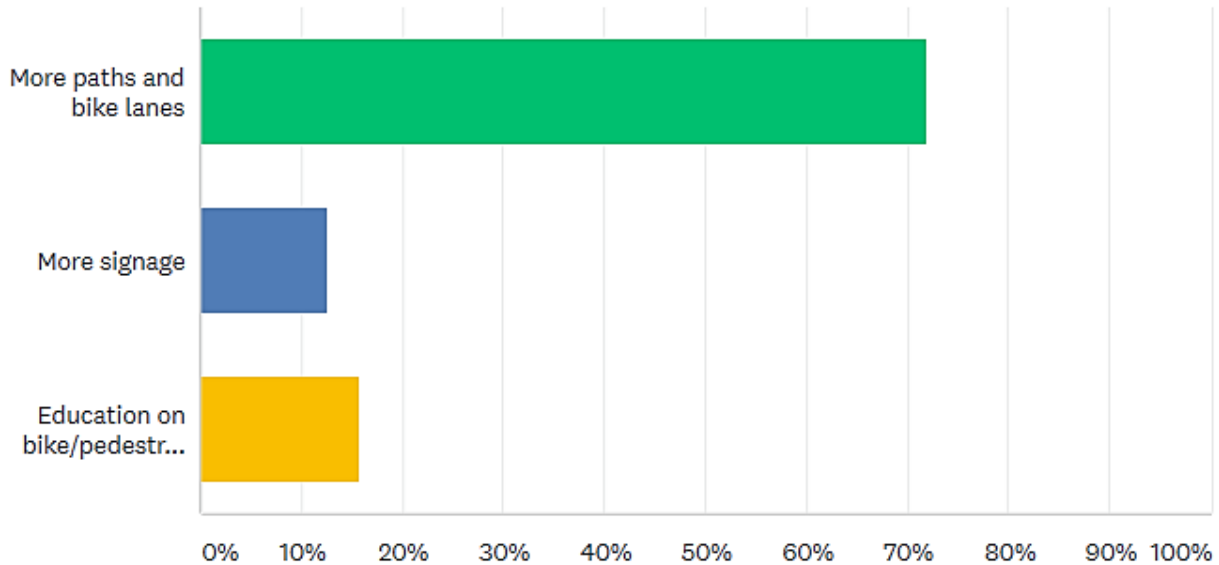
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	53.00%	53
Medium	27.00%	27
Low	20.00%	20
TOTAL		100

Q7



What could be changed to make Vicksburg more walkable?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 4



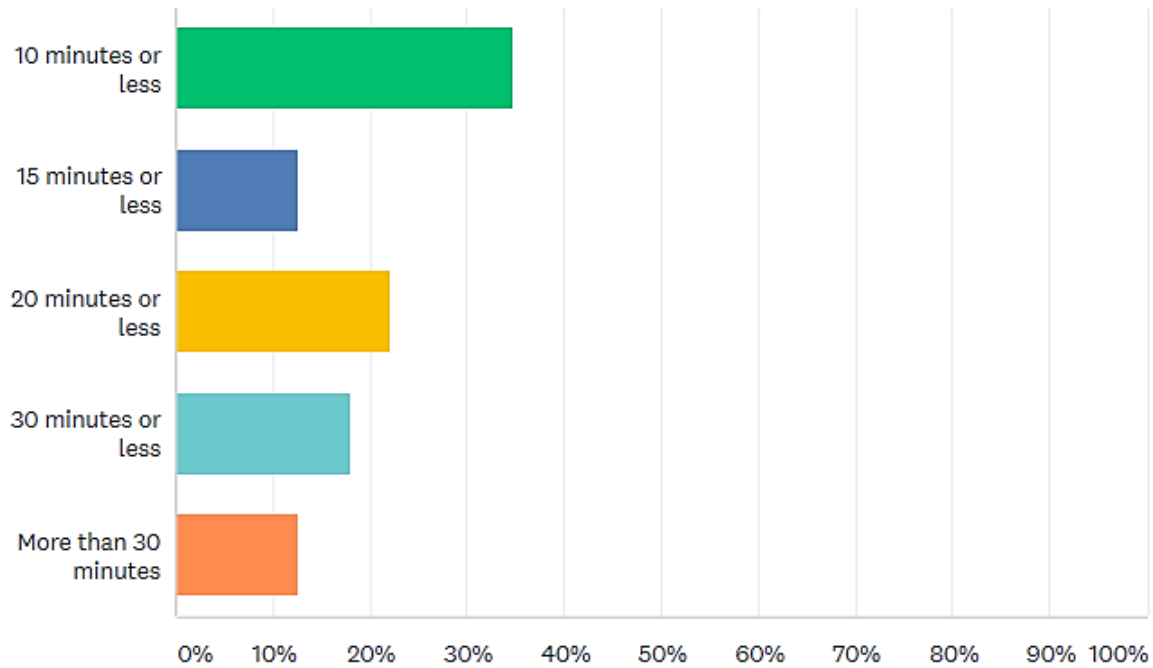
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More paths and bike lanes	71.88%	69
More signage	12.50%	12
Education on bike/pedestrian safety	15.63%	15
TOTAL		96

Q8



How long is your commute to work?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 5



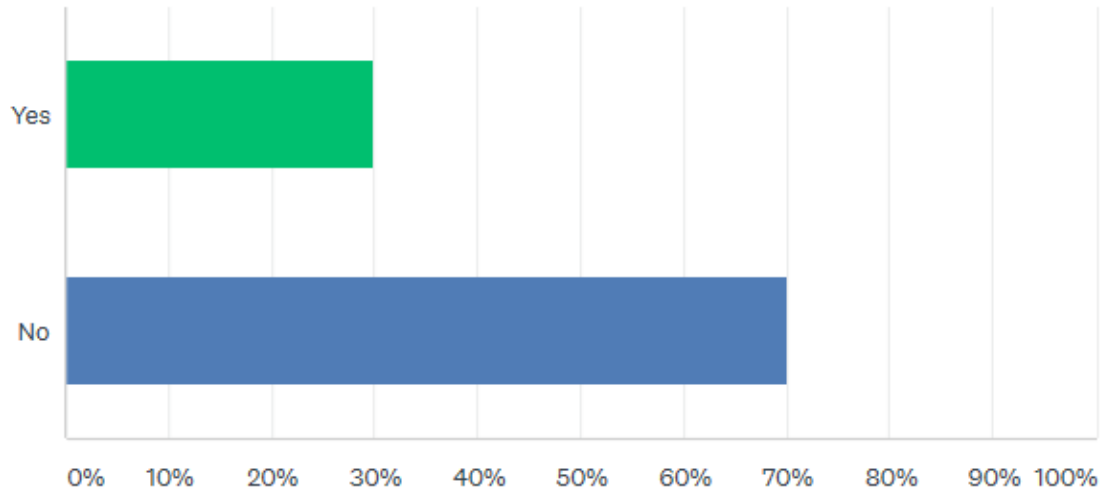
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
10 minutes or less	34.74%	33
15 minutes or less	12.63%	12
20 minutes or less	22.11%	21
30 minutes or less	17.89%	17
More than 30 minutes	12.63%	12
TOTAL		95

Q9



Do you work inside the Village limits?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.00%	30
No	70.00%	70
TOTAL		100

Q10



What is your age?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

