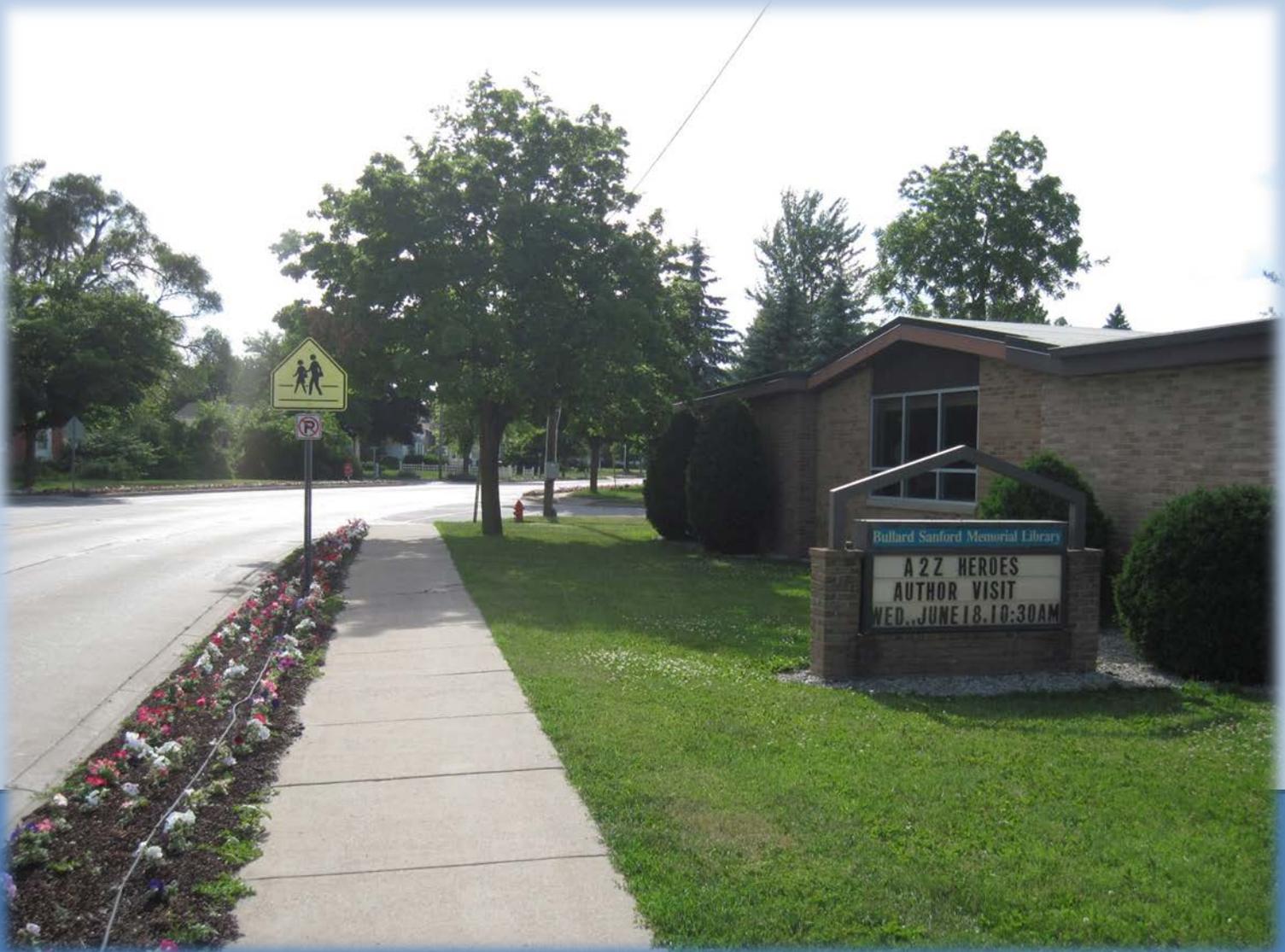


# City of Vassar

## Master Plan 2015



# City of Vassar

## Master Plan 2015

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# Chapter 1

## The Planning Process

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### INTRODUCTION

This document is the outcome of a year-long effort by the City of Vassar Planning Commission to draft a new Master Plan and to steer the course for the future. This document reflects the community's concern for the future development of Vassar and conveys a strong commitment to retain and strengthen the local quality of life. The preferred future, or vision, for the City of Vassar is outlined within this Master Plan. Specifically, the vision is expressed in the way this Master Plan:

- Documents citizen input on community needs and services,
- Articulates goals and related actions to be accomplished by local leaders,
- Provides an overall view of future physical development of the City of Vassar, and
- Presents a map that shows locations of how land is proposed to be used in the future.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, is the legal basis for cities in the State of Michigan to develop a Master Plan. The main purpose of a Master Plan is to guide and enable a community to establish a future direction for its development. The Planning Act specifically gives communities the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Master Plan, which serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering matters related to land development. As a policy guide, the Master Plan is specific to the City of Vassar and considers market trends, community character, environmental conditions, the availability or capacity of public infrastructure and services, and the relationship to existing and planned land uses. As such, the Master Plan aims to:

- Guide the use of limited resources in an efficient manner,

- Promote public health, safety, and general welfare,
- Preserve the quality of the environment in the City, and
- Guide future zoning decisions.

Because of constant change in our social and economic structure and activities, this Master Plan must be maintained through periodic review so that it reflects contemporary trends while maintaining long-range goals. The MPEA requires the Master Plan be reviewed by the City at least once every five years.

## **PROCESS AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

The City of Vassar began the process to update its Master Plan in May of 2014. It contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist the Planning Commission in the preparation of this Master Plan. The Planning Commission met with the Spicer Group planning consultants six times between June 2014 and February 2015 to work on the plan. As required by the MPEA, the City of Vassar followed the required procedures for notifying neighboring communities and registered entities so that each interested party was made aware of the planning effort and was provided an opportunity to comment on the Master Plan.

The planning process began with a review and analysis of existing conditions and land uses in Vassar. Then, a community input was sought through an online survey. Feedback from the community along with the pertinent background data was used as the basis for the goals, action program, and future land use outlined within this Master Plan.

A draft of this document was prepared in February of 2015 and delivered to the Planning Commission and City of Council for review. On March 2, 2015, the City Council approved the distribution of the proposed plan. The plan was then distributed to neighboring communities, registered entities, and to Tuscola County for review. The final step in the planning process was a public hearing that is required by the Michigan Planning Act. This provided an additional opportunity for public information and input. Final Master Plan copies were prepared and the Planning Commission adopted the Master Plan on May 18, 2015.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF A MASTER PLAN TO A ZONING ORDINANCE**

Zoning is regulation of the use of land. A zoning ordinance controls how land is used today. It is the law. A Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. The Master Plan represents a community's future vision, while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. The long-range goals of the Master Plan are the basis for a zoning ordinance and zoning decisions. State law requires that a zoning ordinance be based on an adopted Master Plan. Zoning decisions that are consistent with the Master Plan are more likely presumed to be valid if ever challenged in the courts.

# Chapter 2

## Learning about Vassar

---



### LOCATION AND HISTORY

The City of Vassar is located within the southwest portion of Tuscola County, Michigan. See Figure 1. The City is situated at the junction of Michigan State Highway M-15 and the Cass River, which transverses the heart of the City. The City of Vassar sits at the western edge of Vassar Township and the eastern edge of Tuscola Township in Tuscola County. Vassar is seated in Michigan's "Thumb" region, an area known for its rich agriculture, picturesque towns, tourism, and proximity to Lake Huron, the fifth largest body of fresh water in the world. Vassar is also within an accessible range of important regional cities. Two cities with greater than 50,000 residents are within 30 miles of Vassar. Flint is about 29 miles to the southwest, while Saginaw is about 20 miles to the west. Bay City is about 23 miles northwest of Vassar and Port Huron is about 84 miles southeast. To the south, Detroit is about 81 miles away. See figure 1.

Native Americans of the Sauk eastern woodlands tribe originally traveled along the Saint Lawrence River to settle in the Saginaw Bay area of Michigan prior to the arrival of European settlers in the region during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The Sauk, Fox, and Ojibwe tribes all had a presence in the area surrounding and near Vassar. At the site of downtown Vassar on March 1, 1849, four men led by Townsend North and James M. Edmunds began the construction of a dam on the Cass River. The development of the town of Vassar soon followed. Vassar was named for Edmunds' uncle, Matthew Vassar, who later founded Vassar Female College in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1861. Edmunds borrowed \$10,000 in 1851 upon the authorization by the Michigan State Legislature to organize the town of Vassar. Within four years' time, Townsend North had streets laid and the village surveyed and platted. In 1850 a school district was formed and classes began the following year in the new schoolhouse on the corner of South Main and Spruce Street.

The town's abundance of Cork pine which grew alongside the River made it a prime center of lumbering. Cork pine, a particularly high-quality of white pine trees (so named because its logs floated on water like a cork), lined the Cass River and often reached a height of 150 feet and a diameter of three or four feet. Vassar continued to grow as a lumbering community with a rise in population from 74 in 1854 to 264 in just ten years, and to 1,500 people by 1875. This growth was largely contributed to the improvements made to State Road, currently M-15, which was campaigned for by North. Timber was being floated down Cass River for sales as far as Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis; railroads soon followed. By 1873, 12 industries and multiple services and stores were established within the City. In 1873, the Michigan Central Railroad Company built a rail line connecting Detroit, Vassar, and Bay City, which had a station in Vassar that went into disuse in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The first charter election was held at the Union Hall in Vassar on April 10, 1871, at which Townsend North was elected president. North continued to hold public offices throughout his lifetime. He served on school boards, and served as the Assessor of Internal Revenues of the Sixth District of Michigan (as appointed by President Abraham Lincoln) and finally served as Michigan State Senator of the 241<sup>th</sup> District in 1874. While acting senator, he introduced numerous bills such as the incorporation of Vassar as a Village, mandatory school attendance, and regulations on practicing medicine and surgery. Vassar's economy grew through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from a booming lumbering industry and related industries. Once the forest resources were depleted, a diversified economy was developed which included agriculture, manufacturing and commercial businesses. Today, Vassar is a City of more than 2,600 residents with a variety of small businesses, a diverse stock of housing, and recreational opportunities.



Figure 1. Vassar's Location, in the Great Lakes Region and in the State.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

Vassar's population shrank by 4.5% between 2000 and 2010. In 2000, the City's population was 2,823 people, and by 2010, it shrank by 125 people to 2,697, which is still an increase over its 1990 population of 2,559. See Figure 1. By comparison, population trends for surrounding Tuscola County have been starkly similar, with the County losing 2,497 of its 58,226 residents (4.3%) between 2000 and 2010. The State of Michigan as a whole experienced a slighter decline, losing about 0.6% of its population during that time, or a little under 55,000 residents. See Figure 2. These trends are indicative of the Recession of 2007-2009, which proved to be one of the most difficult and long-lasting recessions in the State's history. Additional demographic, housing, and income facts about Vassar are provided in the table in Appendix A.

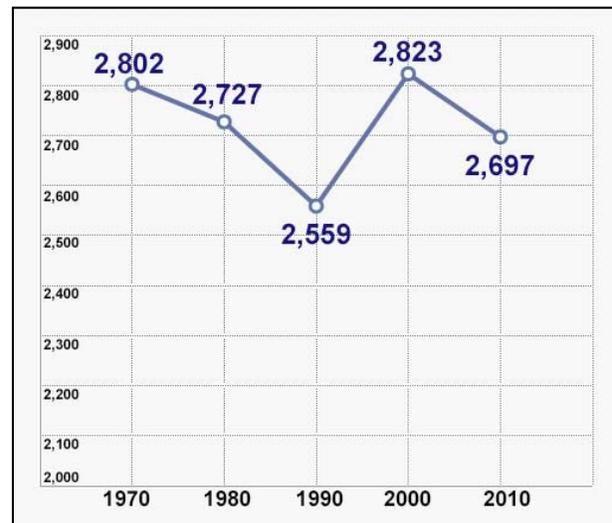


Figure 2. Population trends in Vassar, 1970 - 2010.

Governmental Unit	2000 Population	2010 Population	10-Year Change	% Change 2000-2010
City of Vassar	2,823	2,697	-126	-4.5%
Tuscola County	58,226	55,729	-2,497	-4.3%
State of Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	-54,804	-0.6%

Figure 3. Population trends in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan, 2000-2010.

Figure 4 shows how the age distribution changed in Vassar from 2000 to 2010. The age group with the largest proportionate gain was that of the 45 to 64 age group, increasing from 524 residents in 2000 to 662 residents in 2010, a 23.3% increase. For comparison, this age group for the State of Michigan as a whole during the same period grew by 23.8%, from 2,230,978 residents in 2000 to 2,762,030 in 2010. This is the age cohort that will soon be entering its retirement years. The needs of this growing generation will have special implications for long-range planning in Vassar. For example, retirees are looking for more leisure time activities, tend to have greater needs for medical care, and have changing housing needs. The number of residents aged above 65 increased from 290 to 319 between 2000 and 2010, a more modest increase of 10 percent.

The age group that declined the most between 2000 and 2010 was those between ages 5-19. Vassar had 143 fewer residents in this age group in 2010 than in 2000, a loss of 16.2%. It is important to note that despite this loss, the City still has a proportionally high percentage of residents (27.5%) in this age group as compared with the County (20.5%) and the State (20.8%). Similarly, the City has a relatively low median age of 32.5 in 2010 in comparison with the County

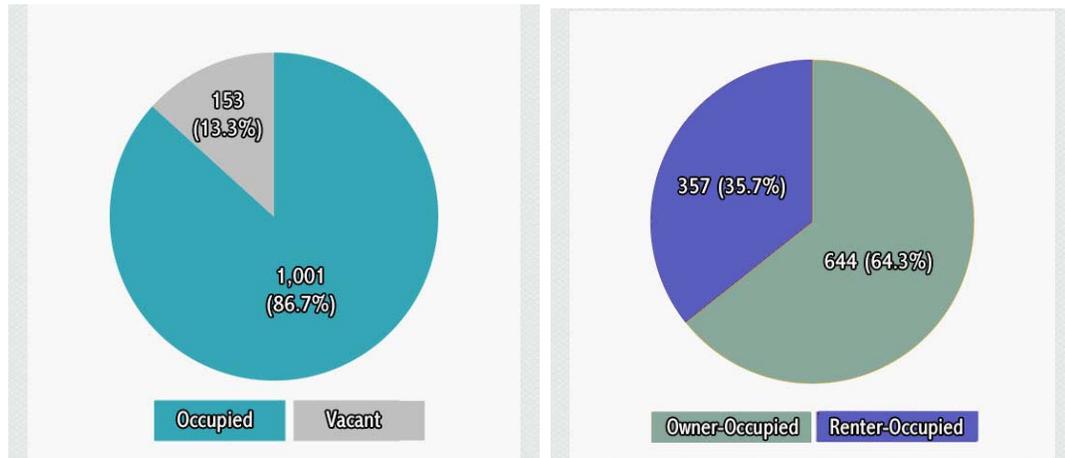
(41.7) and the State (38.9). This is in large part due to the presence of the Wolverine Services housing facility, which houses approximately 200-250 youths depending on the year. Without factoring this housing, it is likely that Vassar's median age and percentage of persons age 5-19 is closer to those of the County and State at large.

Overall, the City's population is showing an overall trend toward aging as shown by reductions in percentages of persons aged 5-19 and increases for those 45 and older. The City's youngest age group, those under 5, did increase by 17 residents (9.9%) between 2000 and 2010, whereas the County and the State both lost residents in this age group between those years at rates of 11.1% and 11.3%, respectively. In consideration of Vassar's lower median age, and its large segment of the population under the age of 35 (52.6%), this would be expected since younger households tend to have more children than older households. This factor suggests that, looking toward the future, Vassar's trend toward aging is not as strong as that seen in other communities across the State. The City's population under 35 still holds 52.6% of the total population. See Appendix A for more information.

Age Group	2000 Population	% of Total	2010 Population	% of Total
Under 5 years	172	6.1%	189*	7.0%
6 to 19	885	31.3%	742	27.5%
20 to 24	161	5.7%	164	6.1%
25 to 44	744	26.4%	621	23.0%
45 to 64	524	18.6%	662	24.5%
65+	290	10.3%	319	11.8%

Figure 4. Population by age group in Vassar, 2000-2010.





**Figure 5.** Occupied vs. vacant homes (L) and owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied homes (R) in Vassar. There were 1,154 known total housing units in Vassar in 2010. This compares to 1,062 housing units in 2000, an increase of 8.7%. Of the total housing units in Vassar in 2010, there were 153 vacant units (13.3%). See Figure 5. In 2000, the vacancy rate was 6.7%. The percentage of the occupied housing units that were owner-occupied in 2010 was 64.3%. The remaining occupied units were renter-occupied, a total of 357 units, or 35.7%. By comparison, there were 289 renter-occupied housing units in 2000, or 29.2%.

Vassar’s housing construction history is distributed widely across different decades. It is important to note that no new housing units have been built in Vassar since 2010; an indication of the severe slowdown of the housing market as a result of the 2007-2009 recession. Just over 70% of Vassar’s housing units were constructed prior to 1980. 47.7% of Vassar’s housing units were built before 1960. See Figure 6 and Figure 7.

	Vassar*	Tuscola County	Michigan
<b>AGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURE</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
2010+	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
2000-2009	8.2%	7.7%	10.4%
1990-1999	14.2%	12.5%	12.8%
1980-1989	7.2%	8.6%	10.0%
1970-1979	11.9%	19.5%	15.4%
1960-1969	10.8%	12.3%	12.2%
1940-1959	21.6%	17.8%	23.7%
1939 or earlier	26.1%	21.6%	15.3%
% Housing units built prior to 1980	70.4%	71.2%	66.7%

\* These figures have a margin of error ranging from +/- 2.0% for units built after 2010 to +/- 5.4% for units built in 1939 or earlier.

**Figure 6.** Ages of housing structures in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan as a whole. Source: 2012 US Census estimates.

The median household income in Vassar was \$41,875, according to 2012 Census estimates. In Tuscola County it was \$43,463 and in the State of Michigan it was \$47,175. It is important to note that, despite a rise in median household income for all of these geographies during the period from 2000-2010, none of these median household incomes kept up with the rate of inflation. See Figure 8.

The median value of a home in Vassar was \$94,000 in 2012 according to Census estimates, which rose from \$69,000 in 2000. This is less than Tuscola County at \$101,000, which rose from \$87,000 in 2000, and the State of Michigan at \$119,200, which rose from \$115,600 in 2000. For the City, median housing value remains considerably lower than in Tuscola County and in the State of Michigan. See Figure 9. However, it is worth noting that median home values did not rise enough in Tuscola County or in the State of Michigan during that time frame to keep up with the rate of inflation, as projected by US Labor Bureau estimates, whereas Vassar's housing units saw a median value that remained slightly ahead of the rate of inflation.

Throughout the State of Michigan, the percentage of individuals living below the poverty line rose sharply between 1999 and 2012. This change was even more drastic in Vassar. Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of individuals below the poverty line rose more than three-fold, from 6.3% to 19.3%. See Figure 10. This is compared with Tuscola County, which rose from 5.4% to 11.7% during that time, and the State of Michigan, which rose from 7.4% to 11.7%. For renter-occupied structures, the median monthly gross rent was \$552, according to 2012 Census estimates. This is considerably less than Tuscola County (\$635 per month), and was relatively even less than the State of Michigan as a whole (\$755 per month).

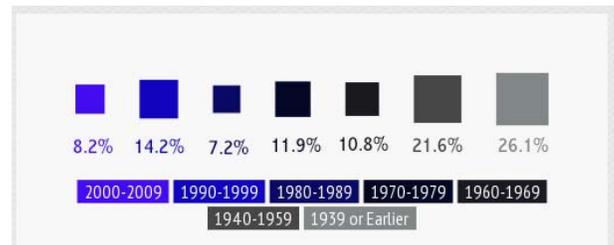


Figure 7. Ages of housing structures in Vassar. Source: 2012 US Census estimates.

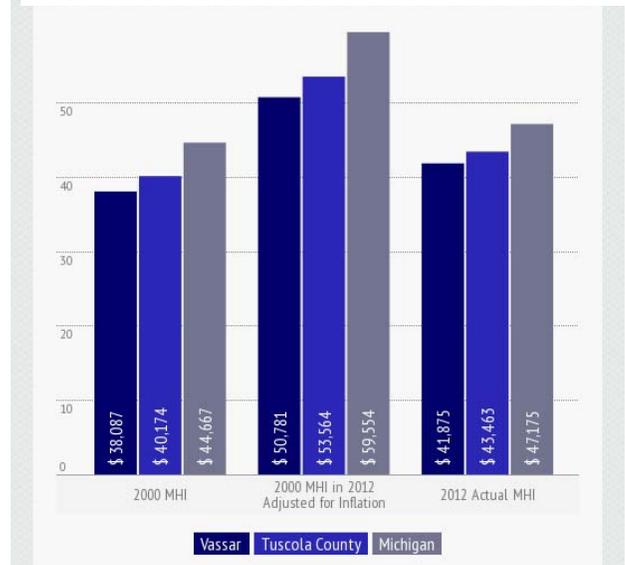


Figure 8. Median Household Income in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan. 2000 incomes are adjusted for 2012 inflation as projected by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

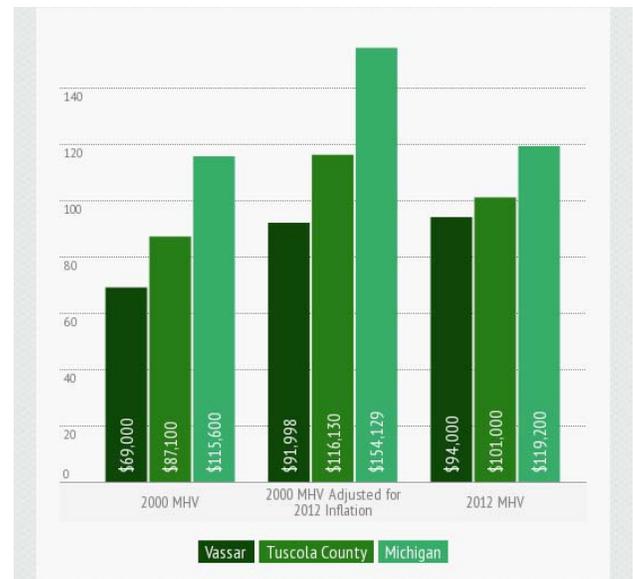


Figure 9. Median Housing Value in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan. 2000 values are adjusted for 2012 inflation as projected by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

	Vassar		Tuscola County		Michigan	
	1999	2012	1999	2012	1999	2012
Median Household Income (\$)	38,087	41,875	40,174	43,463	44,667	47,175
	1999	2012*	1999	2012*	1999	2012*
Percentage of families living below the poverty level (%)	6.3	19.3	5.4	11.7	7.4	11.7

\* 2012 figures reflect percentages of families living below poverty level during the past 12 months according to 2012 US Census estimates.

**Figure 10.** Key income and poverty statistics for Vassar, Tuscola County, and the State of Michigan, 1999 and 2012.

	Vassar, 2000	Vassar, 2010	Tuscola County, 2000	Tuscola County, 2010	Michigan, 2000	Michigan, 2010
Median Housing Value (\$)	69,000	94,000	87,100	101,000	115,600	119,200
Median Housing Value (\$) (Adjusted for 2012 US Dollars)	91,998	--	116,130	--	154,129	--

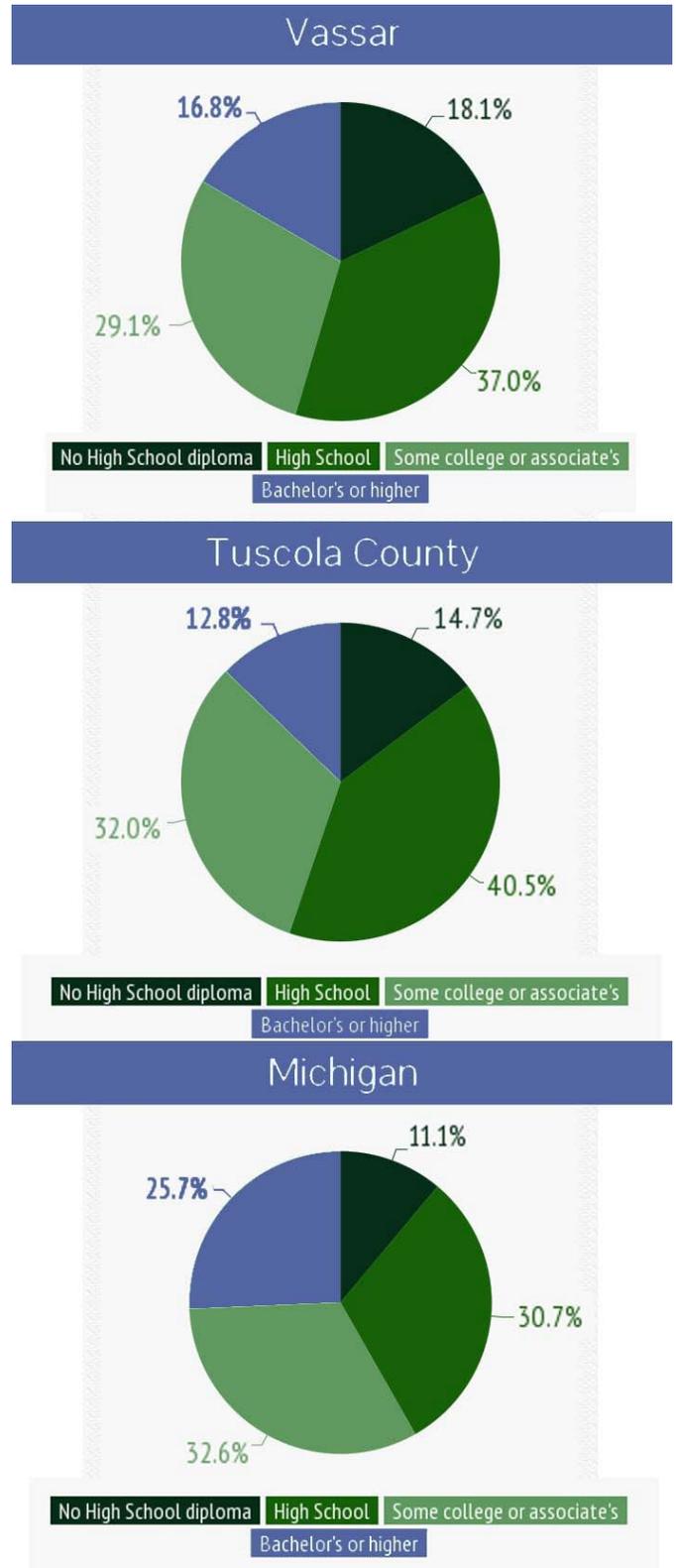
**Figure 11.** Median Housing Value for Vassar, Tuscola County, and the State of Michigan, US Census, 2000 and US Census estimates, 2012. 2000 values are adjusted for 2012 inflation as projected by the US Bureau of Labor

Over 82% of the citizens of Vassar had a high school diploma or higher and 16.8% had a bachelor's degree or higher, according to 2012 Census estimates. In Tuscola County 10.6% of the population had a bachelor's degree or higher. In the State of Michigan, 25.7% of people had a bachelor's degree or higher. In Vassar, the percentage of both those with a bachelor's degree and those who have not graduated high school rose between 2000 and 2010. See Figure 12 and Figure 13.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Vassar				Tuscola County				Michigan			
	2000		2010		2000		2010		2000		2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Bachelor's or higher	213	13.5	283	16.8	4,019	10.6	4,897	12.8	1,396,259	21.8	1,693,007	25.7
Some college or associate's	462	29.3	491	29.1	10,910	28.8	12,222	32.0	1,944,688	30.3	2,148,211	32.6
High School	632	40.0	607	37.0	15,828	41.8	15,471	40.5	2,010,861	31.3	2,023,803	30.7
No High School diploma	272	17.3	306	18.1	7,141	18.8	2,793	14.7	1,064,133	16.6	728,468	11.1

**Figure 12.** Educational attainment in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan. Source: American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, 2012.

The occupation of the workers in Vassar is shown in Figure 14. The largest share of Vassar residents works in the educational, health and social services occupations, at 29.4%. A sizeable number of Vassar residents works in the occupational industries of manufacturing (15.7%), arts, entertainment and recreation (14.6%), and retail trade (9.9%). With the closing of the Metavation / Grede Foundry in December 2013, these figures are expected to change as this closing will cause a net loss of about 130 manufacturing jobs in the near-term, shared between Vassar residents and non-residents who have worked at the facility. In the past ten years, jobs held by Vassar residents in the educational, health and social services, arts, entertainment, and recreation, transportation and warehousing, and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing have risen while jobs in manufacturing and construction have fallen substantially. This is indicative of nationwide trends in a job market that has shifted away from manufacturing and toward a more service-based economy.



**Figure 13.** Educational attainment in Vassar, Tuscola County, and Michigan. Source: American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, 2012.

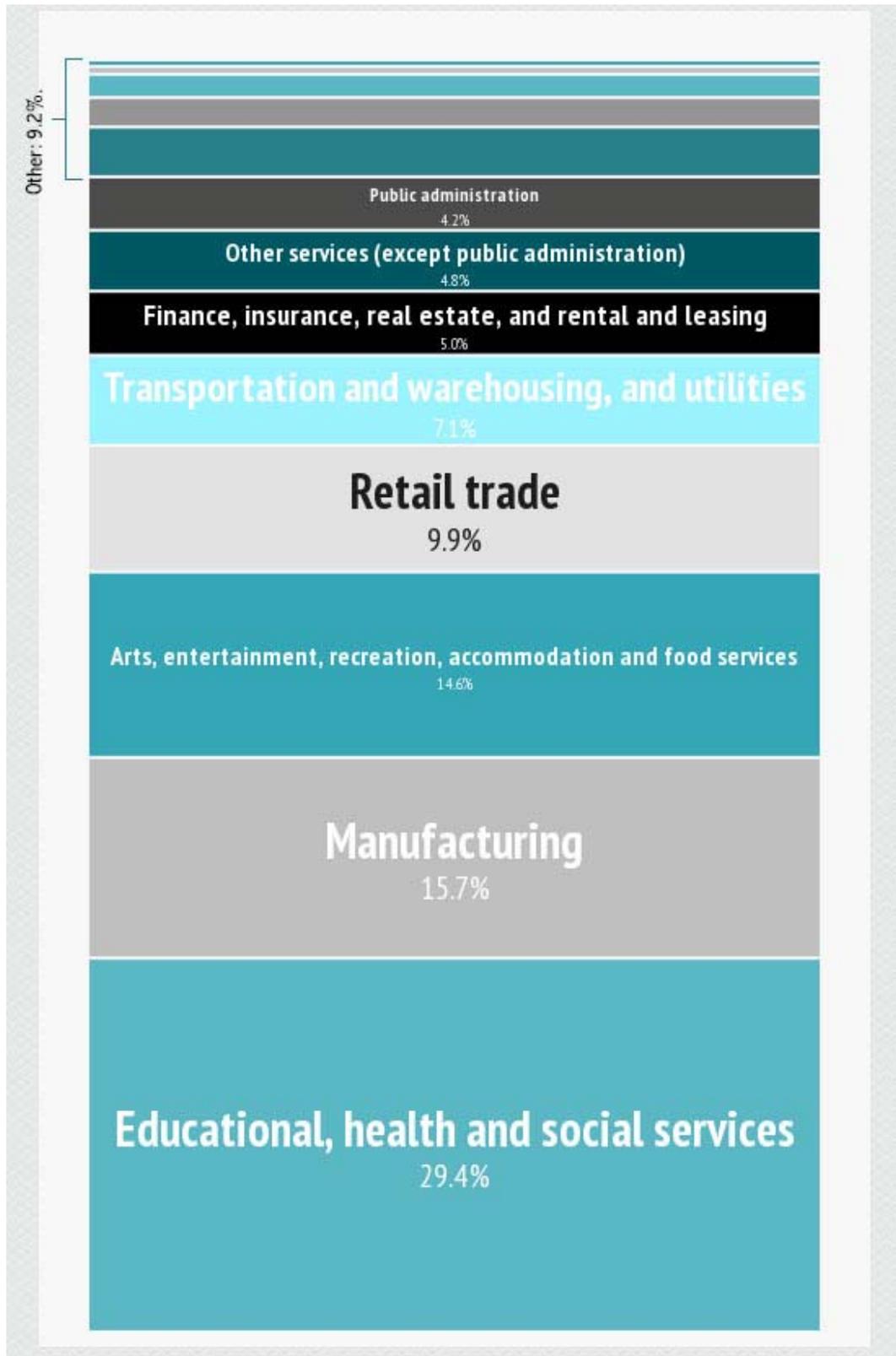


Figure 14. Occupation by sector in Vassar, 2012. Source: US Census estimates, 2012.

## PUBLIC SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FACILITIES

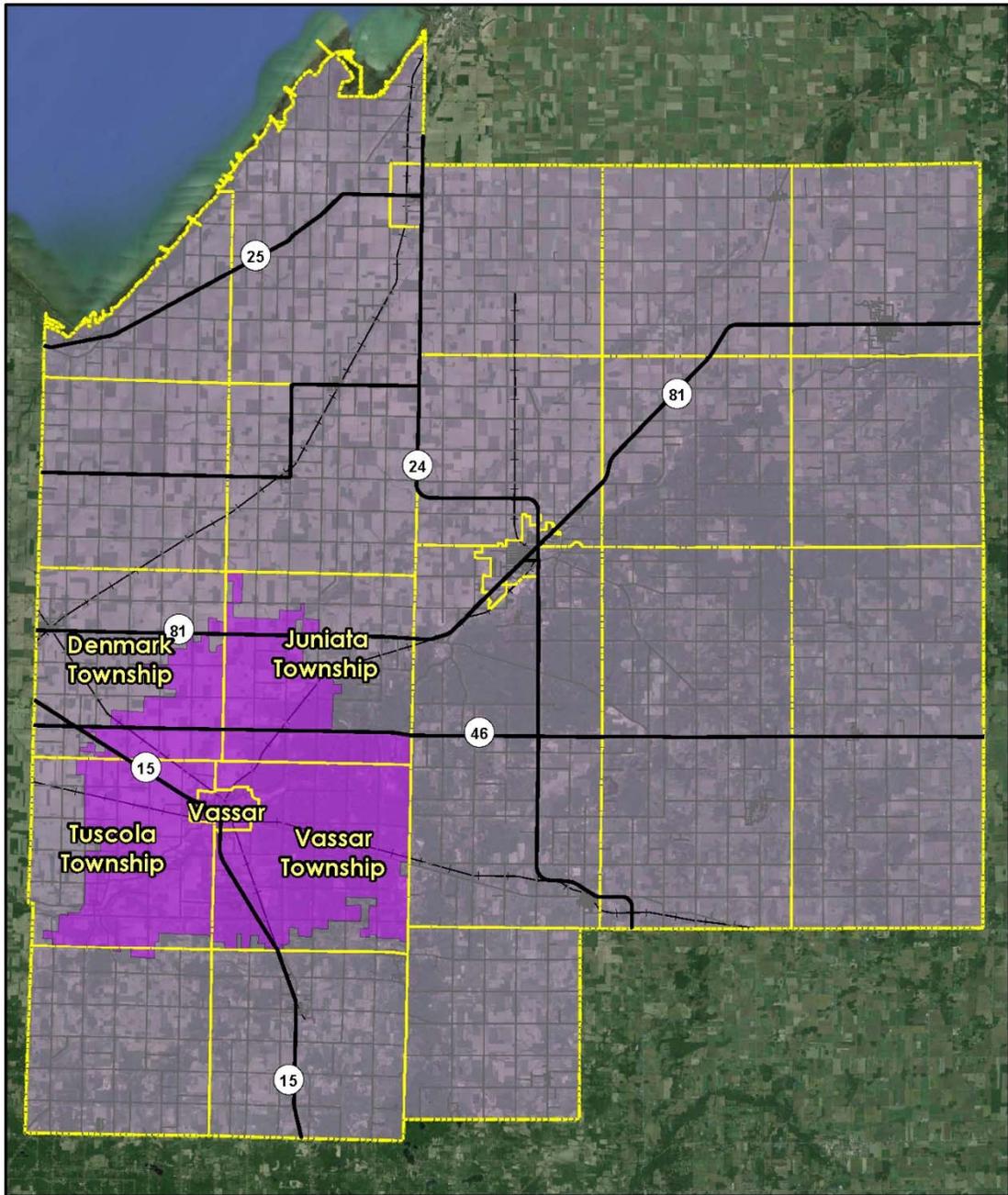
### Public Schools and Library

Vassar Public Schools serve the entirety of the City of Vassar as well as portions of the surrounding Townships of Vassar, Tuscola, Denmark, Juniata and a very small portion of Arbela Township as well. The district today includes five schools, which are displayed in greater detail in Figure 15:

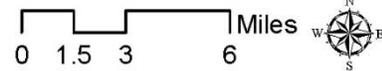
- Townsend North Elementary Pre-K-K: 220 Athletic Street, Vassar (City).
- Central Elementary 1-5: 425 Division Street, Vassar (City).
- Vassar Middle School: 220 Athletic Street, Vassar (City).
- Vassar High School: 220 Athletic Street, Vassar (City).
- Wolverine Alternative Education: 110 Commerce Drive, Vassar (City).

Residents of Vassar utilize the Bullard Sanford Memorial Library. The Bullard Sanford Library is located at 520 West Huron Street in Vassar. See Figure 16.





 Vassar School District



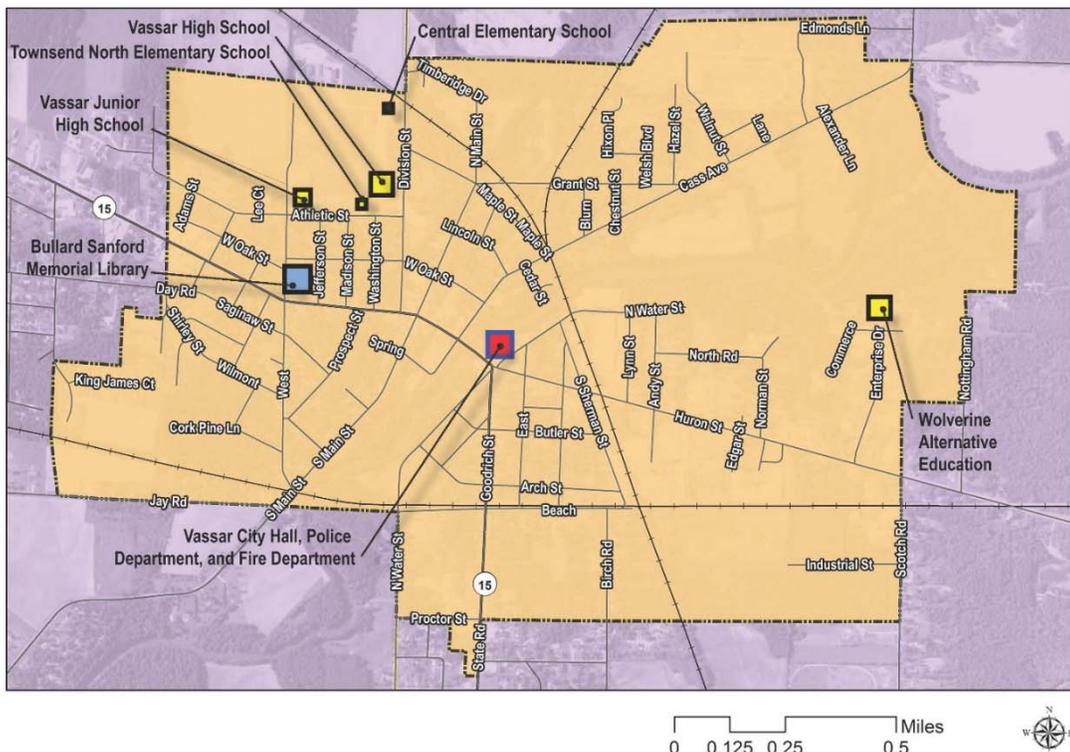
# Vassar School District

Figure 15. A map of the Vassar School District. Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

## Public Safety

The City of Vassar operates a Police Department maintains 24 hour per day, 365 day per year operations. The Police Department was established with the City of Vassar in 1952 as a one-man department. Today, the Department is a full service police agency. In 2009, the department's K-9 unit and one officer were cut, reducing the full-time staffing to four officers and the Police Chief. In January of 2011, the Department placed all full-time staff on a 12-hour rotating shift schedule to reduce part-time hours utilized by the department and to maintain a balanced budget within the constraints of shrinking revenues. The police department stays actively involved in community projects and events including Community Pride City Wide, the River Fest, the Vassar High School Homecoming Parade, the Vassar Pumpkin Roll and "Chill on the Hill" – Vassar's newest event. The Department has within its mission to continually strive to make Vassar a safe and enjoyable community to live in. Vassar's Police Department is based out of City Hall, located at 287 West Huron Street in Vassar. As of 2014, Ben Guile is the City's current Police Chief.

Vassar's Fire Department is also based out of City Hall at 287 West Huron Street in Vassar. The Department includes 21 part-time paid fire fighters. The Department is responsible for addressing emergency fire management as well as specialized tasks including training community members in emergency preparedness, severe weather / tornado spotting, tornado siren testing and general emergency management. The Department facilitates the allowance of burn permits in the City of Vassar. Only brush materials and not building materials can be burned in the City of Vassar. The Department provides classes to the community on a range of fire safety topics. Gary Millerov is the City's Fire Chief as of 2014, and has been Chief since 1997. Fire and Police facilities in addition to schools and the library are mapped in Figure 16 below.



**Figure 16. Community facilities.**

Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

## Roads and Transit Information

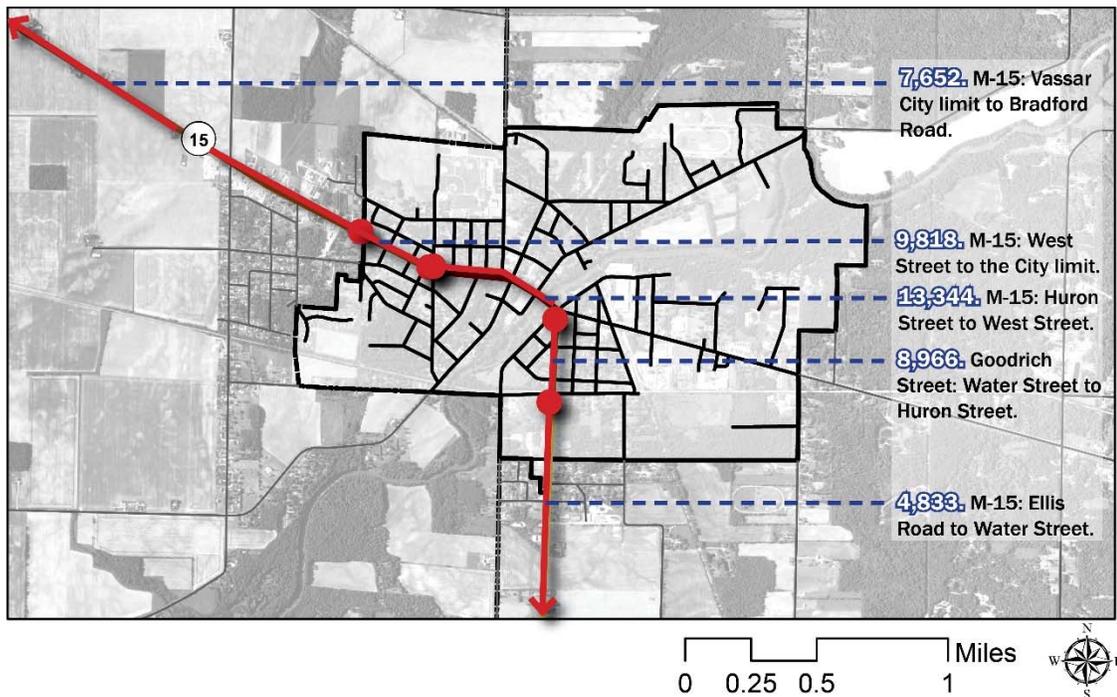
The roads in The City of Vassar are depicted in Figure 17 on the following page. This map shows that there is a state highway, several principal arterial roads, minor arterial roads, residential courts / cul-de-sacs, general non-certified roads and certified road rights-of-way in The City of Vassar. M-15 is the only State highway in the City of Vassar. M-15 has unlimited vehicular access and retains speed limits lower than 55 miles per hour in the City limits of Vassar. M-15 transverses about 1.5 miles of the City of Vassar. The City's principal arterial roads include East Huron Avenue, South Vassar Road and South Main Street / Frankenmuth Road. Principal arterials carry long distance, through-travel movements and provide access to important traffic generators such as regional shopping centers. There are about 2.7 miles of principal arterial roadways in Vassar. Minor arterial roads in Vassar encompass most other streets in Vassar. Minor arterial roads carry trips of shorter distance and less traffic overall, but are otherwise similar in function to principal arterials. There are about 16.6 miles of minor arterials in Vassar. Vassar also has about 1.1 miles of general non-certified roads and a negligible length (less than 0.1 miles) of roads that have been classified by the State of Michigan as residential courts or cul-de-sacs and certified rights-of-way.

Traffic counts are also found in Figure 17. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) collected 24-hour Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts for various segments of road in and adjacent to Vassar in 2010. M-15 near downtown Vassar appears to be the busiest stretch of road where these measurements were taken, with about 13,344 vehicles being counted on this road between West Street to the west and Goodrich Street / M-15 to the east. M-15 / West Huron Street between the City limit to the west and West Street to the east is also fairly well-used, with 9,818 vehicles being counted on this stretch per day in 2010. Outside of the City, driving density off, with only 4,833 vehicles being counted per day along M-15 / State Road south of the City limit. For comparison with some of Vassar's busier streets, Caro's stretch of M-81 / State Street from Colling Road to Almer Street saw 15,770 vehicles per day in 2010. In Frankenmuth, 12,464 vehicles on average were counted per day between Genesee Street and Koester Drive in 2010. Located about 29 miles northeast of Flint, the City of Vassar is not a part of the Flint Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and is not serviced by any public transportation available in nearby Flint or Saginaw.

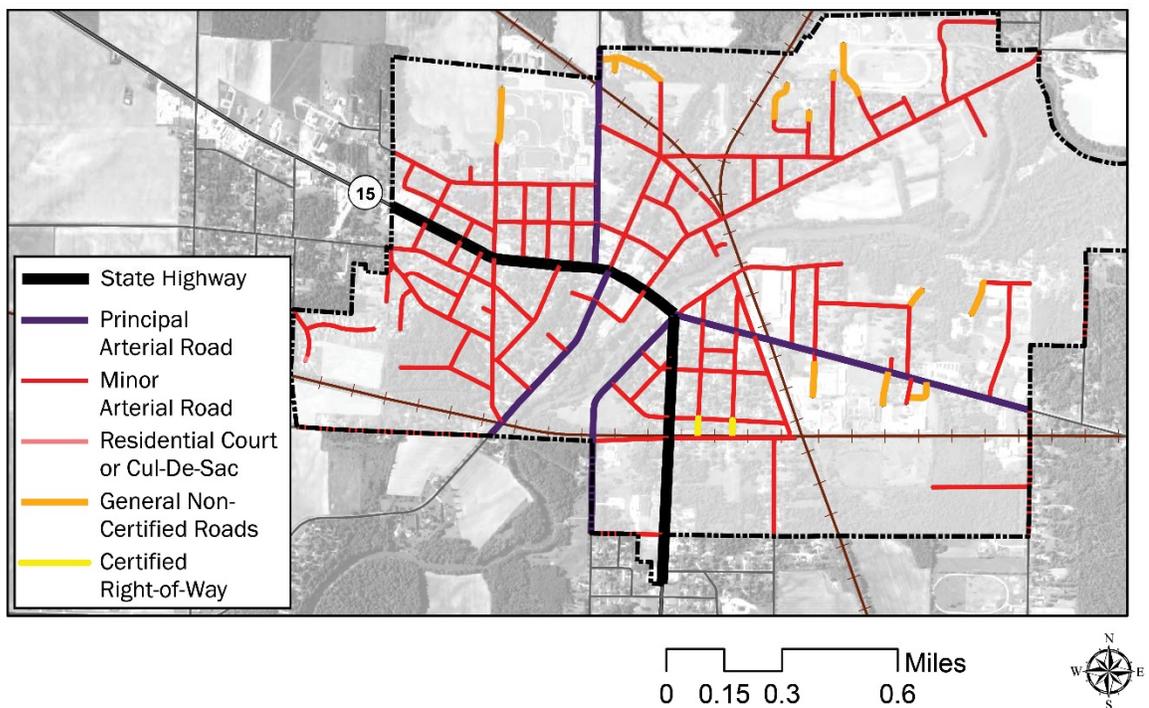
## Railroads

Two rail freight lines run through the City of Vassar. The Michigan Central Railroad, which is owned by the Huron and Eastern Railway Company, has two lines which join near the intersection of Maple Street and Cass Avenue in downtown Vassar. The Huron and Eastern Railway began service in 1986 along about 83 miles of rail lines in Michigan's Thumb region which previously belonged to the former Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. Between that time and the present, the railroad expanded to connect with the Bay City and Midland area as well as with Class I rail freight coming from the Canadian National (CN) railroad southeast of Vassar in Durand. Today, the Huron and Eastern Railway serves the Great Lakes Bay region and transports mostly agricultural and industrial goods including fly ash, cement, and chemicals.





## Vassar's Roads and Streets: Average Daily Traffic



## Vassar's Roads and Streets: Classification

Figure 17. Vassar roads and streets information. Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

## Public Utility Network

The City of Vassar Department of Public Works (DPW) provides services to the City's residents including the provision of safe drinking water and the provision of storm and sanitary sewer services. The DPW also ensures street maintenance and repairs are adequately addressed and that city-owned open spaces and lawns, including the cemetery property, are adequately maintained. The current DPW supervisor oversees the work and operations of four full time and three part-time employees.

### Water services

Drinking water in Vassar is supplied by four wells which are owned and operated by the City. The City of Vassar owns and operates all water utility infrastructure, including a water tower and an above ground storage tank. Debt associated with the water system is paid by the users through a monthly / quarterly bill charge. The Director of the DPW facilitates the monitoring and purification of the City's water. In 2011, an annual Drinking Water Quality Report was published which found that the City's water included acceptably low levels of potential contaminants including barium, chromium, selenium, chloroform, lead and copper. The City of Vassar Water Department is primarily responsible for delivering safe, clean drinking water to residents. The department is responsible for installing new water lines as well as repairing and maintaining the current water supply.



### Stormwater services

Stormwater in Vassar is handled through storm infrastructure including culverts, pipes, drainage ditches, and outflows of varying sizes, each of which is generally connected to the Cass River. Unlike the combined water treatment facilities found in other municipalities, where stormwater is handled through the same drainage network and treated together with wastewater, the water treatment facility in Vassar handles waste water only. Stormwater entering storm drain infrastructure in Vassar ultimately finds its way to the Cass River, which ultimately drains to the Saginaw Bay. The City of Vassar is located within the Cass River watercourse that is part of the Cass watershed, which is found within the larger Saginaw Bay watershed.

### Sewer services

The City of Vassar sewer utility is facilitated through a wastewater treatment plant which was developed in 1989. The plant is a .700 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) Class B facility, meaning that it can facilitate the treatment of 700,000 gallons of water per day. The City of Vassar owns and maintains the entire collection system for the Plant, including one pump station and one river crossing. Like water services, debt is paid through monthly / quarterly bill charges and a separate debt charge. The City's wastewater treatment plant is managed by a Superintendent. The Superintendent's main responsibilities include overseeing the operations and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facility, lift station and supervising three fulltime employees, as well as maintaining State Certification for the City's Water and Wastewater Laboratories, Industrial Pretreatment, Mercury and Biosolids Programs

In March 2014, the City determined that factors including a declining customer base (including the loss of the large commercial user, the Metavation / Grede Foundry in late 2013),

infrastructure failures, additional capital expenditure, and regulatory requirements have led to a need to propose higher water and sewer rates for Vassar residents. The water and sewer fund operate as a separate business and no subsidies from the City's general fund are used to maintain water or sewer facilities. Revenues from water and sewer rates are used to cover expenses and build cash reserves for future needs. The City's Water and Sewer rates cover:

- Day to day operations & maintenance of
- Collection system and facilities
- Capital Improvements
- Regulatory compliance (MDEQ permits)
- Debt Payments
- Administration (billing)
- Cash Reserves (these affect the City of Vassar's bond rating)

The City decided to maintain a billing plan which includes metering for all commercial and multiple family residential properties, with a flat rate for all residential properties regardless of usage. The proposed new rate for residential users rose from \$172.50 per quarter to \$203.16 per quarter, which evens out to an increase of just over \$10 per month.

In 2013, the City of Vassar awarded a contract for the construction of nearly 2,000 linear feet of sanitary sewer infrastructure in the City including:

- Installing 1410 feet of 15 inch sanitary sewer along Water Street
- Boring 150 feet of 15 inch sanitary sewer underneath the Cass River.

These improvements were scheduled for completion in 2014.

## **Solid Waste and Recycling**

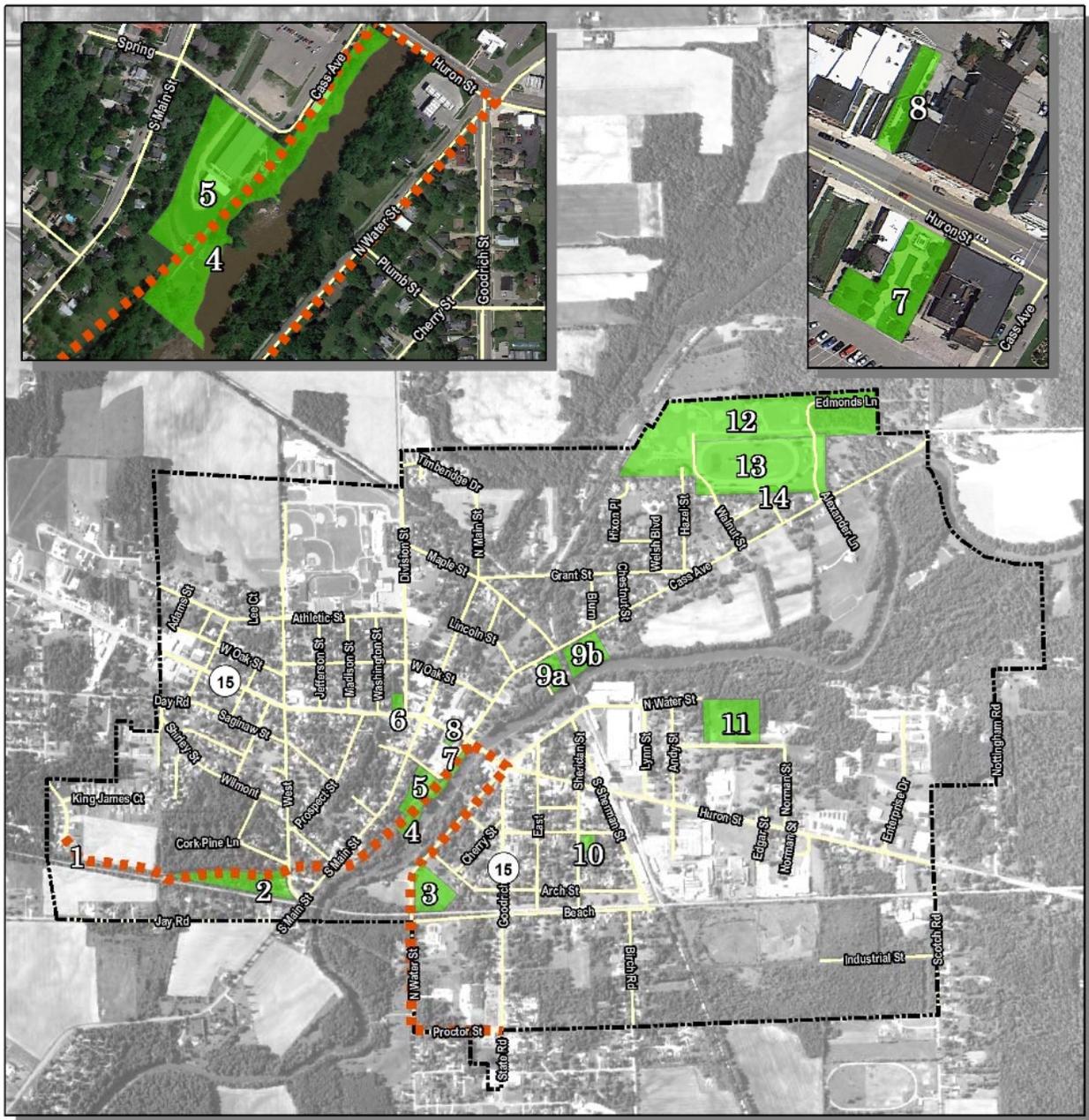
The City of Vassar provides solid waste and recycling services in cooperation with Republic Services. Solid waste is collected from a solid bin with a blue lid once per week. Recycling is also collected once per week. Republic Services also collects yard waste on a weekly basis from the first full week in April through the end of November every year. More specific information regarding schedules, customer service, and allowable items for disposal are available on the City Clerk's portion of Vassar's City website, and at the Clerk's office at City Hall, located at 287 East Huron Street.

## **Parks**

The City of Vassar has nine formally designated City Parks and open spaces:

1. **The Vassar Rail Trail.** The 2-mile rail trail runs from Huron Street / M-15 downtown to the southern boundary of town adjacent to the Cass River, as well as along a connecting spur southwest of the Huron Street Bridge along Water Street.

2. **White Birch Park (Sticks Park).** Located on West Street just off of South Main Street, this nine (9) acre park features a pavilion, playground area, tables, benches and grills. This park also has an adequate parking lot to accommodate visitors.
3. **Open Field (Youth football practice field).** This is an approximately 4-acre public open field located south of the intersection of Water Street and Arch Street, north of the Railroad.
4. **Riverside Park (Lions Park).** One block south of M-15 and the Vassar downtown adjacent to the Cass River, this 11.09 acre park features a playground/playscape equipment and a restroom facility. This park is located south of the rail trail, adjacent to T. North Pavilion.
5. **T. North Pavilion.** This is a multipurpose 180' x 90' structure for year round activities including concerts and ice hockey. The pavilion is located just north of the rail trail, adjacent to Riverside Park (Lions Park).
6. **Hillside Park (Band Shell).** Just located outside the downtown district, this half-acre park features a band shell with decorative landscaping.
7. **Veterans Plaza.** This small park, located in downtown on the south side of Huron Street / M-15, adjacent to Moore Drain. The plaza includes a public fountain, veterans' monuments (stones), flag poles, benches, picnic tables, and decorative lighting and landscaping.
8. **Rotary Park.** This is a downtown pocket park less than 1 acre in size, adjacent to Veterans Plaza, located on the north side of Huron Street / M-15, adjacent to Moore Drain. The park includes a picnic table and LED lighting.
9. **Gazebo and RV (Riverside) Parks.** These two parks comprise a 10-site recreational vehicle park, approximately 5.6 acres. The site includes electrical hookups and a small play area.
10. **McKinley School (Dance School Playground).** This half-acre site, located on Sheridan Street just south of M-15, includes swings, a slide and other small playground equipment.
11. **Harper Park.** This 8.5-acre park is located next to woods and has a small pavilion and playground area located off of M-15.
12. **Vassar Memorial Park (Ball Diamonds).** This 36-acre facility is the largest park in Vassar. The park includes 6 ball diamonds as well as a playground, concession area, restrooms, benches / bleachers, a basketball court, and a storage building. Groups including Vassar Little League, the Co Ed Softball Recreation League, and the T-Ball League use the facility.
13. **Vassar Memorial Park Fairgrounds (Horse track and stables).** This 21- acre facility includes a horse track, full bleachers, a horse stable, and a block building with functioning kitchen and restrooms that can be rented out or utilized for community events. It is located adjacent to the Vassar Memorial Park (Ball Diamonds) facility, between Walnut Street and Edmunds Lane in the north end of the City.
14. **Ivan Middleton Hall.** This 2-acre facility, located adjacent to the Vassar Fairgrounds, can be rented for various activities and includes a main hall building with a kitchen and bathrooms.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Rail Trail                                 | 9a RV (Riverside) Park  |
| 2 White Birch Park (Sticks Park)             | 9b Gazebo (Riverside) Park                                    |
| 3 Open Field (Youth Football Practice Field) | 10 McKinley School (Dance School Playground)                  |
| 4 Riverside Park (Lions Park)                | 11 Harper Park  |
| 5 T. North Pavilion                          | 12 Vassar Memorial Park (Ball Diamonds)                       |
| 6 Hillside Park (Band Shell)                 | 13 Vassar Memorial Park Fairgrounds (Horse Track and Stables) |
| 7 Veterans Plaza                             | 14 Ivan Middleton Hall  |
| 8 Rotary Park                                |   |



**Figure 18.** Parks and recreational facilities.

Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

# NATURAL FEATURES IN VASSAR

## Introduction

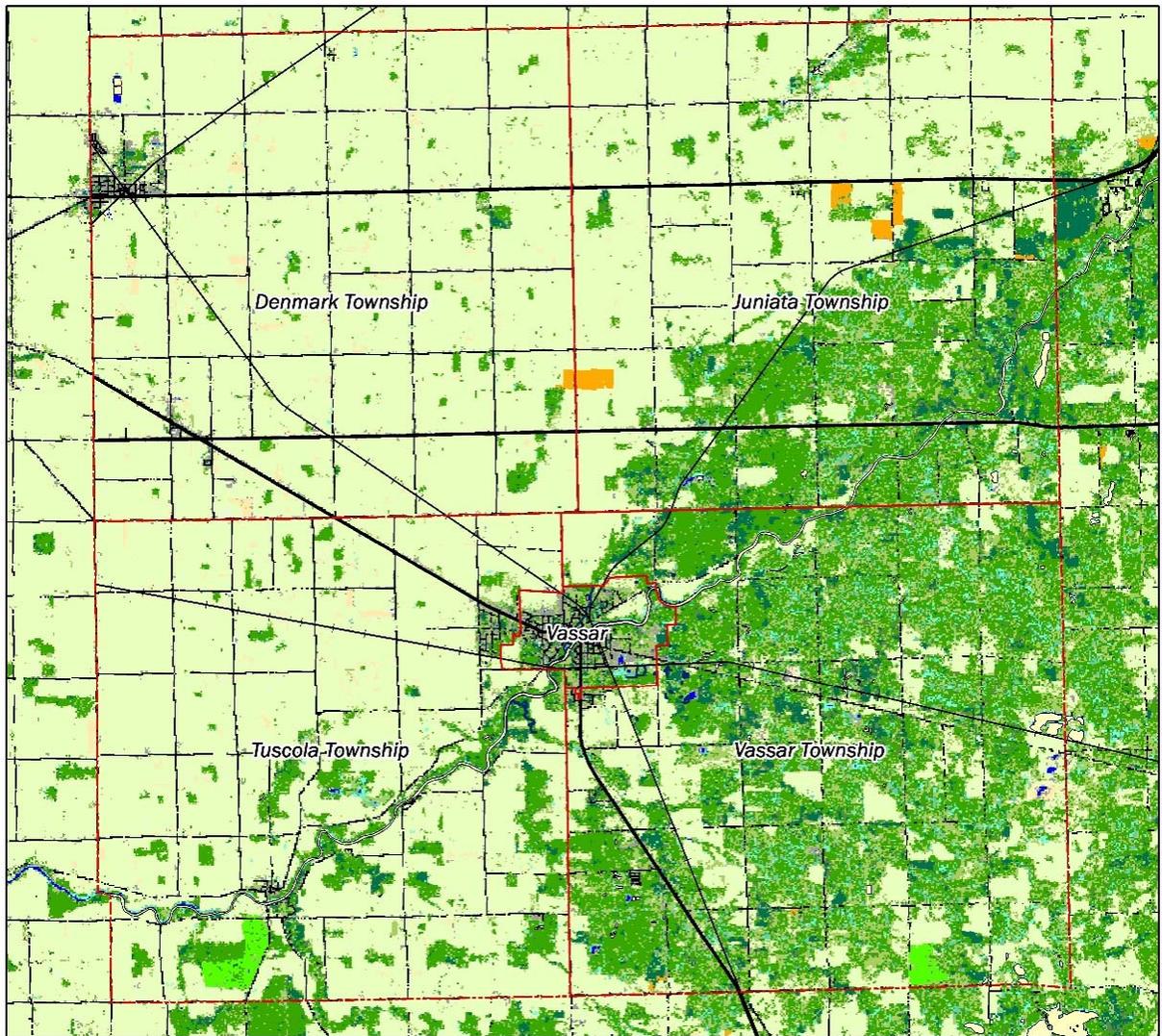
It is important to understand the natural features of a community when looking at how land may be used or developed in the future. For example, some natural features such as steep slopes or wetlands are natural barriers to development. Special attention must be given to the preservation of natural and environmentally sensitive areas during long-range planning. Environmentally sensitive areas can be defined as land areas whose disturbance or destruction will affect a community by 1) creating hazards such as flooding; 2) destroying important resources such as wetlands or woodlands; or 3) wasting important productive lands and renewable resources.

## Climate

Tuscola County's proximity to the Great Lakes keeps the climate more moderate than other cities at similar latitudes. Summers are generally warm and humid, with an average high temperature in the low-80s. Winters are cold and snowy, with average lows in the low-teens. The area experiences considerable cloudiness and is breezy most of the year. Annual snowfall in Vassar (about 38 inches) is less than in the State as a whole (about 51 inches). Annual rainfall in Vassar (about 34 inches) is slightly higher than in the State as a whole (about 32 inches). Wind speed in Vassar is consistent with the state as a whole, with an average wind speed of about 15 miles per hour. Average humidity in Vassar (78.24%) is slightly higher than in the state as a whole (74.78%).

## Natural Features

Vassar is seated in an area rich in a variety of open spaces. Much of the surrounding Tuscola County is used for agricultural land. Vassar also sits at the nexus of this agricultural land and large areas of woodlands and shrub or grassland landscapes adjacent to the Cass River. Tuscola County is home to twelve designated State Game or State Wildlife Areas, partially because of the diversity of natural features enjoyed by wildlife in the County. Figure 19 shows the land cover surrounding Vassar including the adjacent municipalities of Denmark, Juniata, Tuscola and Vassar Townships. Vassar itself is covered by a variety of land cover types. Only about 16.9 percent of the City is covered by urban developed or paved uses. About 30% of the City is covered by shrubs or herbaceous open lands, making this the most prominent land cover in the City. This could be in part because open grassy lawns are designated under this category. Hardwood / deciduous trees (trees which lose their leaves such as oaks and maples) cover about 21.2% of the City. The larger Vassar area, including the four Townships described above and the City of Vassar, is covered by a much smaller percentage of urban or developed lands – about 1.7 percent. Shrubs or herbaceous open lands cover about 26.9% of the landscape, and hardwood / deciduous forests cover about 26.0 percent. Row crops or forage crops used in agriculture are also prevalent, covering about 25.7% of the landscape. Denmark and Tuscola Township to the west are considerably more agricultural than Juniata and Vassar Townships to the east, which have a much higher percentage of woodlands.



**Figure 19.** Land Cover and Natural Resources in and near Vassar.

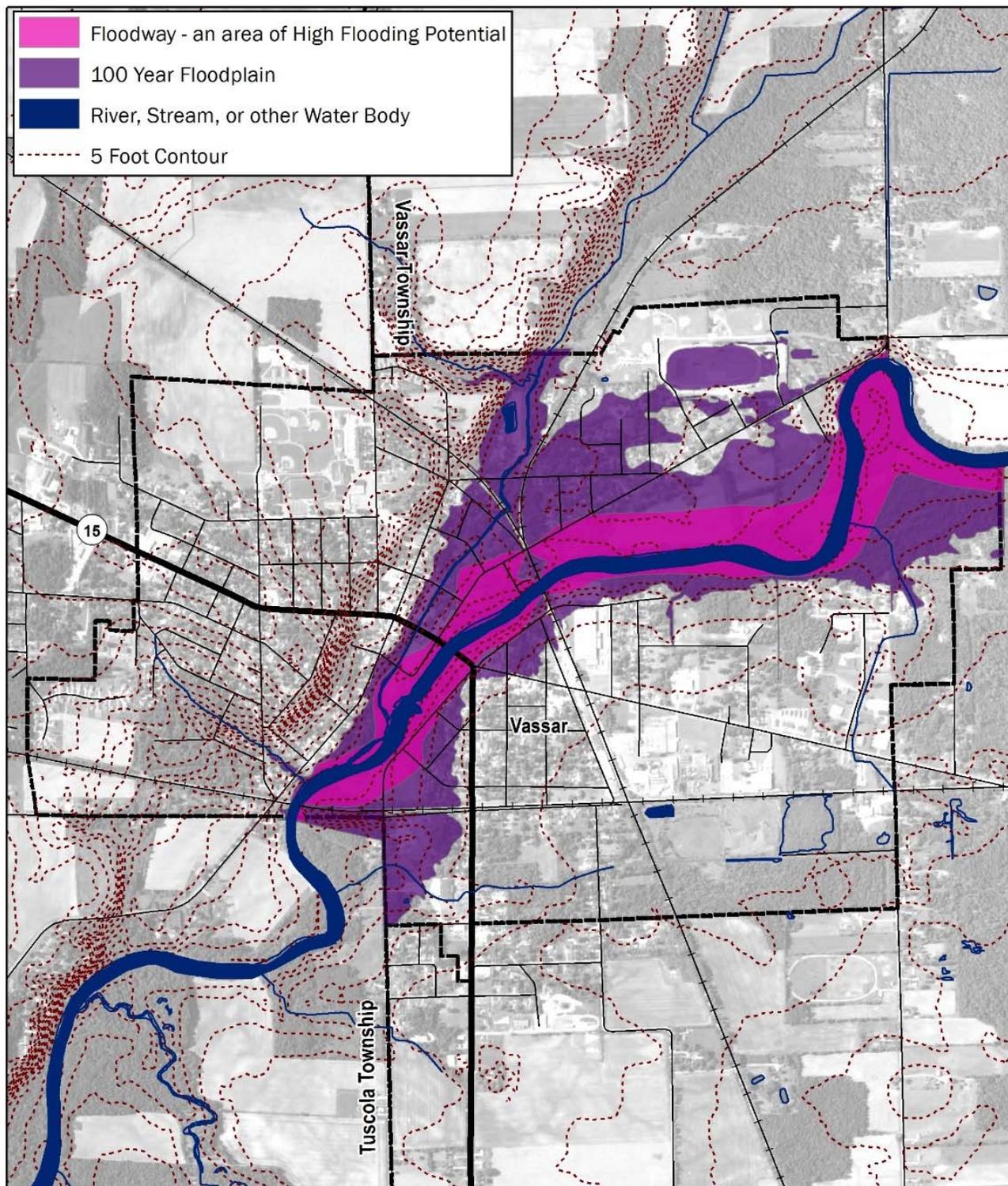
Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

## Waterways and Wetlands

The close proximity to the Great Lakes plays a major role in the definition of Vassar's important natural features. The City of Vassar is about 21 miles south of the Quanicassee Preserve, situated on the southern shore of the Saginaw Bay. Glacial landforms played a major role in shaping the geology and soils of present-day Vassar. According to maps produced by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Michigan State University (MSU), the Vassar area contains large amounts of coarse lacustrine (lake-derived) sediments, likely as the result of glacial outwash that left coarse sediments at the edges of receding glaciers 10,000 or so years ago. The City of Vassar lies in an area that was historically defined by beech-sugar maple forest, beech-sugar maple-hemlock, and hemlock-white pine forest land covers.

The 61.5 mile-long Cass River is the main waterway traversing the City of Vassar. According to the Cass River Greenway, the Cass River Watershed encompasses an area of 908 square miles. It also contains 1,352 miles of rivers and streams and hundreds of miles of county drains. In 2013, the City of Vassar took part in an effort to improve the quality and opportunity for recreation on its stretch of the Cass River by working with Spicer Group, a local engineering firm, to remove the dam which had served the River near downtown Vassar but had come into disrepair during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. According to a report published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2008, there are 1,909 road stream / crossings in the Cass River Watershed, each of which is a point of potential maintenance considerations for ensuring a well-connected, properly drained watershed. 238,850 acres of cropland feed into the watershed as well.

About 417.1 acres, or about 29.9 percent, of the City of Vassar including the portion of the City covered by the Cass River are within the 100-year floodplain. In September 1986, the River flooded immensely and nearly 8 feet of water flooded storefronts and other buildings in downtown Vassar. The River, which has a normal crest of 4.5 feet and a flood stage of 14 feet, reached a flooding crest of 24.75 feet in a storm that was 60 by 100 miles in area, covering much of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Though the River has not flooded to anything close to that level since the 1986 storm, policy makers in the City should exercise caution and proactive decision-making to encourage development which facilitates sound water and drainage management. The City of Vassar Department of Public Works (DPW) provided a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) shapefile showing the City's 2011 100-year floodplain, along with a "floodway" layer to display areas particularly prone to flooding. These data help to illuminate information about flooding potential throughout the City. A map showing existing wetlands in and around Vassar, along with the approximated flood-prone area in and around Vassar as well as the more exact 100-year floodplain data, appears in Figure 20. According to the National Wetlands Inventory, the City of Vassar contains about 254.1 acres of wetlands, of which 233.8 acres are permanently flooded and are affiliated with the Cass River. The remaining 20.3 acres of wetlands account for about 1.5 % of the City's total land area.



**Figure 20. Hydrology and floodplain information.**

Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

## Slopes and Soils

Soils in the Vassar area have mixed qualities with regard to drainage and other important characteristics. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) assigns hydrologic groups as a classification system for these and other soil characteristics. Hydrologic groups take into account several factors, including the following:

**Runoff potential:** A measure of the likelihood of soil being infiltrated by water to full capacity and excess water from rain, snowmelt, or other sources flowing over the land.

**Infiltration rate:** A measure of the rate at which soil is able to absorb water from rainfall or irrigation.

**Soil texture:** A measure of the particle size of soil. Soils with higher clay content have a finer texture, while soils with a higher sand content have more coarse texture.

Soils can be generally be classified in groups A-D as relating to the characteristics below:

Hydrologic Group	Runoff Potential	Infiltration Rate	Soil Texture
A	Low	High	Coarse
B	↕	↕	↕
C			
D	High	Very Low	Fine

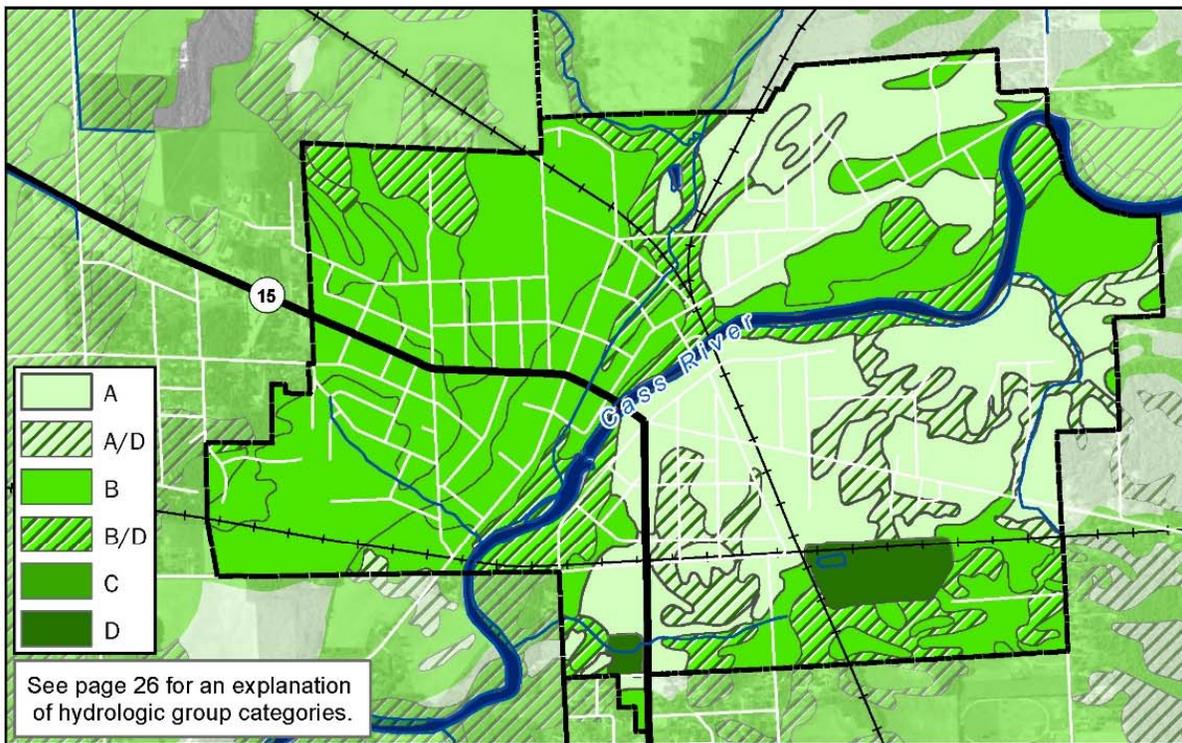
Soils can also be classified as dual hydrologic soil groups if a soil group with relatively high drainage potential and low runoff potential is found in the soil surface above soils of poorer drainage. These soils may be designated as A/D, B/D, or C/D. Many of Vassar’s soils are in the A or B group, with relatively coarse texture, high drainage, low runoff, and high infiltration. Patches of soils in the D hydrologic group, with slower drainage and higher runoff, exist adjacent to the industrial land uses on the southern edge of the City, roughly between Scotch Road to the east, Industrial Street to the south, and the Huron and Easter Railway lines to the west and north. See Figure 21 for soil information.

Soil texture can provide further indication of some of these properties. Soils in the “A” and “B” hydrologic groups most often correlate with coarse soil texture, meaning that the City’s sandier soils are found in areas with A and B hydrologic groups. Figure 22 shows the dispersal of different soil texture groups throughout the City. Finer-textured soils with higher clay content, which are typically not associated with hydrologic group A, are found adjacent to the upland portions of the City and are concentrated more heavily on the western and north-central portions of the City. Generally, finer-textured soils with higher clay content have a greater ability to retain nutrients because of the relatively large overall surface area of clay particles and the negative charge generally held by these particles, and are thus desirable for crop cultivation. For this reason, soils with little or no clay content should generally not be considered for agricultural use. Sandier soils

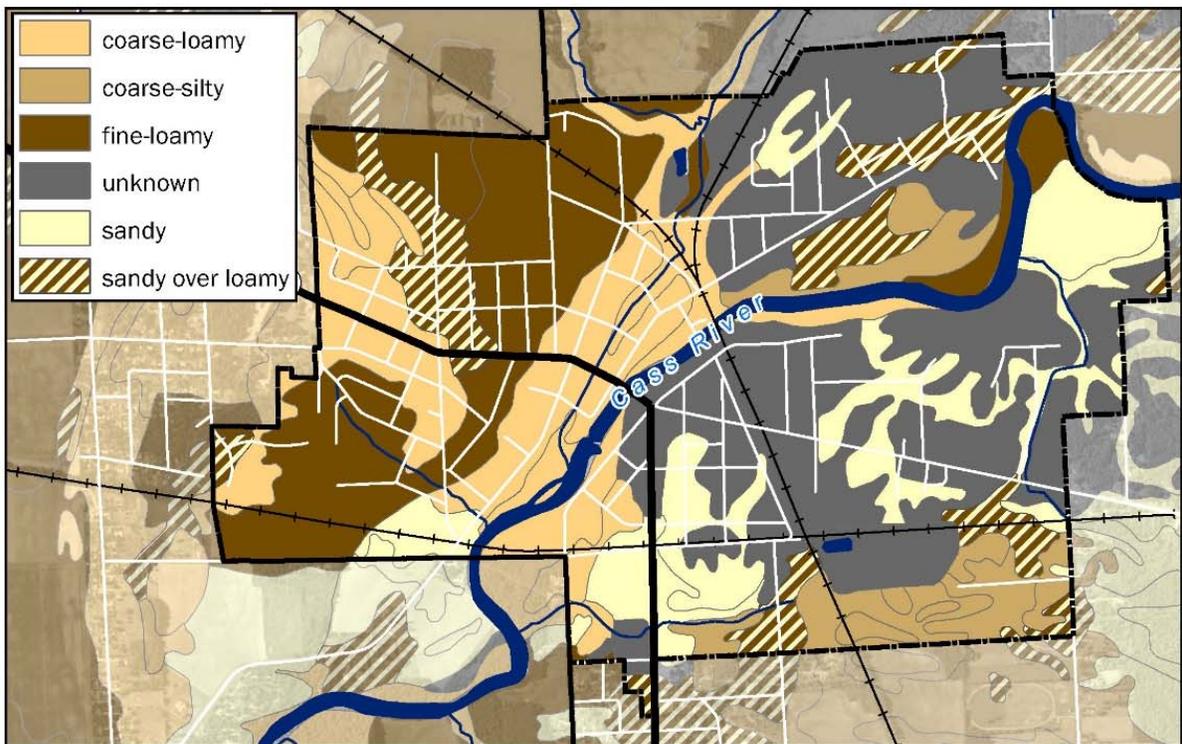
do not necessarily hold advantages for agricultural use, but do offer the advantage of having less potential for runoff. Overall, Vassar's soils have high drainage, low runoff potential, and coarse texture. The distribution of different soil texture groups should be one of the key considerations used to determine the suitability of a particular land use.

Topography in and around the City of Vassar relates mainly to it's the Cass River and the overall topographic picture of the Saginaw Bay region. Most of the Vassar's topography is rolling in comparison with other communities in Mid-Michigan, as the City slopes toward the winding path of the Cass River. Many of the City's slopes exceed 10%. Only the corner of the City south of the Cass River east of M-15 / Goodrich Street consistently has slopes under 2 percent. Much of the City's industrial property exists in low-lying, low-slope areas in this southeast corner of the City. Adjacent to the banks of the Cass River, slopes consistently exceed 10 percent. Some of the City's most varied topography is just northwest of downtown, set back 700 to 2,000 feet from the River. This area mostly holds residential land uses. See figure 22 for a map displaying topography information.

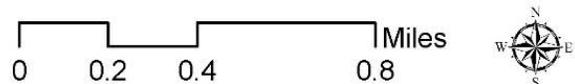




## Soils in Vassar: Hydrologic Groups

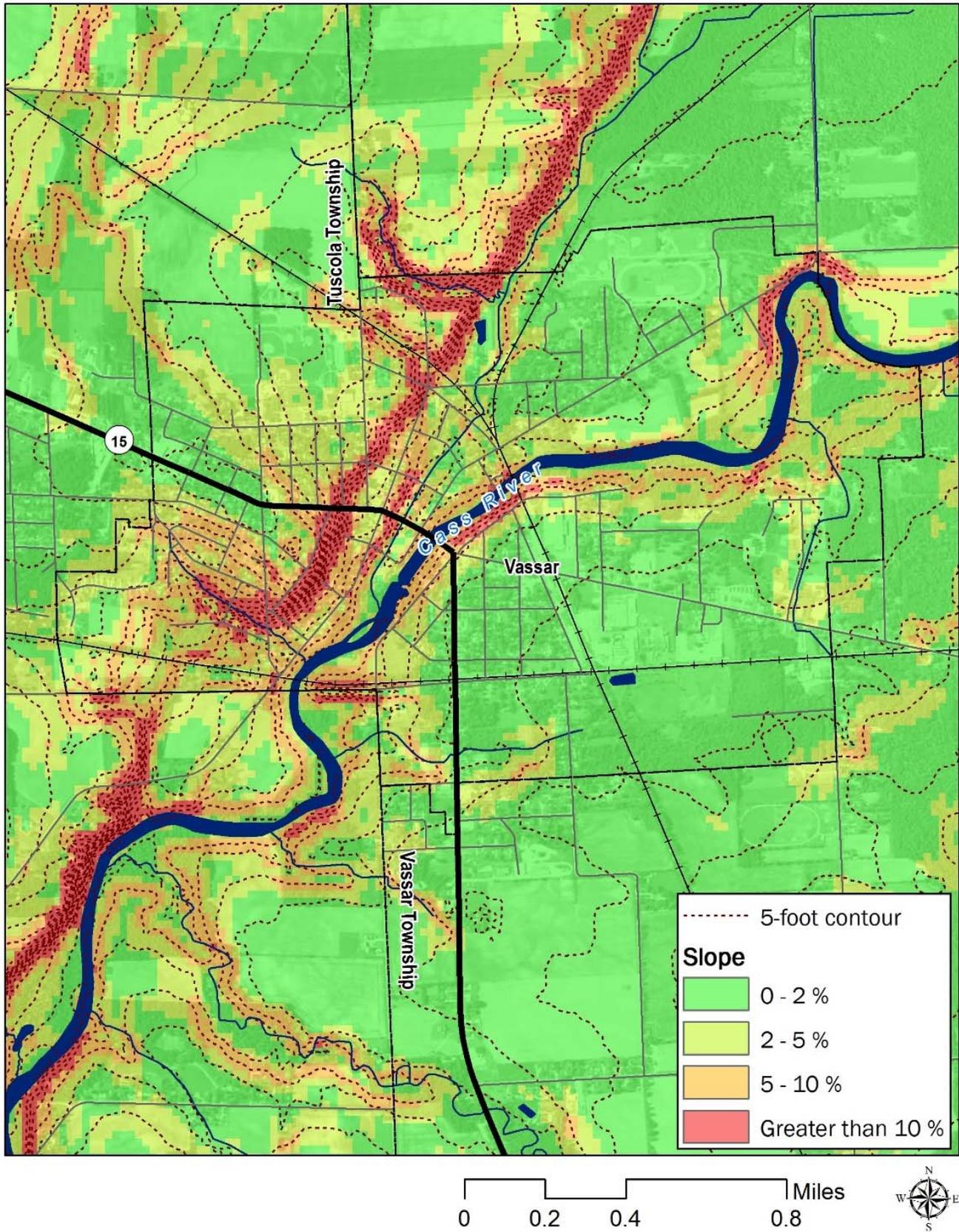


## Soils in Vassar: Texture



**Figure 21. Soils information.**

Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.



**Figure 22. Topography information.**

Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library (MIGDL), 2014.

# Chapter 3

## Existing Land Use in Vassar

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### INTRODUCTION

The existing land use in a community is one of the most important pieces of data to analyze among the characteristics in a place like Vassar. In many cases, the existing land uses have set a pattern that is unlikely to change. In other areas there may be vacant or underutilized land that can be evaluated for its development or conservation value.

An existing land use map is designed to provide a snapshot in time of how land in the City is actually being used. Such a map is useful in developing a Master Plan since it provides a benchmark as to how property is being used, regardless of, or sometimes in contradiction to, zoning. It lets residents, City officials, and other stakeholders see patterns in growth and development.

To provide a detailed account of the existing land uses, a review of the 2000 Vassar Master Plan and spatial data collected from aerial photography from Google Earth were used to develop a draft of the land use map. Then, to account for changes over the intervening years, every road in Vassar was driven in June through September of 2014, correcting the map as needed to identify land that was used for commercial, residential, industrial, public, recreational, and agricultural uses, including identification of undeveloped or underutilized areas. Feedback and quality control were also provided by the Vassar Planning Commission.

## LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use	Area (Acres)	Portion of total land area (%)
Single Family Residential	489.5	41.4%
Industrial / Utility	146.7	12.4%
Quasi-Public	131.4	11.1%
Commercial	98.5	8.3%
Parks	93.0	7.9%
Agricultural	77.7	6.6%
Public	66.2	5.6%
School	49.1	4.1%
Multiple Family Residential	20.3	1.7%
Undeveloped	11.1	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,183.3</b>	

### SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This land use category describes areas composed of single-family dwellings with accessory structures such as garages and sheds. Single-family residential development is a predominant development pattern in the City and accounts for 41.4% of the land area. Single-family residential areas are found throughout the City, with most properties in several key zones being single family residences:

- East and north of the railroad, north of the Cass River.
- West of Division Street and South Main Street, west of the Cass River.
- Southeast of Water Street, east of the Cass River.

Most single family residential areas of Vassar have an older housing stock, with over 70% of its housing structures being built prior to 1980. There are also pockets of newer single-family residential development in the City, notably the new single family residences surrounding the Canterbury Court and King James Court streets.



## INDUSTRIAL / UTILITY

Covering 12.4 percent of the total land area, industrial uses account for the second highest area of land use in Vassar and they play an important role in the City of Vassar. Included in this category are warehouses, processing facilities, and manufacturing or non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. Industrial / Utility lands also include those on which public utility companies such as Consumers Energy house substations, utility boxes, and other facilities. One such site is a parcel on Birch Street about a half block south of Beach Street which houses a Consumers Energy substation. Industrial / Utility land uses can be found primarily southeast of the Cass River, along M-15 and MOOT/Huron Eastern Railroad.



## PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC

Public lands in Vassar include governmental facilities and offices, libraries, public works facilities, and post office buildings. Quasi-public land includes areas with churches, religious institutions, and private institutions. Generally speaking, this use includes property held in the public interest and is usually exempt from real property taxation. Many of the quasi-public land uses in Vassar are scattered throughout the City. Quasi-public uses comprise 11.1 percent of the total land area in the City, or about 131.4 acres, and public lands comprise an additional 66.2 acres, or about 5.6 percent. Public lands in Vassar include, but are not limited to, the following uses:



- The Fire Station on Sherman Street,
- The City Hall at 287 East Huron Avenue,
- The Bullard Sanford Memorial Library at 520 West Huron Avenue,
- The Water Tower at Richard and West Street,
- The Water Treatment Facility at Richard and Andy Street,
- Properties used to protect public wellheads, and
- City-owned public lands adjacent to the Cass River.

Quasi-public uses include churches and institutional uses found throughout the City. The largest institutional use found in the City is Wolverine Center youth rehabilitation facility, found at the terminus of Enterprise Drive on the east end of the City. The Wolverine Center property includes a leadership academy and housing for 6-18 year old boys in need of shelter, educational training and care.



## COMMERCIAL

Commercial development in Vassar adopts different forms in different portions of the City. Commercial use occupies 8.3 percent, or about 98.5 acres, of the land in Vassar. Despite a strong presence in Vassar's downtown, much of which lies within the 100 year floodplain of the Cass River, commercial uses have become less prominent in the center of the City, as flooding risk has reduced floodplain development in recent years. Most of the City's commercial uses are found near the western end of the City off of M-15, along M-15 / Huron Avenue in the downtown area, and along East Huron Street near the east end of the City. Some of the most large-scale, auto-oriented businesses such as gas stations and drive-through restaurants can be found on the west entrance to the City along M-15 / Huron Avenue. These uses cater to state highway travelers whose destination may or may not be in the City of Vassar. Commercial land in Vassar also includes retail sales and service establishments, specifically including a variety of operations such as financial institutions, professional offices, local small business operators, gas stations, grocery stores, and personal service establishments such as barbers and hair salons. Downtown Vassar is home to a variety of small businesses including restaurants and boutiques. A number of small businesses as well as larger retail establishments occur along M-15 and Huron Street on the south side of the Cass River.



## PARK

This category includes all public land developed for the purpose of providing recreation and accounts for 93 acres, or 7.9 percent, of the land used in Vassar. Park lands are found throughout the City of Vassar and include the following parks, which were fully described previously in Chapter 2:

1. The Vassar Rail Trail.
2. White Birch Park (Sticks Park).
3. Open Field (Youth football practice field).
4. Riverside Park (Lions Park).
5. T. North Pavilion.
6. Hillside Park (Band Shell).
7. Veterans Plaza.
8. Rotary Park.
9. Gazebo and RV (Riverside) Parks.
10. McKinley School (Dance School Playground).
11. Harper Park.
12. Vassar Memorial Park (Ball Diamonds).
13. Vassar Memorial Park Fairgrounds (Horse track and stables).
14. Ivan Middleton Hall.



## AGRICULTURAL

This includes land that is being used for crop production, grazing, and other related activities and accessory farm buildings such as barns and elevators. Agricultural areas occupy 6.6% of the land in Vassar. Most of this land is located on several large parcels in three main locations; one being near Jay Road and the City's western border, one being near Cass Avenue and Walnut Street in the northeastern corner of the City, and another north of Athletic Street in the northwestern corner of the City. All land currently used for agriculture are located north of the River.



## SCHOOL

Schools cover about 49.1 acres, or about 4.1 percent, of land in the City of Vassar. These include Central Elementary School, Townsend North Elementary School, Vassar Junior High School, and Vassar High School, all of which are located near the intersection of Athletic Street and Division Street in the northwest corner of the City. The Lt. Clarence Fischer Leadership Academy, though a use with a partial educational focus, is part of the overall Wolverine Human Services facility and is thus considered a quasi-public use, rather than as a school use.



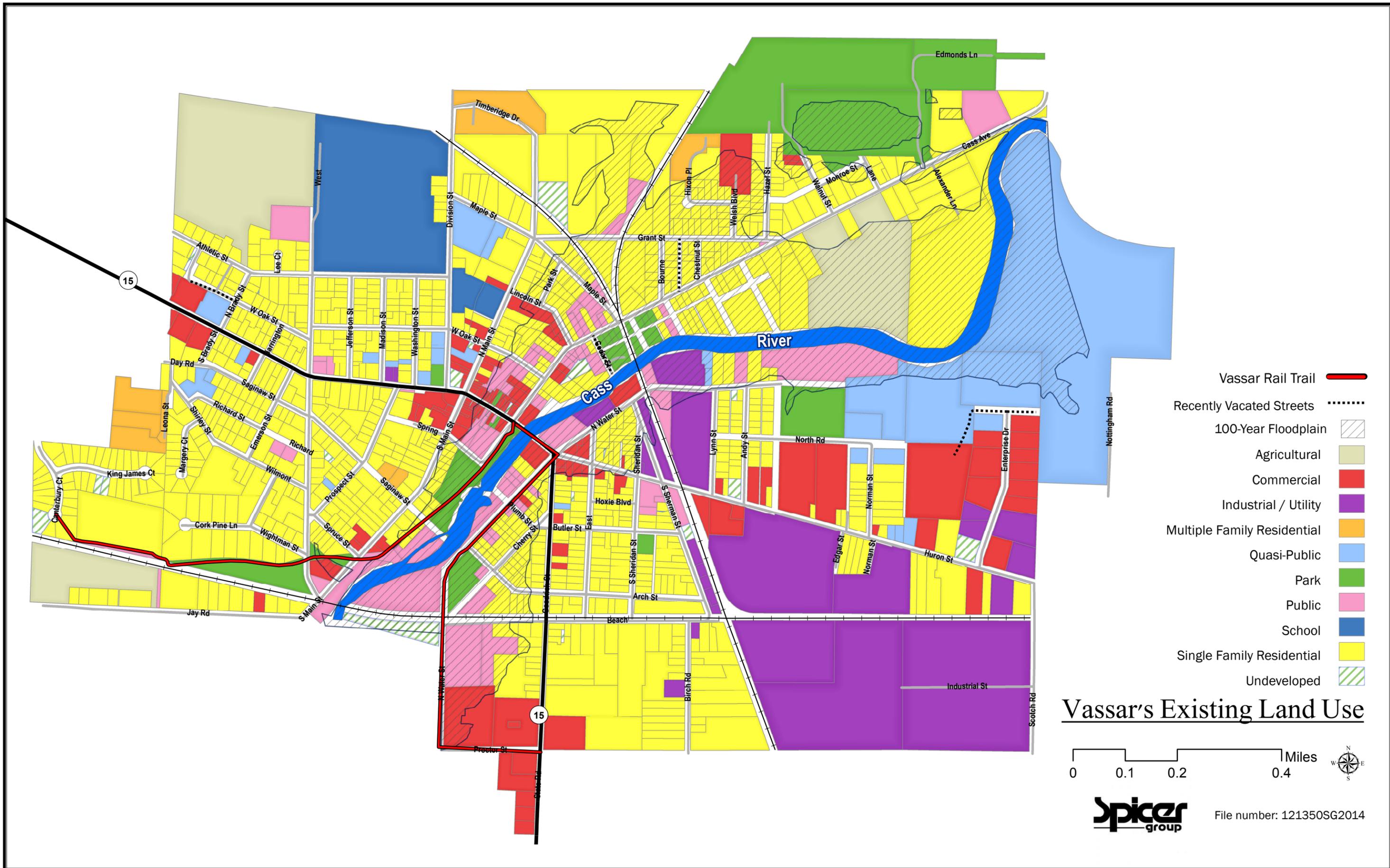
## MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This category, which covers 20.3 acres or 1.7% of the total area of Vassar, includes duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. Included among these are the Tall Oaks Manor, Walnut Grove and Popular Point apartment complexes located in the southwestern section of the City and the Ridgewalk duplex complex along the northern City boundary at Timberridge Drive.



## UNDEVELOPED

Covering a total of about 11.1 acres, undeveloped land accounts for about 0.9 percent of all land use in the City of Vassar. Vassar's undeveloped parcels are generally the result of residentially zoned areas which have not been developed yet. These include several parcels on the southwest end of the City along Canterbury Court and King James Court, and along Timberridge Drive in the northern part of the City.





# Chapter 4

## Listening to Vassar

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### INTRODUCTION

To be effective, a Master Plan should incorporate the input and ideas of the local population. By basing the Master Plan on the goals and objectives of its residents, land use management decisions become politically feasible and represent the intents and vision of the community. In The City of Vassar and surrounding communities, citizens were given the opportunity to participate in two methods of community input:

1. An online community input survey, hosted on [fluidsurveys.com](http://fluidsurveys.com), which produced results from 397 respondents.
2. A Facebook page for the City of Vassar, on which residents were enabled to comment and provide input about the Plan overall and discuss their opinions on future goals and desires for the City.

The online community input survey was advertised to respondents in the City of Vassar, with survey promotion distributed to those living in the nearby communities of Tuscola Township and Vassar Township as well. An advertisement was published in the Vassar Pioneer Times newspaper on September 4, 2014. The survey was officially launched on Monday, September 8, 2014, with the domain name of [www.VassarSurvey.com](http://www.VassarSurvey.com). A Facebook advertisement promoting the survey was released on September 8<sup>th</sup>, with follow-up survey announcements being posted on September 9 and September 11, 2014. For those who wished to take the survey in a hard copy format, hard copies were available at the City Hall and at the Library. A link to the survey was also

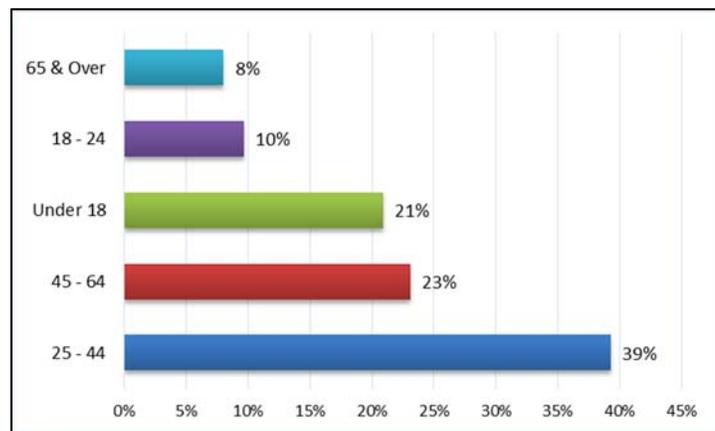
posted on the City of Vassar’s home page ([www.cityofvassar.org](http://www.cityofvassar.org)), and postcards and flyers were also distributed to further promote the survey. Documentation of all survey promotion methods can be found in Appendix B. The survey closed officially on October 15, 2014.

## ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

### Age

At the terminus of the community input survey, respondents were asked to identify several characteristics about themselves. The first of these was their age, as divided into five age groups:

- Under 18
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 44
- 45 – 64
- 65 & Over

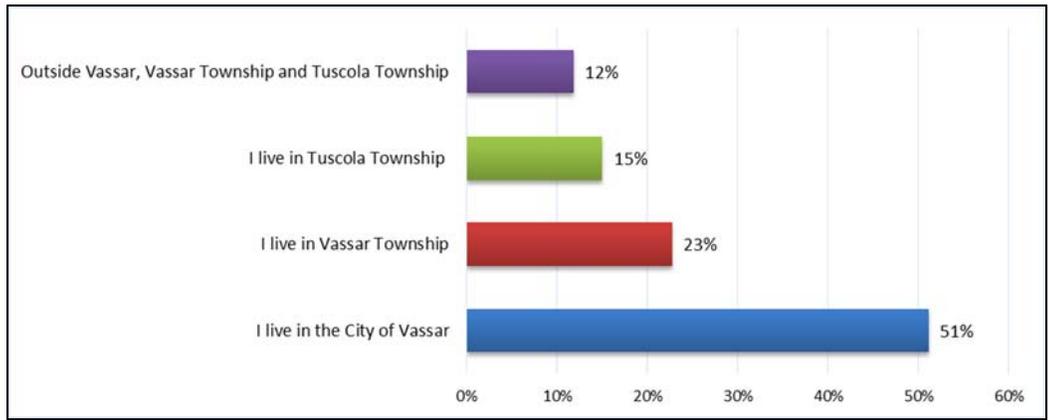


The highest percentage of survey respondents (39%) were between 25 and 44. The most well-represented group was those age 45-64, with 74 respondents (23%) coming from this group. Interestingly, the number of respondents under the age of 18 were fairly well represented in this survey. 67 respondents (21%) came from this group, more than doubling the number of respondents who were 65 and older (24 respondents, or 8% of the total).

### Residential Status

The second self-identification question at the end of the survey asked respondents what their residential status is, according to these choices:

- I live in the City of Vassar
- I live in Vassar Township
- I live in Tuscola Township
- I live outside the City of Vassar, Vassar Township, and Tuscola Township



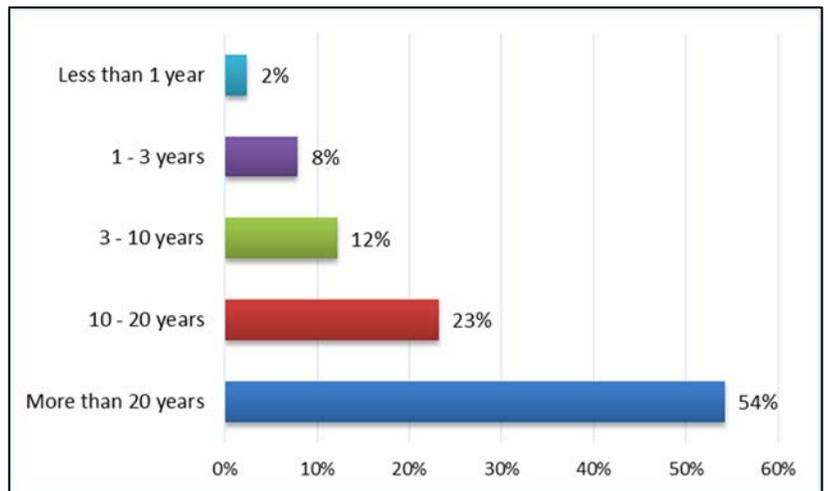
Of the 322 respondents who answered this question, just over half (164, or 51%) came from the City of Vassar. A total of 120 respondents (37%) came from Vassar Township and Tuscola Township. Twelve percent of respondents came from outside the immediate Vassar Area.

### Duration of Residency

Respondents were also asked to identify the duration of their residency, according to five choices:

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - 3 years
- 3 - 10 years
- 10 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

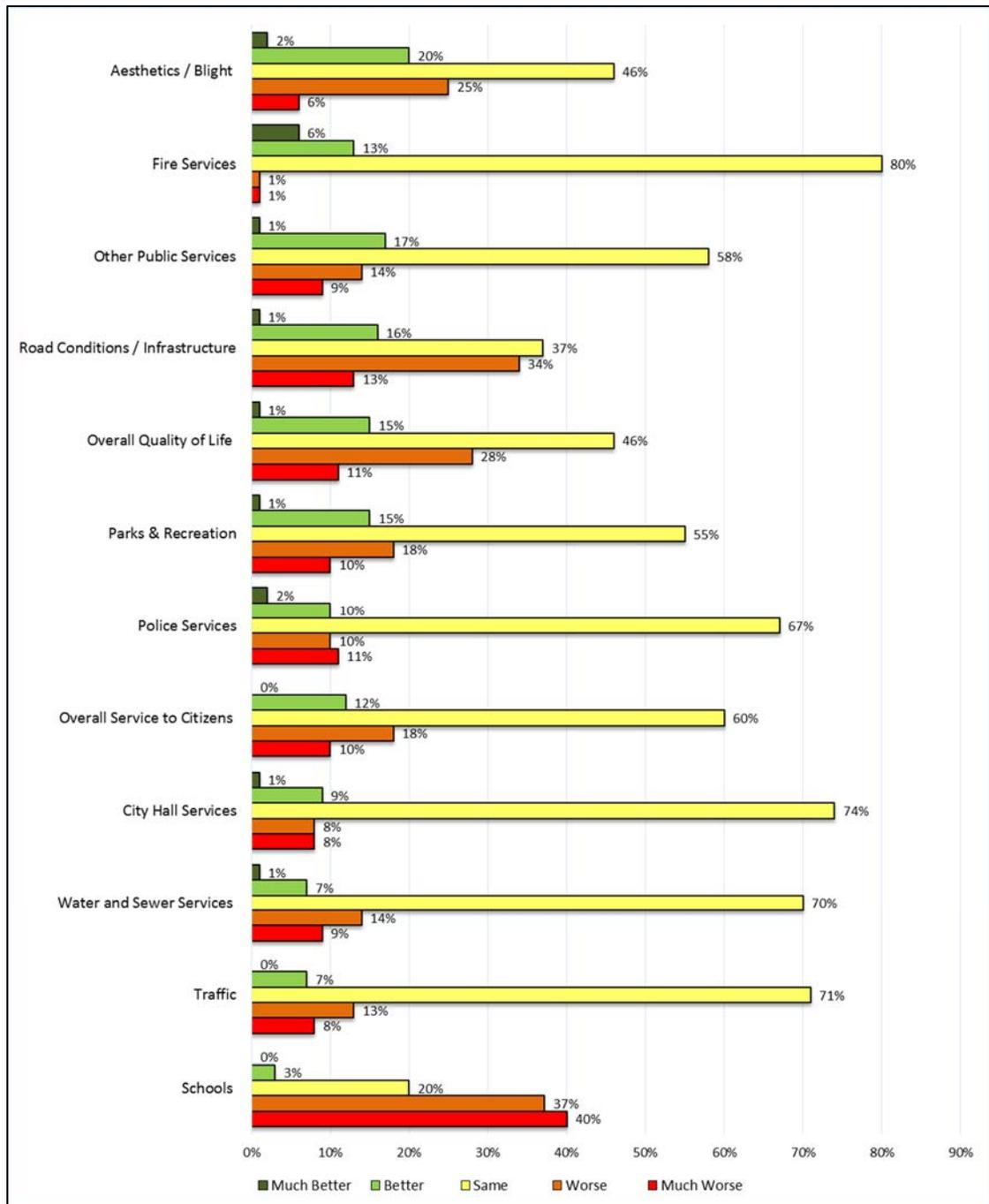
Among the 164 respondents who indicated they were from the City of Vassar, 89 of them (54%) had lived in Vassar for over 20 years. 38 respondents (23%) had lived in Vassar between 10 and 20 years. Only 4 respondents (2%) had lived in Vassar for under a year.



## GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CITY

### Perceptions of Change

The first general community question of the survey, question 1, asked respondents to identify their perceptions of changing conditions for twelve features of the community during the past five years:



Overall, respondents had the least negative impressions of the direction of features such as aesthetics / blight reduction, DPW services such as trash and snow removal, and fire services. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that they felt aesthetics and blight reduction had improved, and these feelings were shared regarding fire services by 19% of respondents.

Responses to several categories highlighted several clear areas of concern for respondents. Schools, for example, were perceived as having gotten worse or much worse by a total of 77% of respondents during the past five years. Road conditions and infrastructure were perceived as having become worse or much worse by 47% of respondents.

Some categories were perceived by residents with a sense of stability. Over two-thirds of all respondents thought traffic, police services, fire services, City Hall services, water and sewer services had remained the same during the past five years. And for other categories, such as parks and recreation, respondents varied more in their opinion.

## **What shapes the Quality of Life?**

The second general community question asked respondents to indicate how important they feel 13 different features to be in shaping the quality of life in Vassar, with “1” being considered not very important and “5” being considered very important. Respondents were also allowed to list other choices.

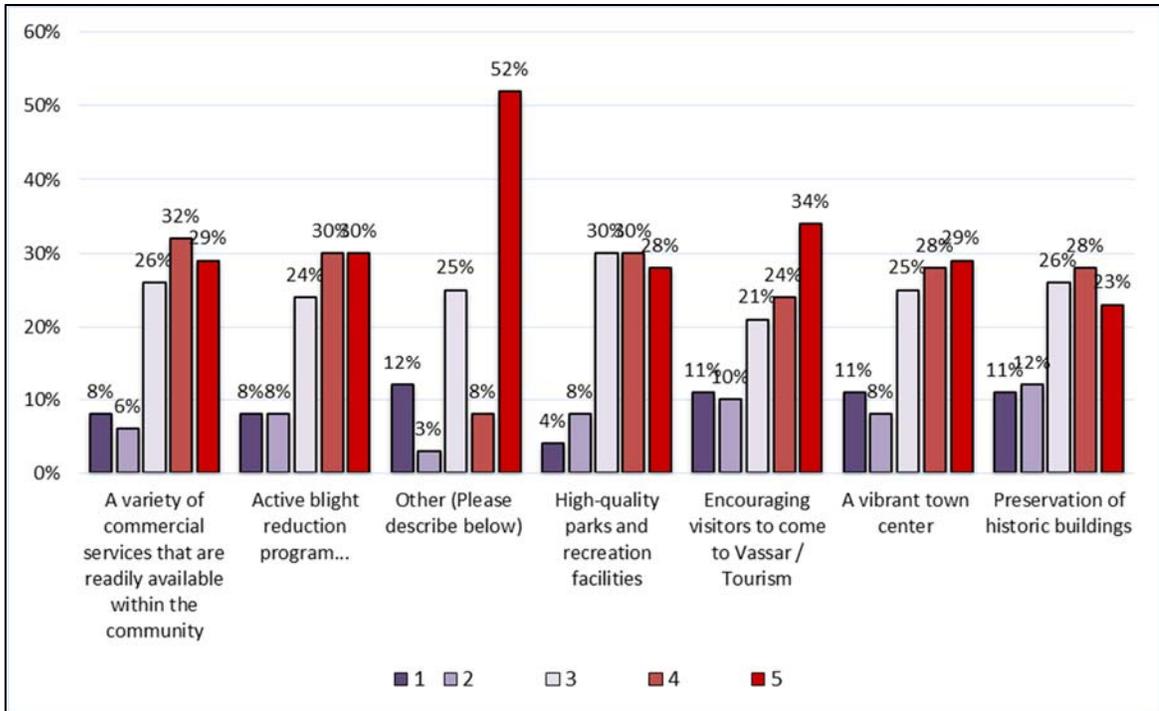
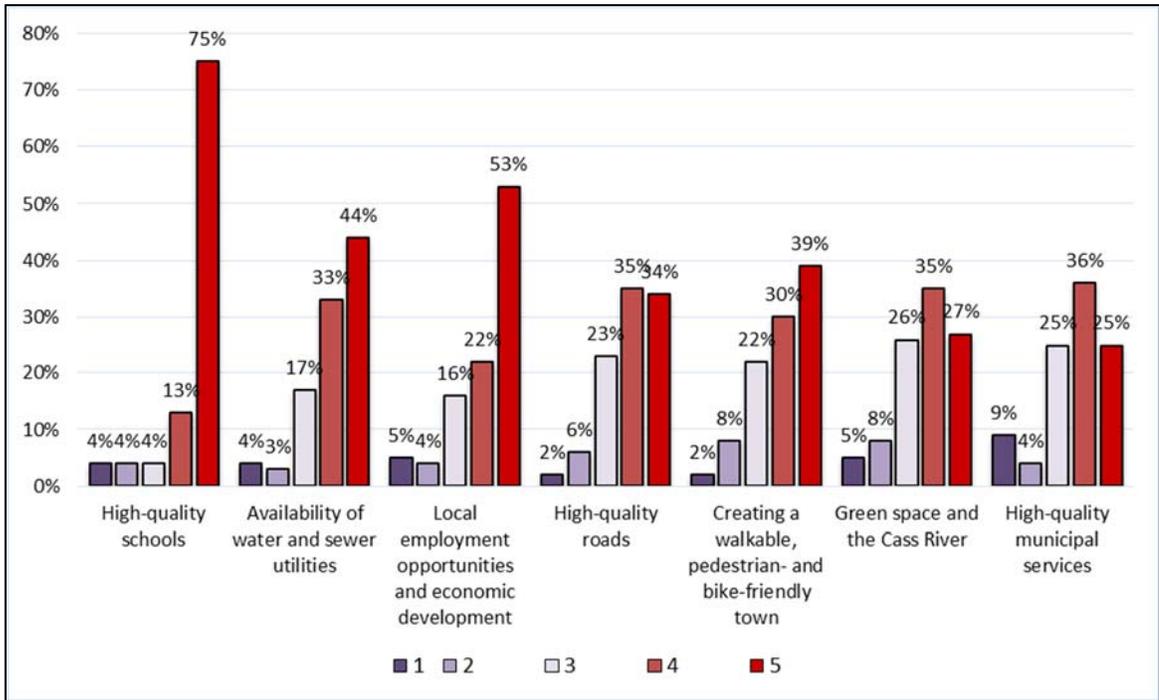
Respondents showed a preference for education, essential utilities, and job opportunities when answering this question. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents considered high-quality schools to be either important or very important for achieving a high quality of life in Vassar’s future. Seventy-seven percent of respondents shared the same sentiment for the availability of water and sewer utilities, and 75% said the same for local employment opportunities and economic development.

Several factors were perceived as relatively unimportant for achieving a high quality of life in Vassar’s future. The preservation of historic buildings was perceived by only 51% of respondents as either important or very important. Similarly, encouraging visitors to come to Vassar / Tourism was perceived by only 58% of respondents as either important or very important. Finally, having a vibrant town center was perceived as very important or important by 57% of respondents.

Overall, these responses suggest a preference for long-term factors of growth such as high-quality education, job creation and economic opportunity, and durable infrastructure. The factors given the lowest level of prioritization appeared to be those concerned with attracting visitors to the community, as compared with providing a source of livelihood for long-term residents.

Respondents were also asked to write in any additional factors they considered to be important in achieving a high quality of life. Some of the most common responses to this question included security / safety, increased police staff, and new or revitalized businesses such as the theater and fast food restaurants.

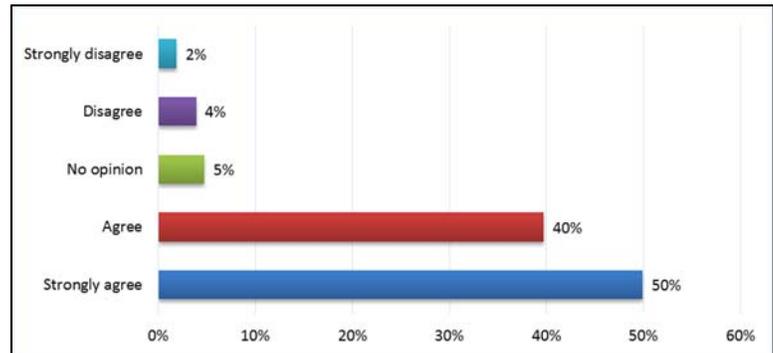
## What shapes the Quality of Life?



## LAND USE IN VASSAR

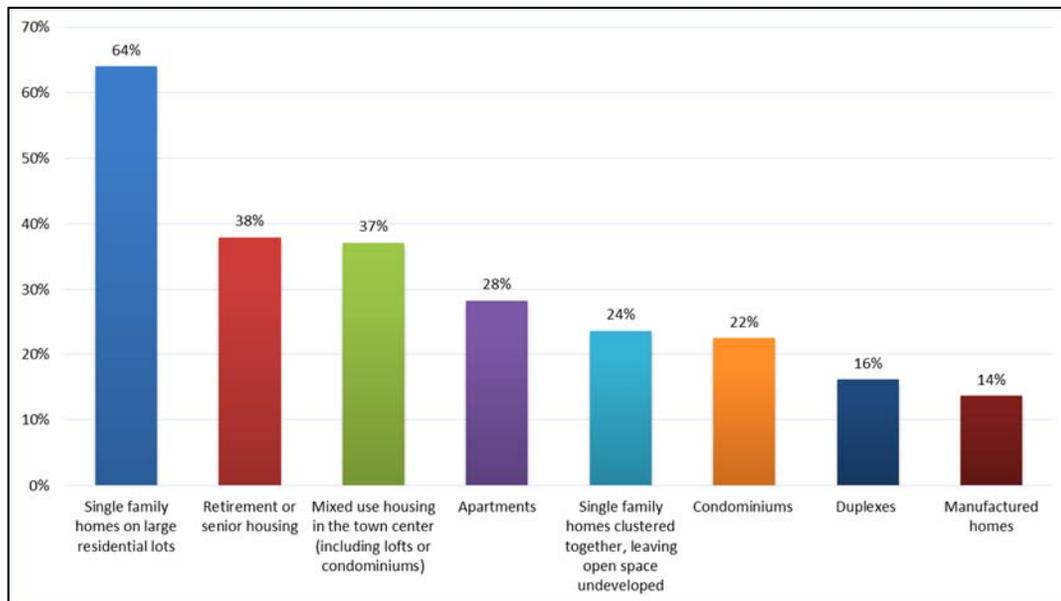
### New Development Overall

The first land use question, question 3, asked respondents to rank their level of agreement with the idea that Vassar should encourage new development. There were 364 respondents for this question. Of these, 326, or 90%, believe that new development should occur in Vassar.



### Residential Development, by Type

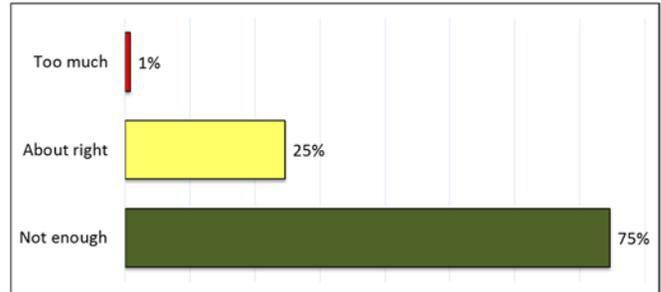
Question 4 asked respondents to select all forms of residential development they prefer in the Vassar community, inclusive of eight choices in addition to an open-ended response for any other form of residential development they prefer.



The most popular type of residential development among respondents to this question was single family homes on residential lots, with 64% of all respondents supporting this option. Senior or retirement housing (38%) and mixed use housing in the town center (37%) were also popular responses. Some of the less popular responses included manufactured homes and duplexes, with 14% and 16% of respondents supporting these, respectively.

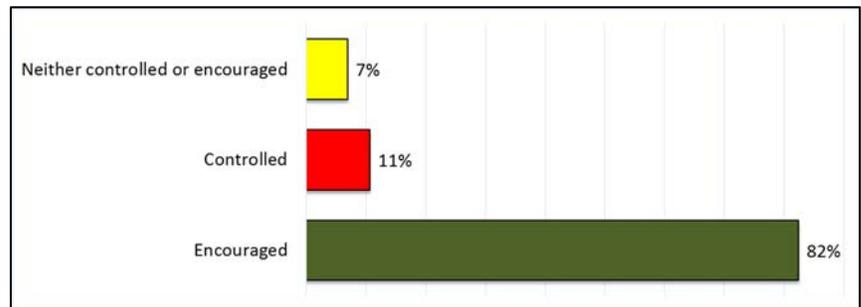
## Perceptions of Commercial Use

The third land use question, question 5, asked respondents to indicate their perception of commercial businesses in Vassar as either not enough, about right, or too much. Most respondents (75%) believe there are not enough commercial (retail and service) businesses in Vassar.



## Desired Commercial Growth

Question 6 asked respondents to indicate their preference for commercial growth in the next ten years as either controlled, encouraged, or neither controlled nor encouraged. Most respondents (82%) believe commercial growth in Vassar should be encouraged.



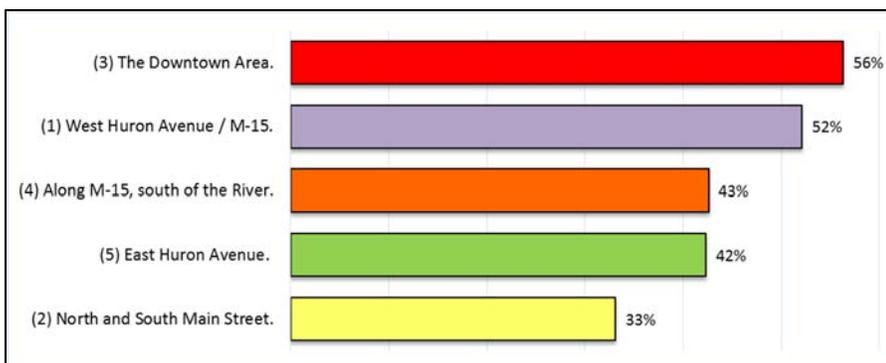
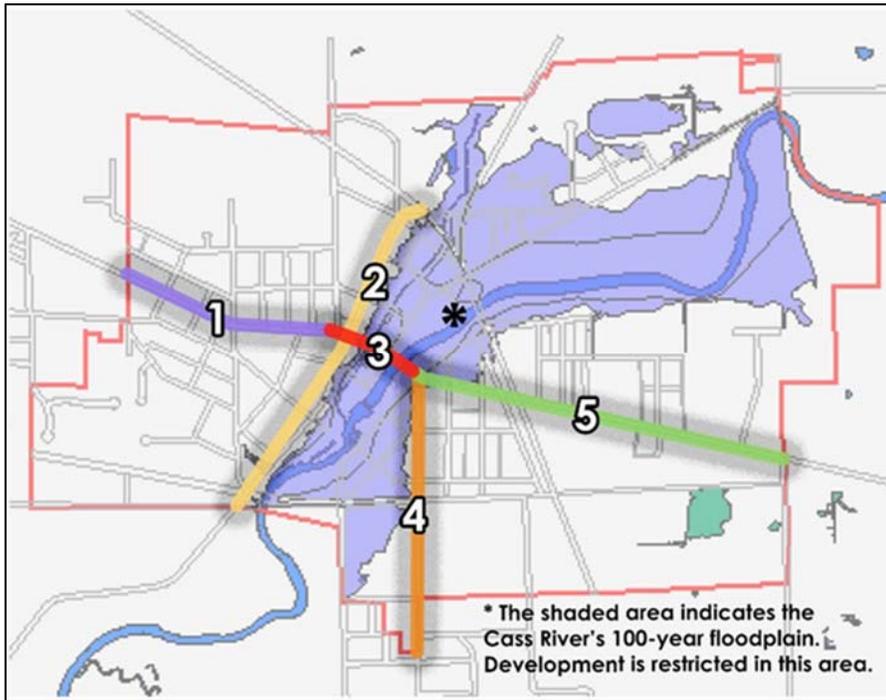
## Desired Types of Businesses

Respondents were given the opportunity to list three specific types of businesses they'd like to see developed in Vassar in question 7. In total, 872 responses were given for this question, as divided among three different options for each respondent. Of these, restaurants were by far the most popular response, with 169 respondents indicating a direct interest in more restaurants in the community. Other commercial uses preferred heavily by respondents included fast food / drive-thru restaurants (116 respondents), clothing stores (83 respondents), large retail stores such as Wal Mart or Meijer (58 respondents), and a theater (46 respondents), either as a request for a new theater or a desire for maintaining the re-opened historic Vassar Theater.



## Desired Commercial Locations

Question 8 allowed respondents to indicate where they'd like to see new commercial development occur, given five specific zones shown on a map of the City. Respondents were also allowed to write in any other areas of the community where commercial development would be preferred.

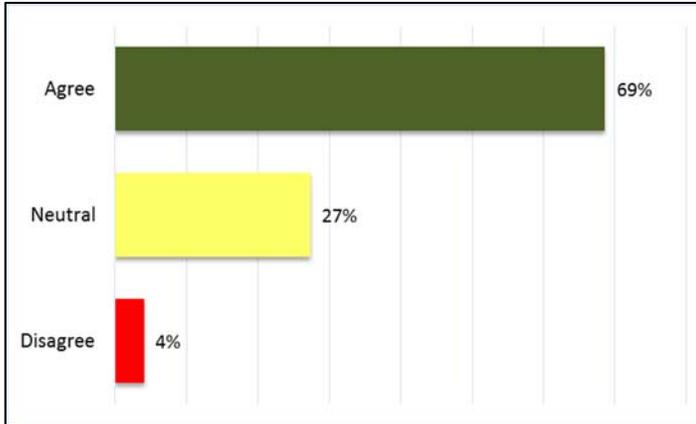


A total of 360 respondents answered this question, with the option of selecting multiple zones of the City for commercial development. The downtown area was the most popular choice for an area of new commercial development, with 202 respondents (56%) selecting this zone. Zone 1, or West Huron / M-15 (52%) was also a widely popular choice.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to suggest other unlisted areas for commercial development. Comments in this suggestion were largely used to amplify concerns over allowing commercial development in the areas of the City most susceptible to flooding

## Industrial Development

The final land use question, question 9, asked respondents whether they would like to see industrial development near existing industrial land uses on Huron Avenue and Sherman Street.



Respondents also answered this question favorably, with 249 (68.6%) suggesting that they generally agree with proposals for industrial development near existing industrial use on Huron Avenue and Sherman Street.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### Community Events and Features

Question 10 asked respondents to rank their perceived importance of 17 specific community features or events in making Vassar a more unique and enjoyable place, with “1” being not very important and “5” being very important.

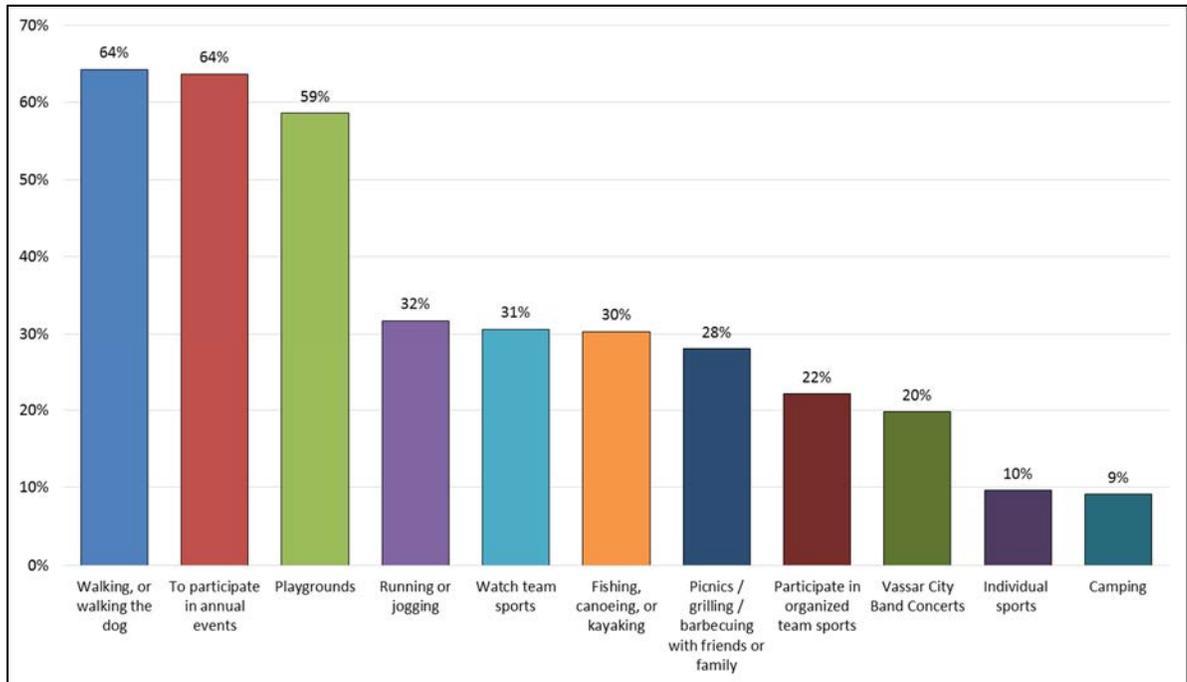
Respondents overwhelmingly supported most listed features as being important in making Vassar a unique and enjoyable place, with each of the following items being perceived as either “important” or “very important” for these qualities by more than two-thirds of respondents:

- The Vassar Rail Trail,
- Events at public schools in Vassar,
- The annual Pumpkin Roll
- The Vassar Riverfest and Auto Show
- Downtown Vassar
- The Cass River
- The Bullard-Sanford Memorial Library
- T. North Pavilion

Several listed features did not receive nearly as enthusiastic a response. Notably, the Mid-Michigan Renaissance Festival was perceived by 42% of respondents as being in the lowest two values of importance, followed by the Rotary Auction (39%) and the Yuletide Celebration (39%).

## Reasons for Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities

Respondents were asked why they visit Vassar’s parks and recreational facilities in question 11, with 11 possible choices and the opportunity to write in an open ended response.



The most popular response to this question was walking, or walking the dog, with 64% of respondents indicating this as a reason to visit Vassar’s parks and recreational facilities. Participating in annual events (64%), playgrounds (59%) were also common reasons to visit the parks. Less common responses included camping, with only 34 respondents (10%) indicating they had visited the parks to participate in individual sports, followed by camping (9%). Respondents were also given the opportunity to write in other choices. A list of these responses can be found in Appendix B.

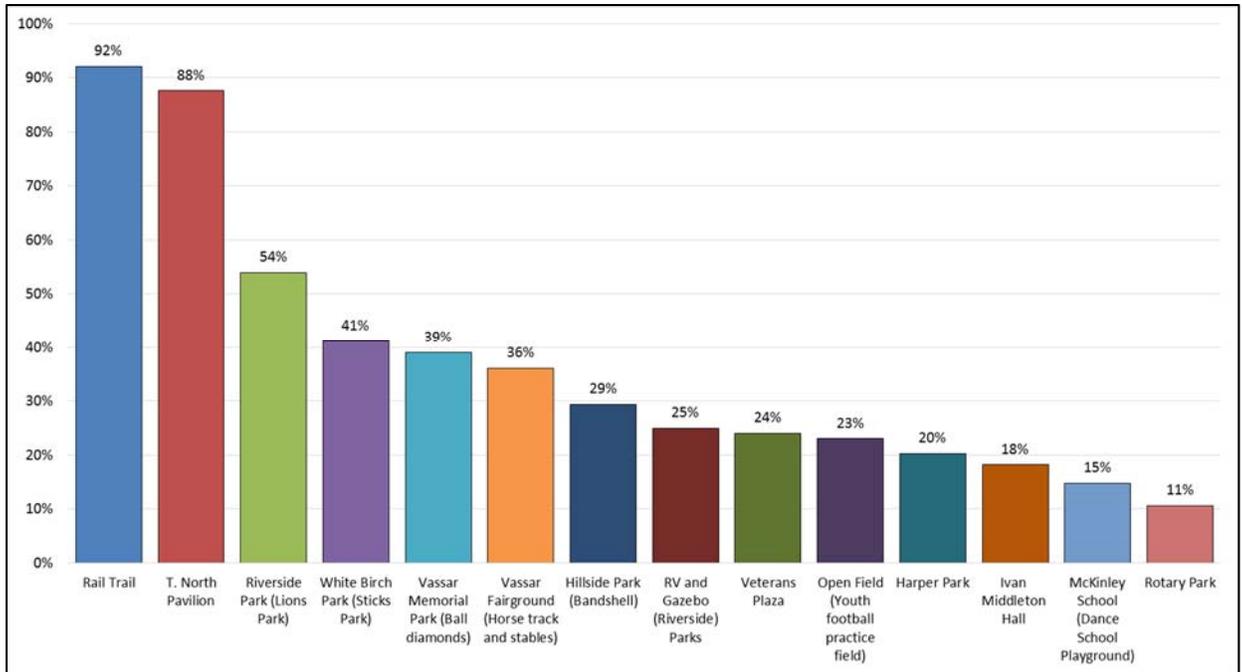
## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PREFERENCES

### Park and Recreational Facility Popularity

At the beginning of this portion of the survey, respondents were shown a map of all recreational facilities in Vassar. Question 12 asked respondents to indicate which of the City’s parks and recreational facilities they had visited in the past year, from a list of 14 such facilities.

The Rail Trail was the most widely visited facility by Vassar residents, with 92% of respondents having visited this in the past year. T. North Pavilion was close behind, with 88% of respondents indicating they had visited the Pavilion in the past year. Other well-attended facilities included

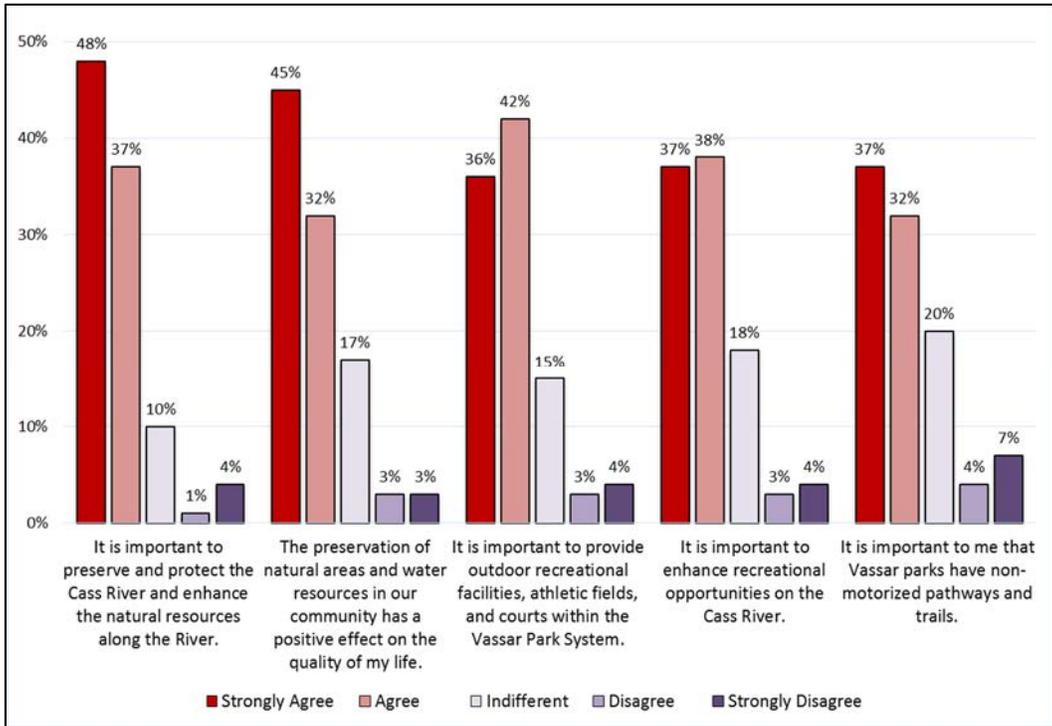
Riverside Park / Lions Park (54%), White Birch Park / Sticks Park (41%), and the Vassar Memorial Park Ball Diamonds (39%).



Question 13 asked respondents to indicate which of the selected facilities they had visited the most. Interestingly, though the Rail Trail had received more individual visitors, T. North Pavilion had actually received the most *frequent* visitors, with 92 respondents (35%) indicating that they had most frequently visited the pavilion. Close behind, 90 respondents (34%) had visited the Rail Trail the most. Some of the least-frequently visited facilities included Ivan Middleton Hall, Rotary Park, the Riverside RV Park / Gazebo Park, and the Band Shell.

## Perceptions of Vassar’s Parks and Natural Features

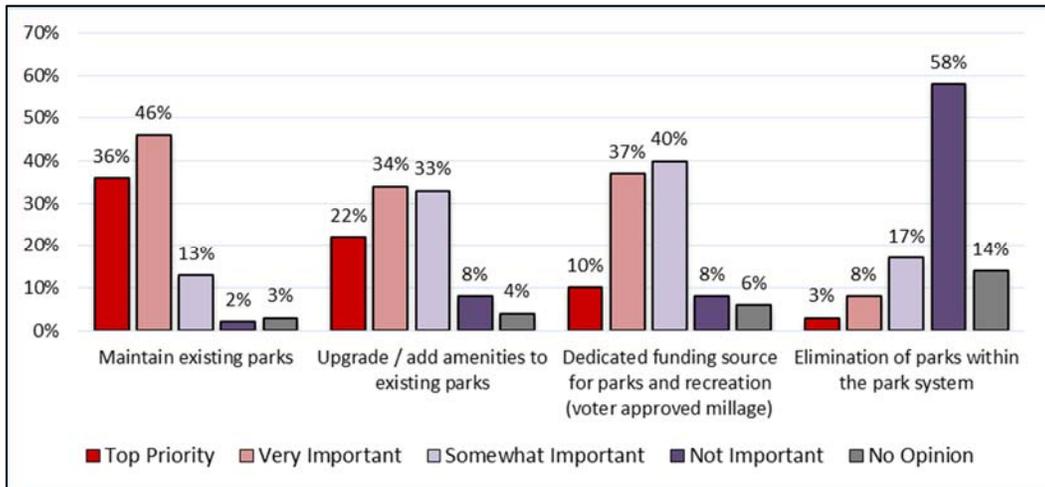
Question 14 asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements concerning the importance of five different elements of parks and natural features in Vassar.



Overall, the level of support was high for all items. Respondents showed a particular affinity for preserving the Cass River, with 85% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that “It is important to preserve and protect the Cass River and enhance the natural resources along the river.”

### Future Priorities for Vassar’s Parks and Recreational Facilities

Question 15 asked respondents to indicate their prioritization of four different activities for the City of Vassar over the next five years, ranking each on a scale of “top priority” to “not important”.



The only item perceived unfavorable among those listed was the elimination of parks within the park system, with 58% of respondents listing this as “not important”. Maintaining existing parks was by far the most prioritized item, with 82% of respondents listing this as either a top priority or very important.

## Improving Access to the Cass River

In question 16, respondents were asked to provide an open-ended short answer listing specific recommendations for improving access to the Cass River. Some popular responses for this question included a kayak or canoe launch, a pedestrian bridge, fishing docks and platforms, and walkways for easier River access.

A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

## A Dream Park for Vassar

Respondents were given the opportunity to think outside the box and list the park they’d like to see in Vassar in a perfect world in question 17. Some of the responses and common categories of responses can be found below:



Some of the most popular choices for this question had consistent themes of safety, child- and family-friendliness, cleanliness / maintenance, and water access. These included a water park, new fishing facilities, a disc golf course and a police officer-patrolled facility. Some of the more unconventional responses included a rock wall, a 2- or 3-story structure to be rented out for weddings and special events, a natural park playground, a night club, and an amusement park. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

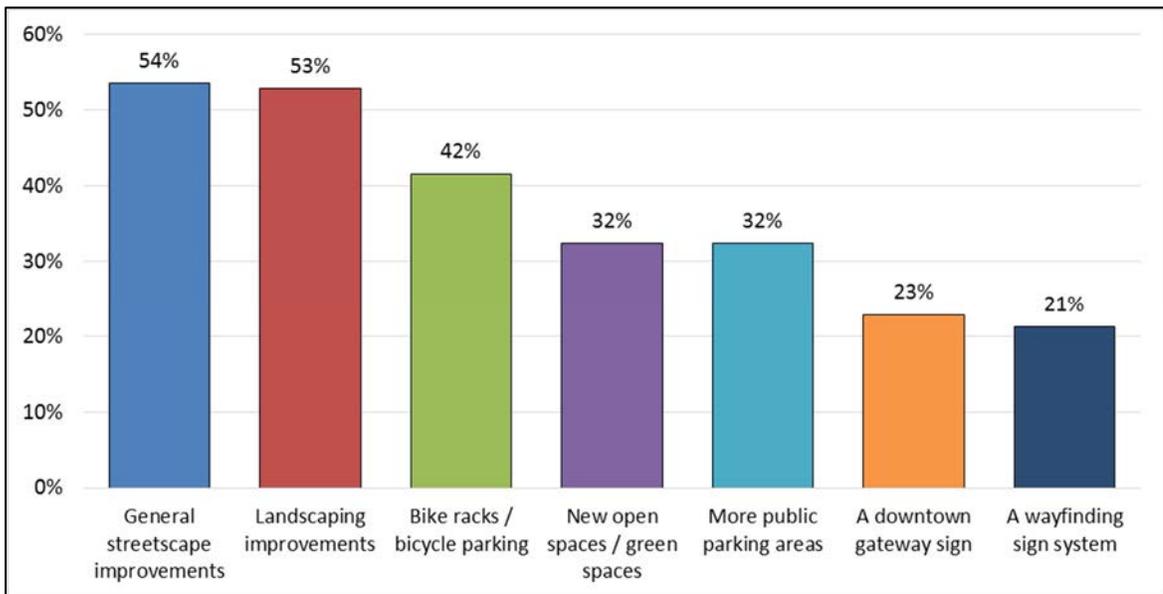
## Other Parks and Recreation Comments

Question 18 asked respondents to list any other comment regarding parks and recreation in Vassar. Some of the common categories of responses included park maintenance, supervising and monitoring parks for safety and law enforcement, the need for preserving and expanding Cass River access, and concerns regarding dogs. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

## IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECTS

### Downtown Improvements

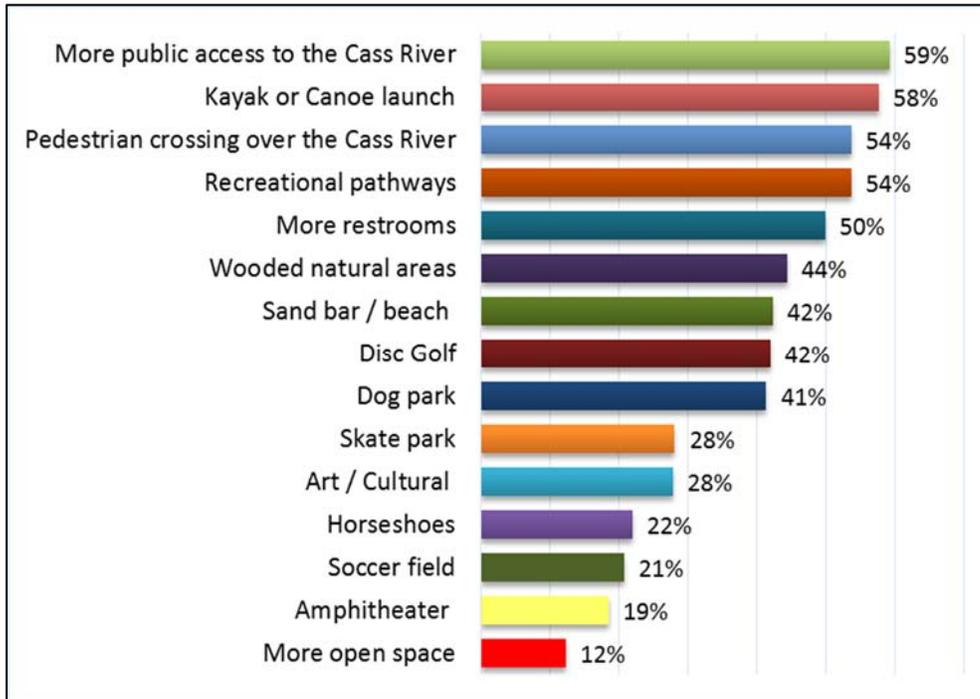
Question 19 asked respondents to list any and all types of improvements they'd like to see in the downtown area over the next 10-15 years, given a list of seven choices. Respondents were also allowed to write in an open-ended response to this question.



Among the choices listed, general streetscape improvements, such as more and brighter street lighting and benches, and landscaping improvements were two of the most popular items, receiving 169 responses (54%) and 167 responses (53%) respectively. Respondents overall were least interested in a wayfinding sign system (21%) and a downtown gateway sign (23%). Respondents were also allowed to list other amenities they'd like to see as part of future downtown improvement projects. A full list of these responses can be found in Appendix B.

## Parks and Recreational Facility Improvements

Respondents were allowed to indicate any specific improvements they'd like to see in their parks and recreational facilities, given a list of 15 possible responses, in question 20. As in question 19, respondents were allowed to write in open-ended responses.

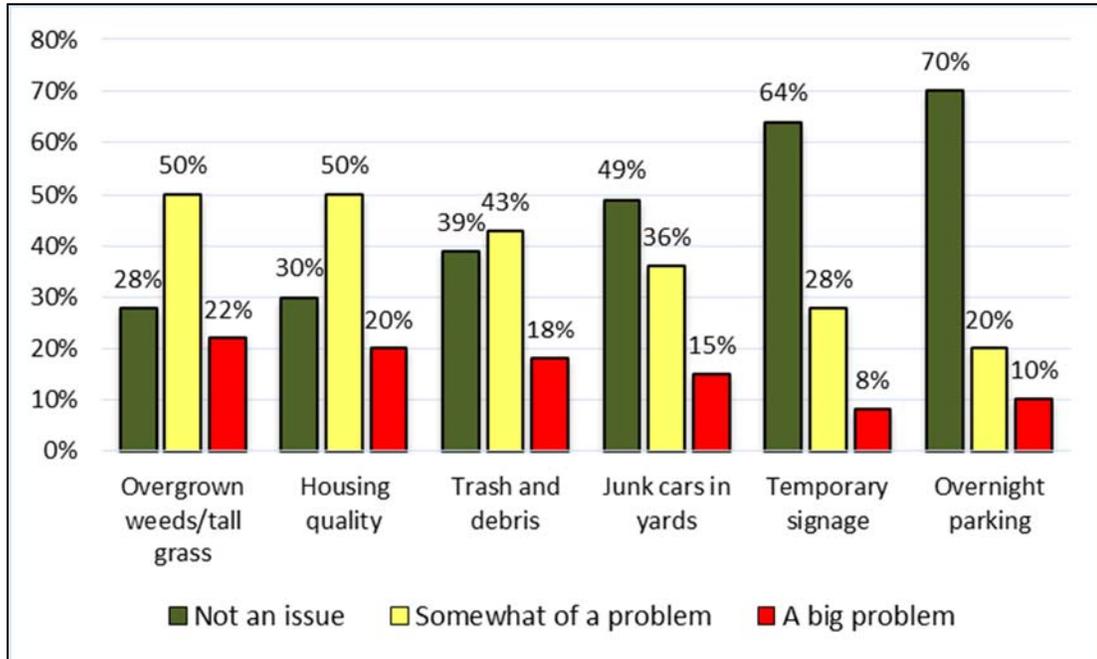


Respondents expressed a strong preference for more public access to the Cass River, with 192 respondents out of 324 (59%) seeking this. Other popular facilities and amenities included a kayak or canoe launch (58%), recreational pathways for walking / biking (54%), a pedestrian crossing over the Cass River (54%), and more restrooms (50%). Some of the least popular choices were more open space (12%) and an amphitheater (19%). Respondents were allowed to provide additional suggested facilities or amenities, which are shown in Appendix B.

## CHALLENGES

### Specific Issues in Vassar

Question 21 asked respondents to list their opinion on six specific problem issues in Vassar, ranking these as either “not an issue,” “somewhat of a problem”, or “a big problem.”



Respondents indicated certain issues as much larger problems than others. More than half of respondents indicated temporary signage (64%) and overnight parking (70%) as “not an issue”. Conversely, trash and debris was perceived to be “somewhat of an issue” or “a big problem” by 82% of respondents. Seventy-eight percent of respondents felt the same way about overgrown weeds and tall grass, and 80% of respondents felt this way about housing quality.

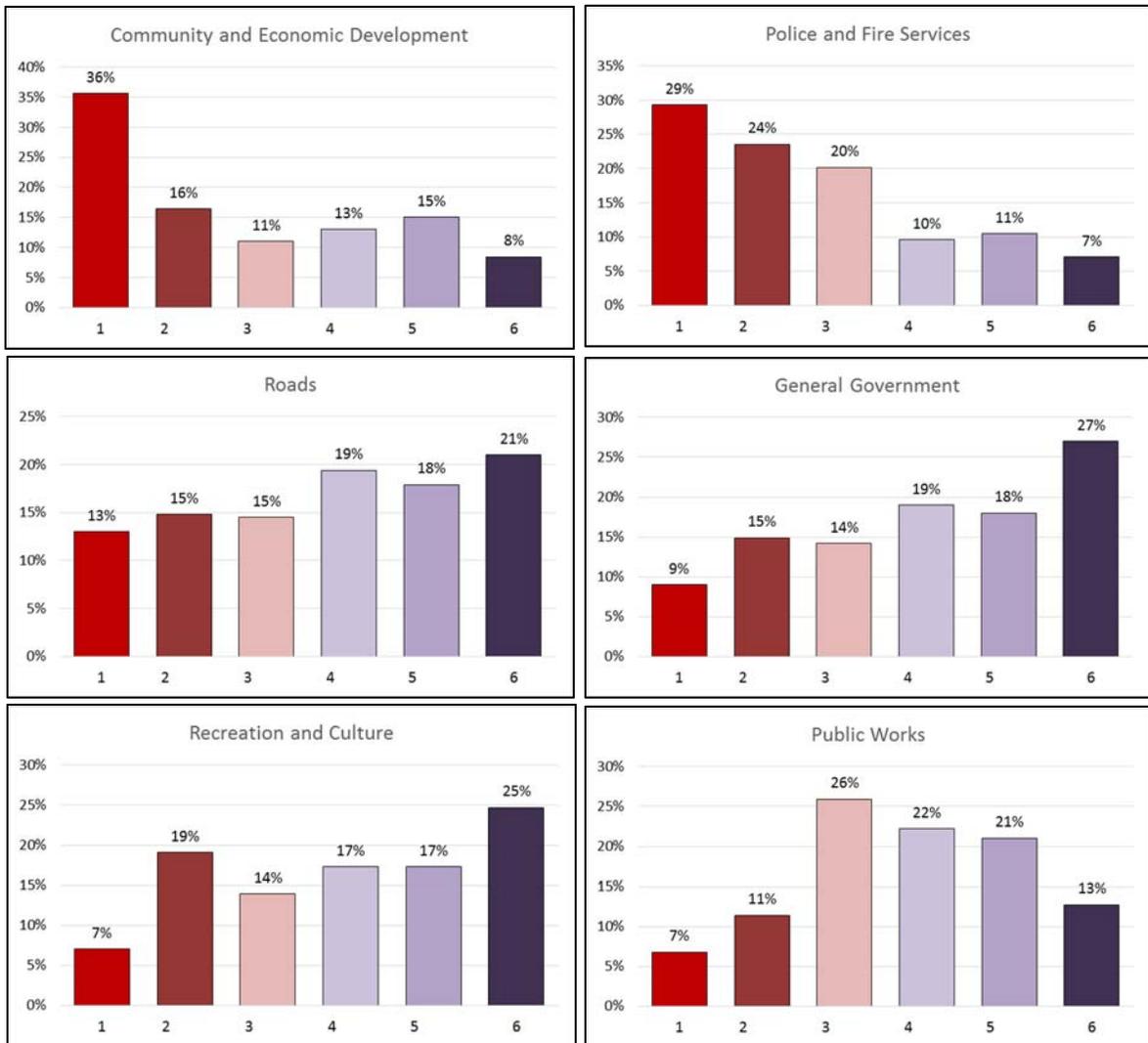
### Open-ended Comments

Respondents were allowed to build on the opinions shared in the previous question by listing other specific problem issues in an open-ended response to question 22. Some of the common categories of responses included the lack of police presence or supervision, uncontrolled dogs, and an uncomfortable atmosphere near bars. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

## FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

### Prioritizing Specific Areas of Governance

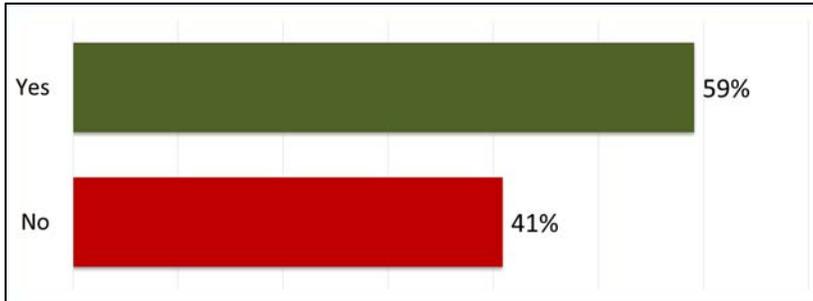
Question 23 asked respondents to think critically as if they were in a managerial position for their community. Respondents were asked to rank items in a list of six different areas of government spending focus on their importance, with “1” being the most important and “6” being the least important.



Overall, community and economic development was indicated as the top priority for the plurality of respondents, with 36% ranking this as the top priority. This was followed by Police and Fire services (29%) and roads (13%). Public works and general government were ranked relatively low among respondents' funding priorities. Public works received the lowest number of responses for being the top priority (7%). General government received the highest percentage of responses for being the lowest priority (27%).

## Paying for Community Improvement

Question 24 simply asked if respondents would be willing to pay more to help improve their community overall. Importantly, 188 of the 319 respondents (59%) said they would be willing to pay more.



## GENERAL COMMENTARY

### The Good

Question 25 asked respondents what they like best about Vassar. Some of the common categories of responses included the small town atmosphere, the friendly nature of the community, the low crime rate, the community pride, and the family-friendly environment. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

### The Bad

Question 26 asked respondents what they like least about Vassar. Some of the common categories of responses included businesses closing, concerns about the declining quality of schools, the lack of employment opportunities, and inadequate enforcement of codes. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

### The Suggestions for Improvement

Question 27 asked respondents, "What is the one thing you would do to improve Vassar?" Some of the common categories of responses included encouraging and incentivizing new business growth, bringing new activities and stores to the area, and rejuvenating declining industries in the area. A full list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

## CONCLUSION

The community input survey revealed several important conclusions about Vassar's position in 2015. Vassar area residents overall share a strong sense of community pride. They generally favor investments in economic development and police and fire services while supporting the continued use of public spaces for events and activities that highlight the City's unique identities. Residents are also aware of the City's issue and see investment in schools, police services and safety, and infrastructure as critical moving toward the future.



# Chapter 5

## What do we want for Vassar?

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### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to describe the long-term vision for Vassar, with enough detail to highlight likely outcomes for the City, yet be flexible in order to address changing conditions and adapt to the changing wants and needs of its current and future residents, landowners, and other stakeholders. It should go without saying that determining the direction for the Vassar community for the next five to twenty years is a challenge. Determining what needs to be improved, what should be preserved, and what should be substantially changed is successful only when based on sound public participation and detailed analyses.

Setting the goals for Vassar was a process accomplished by the thorough review of existing characteristics in the City and the results of the community input survey. Based upon this information, a number of goals were established and are a major component of this Master Plan, which is intended to be the primary policy document for City officials when considering matters related to land use, development proposals, and infrastructure improvements. What follows then, are the goals and action items that represent the overall vision for the City of Vassar. They will serve as the foundation for preparing concise and well thought-out community improvements for the life of this Master Plan.

All goals can be pursued with a vigorous action program. Such a program will allow policymakers to pursue actions either continually or in a defined timeframe. In the following sections, actions denoted with a (\*) are those which have been identified as recommended projects to be undertaken in the near future, within three years of the completion of this Master Plan. These actions will be listed in Chapter 7. The actions not denoted with a (\*) should be continually implemented by the City, or may be implemented over a longer period of time. The goals described in this section will be the guiding principles for future land use decisions by City officials and should guide rezoning decisions and other land use questions that arise from time to time, which might include floodplain management strategies, integrating transit and infrastructure improvements in the City land use pattern, and developing sensible new low-intensity industrial uses and public uses on formal industrial sites.

## COMMUNITY-WIDE GOALS AND ACTIONS

Broad considerations such as education, safety, and the small-town feel of a community impact more than just one land use or focus area within the community. In Vassar, these issues stand out as especially important to community members. In the community input survey, high-quality schools ranked as “very important” in achieving a high quality of life in Vassar’s future. A slightly higher number of community input survey respondents felt that aesthetics and blight throughout the community had gotten worse than better during the past 5 years. When asked how to best address general problem issues in the City, many respondents listed concerns about safety. These issues permeate many areas of the community. These broader issues are thus addressed in their own category as community-wide goals.



### Goal 1

**Create an environment that will meet the physical, social, and economic needs of present and future residents.**

#### Actions

- Provide safe and accessible areas for recreation and social interaction in Vassar's neighborhoods.
- Enforce performance standards governing commercial, light and heavy industrial, and other higher-intensity uses.

### Goal 2

**Work with property owners and governmental agencies to enhance the aesthetic characteristics of the community.**

#### Actions

- Develop standards which improve the visual appearance of outdoor storage, parking and loading areas and any outdoor operation.
- Employ and enforce ordinances for landscaping and waste management to remove blight and associated issues such as garbage accumulation and overgrown grass and weeds throughout the City.

### Goal 3

**Employ land use planning to meet the long-term needs of residents and improve the quality of life in the community.**

#### Actions

- Develop design standards which buffer surrounding agricultural and residential uses from the City's more intensive commercial and industrial uses.
- Use zoning in a way that ensures appropriate land use transitions to minimize conflicts.

### Goal 4

**Encourage intergovernmental cooperation with other surrounding communities in the coordination and provision of activities and projects in area-wide facilities.**

### Actions

- Regularly interact with Cass River Greenway, the Tuscola County Community Foundation, the Saginaw Watershed Initiative Network (WIN), and the Michigan DNR organizations to seek resources for connecting Vassar to the Cass River Water Trail (CRWT) and other regional recreation resources.
- Regularly work with the Thumb Area Tourism Council to maximize the promotion of the City's events and activities to visitors from surrounding communities.

### Goal 5

Work with the School District to foster a positive environment for families.

### Actions

- \* Work with the School Board to determine the best ways to assist with improving the school system.
- Encourage public involvement with community, civic, and school activities and organizations.
- Explore opportunities for feasible ways to share school and city-owned facilities for events and activities.

## RESIDENTIAL GOALS AND ACTIONS

The input received from Vassar's survey respondents showed that the small town character of the City was repeatedly found to be an important factor to quality of life. Holding the highest proportion of land use in the City, it is important that residential areas be developed, maintained, and redeveloped in a way that further contributes to the friendly, small-town, historical appeal of the City.



While residential areas are highly valued in Vassar, they face challenges. Residents are concerned about housing quality in the community, with 70% of community input survey respondents feeling that housing quality is either "somewhat of a problem (50%)" or "a big problem" (20%). The challenge moving forward will be to preserve the residential land use components that work for existing neighborhoods – the infrastructure, street trees, sidewalks, lights, and the quality of homes original to the community – while taking steps to redevelop or rehabilitate areas in distress.

All communities in Michigan are adjusting the way they view residential development in the wake of the housing-centered economic recession of 2008-2009. In Vassar, this means that overall efforts should be focused on preserving and enhancing existing neighborhoods. As residential growth slowly picks up, Vassar can look forward with an eye toward stabilizing the City's existing residential areas and attracting investment. Community input survey responses show a preference for single family homes on large residential lots, as well as options to meet the community's diverse needs including retirement or senior housing and mixed use housing. The

\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

development of these housing types should be encouraged where they can be feasibly built with high standards for aesthetic appeal, structural appeal, and environmental sustainability.

### Goal 1

Promote attractive and affordable housing choices.

#### Actions

- \* Promote beautification projects in neighborhoods.
- Use the Zoning Ordinance as a guide to ensure new single family homes are developed to a set of building standards and are compatible with the existing community housing stock.
- Remove unsanitary or unsafe housing through code enforcement or other means.
- Encourage the growth of retirement and/or senior housing where appropriate.
- Encourage mixed use development where appropriate.
- Use zoning to encourage desirable, high-quality low-income housing developments.
- Employ design standards for building orientation, spacing, open space, parking and screening to promote high-quality multiple-family residential housing options.

### Goal 2

Protect the identity and stability of residential neighborhoods.

#### Actions

- Maintain and rehabilitate homes which are original to the community to preserve and enhance the City's unique character.
- Maintain existing amenities and infrastructure in residential neighborhoods such as sidewalks, lighting and street trees.
- Employ redevelopment, code enforcement, and home improvements to encourage the long-term maintenance and vitality of existing single family residential areas.

## COMMERCIAL GOALS AND ACTIONS

Vassar is uniquely situated for commercial development. Its downtown serves as its cultural center; home to various community events and locally owned businesses. However, commercial growth is restricted in most of this area because of its location within the 100-year floodplain. New commercial development should continue to be restricted in this area. The challenge moving forward will be to focus other portions of the community as centers for commerce which serve a variety of local market needs while spurring job growth. Appropriate land use transitions should also be encouraged to minimize the impact of commercial use on adjacent residential and agricultural areas. Commercial developments should be subject to standards for landscaping, off-street parking, and structural quality which make them conducive to the overall aesthetic appeal



\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

of the City and quality of life of its residents. New developments that meet these standards should be encouraged in strategic areas. This is especially true of restaurants and food service establishments, clothing retail and general retail stores, and grocery stores, all of which were types of commercial uses favored heavily by community input survey respondents.

### **Goal 1**

Promote commercial growth in a way that enhances community economic development.

#### **Actions**

- \* Meet with the DDA to discuss overall goals for the Downtown area.
- \* Pursue advertisements of local businesses outside of Vassar on M-15.
- Redevelop, expand, beautify, and promote the central business district to promote commerce in the community.
- Establish a compatible relationship between commercial and adjacent residential uses, especially with regard to flood plain management, through long term planning and local ordinance adoption.
- Work with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to improve the downtown streetscape.
- Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to improve green spaces and parks which border the downtown area.
- Work regularly with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to pursue projects which foster economic development.

### **Goal 2**

Provide for a wide range of commercial facilities to serve the needs of the local population and visitors.

#### **Actions**

- \* Identify priority areas for lighting, sidewalk, access management and general infrastructure improvements in areas of the City where commercial development is preferred, especially on portions of M-15 / Huron Avenue and Goodrich Street outside of the 100-year floodplain.
- Encourage the development of commercial establishments, including restaurants and retail establishments, to serve the unique needs and demands of the community, where appropriate.
- Explore zoning mechanisms which provide flexibility for commercial developments with high design standards which meet market needs.
- Maintain the reuse of the movie theater and other historic commercial facilities.
- Encourage infill construction that upholds high design standards and adds to the variety of businesses and the appeal of Vassar's downtown.

\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

- Encourage area apartment complexes to promote local businesses for a variety of renters.

## INDUSTRIAL GOALS AND ACTIONS

With the final closure of the Metevation / Grede Foundry facility in October 2013, this Master Plan comes at a perfect time for new considerations for the role in industrial land uses in Vassar's future. With much of the community's southeastern corner dedicated for industrial land, and with nearly 7 in 10 community input survey respondents favoring the development of new industrial land near Huron Avenue and Sherman Street, new industrial development should be strongly encouraged. At the same time, the community's various shared concerns about housing quality, community aesthetics and blight provide an opportunity to ensure that industrial developments are encouraged which conform to high landscape and structural quality which minimize their impact on surrounding areas.



As Vassar looks to a future less dependent on traditional heavy manufacturing, there is also an opportunity to open vacated and undeveloped industrial lands for light industrial development. Light industrial uses such as warehousing, laboratories and research facilities, light manufacturing, and storage facilities should be encouraged. These uses, whose external effects are generally not felt outside of their boundaries, should be encouraged as buffering land uses between heavier industrial uses and surrounding residential, commercial, and public land uses. Where either light or heavy industrial development is sought, the City should consider financing mechanisms such as the development of a Local Development Financing Act (LDFA) district to achieve certain favorable developments such as manufacturing, agricultural processing, and high technology operations.

### Goal 1

Encourage a variety of industrial developments with attractive sites to strengthen the tax base and provide employment opportunities for area residents.

#### Actions

- \* Explore the opportunity to develop a Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA) district or other financing mechanisms to promote the development and redevelopment of industrial sites for manufacturing, agricultural processing, and high technology operations.
- Employ best practices for the re-use and redevelopment of large industrial lots, removing incompatible uses, consolidating land, and removing vacant and substandard buildings.
- Continue to regulate industrial areas as to separate light industrial uses from heavy industrial uses.
- Promote industrial development that respects the environment and protects natural features on the site by utilizing zoning to encourage landscaping standards and buffer requirements.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of discontinued industrial properties in the City.

\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

- Locate industrial areas within reasonable boundaries that are easily accessible from existing transportation networks and that are not subject to encroachment by incompatible uses.
- Ensure compatibility of the rail line with its adjacent land uses.
- Encourage industrial uses such as agricultural processing facilities which complement the many nearby agricultural lands.

## TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND ACTIONS

It is important to evaluate transportation needs in Vassar from a perspective of both vehicular and non-motorized transportation. In the community input survey, 69% of respondents indicated that high-quality roads are either important or very important in achieving a high quality of life in Vassar’s future. 69% of respondents also said that creating a walkable, pedestrian- and bike-friendly town is either important or very important (though the number indicating that this is “very important” was actually slightly higher, at 39% vs. 34% for high-quality roads). Vassar includes state roads, major arterial roads, minor arterial roads, and residential streets, as well as non-motorized paths. Each of these levels of the road hierarchy play an important role in connecting people through and across the City. Actions to improve transportation must accommodate pedestrians as well as vehicles benefiting from road improvements.



In 2015, the City completed an update to its 2010 Recreation Plan. This Plan highlighted the continued development of accessible non-motorized recreation corridors for a wide variety of residents. The City should synchronize its proposed and existing path network with its transportation network. Street and streetscape design standards will need to play a major role in making the transportation network more connective and usable for motorized and non-motorized users. These include crosswalk design, spatial standards for street and sidewalk width, landscaping, and lighting. Some of these features can be enhanced by enforcing and improving upon standards already found in the Zoning Ordinance. Listed below are some goals and actions that will help to improve motorized and non-motorized transit for visitors and residents of Vassar.

### Goal 1

Develop and maintain a network of streets that meets the needs of all City residents and businesses in a safe and convenient manner.

#### Actions

- \* Install new benches and facilitate new paving improvements in the downtown area.
- Seek and evaluate traffic calming devices to improve the flow of traffic.
- Look at the ways to improve the safe interaction of bicyclists, pedestrians, and cars on city sidewalks and streets.

\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

- Work with MDOT to provide safe pedestrian and non-motorized transportation options and promote safe traffic patterns on M-15.
- Utilize federal/state road and highway classification system for classifying existing and future streets in the City of Vassar.
- Limit points of ingress/egress on major streets.
- Continue to develop a bike / hiking trail network to connect all parts of the City to encourage non-motorized transportation.

## PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS AND ACTIONS

Vassar is home to nearly 88 acres of parks and recreational facilities and about 2 miles of non-motorized pathways. These recreational amenities should be maintained, enhanced, and expanded upon where appropriate to serve the recreational needs and enhance the quality of life of present and future Vassar residents. Vassar completed an update to its 2010 recreation plan in 2015. The City should continually review its 5-year recreation Plan as a means to seek guidance on recreation goals and actionable projects. The Planning Commission and City Council should also work closely with the Parks and Recreation Commission to identify potential projects for grant funding opportunities.



### Goal 1

Preserve the natural resources of the City of Vassar and provide for the recreational needs of all residents.

#### Actions

- \* Seek grants from the DNR to help implement the City's recreation plan.
- Pursue opportunities to improve parks and recreational facilities and programs in the community based on the recommendations of the most current Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Cooperate with intergovernmental, not for profit and community groups in the development of regional land and water trails and other recreational facilities.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS

The City of Vassar is closely entwined with the Cass River, and must manage it as a source of flooding as well as a positive recreational and environmental amenity. The City should continue to encourage natural features setbacks and enforce the structural requirements of the Floodplain Management Zone code as a way to promote uses that minimize flooding risk for land uses along the River and contribute to its overall health. The City should continue to maintain and improve open spaces used for recreation, both adjacent to the River and throughout the



\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

City, based on the recommendations of the City's recreation planning documents. Finally, the City should encourage the use of plantings and natural topography that enhance the natural features of developed sites. Goals and action items for improving natural environment are listed below.

### Goal 1

Preserve and enhance the natural and environmental resources of the City for all present and future City residents.

#### Actions

- \* Explore modifications to zoning ordinance regarding ground water for the purpose of wellhead protection.
- Implement land use patterns which direct new growth away from environmentally sensitive areas, such as woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, and areas subject to flooding.
- Promote sensitive and responsible storm water management practices through developing guidelines and policies based on state and regional Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water management.
- Implement development controls, which will maximize the protection of land-based natural resources while preserving the quality of air and water.

### Goal 2

Ensure development practices and land use policy continues to improve the relationship between the Cass River and the City's residents.

#### Actions

- Improve public access to the Cass River for a variety of users and uses.
- Continually review development practices for adherence to the City's floodplain management zone requirements and enforce the Flood Code to discourage unsafe, environmentally harmful, or otherwise inappropriate uses in the Cass River's 100-year floodplain.
- Preserve and protect the Cass River from the harmful impacts of development.
- Continue to manage and maintain flooding prevention measures throughout the City.

## INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS AND ACTIONS

Vassar's infrastructure including its water and sewer systems, its electrical, gas, and lighting lines, and various road infrastructure, are the lifeblood of the community. The City should work with utility providers to ensure utilities are readily available to residents. In March 2014, the City investigated factors contributing to an increase in water and sewer rates. The City should continue to investigate these issues in an effort to increase overall system efficiencies. It is important that the water and sewer system stays restricted to the City limits. In other ways, the City should work with surrounding communities in meeting the infrastructure needs of the City.



\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The City should also promote feasible, targeted improvements such as installing new utilities underground as appropriate.

### Goal 1

Improve and enhance the infrastructure of the City for all present and future City residents.

#### Actions

- \* Inventory current water and sewer system issues.
- Provide and plan for adequate utilities and infrastructure so that Vassar may ensure managed and responsible growth.
- Cooperate with the surrounding communities in meeting infrastructure needs of the community.
- Limit the water and sewer system to city lands.
- Use underground utilities where appropriate.
- Improve water and sewer services to city residents.

## GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES GOALS AND ACTIONS

The City of Vassar operates many government and community services such as the Police Department, the Fire Department, Vassar Schools, the Library, the Post Office and City Hall. The City should continue to invest in these services, with an understanding that the municipal budget must be managed cautiously. In an environment where state and federal funding for community improvements is limited, the City should make strategic improvements to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its facilities and services. In the community input survey, respondents indicated that they want their government to focus on community and economic development, police and fire services, and roads.



From a community planning perspective, the City has in some ways a limited role in responding to broad-based community concerns such as safety and the quality of schools. However, the City can use its services to address these issues where appropriate. The City can adopt and enforce ordinances to control noise, light, and hours of operation for certain commercial uses. The City can also facilitate interactions with the Schools to bring school district events more into the fabric of the community, and vice versa. The City should also improve engagement with the community; continually utilizing its website and other web and print media to ensure residents are engaging with civic and school organizations.

\* This item is listed in the 3-Year Implementation Plan, listed in more detail in Chapter 7.

### Goal 1

Utilize community policing and code enforcement to maintain a safe environment for all Vassar residents.

#### Actions

- Adopt new codes and ordinances to address blight issues in all types of neighborhoods, including empty buildings, housing structure quality, property maintenance and façade improvement.

### Goal 2

Promote effective, efficient, and responsive services for all City residents.

#### Actions

- Continue planning for capital improvements that will systematically plan and budget future investment in community facilities such as the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Fire Department.

## PLACE-MAKING GOALS AND ACTIONS

When asked how important a variety of features or events are in making Vassar a unique and enjoyable place, 69% listed downtown Vassar and 69% listed the Cass River as either important or very important. Investing in these unique amenities, as well as the various community events considered important by Vassar's residents, is key in ensuring Vassar's sense of place in the future. Goals and actions for place-making need to ensure that Vassar's downtown remains the cultural heart of the City, where opportunities for social interaction can take shape and where visitors can experience the City's uniqueness. The Cass River should also be showcased and celebrated as a way to bring more visitors to the City.



Development and redevelopment in the Downtown area must be responsible and strategic, and must function to elevate the area as the center of the community. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will serve a huge role in incentivizing small business development and allowing continued investment downtown through strategic public-private partnerships. A mix of uses will help to diversify the economy of the downtown area and make it more resilient to market fluctuations while making it approachable and inviting to residents and visitors alike.

As with residential areas, design standards can play a major role in fortifying the downtown area's appeal and small town character. These include developments that maintain a small and approachable scale, streetscape features that promote pedestrian access, strategic street trees, street lights, and landscaping, and architectural features that accentuate landmarks and attractive vantage points. Over 50% of community input survey respondents indicated that they would like to see streetscape improvements such as more lighting and benches in downtown over the next 10-15 years, as well as landscaping improvements such as flower pots and street trees. The same place-making methods can and should be employed where feasible outside of the downtown area.

## **Goal 1**

Facilitate place-making strategies throughout the City to provide a sense of uniqueness and a high quality of life in the community.

### **Actions**

- \* Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City on developing a new access point to the Cass River in the downtown area.
- Continue to maintain the distinct image of the public realm including the street trees, street lights, open spaces and street furniture.
- Continue to allow and encourage a mixture of commercial, residential, office and civic uses downtown through zoning.
- Continue holding and seek ways to expand popular events and facilities where appropriate, including public spaces such as the rail trail, and annual events such as the Pumpkin Roll.
- Seek ways to use community events to foster connections between a variety of community members and stakeholders, including Township residents.

## **Goal 2**

Take advantage of Vassar's unique facilities and events as a way to promote a strong cultural identity for the City.

### **Actions**

- Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to develop new features at City-owned facilities which provide regional tourism opportunities, such as fishing facilities, a boat launch, and a picnic area as opportunities become available.
- Encourage regional connections to Vassar's unique facilities in a way that promotes the City as a unique place within larger regional tourism efforts and opportunities.
- Work in conjunction with the DDA and Parks and Recreation Commission to develop and expand public spaces with defined uses which connect with other facilities.

# Chapter 6

## What will Vassar Look Like?

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### INTRODUCTION

The future land use map will depict the desired form and character the City of Vassar should take over the next five to twenty years. The map depicting the future land uses for Vassar is shown on page 77 at the end of this section. The proposed future land uses in the City of Vassar are divided into ten categories.

The future land use map also transforms the goals and capital improvements into a graphic guide for land development and management in Vassar. The future land use map serves as a guide to decision making – it does not specify how every lot, parcel, or site should be used or zoned. While the future land use map attempts to translate future land use categories to specific zoning districts, it is mostly intended to provide a framework for future site-specific land use or zoning decisions that are brought before the Planning Commission. For example, the future land use map may indicate a single-family residential area, and yet it may not be zoned for residential until a property owner requests that zoning change and the City adopts the rezoning request.

On the future land use map, it should be noted future land use categories are slightly different from the existing land use categories. This difference is attributed to the fact that future land use is developed with an eye toward the zoning classification that will be needed to actually move toward the implementation of this plan. For example, while the existing land use map described wooded and agricultural uses, these uses are not described on the future land use map. These existing land uses are combined into various other future land use categories because the future land use categories reflect how these woodland and agricultural land uses should be used in the future, and hence should be zoned. Ultimately, the recommendations shown on the future land use map are intended to help Vassar officials, property owners, and residents make zoning and

development decisions that are in the best interest of the Vassar community. The future land use map seeks to guide residential, commercial, and industrial development into appropriate locations while maintaining the overall character and appearance of the City of Vassar.

Descriptions of the new future land use categories begin on the following page. The future land use map is shown at the end of this section.

## LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Future Land Use	Area (Acres)	Portion of total land area (%)
Single Family Residential – High	289.1	24.4
Public / Semi-Public	175.7	14.8
Industrial – Light	165.5	14.0
Industrial - Heavy	161.5	13.6
Single Family Residential – Medium	139.6	11.8
Single Family Residential – Light	79.1	6.7
Commercial – General	78.9	6.7
Multiple-Family Residential - Light	57.1	4.8
Multiple-Family Residential - Heavy	22.5	1.9
Commercial – Central Business District	14.5	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1183.3</b>	

### SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - HIGH

Single-family residential development will continue to be a prominent development pattern in the City. The most widespread form of single family residential development will be higher-density developments on traditional sized, relatively small lots. Single Family Residential-High uses will be the largest future land use category, and will account for 289.1 acres or 24.4 % of the land area. This land use category will include single-family dwellings with accessory structures such as garages and sheds, along with certain public and institutional buildings. Single-family residential-high areas are found throughout the City, especially in three main areas:



- Adjacent to Sherman Street and to the south and west.
- Adjacent to Cass Avenue, east of downtown.
- Adjacent to M-15, west of the River and downtown.

Older housing structures, which are prominent in many parts of Vassar, should be preserved and maintained throughout single family residential areas. New single family developments should

also be encouraged. Single-family residential – high uses are intended to provide for stability and protect and encourage the residential character, maintaining high-quality housing stock at a density having a minimum lot area of around 7,200 square feet (-sf) or higher. Impervious surface coverage limitations should be applied to reduce harmful impacts of development on single family residential-medium lots, which is a particularly important regulation for managing storm water flows in the 100-year floodplain. Single-family residential-high land uses should correspond with the RA-1 one-family zoning district.

## PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC

There are a wide variety of lands that will be held in the public interest in Vassar's future. These lands include those used as parks, as public government facilities and utilities, as schools, and as quasi-public institutions. This category includes all public land developed for the purpose of providing recreation. This category, generally consolidated from of a variety of existing land use categories, will be called the public / semi-public future land uses. Because of the breadth of lands used for public / semi-public future land use, they constitute the second largest group of lands in Vassar, covering an area of 175.7 acres or about 14.8% of Vassar's total future land use. This future land use will include the following areas:



- Over 88 acres of land currently used as parks and recreational facilities
- About 49 acres of lands owned and operated by public schools.
- About 21 acres of land currently used for government offices and buildings and other government lands including the City Hall, the Post Office, and the Fire Station.
- About 18 acres of lands owned and operated by churches.

Public / semi-public uses will include property held in the public interest and is usually exempt from real property taxation, therefore, decisions about where these future land uses will occur have been based on a thorough analysis of future potential growth trends and a consideration of the importance in maintaining existing public / semi-public facilities and uses. Public / semi-public lands will be located throughout the City. Being located in a variety of areas, public / semi-public uses will serve a variety of land use functions and will need to be regulated by zoning to fit into the context of other adjacent land uses. Therefore, public / semi-public land uses will not correspond solely with one zoning district. A large portion of public / semi-public future land uses will correspond with the Heavy Industrial I-2 zoning district, because large parcels which may be suitable for industrial land uses could also be re-purposed for public facilities and lands. Generally speaking, the public / semi-public land uses will also correspond strongly with the RA-1, RA-2 and RA-3 Single Family heavy, medium and light density residential zoning districts. Where these districts occur, many public facilities and uses such as parks and public buildings such as

the Post Office and library will continue to be integral to the character and the quality of life for residential areas.

## LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

As traditional forms of industry continue to change and gradually leave the City of Vassar and the State of Michigan at large, it becomes increasingly important to accommodate a variety of new sources of employment and industry. The role of light industrial future land uses will thus grow in the future of Vassar. The Light Industrial future land use is meant to encourage lesser-intensity wholesale activities, warehousing, research and industrial operations. Light Industrial uses may also include retail or other commercial uses which have a substantial industrial component, such as lumberyards and upholsterers, as well as those which serve the convenience needs of the industrial district, such as food or drink establishments or bowling alleys. Light industrial land uses typically will have external physical effects in terms of noise, vibration, and light which are restricted to the area of these uses and have no detrimental effect on surrounding districts. In Vassar, Light Industrial future land uses will take shape where they exist currently in the southeast corner of the community, as well as in some previously undeveloped Heavy Industrial lots. Specifically, these uses will be found adjacent to N. Water Street and the MOOT / Huron-Eastern Railway, along Sherman Street, and along the north side of Huron Street east of Sherman Street nearly to the eastern end of the City. The vast majority of Light Industrial future land uses will occur outside of the 100-year floodplain. Light Industrial future land uses will occur on about 165.5 acres, or about 14.0% of Vassar's total land area. These land uses should correspond with the I-1 Light Industrial zoning district.



## HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Heavy industrial land uses will be a very prominent future land use in the future of Vassar, covering the third largest area of all future land uses at 161.5 acres or about 13.6 percent. With the closure of the Grede Foundry and the larger regional shift away from heavy manufacturing, this category will shrink slightly in scope as public and semi-public lands may begin to take shape on former industrial lots. Land in the heavy industrial future land use area will continue to house trucking facilities, storage facilities, lumber and planing mills, warehouses, manufacturing facilities and other industrial uses as well as substations, utility boxes, and other facilities used by private utility companies. Heavy industrial lands in the future will be more separated from residential land uses by public / semi-public land uses and light industrial land uses, and will be contained in the southeast corner of town. This will include the



area south of Huron Avenue and east of the MOOT / Huron Eastern Railroad as well as the land uses adjacent to Enterprise Drive. The Heavy Industrial future land use will be used for manufacturing, assembling and fabrication activities including larger industrial operations with relatively high external physical impacts. Strategic planning for light industrial and public / semi-public uses around the periphery of these uses will help to minimize impacts on surrounding uses. Performance standards for light, sound, and vibration, and landscaping standards can also help minimize these impacts. Heavy Industrial future land uses will largely correspond with the Heavy Industrial I-2 zoning district.

## SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM

Vassar will continue to provide residential land for its residents in a variety of settings for a variety of lifestyles. The City currently includes a substantial amount of land allocated for mid-sized residential lots; those between 9,600 and 12,000 square feet. These land uses will include lots of medium width, at least 80' wide, and with medium density. These lots should also be subject to impervious surface coverage limitations to minimize environmental impacts. These residential areas accommodate families in a variety of housing units on mid-sized lots. This future land use area will also allow the development of some two-family / duplex dwellings where located and laid out in accordance with the context and character of adjacent properties. In Vassar's future, single family residential-medium uses will be concentrated in several key locations:



- Adjacent to the Huron Easter Railroad, alongside existing heavy-density residential developments, and in replacement of lands currently used for agriculture in the **southwest** corner of the City.
- Along the east side of Division Street around Maple Street in the **north** end of the City.
- Along the south side of Cass Avenue adjacent to the Cass River on lands in the **northeast** end of the City, most of which are currently used for agriculture.
- A small amount of land in the **southeast** end of town adjacent to Norman Street, near future industrial-light uses and public / semi-public uses.

Single family - Medium future land uses will account for the fourth largest area of all future land uses in Vassar, covering about 139.6 acres or about 11.8% of the total land area. Single family-medium future land uses will largely correspond with the RA-2 one-family and two-family residential zoning district.

## SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - LIGHT

The lowest density form of residential development; the single family residential-light future land use, will cover the smallest land area of all single family residential land uses, covering about 79.1 acres or about 6.7% of Vassar's total area. This will be the fifth largest overall future land use category. Light-density single family residential development will accommodate suitably large lots suitable for both new developments and, at least equally importantly, existing community housing stock that was historically developed on larger lots. Single-family residential-light future land uses will typically have lot widths of at least 100'. They will also include impervious surface coverage limitations meant to minimize impacts on storm water management and other environmental effects of development, which is particularly important for larger lots. This land use pattern will cover the relatively new developments adjacent to Cork Pine Lane in the southwest end of the City as well as existing light-density developments and currently undeveloped or agricultural lands in the northwest corner of the City adjacent to Athletic Street and along Prospect Street, just west of Downtown. Single-family residential-light future land uses may include traditional single family housing units and accessory structures related to these buildings as well as publicly owned buildings and facilities and home occupations.



## GENERAL BUSINESS

Commercial development in Vassar adopts different forms in different portions of the City. Outside of the downtown area, most future commercial development will occur in areas designated for General Business future land use. General business use will occupy 6.7 percent, or about 78.9 acres, of the future land use in Vassar. General business uses in Vassar will continue to include automotive-oriented uses such as larger gas stations and drive-thru businesses for residents and outside travelers, as well as retail sales and service establishments, financial institutions, professional offices, local small business operators, grocery stores, and personal service establishments such as barbers and hair salons. The General Business future land use district boundaries are heavily influenced by public input received as a part of the master planning process. Residents made clear that they did not want to see new commercial development near the Cass River, with the exception of downtown businesses, and many were interested in restricting all commercial development in the 100-year floodplain. General business future land use areas should also encourage the development of types of commercial uses needed by residents as stated in the Master Plan public input process such as food service establishments and retail clothing stores. General Business commercial future land uses are thus found in several specific portions of the community:



- Near the west entryway of the City, near the intersection of M-15 / Huron Avenue and Brady Street.
- On the northwest side of Main Street, northwest of the Cass River, outside of the 100-year floodplain.
- Along M-15 / Goodrich Street, to the southern border of the City.
- Adjacent to Spruce Street and Main Street.
- Adjacent to Spring Street and Main Street.

The General Business future land use areas should provide a diversity of businesses along major thoroughfares of the City which provide convenient access to goods and services by automobiles. The General Business future land use should be served by the B-2 General Business zoning designation.

## MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - LIGHT

The Multiple-Family Residential-Light future land use district will be applied to ensure the continuation of livable multiple-family developments in Vassar while providing a template for future high-quality multiple-family developments in strategic areas of the City. The existing Timberridge Duplex development and transitional or undeveloped lands on the northwest side of the intersection of Oak Street and Division Street will be accommodated by the Multiple-Family Residential-Light future land use area, as will other suitable future duplex, townhouse, and apartment developments. Sufficient standards for minimum lot area, generally at least 7,200-sf, as well as maximum impervious surface coverage, should be applied through zoning to make for environmentally responsible, livable, and healthy multiple-family residential developments. Multiple-family Residential-light future land uses will be found north of Grant Street adjacent to the MOOT / Huron-Eastern Railway and Timberridge Drive and northeast of Division Street and Oak Street. Multiple-Family Residential-Light future land uses will account for about 57.1 acres or about 4.8% of all future land uses in Vassar. These lands should correlate to the RM-1 multiple-family residential zoning district.



## MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - HEAVY

Multiple-family Residential-Heavy developments will be meant to accommodate multiple family residential developments at higher densities than the multiple-family residential-light future land uses, but will similarly be intended to provide high-quality structures with high aesthetic and structural standards and minimal impacts to the environment. Like the Multiple-Family Residential-Light future land uses, the Multiple-Family Residential-Heavy uses should be zoned for minimum lot areas and maximum impervious surface coverages to facilitate these goals. This will allow for the continuation of existing multiple-family developments including the Tall Oaks Manor, Walnut Grove, and Popular Point apartments and will also encourage new developments to take form. Multiple-Family Residential-Light future land uses will account for about 22.5 acres, or about 1.9% of the total land area in Vassar. These future land uses will correlate to the RM-2 Multiple-Family Residential zoning district.



## CENTRAL BUSINESS

Though covering the smallest proportional area of all future land uses in Vassar, the Central Business future land use areas will be vital in shaping the character and appeal of Vassar. Central Business future land uses will be used to serve the needs of the entire City, including those who live in Vassar as well as those who only work or visit within the city limits. The Central Business future land uses will include retail businesses which supply commodities on the premises within a completely enclosed building including foods, furniture, clothing, and dry goods. These uses may include offices, retail stores, and related activities, as well as mixed use developments which encourage strategic residential use in the second stories of buildings in these areas. The Central Business future land use area will also serve as a source of identity for the City, where many regular activities and events will occur. New developments, as opposed to redevelopments, should be carefully considered in the Central Business future land use area as most of this area is within the 100-year floodplain. Central Business future land uses will cover about 14.5 acres, or about 1.2%, of the land area of Vassar. Central Business future land uses should correspond with the B-1 Central Business zoning district.







# Chapter 7

## Action Program: A Checklist for Vassar's Future

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### INTRODUCTION

Implementation of Vassar's goals is a multi-faceted effort that will likely enmesh the zoning ordinance, other local ordinances, various City departments, and other plans such as the City's five-year capital improvement program. Community input results and interactions with Planning Commission members show that the priorities shared by many community members include maintaining high-quality schools, improving public safety, expanding opportunities for employment and economic vitality downtown and throughout the City, and maintaining and improving existing infrastructure and services. The goals in this section are divided into broad categories and relate directly to these and other issues identified as priorities by the residents and the Planning Commission. Previously, in chapter 5, goals were identified in order to respond to the broader concerns and desires of the community and the expertise of the City's Planning Commission and other community stakeholders. These goals were divided among a variety of focus areas:

- Community-Wide
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation
- Parks and Recreation
- Natural Environment
- Infrastructure
- Government and Community Services
- Place-Making

Within these goals, specific actions were identified. These actions comprise a toolkit the Planning Commission and the City's other policymakers can use to meet the community's goals. Many of these actions should be pursued either regularly or incrementally. They are items which, when

done consistently over the next ten years, are intended improve the quality of Vassar’s landscape, make its government more effective, and make its economic environment more business-friendly. Some actions, however, can and should be pursued only once and in the near future in order to similarly help forward the City’s goals. These more immediate actions are identified as the City’s “Checklist for Vassar’s Future”. The following section lists the items for Vassar’s checklist. This format serves as a useful checklist to track accomplishments and reassign priorities. It also serves as a checklist to facilitate annual reviews of the plan. Following the checklist, there are additional implementation considerations for the City.

## CHECKLIST FOR VASSAR’S FUTURE

### 2015

- Meet with the DDA and EDC and discuss overall goals for the Downtown area.
- Explore ways to simplify the zoning ordinance and consolidate the City’s zoning districts.
- Work with the School Board to determine the best ways to assist with improving the school system.
- Identify priority areas for lighting, sidewalk, access management and general infrastructure improvements in areas of the City where commercial development is preferred, especially on portions of M-15 / Huron Avenue and Goodrich Street outside of the 100-year floodplain.

### 2016

- Install new benches and facilitate new paving improvements in the downtown area.
- Pursue advertisements of local businesses outside of Vassar on M-15.
- Promote neighborhood beautification projects.
- Explore modifications to zoning ordinance regarding ground water for the purpose of wellhead protection.
- Seek grants from the DNR to help implement the City's recreation plan.

### 2017

- Inventory current water and sewer system issues.
- Explore the opportunity to develop a Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA) district or other financing mechanisms to promote the development and redevelopment of industrial sites for manufacturing, agricultural processing, and high technology operations.
- Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City on developing a new access point to the Cass River in the downtown area.

## ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

### **Master Plan Implementation: An Overview**

Master planning should be a continuous process. The objectives, policies and recommended actions are based on the community's understanding of today's problems, technology and implementation procedures. A Plan Review and Update Procedure are necessary to address changes in community values, living patterns and perception. Therefore, the Plan will be monitored annually, updated periodically, an extensive evaluation will be performed at a minimum of every five (5) years and a major reassessment and revision will be undertaken after a minimum of fifteen (15) years and a maximum of twenty (20) years. The only way to make a plan truly work is to use the plan, to reference it and to correct it or change it when it is not accurately reflecting current changes and conditions.

The actors in the monitoring and update process should include not only the Planning Commission, City Council and their staff, but a representative sample of interested citizens. Just as citizen involvement was an integral part of the process that culminated in the Plan; it is necessary, if the Plan is to remain relevant to the aspirations and needs of the community. Representatives from the schools, business and development communities, other public agencies and groups concerned with the City should also be included in the review process.

The monitoring process to be conducted annually, involves first, assessing factors such as socioeconomic data, development activity, changes in technology and indicators of public opinion. Next an evaluation of the relevancy of the Plan in light of changing conditions is performed. Finally, the results of the monitoring are reported in the Planning Commission's Annual Report. When the monitoring process reveals changes in the community to a degree that seriously impacts upon the relevance of the Plan, the Planning Commission will direct the staff to prepare a Plan update. The update is intended to address only those aspects of the Plan found to be outdated and no longer relevant.

Updates will be performed as need is indicated through the monitoring process. After a minimum of five years, and again at minimum five year intervals, a thorough review of the Plan will be performed to evaluate its effectiveness. The main feature of this review would be a study of all the action recommendations. Each recommendation will be examined for continuing relevance and success in implementation. The evaluation will involve two considerations. First, the effectiveness of the technique by which the recommendations were implemented will be examined. Then the action itself will be studied to determine whether the action achieved the desired objective. Those recommended actions not implemented will also be reviewed for continuing relevance and probability of implementation. This review will help the Planning

Commission adjust the plan to better achieve the goals and objectives, implement City policies, and maintain the credibility of the Plan. After at least fifteen years, but no longer than twenty years, a complete revision of the Plan will be performed. This revision would follow a process similar to the one which has culminated in this document and result in a new Master Plan document.

## **Implementation: Additional Resources**

The key to a well-planned community is the actual day-to-day use of planning documents, like this Master Plan. Because this plan is to be the basis for future zoning and planning decisions, it is imperative that the plan be available to City of Vassar staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as business owners, developers, stakeholders from Tuscola County and the region, and the general public.

The implementation of this Master Plan depends on its continual use by the Planning Commission and the City Council. In its best form, implementation of this plan will result in the achievement of the goals. Implementation is often the most difficult portion of the planning process because while the intentions of the City and its residents and stakeholders are clear, the legal ways and available planning tools are often not. The following provides a review of additional tools available to the City of Vassar and the ways in which they can be used to ensure that the goals of this plan are met. The following tools can help ensure the continued progress toward the implementation of this plan.

**Zoning Changes and Ordinance Updates** Zoning is integral to implementing the goals and actions of this Master Plan in part by providing the legal and spatial framework which promotes the orderly development of a community. With a new Master Plan in place, the City has an opportunity to update its current zoning ordinance to reflect the goals adopted in this plan. Many of the changes may be minor but provide a substantial benefit. For example, one change may be to reduce the number of residential zoning districts in the City, and allowing residential uses of varying densities in a single zoning district. Similarly, the Planning Commission may redefine permitted land uses in the Central Business zoning district to allow a mix of uses and mixed use developments in the downtown area. The zoning ordinance is also a basis for enforcing, reviewing, refining, and identifying appropriate restrictions on developments inside the City's 100-year floodplain. Another change to the zoning ordinance may be larger in scope, which takes a look at how the zoning ordinance is actually used and then finding ways to make it more a user-friendly document through the use of graphics and images. Another step may be to review the cases that have come before the Planning Commission to determine if there are trends that may need to be addressed in the zoning ordinance itself.

**Code Enforcement** The administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance by City officials is integral to its effectiveness, as with all City codes. Enforcement must be thorough and consistent. Procedures such as building inspections, site plan review, and other ordinance administration tasks should be assigned to responsible entities, whereby more discretionary review authority should be assigned to the Planning Commission and more nondiscretionary measures may be assigned to the Building and/or Zoning Administrators. All ordinance enforcement should be done regularly should be resourced with the staff levels and/or consulting assistance necessary to fulfill the day-to-day functions needed to perform a thorough job.

**Identifying and Pursuing Capital Improvements** In the reality of limited available funding at any given time, the City should prioritize specific projects and initiate schedules for their initiation and completion. A Capital Improvements Program which serves as a schedule for implementing public capital improvements, which acknowledges current and anticipated demands, and which recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community should be

regularly implemented by the City. Long-range programming of public improvements should prioritize projects on the basis of community need, should be developed within the City's financial constraints, and should be based upon a sound financial Plan, and should allow for program flexibility. In order to guide the Planning Commission in this process, they should continually evaluate community conditions and development factors, and should continually review proposed improvements and related expenditures. The Planning Commission should ultimately review project proposals to assure conformity with the Master Plan and to make recommendations regarding prioritizing projects and appropriate methods of financing.

**Local Financing Mechanisms and Co-Development** The City of Vassar has access to a number of possible local financing tools. The City should prioritize and schedule its improvements through a capital improvements program. The City may be able to use its general fund for some of the most important improvements. Revenue bonds and general obligation bonds may also be employed by the City. A special assessment can also be used for infrastructure projects. The City should seek ways to encourage joint public and private investments for a common purpose. This includes mechanisms where the City can involve itself in the process of private development such as site location selection, service agreements, and local tax incentives and abatements. The City should continue to use its Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to promote economic growth in the downtown area, halt property value deterioration, and increase property tax valuation partially by using Tax Increment Financing as a tool for generating revenue in the DDA boundary area. The City should also explore opportunities to develop a Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA) to finance public facility improvements using Tax Increment Financing to encourage manufacturing, agricultural processing, or high technology activities on current or defunct industrial lands in the City. The City may also reach out to local foundations and area individuals for support for various civic projects. Additionally, the City may seek to access a variety of government loan and grant programs available to local governments, as described below.

**Grant Opportunities to Support Proposed Capital Improvements** This Master Plan can also be used to identify potential funding sources to support proposed capital improvement projects, such as grant and loan programs to help fund priorities. At the Federal level, there is the Housing and Community Facilities Programs, the Public Works and Economic Development Program, Rural Business Enterprise Grants, and the Water and Wastewater Disposal Loan and Grant Program, to name a few. At the State level, an important funding source for communities with substantial low-to moderate-income households is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Another potential funding source may be the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which offers grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Michigan Natural resources Trust Fund, and the Bond Fund. The Michigan Department of Transportation also administers Federal funds appropriated under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (Public Law 112-141, MAP-21).

**Regional Cooperation** Development, growth, and changes within Tuscola County as well as Saginaw County, will affect its quality of life and growth within the City itself. Vassar and its neighboring communities are interrelated in that trends in overall population loss and declining housing value affect the entire area. The City has the opportunity to pursue cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with all the surrounding communities and Tuscola County. Cooperative relationships between and among Vassar and neighboring communities can provide an opportunity for the full impact of new or expanding developments to be considered as well as

provide an opportunity for communities to pool resources and skills to tackle similar challenges. At the least, the City of Vassar should actively participate with the review and opportunity for comment on neighboring communities' Master Plans. Further, the City should invite comment and suggestions from neighboring communities on major developments within Vassar.

**Local Planning Capacity** Good planning practice and State law require the City to review its plan every five years and update it if necessary. A cursory review of the plan should take place annually by both the Planning Commission and the City Council. This provides an opportunity to consider the goals and intent of the plan against pending capital improvements, budget requests, and other developments that may impact the community. The City of Vassar provides important planning and development services with limited staff. When change confronts the community, it will be necessary to review the time and effort expended by the staff to address development proposals. Adjustments in fees and changes in the application processes may be necessary in order to cover the costs associated with new or expanding development.

**Additional Implementation Tasks** Many of the steps necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this Master Plan might not be obvious or are not part of an established City fund. The implementation efforts that have been described in this section focus on the residents, landowners, and other stakeholders in Vassar. To date, the City of Vassar has taken steps to keep residents and others involved and informed regarding City issues. The successful implementation of this plan depends greatly on City officials using the plan and residents being aware of the plan, knowing its purpose, and understanding how they might be able to use it. This can be accomplished by consistently referring to the document when making zoning decisions and even referencing the plan, when appropriate, during site plan reviews and variance decisions. Further, the City should keep a copy of the Future Land Use Map on display and provide a copy of the plan for review at the City Hall at all times. Citizen participation should be strongly encouraged in a continuing planning process. The successful implementation of planning proposals will require citizen understanding and support.

## CONCLUSION

The City of Vassar has spent approximately a year addressing important issues impacting the community. They received valuable input from residents from an online community input survey. As a result, the Planning Commission has compiled a carefully prepared Master Plan that represents the data, efforts, and community spirit of City residents. This plan is only the beginning of an action program for the next five to twenty years. Because the future welfare of the City depends upon rational, coordinated action, the Planning Commission stands ready to meet any person or group interested in the future development of the area. The Planning Commission will be available to help and guide those needing advice or wish to be part of the plan implementation process. While this task is to be led by City officials, implementation also depends on every responsible citizen in the City of Vassar. By working together, the City will continue to be a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work, and play.

# Appendix A

## Additional Demographic Information

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The City of Vassar: Demographics and Census Data, in comparison with the County, State, and Country

Source Key: US  
A5  
A3  
US Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census Data  
American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, 2012  
American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, 2012

	Vassar City						Tuscola County						Michigan						United States					
	2010	Source	2000	Source	2010	Source	2010	Source	2000	Source	2010	Source	2000	Source	2010	Source	2000	Source						
#	%		#	%		#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%		#	%							
<b>POPULATION</b>	2,697		2,823			5,729		5,226			9,883,640		9,938,444			308,745,538		281,421,906						
<b>% Change in Population, 2000 - 2010</b>	NA	-4.5%	NA	NA		NA	-4.3%	NA	NA		NA	-0.6%	NA	NA		NA	9.7%	NA	NA					
<b>Population age 5 years and younger</b>	189	7.0%	172	6.1%		3,128	5.6%	3,517	6.0%		596,286	6.0%	672,005	6.8%		20,201,362	6.5%	19,175,798	6.8%					
<b>5 to 19</b>	742	27.5%	885	31.3%		11,432	20.5%	13,685	23.5%		2,052,599	20.8%	2,212,060	22.2%		63,066,194	20.4%	61,297,467	21.8%					
<b>20 to 24</b>	164	6.1%	161	5.7%		2,929	5.3%	3,178	5.5%		669,072	6.8%	643,839	6.5%		21,585,999	7.0%	18,964,001	6.7%					
<b>25 to 44</b>	621	23.0%	744	26.4%		12,807	23.0%	16,380	28.1%		2,442,123	24.7%	2,960,544	29.8%		82,134,554	26.6%	85,040,251	30.2%					
<b>45 to 64</b>	662	24.5%	524	18.6%		4,151	7.4%	14,056	24.1%		2,762,030	27.9%	2,230,978	22.5%		81,489,445	26.4%	61,952,636	22.0%					
<b>65+</b>	319	11.8%	290	10.3%		1,766	3.2%	7,450	12.8%		1,361,530	13.8%	1,219,018	12.3%		40,267,984	13.0%	34,991,753	12.4%					
<b>Population age 19 and younger</b>	931	34.5%	1,057	37.4%		14,560	26.1%	17,202	29.5%		2,648,885	26.8%	2,884,065	29.0%		83,267,556	23.9%	80,473,265	28.6%					
<b>Median Age</b>	32.5	NA	30.5	NA		41.7	NA	37	NA		38.9	NA	35.5	NA		37.2	NA	35.3	NA					
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.47	NA	2.55	NA		2.52	NA	2.65	NA		2.49	NA	2.56	NA		2.58	NA	2.59	NA					
<b>Black &amp; Hispanic Population</b>	340	12.6%	316	11.2%		2,192	3.9%	1,964	3.37%		NA	18.4%	1,736,619	17.50%		NA	28.5%	69,964,008	24.90%					
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	1,154	NA	1,062	NA		24,451	NA	23,378	NA		4,532,233	NA	4,234,279	100.0%		131,704,730	100.0%	115,904,641	100.0%					
<b>Occupied</b>	1,001	86.7%	991	93.3%		21,590	88.3%	21,454	91.8%		3,872,508	85.4%	3,785,661	89.4%		116,716,292	88.6%	105,480,101	91.0%					
<b>Vacant</b>	153	13.3%	71	6.7%		2,861	11.7%	1,924	8.2%		659,725	14.6%	448,618	10.6%		14,988,438	11.4%	10,424,540	9.0%					
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	644	64.3%	702	70.8%		17,880	82.8%	18,037	84.1%		2,793,342	72.1%	2,793,124	73.8%		75,986,074	65.1%	69,815,753	66.2%					
<b>Renter occupied</b>	357	35.7%	289	29.2%		3,710	17.2%	3,417	15.9%		1,079,166	27.9%	992,537	26.2%		40,730,218	34.9%	35,664,348	33.8%					
<b>Median Housing Value (\$)</b>	94,000	NA	A5 69,000	NA		101,000	NA	A5 87,100	NA		119,200	NA	A3 115,600	NA		174,600	NA	A3 119,600	NA					
<b>Median Housing Value (\$)</b> (Adjusted for 2012 US Dollars)	94,000	NA	NA 91,998	NA		101,000	NA	NA 116,130	NA		119,200	NA	NA 154,129	NA		174,600	NA	NA 159,463	NA					
<b>AGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURE</b>																								
<b>2010+</b>	0	0.0%	A5 NA	NA		10	0.0%	A5 NA	NA		8,628	0.2%	A3 NA	NA		629,215	0.5%	A3 NA	NA					
<b>2000-2009</b>	99	8.2%	A5 NA	NA		1,876	7.7%	A5 NA	NA		4,690,010	10.4%	A3 NA	NA		19,725,338	14.9%	A3 NA	NA					
<b>1990-1999</b>	171	14.2%	A5 57*	5.3%		3,044	12.5%	A5 3,120	13.3%		5,781,134	12.8%	A3 6,238,555	14.7%		18,292,225	13.8%	A3 19,701,058	17.0%					
<b>1980-1989</b>	87	7.2%	A5 67	6.2%		2,106	8.6%	A5 2,298	9.8%		4,511,317	10.0%	A3 4,461,197	10.5%		18,335,738	13.9%	A3 18,326,847	15.8%					
<b>1970-1979</b>	144	11.9%	A5 169	15.7%		4,756	19.5%	A5 5,035	21.5%		6,991,194	15.4%	A3 7,227,799	17.1%		21,008,541	15.9%	A3 21,438,863	18.5%					
<b>1960-1969</b>	130	10.8%	A5 78	7.2%		3,015	12.3%	A5 2,720	11.6%		5,527,668	12.2%	A3 6,027,670	14.2%		14,629,209	11.1%	A3 15,911,903	13.7%					
<b>1940-1959</b>	260	21.6%	A5 315	29.2%		4,355	17.8%	A5 4,369	18.7%		1,076,515	23.7%	A3 1,123,299	26.5%		21,631,125	16.4%	A3 23,145,917	20.0%					
<b>1939 or earlier</b>	315	26.1%	A5 393	36.4%		5,267	21.6%	A5 5,836	25.0%		6,924,476	15.3%	A3 7,154,459	16.9%		17,862,892	13.5%	A3 17,380,053	15.0%					
<b>% Housing units built prior to 1980</b>	849	70.4%	A5 955	88.5%		17,393	71.2%	A5 17,960	76.8%		3,020,953	66.7%	A3 3,164,227	74.7%		75,131,767	56.9%	A3 77,876,736	67.2%					
			*To March 2000						*To March 2000															
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>																								
<b>Bachelor's or higher</b>	283	16.8%	A5 213	13.5%		4,897	12.8%	A5 4,019	10.6%		1,693,007	25.7%	A3 1,396,259	21.8%		59,163,882	28.7%	A3 44,462,605	24.4%					
<b>Some college or associate's</b>	491	29.1%	A5 462	29.3%		12,222	32.0%	A5 10,910	28.8%		2,148,211	32.6%	A3 1,944,688	30.3%		59,995,776	29.1%	A3 49,864,428	27.3%					
<b>High School</b>	607	37.0%	A5 632	40.0%		15,471	40.5%	A5 15,828	41.8%		2,023,803	30.7%	A3 2,010,861	31.3%		58,410,105	28.3%	A3 52,168,981	28.6%					
<b>No High School diploma</b>	306	18.1%	A5 272	17.3%		2,793	14.7%	A5 7,141	18.8%		728,468	11.1%	A3 1,064,133	16.6%		29,027,440	14.1%	A3 35,715,625	19.6%					
<b>Median Household Income (\$)</b>	41,875	NA	A5 38,087	NA		43,463	NA	A5 40,174	NA		47,175	NA	A3 44,667	NA		51,771	NA	A3 41,994	NA					
<b>Median Household Income (\$), adjusted for 2012 US Dollars</b>	NA	NA	A5 50,781	NA		NA	NA	A5 53,564	NA		47,175	NA	A3 59,554	NA		51,771	NA	A3 55,991	NA					
<b>Per Capita Income (\$)</b>	18,976	NA	A5 15,029	NA		20,611	NA	A5 17,985	NA		24,997	NA	A3 22,168	NA		27,385	NA	A3 21,587	NA					
<b>Individuals below Poverty Level (%)</b>	NA	23.9%	A5 NA	9.2%		NA	15.7%	A5 NA	8.2%		NA	17.3%	A3 NA	10.5%		NA	15.7%	A3 NA	12.4%					
<b>OCCUPATION BY INDUSTRY</b>																								
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</b>	19	1.9%	A5 9	0.8%		710	3.2%	A5 789	3.1%		56,283	1.3%	A3 49,496	1.1%		2,734,898	1.9%	A3 2,426,053	1.9%					
<b>Construction</b>	22	2.3%	A5 85	7.3%		1,511	6.8%	A5 1,955	7.6%		200,762	4.8%	A3 278,079	6.0%		8,696,628	6.2%	A3 8,801,507	6.8%					
<b>Manufacturing</b>	153	15.7%	A5 307	26.5%		3,849	17.2%	A5 6,802	26.3%		709,434	16.9%	A3 1,045,651	22.5%		14,704,656	10.4%	A3 18,286,005	14.1%					
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	5	0.5%	A5 41	3.5%		426	1.9%	A5 703	2.7%		106,093	2.5%	A3 151,656	3.3%		3,881,120	2.8%	A3 4,666,757	3.6%					
<b>Retail trade</b>	97	9.9%	A5 141	12.2%		3,062	13.7%	A5 3,333	12.9%		490,519	11.7%	A3 550,918	11.9%		16,397,044	11.6%	A3 15,221,716	11.7%					
<b>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</b>	69	7.1%	A5 47	4.1%		1,025	4.6%	A5 1,047	4.1%		173,997	4.1%	A3 191,799	4.1%		6,963,156	4.9%	A3 6,740,102	5.2%					
<b>Information</b>	6	0.6%	A5 22	1.9%		202	0.9%	A5 378	1.5%		66,429	1.6%	A3 98,887	2.1%		2,987,507	2.1%	A3 3,996,564	3.1%					
<b>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing</b>	49	5.0%	A5 34	2.9%		779	3.5%	A5 1,037	4.0%		230,838	5.5%	A3 246,633	5.3%		9,327,638	6.6%	A3 8,934,972	6.9%					
<b>Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services</b>	38	3.9%	A5 34	2.9%		1,093	4.9%	A5 944	3.7%		384,243	9.1%	A3 371,119	8.0%		15,145,362	10.7%	A3 12,061,865	9.3%					
<b>Educational, health and social services</b>	287	29.4%	A5 237	20.4%		5,842	26.2%	A5 5,254	20.3%		1,023,952	24.3%	A3 921,395	19.9%		32,720,462	23.2%	A3 25,843,029	19.9%					
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, and other services (except public administration)</b>	142	14.6%	A5 127	10.9%		1,945	8.7%	A5 1,729	6.7%		401,348	9.5%	A3 351,229	7.6%		13,250,172	9.4%	A3 10,210,295	7.9%					
<b>Public administration</b>	47	4.8%	A5 39	3.4%		1,054	4.7%	A5 1,063	4.1%		205,061	4.9%	A3 212,868	4.6%		7,026,743	5.0%	A3 6,320,632	4.9%					
<b>Mean commute time (minutes)</b>	23.8	NA	A5 25.9	NA		29.7	NA	A5 30.3	NA		24	NA	A3 24.1	NA		25.5	NA	A3 25.5	NA					
<b>TRANSPORTATION BEHAVIOR</b>																								
<b>Drove alone</b>	858	89.7%	A5 947	83.2%		18,336	84.3%	A5 21,035	83.2%		3,407,959	82.8%	A3 3,776,535	83.2%		106,069,531	76.4%	A3 97,102,050	75.7%					
<b>Carpooled</b>	87	9.1%	A5 121	10.6%		1,998	9.2%	A5 2,676	10.6%		365,996	8.9%	A3 440,606	9.7%		13,483,552	9.7%	A3 15,634,051	12.2%					
<b>Public Transport</b>	0	0.0%	A5 0	0.0%		31	0.1%	A5 38	0.2%		55,332	1.3%	A3 60,537	1.3%		6,933,318	5.0%	A3 6,067,703	4.7%					
<b>Walked</b>	8	0.8%	A5 45	4.0%		373	1.7%	A5 495	2.0%		89,678	2.2%	A3 101,506	2.2%		3,883,300	2.8%	A3 3,758,982	2.9%					
<b>Other</b>	13	1.4%	A5 8	0.7%		240	1.1%	A5 155	0.6%		49,190	1.2%	A3 33,423	0.7%		2,433,344								



# Appendix B

## Community Input Documentation

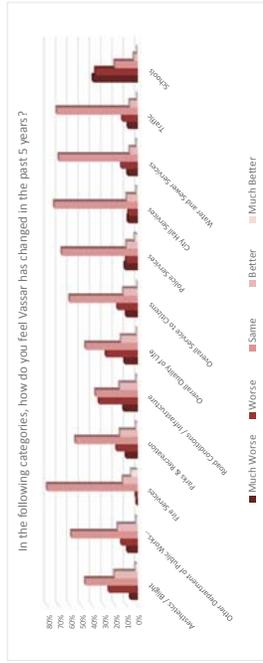
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**Vassar Survey Results, October 15: All Respondents' Results**

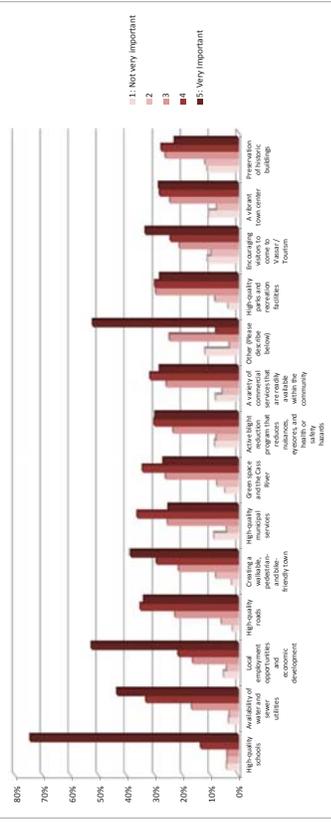
1. In the following categories, how do you feel Vassar has changed in the past 5 years?

	Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better
Appearance / Blight	6%	29%	29%	46%	20%
Other Department of Public Works (DPW) Services (Tree and snow removal, etc.)	9%	14%	14%	59%	14%
Fire Services	3%	3%	3%	89%	8%
Police Services	12%	34%	37%	15%	1%
Public Conditions / Infrastructure	11%	28%	46%	15%	1%
Overall Quality of Life	10%	18%	60%	13%	0%
Police Services to Citizens	11%	10%	67%	10%	2%
Police Services	8%	8%	74%	10%	1%
City Hall Services	14%	14%	69%	7%	1%
Water and Sewer Services	8%	32%	71%	7%	0%
Traffic	39%	37%	20%	3%	0%
Schools	39%	37%	20%	3%	0%



2. Please rank how important you feel each of the following factors is for achieving a high quality of life in Vassar's future. '1' is considered not very important and '5' is very important.

	1: Not very important	2	3	4	5: Very important
High-quality schools	4%	4%	4%	4%	74%
Availability of water and sewer utilities	4%	4%	3%	17%	53%
Local employment opportunities and economic development	6%	6%	4%	49%	53%
High-quality roads	2%	2%	6%	23%	34%
Creating a walkable, pedestrian- and bike-friendly town	2%	2%	8%	22%	38%
High-quality municipal services	9%	4%	4%	26%	39%
Green space and the Case River	5%	5%	8%	26%	27%
Active high reduction program that reduces nuisances, expenses, and health or safety hazards available within the community	9%	9%	8%	24%	30%
A variety of commercial services that are readily available within the community	8%	8%	5%	26%	32%
High-quality parks and recreation facilities	4%	4%	3%	30%	39%
Encouraging visitors to come to Vassar / Tourism	11%	11%	10%	21%	33%
A vibrant town center	11%	11%	8%	25%	29%
Preservation of historic buildings	11%	11%	12%	26%	28%



2. Please rank how important you feel each of the following factors is for achieving a high quality of life in Vassar's future. "1" is considered not very important and "5" is very important.

Please list any other important factors here. |

There are 96 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	Bringing new customer (not service based) businesses into downtown
2	more places to eat and places to shop
3	Encourage youth involvement & activities to show respect for our community
4	Improve school academics
5	archery range, bark park, bike and skate park, the movie theater.
6	help the small businesses and get more of them in and help them stay
7	more fairs, car show stunk last two years
8	Improve the school and get more jobs here. Vassar is not good at supporting local small businesses. Downtown used to thrive.
9	promote new businesses to come into town by making space affordable and well advertised
10	Less racist people!
11	more employment opportunities for youth and adults
12	Vassar needs to have more things to do. More community outings that are annual, yes the first year they may not go over well but we are a small town and should do small town things and encourage our community to shop, and have their services done in Vassar
13	Bring high quality jobs and tax base and the rest will follow.
14	We need to be known as Vassar.... Not "the town by Frankennuth" ...
15	I have not lived here five years so I can not answer the first set of questions
16	Get the DNR to Restock the River to Draw in Fishermen and Canoeing
17	Area to exercise pets
18	strive to get downtown buildings rented
19	Last years blight reduction of the old laundromat created a greater eyesore with the weed stream building foundation left intact.
20	SCHOOLS: SCHOOLS: DO I NEED TO SAY MORE. SOMETHING NEEDS TO CHANGE THERE!!!!
21	COMMUNITY events/community pride
22	Cleaning up the Cass River, Cleaning up around Town and bringing something new to Vassar such as a fast food restaurant.
23	Free/Subsidized Internet
24	Quality parks for children to play in
25	Use our history to our advantage. Preserve, rather than tear down, our beautiful historical buildings. Expand our festivals (which I think is beginning to happen) to include more activities. Take advantage of our neighboring towns and learn from their successful festivals. Millington had tons of people playing games. Why? The games were cheap to play, and fun. We need to encourage our restaurant(s) to improve their menus and therefore be a solid place to bring outsiders. They will come back. We have to work together to succeed. Purchase central hill and make Vassar's very own Central Park! Bring back the sledding there. The citizens and city should do what they can to purchase the theater. We can do this! Go Vassar!
26	The downtown area has so much potential! Props to the Fitness Facility, Target those people who feel good, are in town, and have some cash to spend. workers, and keep the businesses there. I am willing to be a hard worker, but I do not have the income to invest to buy a business nor the restaurant/sales experience to make it work long-term. Please help the city by creating jobs for its citizens. Praying.
27	Schools must be first priority!
28	Possibility of opening new fast food businesses.
29	add left turn arrow from west 38 to south 15
30	Stores
31	Education standards literally could carry the town if only more people cared about our youth
32	taxes are sky high here, city workers are lazy!
33	There needs to be public transportation in Vassar
34	Leadership, esp. at creating and implementing a vision for Vassar City for the future.
35	Easy access to the river
36	i want a taco bell
37	the shops up town are empty and the int very good bight
38	the buildings are mostly close like little stores.
39	Better basketball hoops at the pavilion
40	more fast food places

41	Taco Bell
42	Fast Food Restaurants
43	taco bell
44	Fast Food Restaurants
45	Other food/local shopping centers.
46	Deer Hunting, Fishing
47	more town events, muddoggs,volleyball tournaments,
48	Taco Bell
49	taco bell
50	schools are not very good, poor conditions
51	more commercial businesses
52	As a student here at Vassar High School, I feel it important that I give my opinion on how we can better our school system. In my time here, I have noticed a considerable lack of effort by the majority of the students. This is not the fault of the teachers or the school, this is the fault of the people of Vassar, and the country as a whole. We need to change the ideals of children, raise them up to want to learn, to desire success. If we do this, many of our problems will be solved with the next generation of people in Vassar.
53	family friendly activities with donations
54	figuring out how to grab some of the tourism that frankennuth has, camppgrounds & Entertainment
55	Taco Bell or Burger King next to Dollar General. Reopen the theater
56	Vassar is a City, but it does not have anything a City has to offer. It need'd to be changed to a town or village.
57	business needs to be brought in the town for employment to bring families into town
58	better festivals and use of pavilion
59	First you have to create a need for them to come here. (restaurant, theater, canoeing, etc.)
60	A better police system.
61	I am ashamed of what this town has become! As an elderly lady I am sick of picking up trash that stray cats cant stay out of. Trap the stray cats getting into our trash cans! Leash laws ought to be enforced before someone is bitten. Parks need cleaned and actually watched, it's common to find drug needles and used condoms at our parks. We need more police on duty to stop the vandalism. ALSO the Vassar PD need to concentrate on Cork pine & Cheeks bar parking lots. It is pretty comical at times watching the police sit at their common radar points while I see a drunk stumble to their automobile and just drive away. I witness this just about every weekend. The safety of the public should be more of a concern than the bar owners business. Maybe you could have the police check out the marijuana smel coming from the car detail business on s water st? I walk my leashed dog that side of town often and the smell only gets stronger. Also improve the schools security did you not learn anything newtown? Protect our town and our youth. GOOD DAY
62	Fix the walking signs for pedestrian its to fast barely can cross at traffic lights. Have police watch our parks better kids are destroying them. Please take action on dogs roaming I was nearly bitten twice in one week.
63	upkeep the parks we have now and monitor them. its not very great stepping on used condoms and even finding used drug needles in our park. The Vassar Police need to enforce the laws better for example watch the alcoholics driving drunk away from the bars this is a big concern.
64	No illegals, clean and maintain parks we have.
65	fix the street lights its difficult to cross the road on foot. reduce speed throughout town, enforce drunk driving laws, place police units on duty near the bars, control animals
66	Vassar needs to properly inform residents of things not just through facebook but via mail. The illegal immigration being housed here is a perfect example, we as residents deserve to know whats going on and have a voice in it. Another very important factor is the constant intoxicated people leaving the bars and driving putting us all in danger. The police really should patrol those bar parking lots at night alot more I do not care if the chief of police is the neighbour of the bar owner and its bad for the bar owners business... its also bad for our safety with these drunks on the roads.
67	I have been a resident of Vassar for over 20 years. I live on Beech st. Here is a list of things that need attention and are very important. improve school security and work harder to remove drugs in our school system my children see the drugs handed off regularly. Reduce traffic speed and fix lights so that pedestrians can actually get across the road in time. remove nuisance animals such as stray cats and aggressive dogs such as Angie Browns dog on Main street. crack down on drunk drivers leaving the bars. place an officer on duty for our parks and to stop the vandalism, sex and drug use.
69	LISTEN UP Yall missin it.. take the flowers for example the petunias are annual why not plant perennial flowers through town? they come back every year which saves money. Another thing yall missin ever been to a football game? well check the trash cans yall find ton of bottles which have a deposit value! Put that money back into the school. Speaking of school have you not learned anything from newtown? improve the school security and id like to see an armed officer on the school grounds during school hours. Our children are the most important thing lets clean up the parks and monitor them properly. lets not allow dangerous animals such as rummels insurance company's dog on south main street prowl and chase people! Id like to see more police doing their job.
70	Up the number of police on duty. Reduce vehicle speed through town. fix the sidewalks and remove nuisance animals such as the black pitbull behind the vassar bar.

71 School security to prevent a horrible incident like the one in Newtown, better law enforcement that actually look out for the safety of citizens. Didn't the Vassar police take the same oath as other officers across the US? to protect and defend??? I'm not sure how many times my family and neighbours must be chased by Angie Browns pitbull before a police officer actually does his job.

72 I'd like to see more police a lot of drug activity has recently hit our small town as well as people driving away intoxicated from the bars. A lot of talk is going around about the aggressive dog behind Cheeks bar and rummel insurance property ideally you should take care of this problem. this dog has gone after me also. Might want to consider replacement of the police that are on duty now with more professional ones that uphold the oath they took to protect us.

73 The movie theater is important to have here, I hope it stays.

74 So like obviously we need more police enforcement... look at all the litter as you go through town its pretty sad if the police would fine these people littering it would help our town look a little better. Another important concern of mine is the dangerous dog that lives by the business time to shine I have been unable to even get my hair or done there due to the aggressive nature of this animal. I have talked to others that have the same problem with this unchained dog. I suggest getting in new police officers because the police we have now are obviously not capable of enforcing any laws. I would really like to see more concern for the safety of our residents and visitors! I would also like to take this time to address an issue I have with city hall and the people running our city. We the residents have a right to know what's going on with our town the illegal immigrant criminals are not welcome here.

75 fix sidewalk, replace our mayor, clean up the town, enforce laws to many drunk drivers.

76 More school security since the past mass shootings I think we should have an armed officer or teachers armed and we need a crack down on drugs in our schools. Slower traffic speed through our town is a must.

77 My close friends live on s main st and they have to deal with an aggressive pitbull this is not acceptable they have a child and this dog is a danger to our customers and residents. I expect to see something done about this animal. We will inform other residents of this lack of law enforcement. The police gave an oath and we expect them to uphold it.

78 more security at our schools and police need to enforce more leash laws and sit behind where drunk people leave bars to avoid an accident

79 Clean up our town everytime I walk I pick up trash we need law enforcement to start nabbing these litterbugs and please have animal control remove stray cats Ive also heard about a aggressive black dog on s main st please take action.

80 I have a problem with a few dogs on my road they chase all my wildlife away and destroy my trash when I put it out. I even have to chase cats out of it.

81 lets create a safe place for our residents! We can start by placing a armed police officer at our schools during school hours. Did we not learn anything from the pass mass shootings? Lets also take police reports serious especially when it concerns the safety of our residents such as a report or reports on an aggressive dog.

82 Increase the residents safety. Remove dangerous animals, Arm teachers and or have armed police present at our schools, Patrol the bars and arrest the drunk drivers.

83 I think this is necessary to share this. I am a disabled father of a 3 year old I live on south main street with my soon to be wife. We have had so many dangerous encounters with Angie Browns Pitbull mix breed. We have called the police and even had witnesses of this dog trying to attack me and my 3 year old. This pitbull is a big concern it is a danger to the towns people and visitors alike. We have to use the dumpster behind our apartment for our trash well at times my wife is forced to throw our trash in the public trash can right in front of our apartment to avoid being attacked by Angie Brown unchained pitbull. No signs are on this public trash can, and yet a police officer wanted to fine us for using the public trash can, we informed this officer of the dog and that nothing has changed with the negligent owner and explained to him that if they had done the proper thing this would not be an issue. The officer then goes on to say "What is the dog chained to the dumpster??" As he got louder with My wife I got loud back and this officer soon left after demanding I give him my Id I didn't do so As I had not broken the law nor did I even step foot out of my home. After he left I went down and photographed the trash can for future use in court. I am a lawful and responsible resident here in Vassar and I am blown away by the poorly handled matter of this danger animal in our community. I really respect the police but dont come to my home disrespecting my wife because you have not properly done your job. I hope and pray nobody is bitten by this animal.

84 increase School security

85 Public safety, reliable police coverage, and a visible and up to date fire service

86 Groups that welcome new comers and get them connected or a local hang out--- coffee shop, some place that anyone can go and enjoy community. I know that the smoke shop has plans to do that, but considering the inflammatory nature of their shop, perhaps they could get funds with provisions to have another name or emphasis--- so that teens could go there without parents freaking out.

87 Not having so many buildings empty downtown!!! In the 2 years I have lived here and 10 years I have visited, it is the worst I have ever seen!!!! Makes Vassar almost look like a ghost town!!!

88 public restrooms downtown for events, walkers, etc. only one available. locked during busiest event of the year.

89 some kind of around town transportation and bus connection to Saginaw and/or Flint

90 Vassar has never supported their community outside of school related events, unless its free or a minimal fee...example- pumpkin roll, chili on the hill. It seems that people will travel out of the area and spend money, but not within the city limits. Im not sure why that is...or how to encourage spending within Vassar.

91 "Out of towners" do not feel welcome in Vassar! In my opinion City Council has done nothing to close this divide!

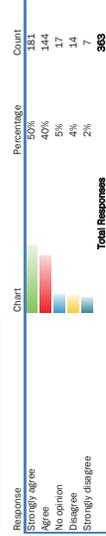
92 Paved sidewalks on the city's outer boundaries, such as Jay rd, and north and south sides of Main st, by the railroad tracks

94 I understand HIPPA effects the crack down, but drugs and alcohol use in school age is horrible. The self esteem and lack of pride needs to be addressed before change can occur.

95 Now residents of Vassar can't even trust our law enforcement. Due to the corruption... I seen on the news a Vassar police officer break into a home and I am now fearful of the Vassar police department as well as our mayor that wanted to house dangerous illegal criminals in our town. This town has gone to crap and I know what could fix it. Replace our mayor, city manager. Then replace the police force with police that will actually uphold the oath they took. Our residents shouldn't have to be fearful of the people running Vassar but we are... I have talked to many concerned citizens about this issue and our views are the same. Also as a business owner I do NOT think it's acceptable to let a pit bull dog have free range of a city block. Protect our residents! I am losing business with this animal it needs to be controlled or removed.

96 bus transportation to Saginaw hospital and shopping

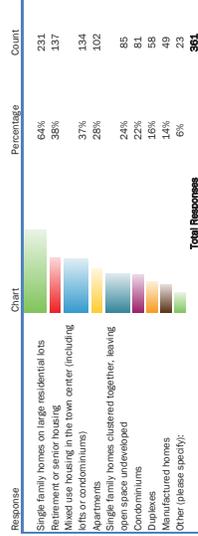
3. Vissler should encourage new development.



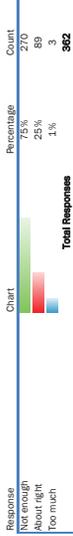
4. I prefer that new residential development include the following (please check all that apply): (Other (please specify):

#	Response
1	apartments that allow cats
2	leave the trees in tact as much as possible
3	Mobile homes in areas that will accommodate them.
4	Something encouraging gardening/growing own food, small farm animals (chickens etc) to help forward self-sustainability
5	Affordable and safe housing for low income families
6	leave it alone
7	As awful as it sounds, I'd prefer more homes that exclude those in need of government assistance.
8	Clean up the downtown look and improve the apartments already there, or tear down and build new.
9	NOT RENTALS
10	Apartments that allow pets
11	Variety is good
12	taco bell or KFC
13	Special Needs Housing
14	Deer Camps
15	dorms
16	based on income housing
17	None, other than replacing or renovating existing homes.
18	leave nature especially near our beloved Cass river
19	More attention to rental properties
20	affordable single family homes
21	get rid of rental housing units that are divided up houses
22	
23	8 foot wide sidewalks, especially on approaches to schools

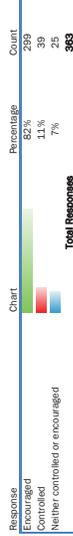
4. I prefer that new residential development include the following (please check all that apply):



5. Which describes how you view the amount of commercial (retail and service) businesses in Vassar?



6. In the next ten years, commercial growth in Vassar should be:



7. What three types of businesses would you most like to see in Vassar? Restaurants, clothing stores, specialty / craft stores, are a few examples. |

There were 872 responses to this question

**Top Responses:**

- 1 Restaurants [169]
- 2 Fast Food / Drive-thru Restaurants [116]
- 3 Clothing Stores [83]
- 4 Large Retail Stores (Wal Mart, Meijer, etc.) [58]
- 5 Movie Theater / Re-open the Existing Historic Theater [46]
- 6 Grocery Stores [37]
- 7 Cafes / Bakeries / Coffee Shops [21]
- 8 Specialty Shops [21]
- 9 Craft Stores [19]
- 10 Manufacturing / Light Manufacturing [14]
- 11 Goodwill/ Re-sale Shops [9]
- 12 Entertainment [8]
- 13 Sports Retail [8]
- 14 Book Stores [6]
- 15 Antique Stores [5]
- 16 Department Stores [5]
- 17 Ice Cream Shops [5]
- 18 Brew Pub / Brewery or Bar [5]
- 19 Gift Shops / Giftwares [5]
- 20 Activity center [2]
- 21 Animal control [2]
- 22 Hardware Stores [2]

**Other Responses:**

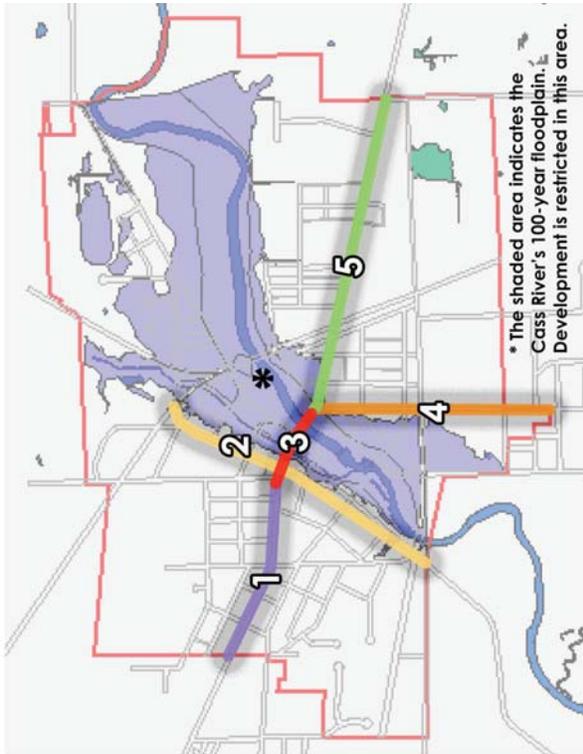
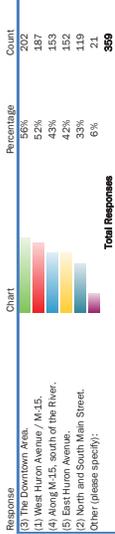
- A cheap smoothie place/coffee/tea/expresso shop with local artists' work on display in a modern, clean-cut, crisp way.
- A Hunting/ Fishing store..... People around here enjoy outdoor activities and CAMO
- A kids center
- a mall
- a mall possibly, because there would be a lot more money in our town's economy
- A nice sit down restaurant with home cooked foods for family to gather in a place for kids
- a sit down restaurant and more fast food
- a unique type of store/business
- Activity center for all ages
- affordable clothing
- After hours & weekend medical
- Aldi food store
- all in one stores (meijer, walmart)
- Any small business
- anyone willing to locate downtown
- Anything service based as oppose to product based
- Bait Shop
- Banquet facility
- bass pro shops
- Bass Shop
- Betty Lou's
- Bicycle Shop
- Big Box Lumber/hardware
- Big Boys

Bigger chain grocery store  
 billiards  
 boutiques  
 Bowling Alley/Pool hall  
 breakfast restaurant  
 Business with multiple employment opportunities  
 Businesses focusing on the arts  
 businesses that get the community interacting again - places to hang out and make memories  
 butcher/bakery  
 Cabelas  
 casino  
 Ceader Point  
 cheaper grocery store  
 chucky cheese???  
 commercial business  
 Community Center  
 Community Center Multi-use venues  
 Community swimming pool  
 Competition for Shop Rites over priced items!!!!  
 computer store/shops  
 Country-western Bar with Live music/open-mike night/karaoke/dance nights  
 Da ja vu  
 dance bar  
 Daycare center  
 Decent restaurants  
 decor stores  
 Denny's  
 Dicks  
 different stores  
 Dining  
 dining/nice but not overly pricey, similar to applebees  
 discount grocery store  
 Dispenseries  
 doctor  
 dollar store  
 dollar tree  
 downtown restaurant, not necessarily a bar  
 drag strip  
 Dunhams  
 Energy  
 exercise  
 expanded retail  
 Factories  
 farmers markets  
 Film Studio  
 fine dining  
 fishing  
 Florist  
 flower shop  
 food  
 food delivery  
 Food delivery ex. pizza or Chinese delivered to my door!  
 Ford Dealership  
 Franks great outdoors  
 Furniture restoration  
 Gallery  
 Game Stop  
 Game Stores (i.e. Gamestop, Mom & Pop shops, ect.)  
 Gamestop  
 Gaming

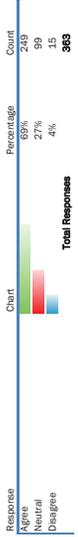
General Merchandise  
 general shopping  
 golden cral  
 Gov building for Social Security ect  
 gun shop  
 gun stores  
 hi tech  
 Hobby Shops  
 Hobby/Craft  
 hot topic  
 Hotel  
 hotels? Frankenmuth is only six miles away  
 Hunting/fishing related  
 hydro electricity plant  
 improved parks  
 indoor batting cage  
 indoor batting cage  
 Indoor fun zone for all ages  
 Indoor play place for young children--- perhaps adding on to McDonalds  
 Industrial, light manufacturing  
 industry  
 Industry niche firms for employment  
 kid friendly activities  
 Kid recreation  
 Large for large #employment opportunities  
 large retail, ie walmart  
 Local transportation service for shopping at Central Shop Rite, banking, etc.  
 locally owned business  
 Lucky's  
 machine shops  
 Make a Huge Indoor Gym or some sort of Family Fun Center in the old factory. Keep the grass cut to keep out rats. Employ people, but run it like a YMCA so people can afford it.  
 mall  
 maybe a mini mall with prices compare to other malls  
 meat market  
 Meat market/Specialty food market  
 Medical related  
 Medical supply and distribution  
 medical supply  
 michaels craft store or a smaller chain  
 michigan state police post maybe than this town could be in order  
 mid level restaurant, a dinner place  
 military surplus  
 military surplus store  
 Mini-breweries  
 more craft stores  
 more stores in general  
 Music Store  
 music/art stores  
 nice consignment shop  
 Nice family friendly restaurants  
 nice gift store  
 nice second hand store  
 Nice sit down restaurant  
 Night Club  
 night club  
 NO STORES LIKE DOLLAR GENERAL!!!!!!!

<p>non general motors dealerships  office supply/printing/copying  Old Navy  one more sit-down restaurant  Organic Food Stores  Our three  Outback Steakhouse  Outdoor store  Outdoor/Recreational Goods Stores  Outlet Mall  Pawn shop  Pharmacy i.e. Walgreens top of the hill  Photographers  physicians office  plants  pool hall  professional,  pubs  quality antique store  restaurants  reasonably priced clothing  recreation type business  recreation outfitters (canoeing/water recreation)  Recreational Businesses  Reopen the theater  Replace Dragon Palace with Chen's Mongolian Grill  Re-sale clothing store  Resale/antiques  retail  retail  Retail - Sporting Goods  retail outlet  retail shops  Retail store  retail stores that are not of the dollar store variety  Retail, ie clothing  Retail/specialty  retailers  Riverwalk  roller skating  save alot  save/lot  Secondhand  services  Sewing/quilting supplies  share shop like the one in mayville  shoe store  Shoe stores  Shooting Range or Canoe Rental  shopping center  shops like wal-mart that don't close at 4 on sundays  Sit down restaurant  Soda shop/big candy store  Something for small children  Something fun like a rec center  Something to buy random items other than a dollar store  Specialty grocery (like healthy habitz in Frankemuth)  specialty stores that include a social aspect or gathering place (ex: bookstore/coffee bar, bakery/coffee, flower/gift/snack shop</p>	<p>speed shop  State police  State police  state police post  Steak house  Steak n Shake  stores  stripclub  Target  technology  Technology store  teen center (controlled)  Thrift/consignment  toneys  tourist shops  tractor supply  Travel agency  tutoring/community center  upscale coffee shop  Variety of food services  vassars biggest asset is the Cass, use it for jobs and environmental opportunities  water purifying plant to help California, etc during droughts  waterpark  Web Hosting and design  Yayd's</p>
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8. Future commercial development should be located in which of the zones indicated in the map below? (Please check all that apply):



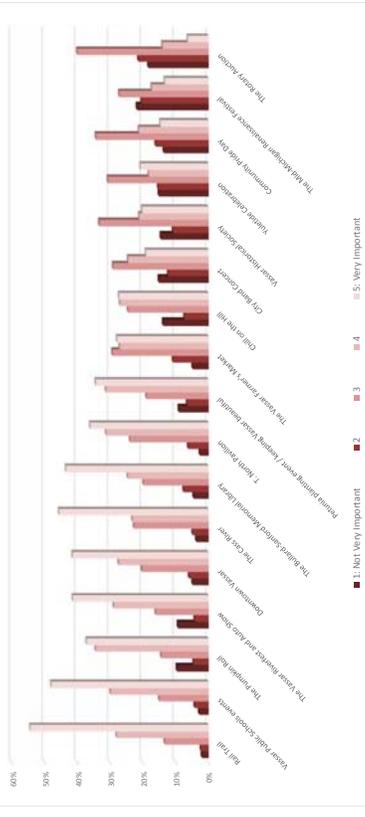
9. If future industrial development that will be built near existing industrial land uses on Huron Avenue and Sherman Street.



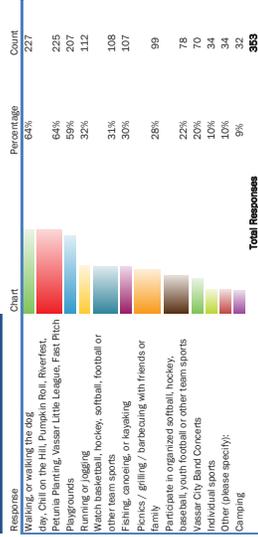
10. How important are the following features or events in making Vassar a more unique and enjoyable place? "1" is considered not very important and "5" is very important.

	1: Not Very Important	2	3	4	5: Very Important
Rail Trail	2%	13%	24%	13%	58%
Vassar Public Schools events	4%	3%	48%	30%	15%
The Vassar Theater and Auto Show	9%	4%	16%	20%	51%
Downtown Vassar	5%	20%	27%	27%	42%
The Cass River	4%	23%	23%	23%	46%
The Bullard-Sanford Memorial Library	5%	8%	20%	25%	44%
T. North Pavilion	3%	6%	24%	31%	36%
Perkins planting event / keeping Vassar beautiful	9%	7%	19%	31%	34%
The Vassar Farmers Market	5%	11%	29%	27%	28%
Chill on the Hill	7%	25%	27%	27%	27%
Cherry Blossom Festival	14%	15%	13%	33%	25%
Vassar Historical Society	15%	13%	31%	18%	23%
Vanderbilt Celebration	14%	16%	18%	21%	31%
Community Pride Day	22%	20%	27%	17%	14%
The Mid-Michigan Renaissance Festival	18%	21%	17%	17%	27%
The Rotary Auction	18%	21%	17%	17%	27%

How important are the following features or events in making Vassar a more unique and enjoyable place? "1" is considered not very important and "5" is very important.



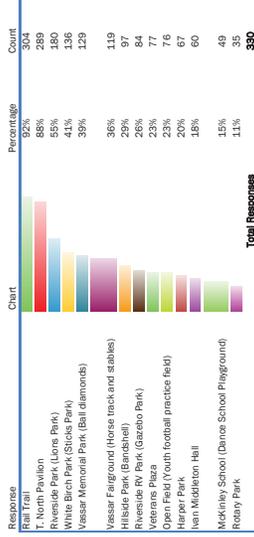
11. Why do you visit Vassar's parks and recreational facilities?



11. Why do you visit Vassar's parks and recreational facilities? (Other (please specify):

- # Response
- 1 Just relax and enjoy a beautiful day and sometimes a quiet spot to work
- 2 cause theres nowhere else to go.
- 3 Riverfest athletic events
- 4 For the solitude, they're a place to think & relax just to get away closer to home.
- 5 Farmers market, shopping
- 6 We like to bike as well and would like to see the rail trail connected further south with a bridge across the river.
- 7 watch hockey in the winter
- 8 I would very much enjoy grilling/picnics and kayaking/canoeing I had more leisure time.
- 9 Places to photograph people
- 10 biking
- 11 enjoy watching the flyball dogs labor day weekend
- 12 I dont visit I go to Frankemuth where it is beautiful, clean and frist class... not white trash
- 13 Geocaching
- 14 Reading
- 15 i didnt even know community pride day existed
- 16 Cross Country
- 17 Bike Rides
- 18 chill
- 19 I don't visit any of the recreational facilities.
- 20 i dont
- 21 play basketball
- 22 picnics
- 23 I dont really do much in the town...:/
- 24 special events, solitude
- 25 i dont. I find other parks have more to offer and dont have to worry about kids falling into the river. It is close to the river.
- 26 dont visit too much trash
- 27 Please clean parks
- 28 remove the vicious dog from rummel insurance on s main at its danger to let our children play its not appropriate the kids have to deal with glass and used condoms at our parks the police should definitely patrol the parks more.
- 30 clean safe town to walk around and feel safe
- 31 A Dog park would be nice
- 32 alone time or meeting new people
- 33 none
- 34 I love being in Vassar. It's a nice friendly town.

12. Which of the following Vassar parks have you visited in the past year (choose all that apply)?



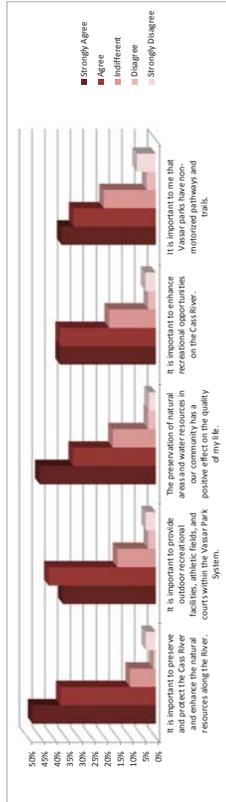
13. Of the parks listed above, which of these have you visited the most?

There are 267 response(s) to this question.

Rank	Response
1	T. North Pavilion [9]
2	Rail Trail [90]
3	Riverside Park (Lions Park) [27]
4	Vassar Memorial Park (Ball Diamonds) [14]
5	White Birch Park (Sticks Park) [9]
6	Vassar Fairground (Horse Track and Stables) [9]
7	Veterans Plaza [4]
8	Open Field [4]
9	Harper Park [4]
10	McKinley School (Dance School Playground) [4]
11	Rotary Park [1]
12	Riverside RV Park (Gazebo Park) [1]
	Ivan Middleton Hall and Rotary Park - [No responses]

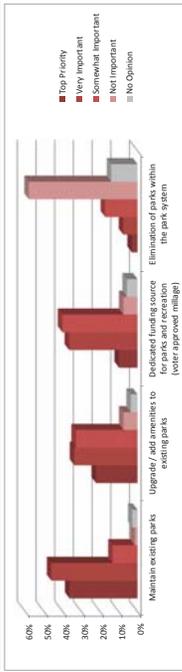
14. Please rate your feelings regarding the following statements concerning parks and natural features in Vassar.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>It is important to preserve and protect the Cass River and enhance the natural resources along the river.</b>	45%	37%	10%	1%	4%
It is important to provide outdoor recreational facilities, picnic tables, and courts within the Vassar Park System.	36%	42%	15%	3%	4%
The preservation of natural areas and water resources in the community has a positive effect on the quality of my life.	45%	32%	17%	3%	3%
It is important to enhance recreational opportunities on the Cass River.	37%	37%	18%	3%	4%
It is important to me that Vassar parks have non-measured pathways and trails.	37%	32%	20%	4%	7%



15. How would you prioritize the following activities for the City of Vassar over the next five years?

	Top Priority	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
<b>Maintain existing parks</b>	36%	46%	13%	2%	3%
<b>Upgrade / add amenities to existing parks</b>	22%	34%	33%	8%	4%
<b>Dedicated funding source for parks and recreation (over approved millage)</b>	10%	37%	40%	8%	6%
<b>Elimination of parks within the park system</b>	3%	8%	17%	58%	14%



16. Do you have any specific recommendations for improving access to the Cass River? Please mention them here:

There are 140 response(s) to this question.

- | #   | Response  |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Focus on the natural beauty of the river, the residents can worry about how to access   |
| 15  | A boat launch area should be made with canoe rental availability.   |
| 125 | a bridge for pedestrians  |
| 43  | A bridge from the Gazebo Park could be nice to sit and fish off of. A small Public Canoe Launch (maybe rental place for funds to go back into the city.) on the East Shore could be nice. |
| 8   | A dedicated kayak/canoe landing   |
| 28  | a kayak launch similar to the one in Frankemuth   |
| 31  | A swinging bridge or some walking bridge over the river as well as some boardwalk type dock along the river would be great  |
| 3   | An easily accessible place to rent canoes or kayaks right in town along the Cass River  |
| 21  | Are there any boat docks anymore? When I was a child there were always places to fish or launch a boat.   |
| 49  | benches   |
| 35  | better access for fishing, canoeing, etc.   |
| 78  | Better space for Canoes   |
| 33  | Better trails to get there  |
| 131 | boat dock   |
| 110 | boat launch fishing   |
| 109 | boat launch, fishing needs to be legal at night especially near our dam and moore drain.  |
| 128 | boat ramp   |
| 11  | boat ramp and dock  |
| 120 | bridge across for people  |
| 112 | bridge for fishing and pedestrians over the cass river  |
| 114 | bridge for pedestrians and night fishing  |
| 121 | bridge over the cass for people   |
| 111 | camping spots and more fishing spots  |
| 23  | Canoe Launch  |
| 55  | Canoe Launch  |
| 14  | Canoe launch in town well advertised  |
| 30  | canoe launch/boat launch  |
| 65  | Canoe Racing, More People Participate   |
| 29  | Canoe rental  |
| 53  | Canoe rental again  |
| 19  | cemented stairs with lookout easy access to load kayak. or tube in to water and exit point the sam.   |
| 127 | Centralize your efforts the city has too many parks to maintain, focus a handful to make them better  |
| 64  | clean it  |
| 71  | Clean it and use it   |
| 38  | Clean it up so people are more likely to want to use it!  |
| 84  | Clean it.   |
| 42  | clean river banks, install dam or other feature.  |
| 48  | clean up banks along rail trail   |
| 5   | clean up the riverbanks so that it's at least a visual addition   |
| 85  | clean up the t pillon   |
| 63  | cleaner banks   |
| 140 | Clear brush and weed trees from banks of the river and mow grass to make banks inviting and accessible  |
| 4   | clear low lying brush along the rail trail to maximize the river view. keep and maintain all mature tree s and foliage.   |
| 46  | clear riverbank in areas viewable in downtown area  |
| 20  | continue to partner with Tuscola and Frankemuth in their efforts, perhaps partner with Caro to preserve it in that direction  |
| 57  | Create a Dam, creating a small lake, add sandy beach access. Use Dam for power.   |
| 132 | Cut down all scrub brush and trees along banks to make the river truly accessible from the banks for fishing adjacent to all park land on the river                                       |
| 22  | Dedicated picnic/rest space for those traveling on the river.   |
| 10  | Develop a "Riverwalk" along and around both sides of the river through downtown   |
| 34  | DEVELOPED AREA FOR CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCHING  |
| 107 | Don't touch it  |

47	Downtown landing	40	Rope Suspended Walking Bridge
41	Easy access on both sides of the river for canoes, kayaks, etc.	27	Since the elimination of the Dam in Frankenmuth is coming, many spawning fish will be entering the Cass River from the Great Lakes. A very large increase in the number of fisherman should be expected, so a boat launch with parking lot would be a great idea.
37	Expanding the river accessibility on the east side of its banks. Everything is geared specifically towards the west side. Possibly clear cut trees and shrubs for additional trail space.	50	some kind of docking or loading area for kayaks and canoes
94	Find a way to stop people from dumping their trash inside it. Try to clean the river somehow.	9	Some sort of boat launch or closer access for fishing type activities
115	fishing bridge or pier	6	Some type of easy access for the public to get to the river, for fishing, boating, or just watching the river.
96	Fishing Dock	133	stairs and handicap ramps and dock, maybe by the red building on cass ave. where their were stairs previously
116	fishing pier another bridge	76	stop factory dump in river
45	Floating dock like Frankenmuth has	25	Take some of the brown out...
103	Have kayak and canoe rental or at least an entrance to the river.	13	The trash needs to be picked up more often at the parks. Lions Park is almost overflowing most of the time. I would like less graffiti. I would like to see more of a police presence to deter scallywags.
79	have more places to launch boats or canoes, along with more open areas to fish	138	There are many parks that are not being used. Return those areas to fields and put the \$ and resources where the people visit.
102	I think we need to make better use of the fair grounds. I dont like the parks near the river.	56	There is access to the river?
32	I would like to see a dock designated as under 16 fishing only.	17	Tidy up around it
36	I would love to see a river walk. Something like Frankenmuth	75	To clean it, or filter it so the water will be cleaner.
36	I would somehow randomly place steps on both sides of the river to make it easier to get down to the river to fish or whatever. The way it is now if someone tried to get down to the river bank they could slip & fall & could really get hurt. Now there's a law suit waiting to happen.	72	we could have a canoe launch
18		135	We use the river a lot, and it would be nice to have better access such as a small boat launch or a floating dock. I think that the Cass River Greenway would be a big help with a project like that. Also maintaining the river bank next to city hall would be nice as well.
99	Just clean it up		
139	Kayak/Canoe Launch Dock		
7	Kayak/canoe launch on Cass River		
61	Keeping cared for		
2	Launch site into river		
108	leave it alone		
106	let people night fish its when my sons catch the most fish!		
105	Make a couple more boat launches.		
90	Make an accessible path		
16	make an area like Frankenmuth has where there is a beautiful boat launch complete with manicured and beautifully landscaped park all in one. Also remove ALL the nasty brush and weeds hindering the view of the river especially by the bridge and in front of the city hall!		
59	make it cleaner		
98	make more		
123	making more room to fish and canoe		
89	Maybe some cement steps and patio for others to look down at the water		
24	More access up closer to enjoy the river.		
113	More boat launches for access with kayaks canoes, etc		
86	More canoe launch sites		
82	More Fish		
122	More fishing area for families to much poison ivy near the old dam		
97	More Fishing Spots		
129	more pedestrian traffic lights and pedestrian cross walks for safety		
12	More public access points. Encourage the use of the Cass River		
126	More trails down to the river		
104	More walkways and pedestrian bridges, rock dams		
58	n/a		
101	n/a		
52	needs to be deeper.		
137	pedestrian bridge over river		
117	pedestrian bridge/fishing over cass		
118	pedestrian river crossing		
119	pedestrian river crossing		
26	Picnic area by canoe launch. Pedestrian/bike bridge across river.		
67	provide a career to people that requires the cleaning of the Cass River		
77	provide observation docks to encourage access to the river		
130	Put a couple signs up near places that kids have direct access to (with parental supervision) asking people to not bring glass bottles near the water's edge		
136	Put in a beach area, fishing docks, boat and kayak launch sites		
39	REbuild boat launch that was funded prior and city removed and did not rebuild		
44	return of canoe rentals with transport to drop in or out sites		
51	river walk		
134	Riverside docks.		

## 17. What would be your dream park for the City of Vassar?

There are 179 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	I like how Lion's Park is next to the river. Just spaces to sit and enjoy the natural beauty of the area.
2	Beautiful gathering place for community with access to river, rail trail, music and food
3	Something that provides access to the river for canoeing and fishing
4	update fairground system with additional park activities.
5	closed in/indoors ice arena, dog park
6	skatepark, dog park
7	a real campground with a multi-use indoor facility at least double the size of Ivan Middleton
8	One large park area that is designed for every age group of people who wish to use the park options,
9	A park with well maintained areas for children's activities and well maintained grounds.
10	Splash Pad for children
11	water park
12	Something with equipment for different aged children. Maintained picnic benches and restrooms. Possibly grills. Would be nice to not be the teen graffiti headquarters too :)
13	Playground, basketball, picnic area, river access
14	A dog park. We have several parks that are hardly used. I have heard several people say they would like a dog park but were told its not do able. Nothing is do able with that attitude. Other cities have them so it can happen.
15	Downtown park on the river.
16	picnic tables by the river. playground for many ages. trails
17	a place where the teenagers did not run out the families on summer nights
18	Gardens, pavilion, playground, grills, horseshoe pits, bathrooms
19	A park where children can play, adults can play volleyball and grill, and families can rent canoes for the river.
20	You already have the rail trail. Make it BETTER with the following gazebos and not like that nasty one on Cass Ave. I) restore the old brick building by Lions park and have it turned into a small bistro so people who enjoy the rail trail could stop for refreshments and also when events are downtown then it too could be a hot spot of activity!
21	Disc Golf
22	A fun, but well-functioning park
23	Coley ball court picnic tables grilling area, pavilions kids play area
24	always safe, clean, available for individuals and families
25	Something that allows you to do physical activities, maybe repair the tennis courts (we drove to frankenmuth for this)
26	Nature Preserve
27	More of a rail trail all around Vassar
28	A great place you
29	I think the Townsend North Pavilion and old lions park is a great area. I would like cleaner bathrooms and the play area maintained. A rock wall would be pretty awesome.
30	a kayak park on the river with manufactured rapids
31	Water park for kids
32	water park
33	A fenced in dog park with lots of shade and room for the dogs to run.
34	Disc golf and dog park
35	A park like the riverside park only much larger, with easier access to the river.
36	Woody along the river with a nice playground and picnic area, throw in a splash park since this is a dream
37	canoe / kutaia rental/ camping
38	It would include kayaks for rental, bicycle and hiking trails and area for fishing. The park would be dog friendly but also include areas for dogs to be off leash.
39	Dog Park like in Frankenmuth and a cement park for skateboarding, etc.
40	Disc golf park
41	There really isnt a dream park.
42	Water fountains, flowers, benches, gazebos, inviting atmosphere along the banks of the river.
43	A bigger playground for smaller children away from the older children
44	lengthened rail trail
45	Park with Eatery and Beverages available (non alcoholic) Updated and clean restrooms
46	We have enough parks!
47	water park
48	All the youth sport fields (Football/baseball-softball) centrally located around a large pavilion (Like the T.North) with a commercial grade concession stand, huge playground, and some auxiliary activities such as tennis and or skatepark.
49	a soccer field, large area for children to play, place for picnics and family outings.
50	Handicap and youth fishing spots via piers etc. Boat/canoe launch
51	Water Park and a dedicated public sledding hill
52	Dog Park
53	Central Park built on the old central hill area. It is a GREAT location and could be promoted easily with sledding, picnics, etc.
54	splash pad!
55	After visiting the city of Adrian's public parks, I can foresee a large, 2/3-story wooden/steel structure being built that could be rented out for weddings/family parties/picnics with beautiful beams that outdoor lights could be strung across and residents could view the river from any of the decks. Having bench swings or hammocks on the levels would be an additional feature. Utilizing the natural beauty of Vassar with an oasis-deck would be ideal. Public restrooms would have ceramic/plastic seat covers and toilet paper in stock 24/7. Vending machines might be available?
56	having great playground with better play equipment
57	lots of woods and hiking trails
58	splash pad park or one youth sports area for all sports at the fairgrounds
59	A water park
60	birch park upgraded to Natural park playground
61	something with a large community play area for the kids
62	?
63	open outdoor water playground
64	Spray Park available
65	child and dog friendly
66	large picnic recreation area with skate boarding area for the kids like Midland has and hiking
67	5 mile rail trail, dog park, playground, pool, picnic area
68	water park/multi plex playground all along west bank by canoe ramp
69	a multi use park with many functions.....disc golf, dog park, walking trails, bike trails,
70	picnic tables, grills, childrens play area, boat launch, river view.
71	to utilize the river.
72	I like the fair grounds. Wish we had horse races or polo or such.
73	one that utilizes waterfront on river
74	Splash pad and community pool
75	A park where adults can drink wine/beer and read a book.
76	a park with fishing and swimming
77	A place that is open to a number of multiple activities at once and can attract events
78	One that had boat ramp again.
79	See #16 comments
80	n/a
81	nothing
82	A clean nice one
83	A playground where they have clean equipment and everyone can go to hang out
84	I don't have a dream park, I just like swings
85	i dont have one
86	playground and a walking trail
87	camping and a nice beach
88	clean camping
89	Playground, Rail Trail, What We Already Have.
90	One that was cleaned up and with a fountain
91	Michigan adventures
92	a park including a pool
93	cedar point
94	cedar point
95	Water Park
96	midigans Adventure
97	Water Park
98	One that has woods, Picnic tables and not a lot of things to play on. Maybe a swing set.
99	pet friendly
100	Amusement park
101	large park with slides, swings, picnic tables, and shady areas
102	One with lots of flowers and wildlife
103	One with lots going on- slides, monkey bars, swings, and a place to play sports.
104	big, green, many trees, flowers, big field, pavilions
105	nope

162 I would like to see a dog/nature park  
 163 walking trail loops  
 164 Riverside Park (lions park) is pretty much it-- sturdy, well maintained equipment, access to toilets, a buffer between the river and the playground, but still has access, a place to picnic out of the sun. It is great! If there could be any improvement, I would say more trash cans. The one that is there gets full and then people start leaving trash around, or maybe the wind rocks it out when it gets too full.  
 165 swimming  
 166 any existing park where outdoor beer drinking would be allowed and proper restrooms provided  
 167 A place for young and old to hang out and exercise and play.  
 168 splash park  
 169 A park along the river with a wooded area that had trails and community flower gardens. Maybe have a small bridge for walking near where the dam was and a couple benches or tables on the other side. A nice little pavillion by the river for outdoor concerts. I would love it.  
 170 All activities area  
 171 Hot Tubs and pools, walking and biking trails, disc golf course, large playground area, lots of trees and plants. It would be nice if we could use the riverbank as part of a park but didn't have to worry about it flooding.  
 172 A park with a police officer  
 173 The school needs playground equipment. Really like T.north, but the bathrooms need to be open with a vending machine and water fountain. When it was first open it was really nice. Be nice if the rail trail had more views of the river instead of brush.  
 174 Water park  
 175 A continuous green belt in the floodway of the Cass River  
 176 Outdoor Screen For Summer/Fall Movies Nights  
 177 a clean one over watched by a oath keeping police officer  
 178 Water Park  
 179 Flat areas adjacent to Cass River

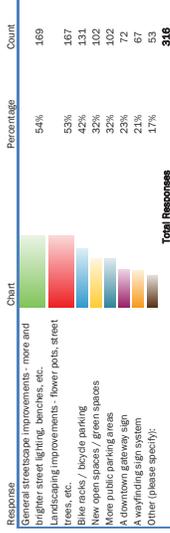
106 Fishing and hunting  
 107 automotove park  
 108 Skate park  
 109 A water park  
 110 Amusement Park  
 111 Waterpark  
 112 water park  
 113 An area for kids to play while having some tables for adults to sit and rest  
 114 splash village  
 115 night club  
 116 Dog Park  
 117 shaded and big for kids  
 118 A huge park that my future kids will love.  
 119 Nothing  
 120 A park with new equipment.  
 121 None  
 122 Huge outdoor sporting facilities  
 123 A Fishing Park  
 124 fishing park  
 125 Get a child friendly park  
 126 A friendly safe park  
 127 Visit McCurdy Park in Corunna MI. Copy it.  
 128 Willy Wonka Park (We already have the chocolate river)  
 129 make use of the fairgrounds...add some new equipment, up date the tents courts and basketball courts. it is an open area with a lot of potential.  
 130 Access to river, grilling facilities/picnic areas  
 131 Camping and swimming pool  
 132 rec. use of cass with food courts and use of pavilion  
 133 Water park and incorporating ball park closer to downtown  
 134 Have a disc golf course- 18 holes  
 135 dog park  
 136 A safe place for the kids.  
 137 just take care of what we have why upgrade when you cant maintain the ones we have  
 138 Vets Park  
 139 veterans park with the old broken down fountain  
 140 more police looking over park I find drug use a problem at the parks. I also dont like having to see used condoms laying in the parks. Better law enforcement is needed.  
 141 a clean and kid friendly park where dogs are kept leashed and police patrol more often  
 142 dog tree parks  
 143 a park with a police officer would be great!  
 144 One park like the one on Cass ave. with the gazebo, and one with more and better ball diamonds.  
 145 A park with a police officer  
 146 A park over looked with a police officer.  
 147 sex and drug free park  
 148 A kid friendly park where children don't have to listen to the sware words and see the drug use at the basketball courts at t. north pavilion a police officer would help in this matter. Dogs in park should be on a leash also.  
 149 A park monitored by a police officer.  
 150 one with a police officer looking over it  
 151 A park with no drugs monitored by a well driven police officer with a purpose.  
 152 a clean and working park the ice rink has shape holes busted out its a danger to kids also place a cop at the pavilion drug use is awful here as well as sex after hours  
 153 a clean park with an active policemen this would help the park be more of a place for children. as of right now its horrible drug needles and condoms laying around and foul language from the older teens at the pavilion bball court  
 154 A clean park with police monitoring it  
 155 somewhere not littered  
 156 a clean and functioning one the kids sprinkler at t north pavilion is broke already n lots of drugs used here  
 157 a well maintained park and a well watched park by the police  
 158 A child friendly park with less drugs. profanity, and leashed dogs  
 159 One with law enforcement present  
 160 one with a police officer present  
 161 Dog park

## 18. Do you have any other comments regarding parks and recreation in Vassar?

There are 133 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	would like the tennis courts by school refurbished
41	allow snowmobiles on roads
5	Baby toddler friendly playset or swing
48	Bathrooms often closed. Wish they were open.
123	beach?
6	Better maintenance of the park properties is a very important matter.
72	Bring back burnouts to river fest
96	Cars drive to fast near parks and dogs unleashed are a danger to the citizens of Vassar.
39	Central school needs new play park it is not safe
114	children and dogs dont mix
118	clean them
130	clean them
116	Clean them and enforce the law. They need monitored.
97	clean them and enforce the laws stop the drug use at them and the vandalism and dogs need to be leashed.
107	cleaner parks and more child friendly
30	Cleaning up along the river and seeing if we can't get more use out of it! The Cass River is a HUGE part of Vassar and we should take more pride in it!
125	clear and open access to the river is needed and development of access to area between rail trail and river
131	Condos overlooking the river with an active downtown. Prefer cluster buildings over individual businesses.
11	Currently they are missed opportunities for encouraging visits to Vassar.
93	do not charge youth leagues a fee to use the parks.
104	Dogs need to be leashed and police at parks
95	don't waste tax payers money
120	dredging out or cleaning the Cass River
73	e
28	Encourage fisheries or DNR restock of the Cass River at no cost to the city but encourages fishing. Add fish ladders in Franklemuth to provide access to the upper Cass. Possible dredging to increase river depth.
110	Enforce Michigan's leash law not just the cities law!
111	enforce the laws no sex nor drugs at park!
17	family friendly movie nite in the park
106	find out who is putting the poop on the kids play equipment at the pavilion park
91	Flush Toilets at all parks would be nice!
14	get rid of that NASTY LaChance era cement thing called a fountain in Vets Park and replace it with a beautiful victorian style fountain complete with new landscaping
35	Have local businesses do BBQ in the park days. Grill out holidays and have coupons for all who can attend to local businesses. Workers would break for lunch anywhere between 11:2 on a Saturday or even a Friday to come support local but also get a good eat.
87	have police patrol the parks for drugs and bad children
20	Honestly didn't know there were that many city maintained parks. Eliminate some while improving others.
16	I think that there should be more benches along the rail trail in shaded areas. Also would like to maybe see a few picnic tables in the grassy area on Water St. near the rail trail. People can sit there & have a bite to eat or just visit if they wish.
127	I think that Vassar needs a disc golf course. Disc golf is a very popular sport, and there are a lot of people in the area that play. Please consider tossing the idea around.
89	I think the parks have steadily improved in the forty years I have used them.
27	I think there is to many parks.
81	I would prefer sand or tire mulch rather than wood chips to be put down on the park grounds so it would be more safer for the children when they play.
2	I would say beyond just maintaining the parks, when we are at a point where we can add amenities and upgrade, we could start with Lion's Park- the heart of the city. Then Sticks Park. The rail trail has been maintained nicely, by the way.
44	instead of 8 little parks to segregate ,build one big park along river, only have to maintain one park and community comes together
45	it is time for them to actually make changes instead of just meeting every month.....nothing ever gets done
122	It would be good to either use them or loose them, if a park is not often frequented, it is time to stop investing in them (unless it doesn't take much \$ to maintain. A once a year event is not enough to keep the fairground, but maybe it is worth saving for the right person to volunteer and make monthly events. I got a lot of use during river fest this year. I vacillate. Sometimes I go to the less frequented parks BECAUSE they are not busy. It is nice to have a place to be alone. I know the town is in financial trouble though. I can be alone a lot of places, if it would help, close it down.
52	Just want easy access to the water.
132	Keep Them Better Maintained
38	keep them clean and pretty!
40	Keep them clean and safe. Add to them over the years.
126	keep them well lit and under camera surveillance to keep the vandals away
46	Keep up the good work and maintain them
94	later hours for fishing and use of the rail trail
10	Let do away with charging Little League, youth football etc to use the parks. These are areas that wouldn't be used anyways. These organizations work hard to bring people in. They are not banking money. They are busting tail to earn enough to provide a program for these kids!
112	letting dogs roam while children are playing
90	lions park is to close to the river and has fence. we have small parks everywhere. Put the fair grounds to use, we only need one big nice one
12	Look at new park at old Tuscola school. That's done right with ball fields, river walk, canoe launch, etc
117	maintain parks
105	maintain the parks we have
108	maintain the parks we have
103	maintain the parks we have they need attention
3	maintain what we have before building new
109	maybe clean them???
92	money is always an issue, pursuing grants and contributions
68	More places to just chill. Cleaner bathrooms. No graffiti (unless its concentrated). Public pool.
33	More playground equipment at the fairgrounds
23	More please... SOCCER.....
115	More police at our parks to monitor and enforce the laws
99	more police monitoring of our parks
15	N/A
124	need indoor basketball courts for winter open to public, need tennis courts back
27	Need to be monitored more.
29	Need to update and consolidate
43	Nice job on keeping parks clean!
98	no lose dogs.
26	No smoking at the parks! Cig butts everywhere it makes it look disgusting and it's not safe for young kids.
80	NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
100	people need to keep animals on leashes this is a danger to all using the rail trail.
113	place a policeman at the park
51	Some areas seem to be getting run down - What is the plan for the Fairgrounds?
13	Sticks park needs serious help. It looks awful next to the Rail Trail.
121	surveillance to discourage vandalism
24	tennis courts would be nice
49	Thank you for all that is here
7	The City of Vassar does a nice job maintaining the parks in the area.
36	the maintenance of the current parks has falling in the past years.
8	The parks Vassar has are sufficient if they were only maintained better. The lack of maintenance only costs more when a problem is ignored, it takes a mouse hole and turns it into a mountain.
128	The pavilion fees are too high.
102	The police need to monitor the park
25	The restroom facilities at the ball diamonds are atrocious. I refuse to use them or allow my children to use them because they are dirty, unkempt and are in serious need of updating.
133	There should be a pedestrian bridge somewhere south of Huron Avenue bridge, perhaps at Spruce Street or near there
59	They are enjoyable but have not been improved in a decade or so
77	they aren't that great
101	they need to be better maintained.
56	They need to be cared for and watched more than they are now
19	They need to be updated. Sticks park looks so old and out dated. If no one plays basketball back there then make it something else. Dog Park??

19. Which of the following types of improvements would you like to see in the downtown area over the next 10-15 years?

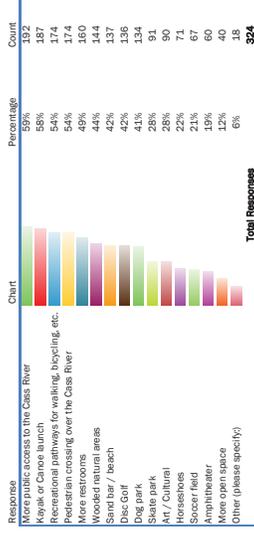


- 71 They Suck
- 31 to many parks
- 119 Too many parks.
- 82 Try to keep the parks clean
- 32 Upkeep and repair of park facilities is vital for a community use, youth may damage property but well maintained grounds not only deter vandalism it also increases appeal to those citizens who wouldn't damage the park to begin with.
- 37 Vassar does do a pretty good job with the parks
- 4 We have a great facility at the fairgrounds....we need to utilize more. We need public tennis courts
- 34 We need a dedicated community center. Perhaps creating a replica of the front of the old Central school, including the gym and stage.
- 18 While we probably can't afford to increase funding for parks/rec through increased millage, it's important to look for grants, and to maintain the nice parks in Vassar
- 22 Wish Vassar had a summer recreation program for our kids. It is a bummer to have to go to Frankemuth and Reese for summer camps, sports, etc. Also, why not charge more for t-ball so that the kids can have safe functioning equipment? The catcher's gear is so bad that it doesn't even stay on half of the time. The fields were so full of weeks on the actual diamond, it was embarrassing. It was like the t-ball program was an after thought.

19. Which of the following types of improvements would you like to see in the downtown area over the next 10-15

#	Response
1	We have many of these items...we just need to clean up what is here!
2	Easier access to the sidewalks from parking spaces as well as better sidewalks in the downtown business area.
3	Care for the patunias and downtown sidewalk cleaning and maintenance
4	building beautification
5	Tear down some buildings and make it parks
6	updating existing downtown parking spaces and maintain what you do. The new parking lot off of Oak Street looks like hell! What was beautiful new landscaping has gone to weeds! Maintain it and also do the same with the parking lot behind the theater!
7	more businesses
8	more things for the community to do
9	improved roadway, sidewalk infrastructure on main street, cass, m-15, etc...some of this has been done
10	A coffee/sandwich shop
11	Upgrade Christmas Decorations
12	
13	resurfacing of parking lot behind old Betty Lou's.
14	More businesses and they will clean everything up
15	More restaurants downtown
16	Restore or tear down shabby run down buildings downtown. Empty decaying buildings are a disgrace
17	Full Occupancy
18	start by weeding and maintaining the flower you plant.
19	Lighting is fine but the store fronts need work
20	none of the above do any good if there are few if any businesses to go to.
21	clean and neat sidewalks. Storefronts maintained and welcoming
22	Bike Lanes
23	almost all of the downtown building look like an eyesore, bricks falling, paint peeling. It needs to be repaired!
24	more shops
25	new and improved movie theatre
26	Thriving businesses
27	taco bell
28	improve road conditions (potholes)
29	Downtown is very dull, especially with the theater and Betty Lou's closing down.
30	paint with brighter colors.
31	Fishing
32	A place to get coffee besides McDonanlds
33	taco bell WILL be next to dollar General
34	
35	Business's to care about their storefront appearance- examine Holland, MI.
36	beautify the existing buildings downtown
37	occupied stores
38	
39	Nothing
40	none
41	less trash laying around again more police enforcing the laws already on the books.
42	more camping and fishing areas. public garden
43	Better law enforcement stop the drug dealing, sex at parks, drugs at parks, and animal control is needed as well as the enforcement of Michigan's leash law
44	Remove eyesores i.e. dying or dead trees along E. Huron Ave in front of Vic's Market area
45	definitely, in-town benches for us elderly
46	by and large, the existing Huron Ave downtown is crumbling and should just be torn down
47	Published hours of all downtown businesses in one place
48	Repair the sidewalks.
49	Replace older structures
50	law enforcement watching the bars
51	Movie Theater
52	The downtown buildings are moldy and the older owner businesses outside appearance is lacking.
53	Rehabilitate all the old junky-looking brick building that could look great if they were maintained, but look terrible at present

20. What additional facilities or amenities would you like to see added to the Vassar's park? Please check all that apply.

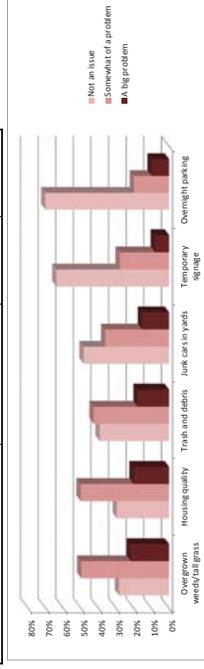


20. What additional facilities or amenities would you like to see added to the Vassar's parks? Please check all that

- # Response
- 1 bmx bike trail down in the low lying river area. already semi set up just would need to be cleaned out
- 2 Pedestrian crossing somewhere between the bridge & the train tracks south of town leading to the rail trail.
- 3 Walk way by river
- 4 Drinking Fountains
- 5 Sledding Hill
- 6 connect current rail trail with Millington and Resse
- 7 Movie Theater
- 8 movie theater
- 9
- 10 Concert hall
- 11 Nothing
- 12 more trash bins
- 13 police on duty not just one
- 14 night fishing should be legal near dam and moore drain
- 15 More law enforcement.
- 16 need to have a communication system where I can go to see if the water levels are going to allow me to kayak and canoe on a certain day.
- 17 Speaker system for music on rail trail or for announcements.
- 18 fishing dock

21. What is your opinion regarding these issues in Vassar?

	Not an issue	Somewhat of a problem	A big problem
Overgrown weeds/fall grass	29%	50%	20%
Overgrown weeds/fall grass	30%	50%	20%
Trash and debris	39%	43%	18%
Junk cars in yards	49%	36%	15%
Temporary signage	64%	28%	8%
Overnight parking	70%	23%	10%



22. Are there any other problem issues you'd like to address? Please specify:

There are 93 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	Noise ordinance enforcement later in the evenings.
18	4 corner light needs a left turn light signal, to allow westbound traffic to turn left onto M15
57	Again, the ideals of children are a considerable detriment to success
28	Better maintenance of Jay Rd in the winter months and more lighting
10	Bring more places to Vassar, so people do not have to always go to another city/town to do things. For example, for shopping, many people go to Caro, Birch Run, Saginaw, and Bay City instead. Bring places such as Walmart or Target to Vassar!
64	City Gov't big joke
62	Clean the river up.
15	Could use a nice hotel to cater to people staying here over night or to stay at a reduced price from what Frankenmuth has to offer.
5	Crossing lights at main intersection not working
66	Dogs roaming unleashed especially a black dog at the rummel agency and surrounding area, drugs at our parks and schools as a mother of three my children always inform me of drugs at the schools. I will be home schooling soon. Maybe have a on duty police officer at schools at all times.
13	Downtown looks like an eye soar, at least one life fitness makes it not look so empty
90	excessive noise from bass or car stereos.
19	Failure to stop at sign leaving apartments behind mcdonalds
79	fix our sidewalks and lower the traffic speed kids cross these roads
17	Graffiti and vandalism cleanup
91	Homeowners need to take pride in there homes or rentals.
65	How about the police actually watch the bar parking lots especially near the pavilion and cork pine so many trashed people are leaving the bars and endangering us. Need animal control to actually control something cats and dogs are a big problem. fed up with having my garbage bags ripped open.
70	I think more police would improve Vassar especially a unit behind The Vassar bar "cheeks"
77	I want to see more preservation of the downtown and residential areas. I feel between the city-chamber of commerce-and dda there should be more grants available to help owners restore their facades and add beautiful visual curb appeal especially on the main drag(Huron Ave and Goodrich Street).
9	That is your gateway into the city and I must say a lot of the homes are so run down and overgrown it looks like Detroit! Add that with empty store fronts and its no wonder people dont want to establish business here. You have to start somewhere and I would say this area is the high priority. Once you establish this visual and you start to promote the downtown people will want to come here to set up shop. I want to see Vassar be like it use to be a place people can be confident in raising a family and setting up shop. Right now it appears stagnant
73	Id like to be informed properly of important things such as illegal CRIMINALS being housed at wolvenrue. via mail and not a comment on facebook thats bullshit! Also Id like a voice in the decision.
87	It looks like our town is dying-- based on the poor upkeep of many of the houses. Maybe it is. I am concerned about people moving out rather than into our town. Is that a problem? I don't think we need new residential areas as much as the old ones torn down and replaced or regulated more. Abandoned homes or homes that have been "for sale" for over a year with boarded up windows make our town look run down. I was so sad to see the brick two story house on Cass Ave torn down, but I think it was necessary. The one across from the library is really run down and no one is living in it. I think there should be a regulation about windows. If there is a board over a window, it should only be allowed to be there so long before fines start. I wonder how many of our houses are up for sale. Before new housing development is considered, the old housing needs to be delt with. Apartments help people move to a town, so they have a place to stay while they look for a house. I get the feeling though, not many people are moving to Vassar. People are moving away from Vassar because of lack of jobs and because of teens and college students feeling like there is no place for them to have fun during the long winter months. I REALLY like the amount of outdoor events and parks that are available though. In Michigan winter though, there needs to be something other than one day of sledding.
88	It seems that the city spends way too much on police protection that isn't really needed. Most police calls seem to go to rental property, suggesting rental property is costing the taxpayers a lot.
21	Joblessness is widespread. Giving homeowners and renters incentive to paint or make positive changes to their building facades. When a town looks good, it'll feel good. I'd like Vassar to look a tiny bit better. Then it'll feel even better.
26	Just not an attractive interesting city to visit
55	Keep the city cleaner, especially the t. North bathrooms
54	lack of fast food choices
3	lack of jobs because of new business being turned away

36	Lack of maintenance of grass and far too much construction
7	Lack of parking in adequate areas for downtown apartments
83	Lower the speed limit through town. The lack of law enforcement behind the bars. These people are driving away trashed putting us all in danger.
30	Make a truck stop with paved parking for our commercial drivers that live here in Vassar. The current existing large truck parking is poor and causes a mess for drivers to clean up inside their cans in wet conditions. In the winter it also causes issues with getting stuck in the mud or on ice slicks in the dirt parking lot provided by the current establishments owners.
16	more businesses and restaurants
78	More police patrolling the bar parking lots to maybe times we hear and see fighting and a lot of drunk driving.
63	more police willing to uphold the bar they took! Arrest the drunks leaving the bars for the safety of our citizens
76	need animal control on our cat problem I am sick of picking my garbage up twice. I take pride in my lawn and dont need the extra hassle
71	No police dealing with the alcoholics leaving the bars. Animals need controlled especially aggressive ones and free roaming cats that destroy my trash and cause a big nasty mess.
47	No where to get decent coffee
12	Not at this time but if you were to put out another survey in the near future after receiving these ones I just may have more to say.
45	Not enough fishing and Deer Hunting
11	not enough street lights on side streets- spruce st, west st, prospect, etc
37	not that I can think of
35	Opening of the Theater needs to happen
27	overgrown grasses on vacant homes and the corner of cottrell and day!
86	parking on laws
23	Parks never being mowed or maintained
60	people letting there dog run loose on s main street
80	people to get together and help the elderly keep there yard up. with the rising cost and some are alone we need to help one another have it 3 times a year, and not to just help one's that have a name in the community but help all. I see favoritism all the time in this town it is who you know and are to get anything done
69	Please have rummel insurance keep their dog tied up its a danger to everyone in the area!
61	police going on calls out of the city
68	police need to bust the alcoholics leaving the bars.
29	public bathrooms lock often and no running water at drinking fountain
89	Repair the hill in Vassar, not just patch it
41	road conditions
67	rummel insurance agency aggressive dog needs controlled.
85	S. Main st has an uncontrolled Dog near state farm!!!
24	School
4	schools
93	sidewalks are in terrible condition, even dangerous many places downtown
29	sky high taxes
14	Something encouraging gardening/growing own food, small farm animals (chickens etc) to help forward self-sustainability
82	speed limit through town is to fast children have to cross these roads
92	stray cats big issue
42	the buildings in the middle of town look run down.
25	The house across the road from Shop Rite needs to be torn down. It is an awful sight for people to see when they are driving into our town on M-15. The windows are broken and drapes hanging in threads. What a sorry statement it makes to visitors driving by.
59	theft and vandalism, loose dogs and cats
46	there seems to be alot of roadkill from in and out of town
50	too much police.
75	trash behind checks bar this parking lot needs maintained. All in all more cops would be great!
72	trash is a big problem behind the bars along with the drunks leaving the bars and putting us in danger put a policeman in these parking lots for christ sake
8	Ugly store fronts/empty buildings downtown.
81	Unchained dogs I get chase a lot when we ride bikes
84	Unchained dogs, stray cats, trash and litter behind corkpine and checks bar, drugs should not be in school, all in all I really think if the police department would properly enforce laws and actually monitor problem areas it would really help our town and improve our safety.
2	Unleashed/Uncontrolled dogs are a serious issue. I see this many times on my walks, and the owners take no responsibility when their dogs come near people. A walking patrol officer to ticket and/or remove uncontrolled animals from the owners would be nice.

6 Vacant historical building store fronts.

33 we need a taco bell

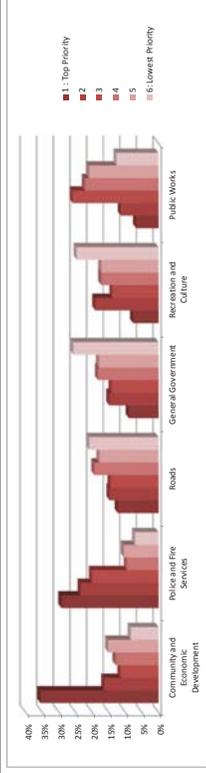
31 What is the purpose of restricting parking on roads with parking spaces overnight?

23. The City of Napa's government generally focuses on six key components:

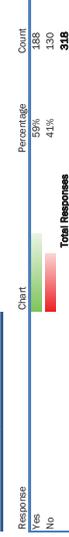
- Community and Economic Development (light removal, aesthetic improvements).
- General Government (City Hall services, information services).
- Police and Fire Services (public safety, emergency services).
- Public Works (water, sewer, and other infrastructure services).
- Recreation and Culture.
- Roads.

Using the list below, please rank each component by how important you think it is relative to the others (1 = the most important item, 6 = the least important item):

	1: Top Priority	2	3	4	5	6: Lowest Priority
<b>Community and Economic Development</b>	<b>36%</b>		<b>16%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Police and Fire Services	29%	24%	20%	10%	11%	6%
Roads	12%	15%	15%	15%	18%	21%
General Government	9%	15%	15%	14%	18%	26%
Recreation and Culture	8%	19%	14%	14%	17%	25%
Public Works	7%	11%	11%	26%	22%	13%



24. Would you be willing to pay more to help improve your community overall?



25. What do you like best about Vassar?

There are 262 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	small town atmosphere
2	small town living
3	Small town people come together when needed
4	It's a small community with a lot of people who know each other and share their lives with each other.
5	The community atmosphere and small town events
6	Small town atmosphere
7	hometown community
8	small town atmosphere.. we are missing that around here lately
9	Community involvement
10	Our small time community love and support
11	sense of community
12	When there is needed, people will come together to help.
13	I feel safe in town
14	We have an attractive downtown and overall nicely kept neighborhoods (with some exceptions)
15	safety, small town, nice area
16	SANIL TOWN LIFE
17	small town feeling
18	Small town feel.
19	the community
20	The people. It is a lovely group of people. I originally came from Cass City and loved it there and it has been an easy transition to a nice little town that is very involved with each other.
21	Small town
22	Small town atmosphere
23	people
24	location
25	been here 17 years, nothing anymore is good
26	the smallness of the community, everyone pretty much knows everyone
27	The style and easy-going way of life. Rural- not too busy but still lively. The sense of community & willingness to come together to partake in community events
28	honey
29	Small town
30	I like the rail trail and that I feel safe exercising on it alone.
31	the beautiful architecture
32	Small town
33	the poor attitude about how the town sucks and how it should just shut down and all that business. but what do I know, im only 17.
34	Quiet community
35	It is mostly safe.
36	people
37	low crime
38	It's a peaceful quiet non-violent town.
39	downtown
40	Small town.
41	small town feel, close to the services that we have, safe and friendly
42	that it's a small town community and could potentially be a great small town community
43	The small town atmosphere is what I like best about Vassar.
44	small, secure, safe town
45	A small town and we all work together
46	The safe place for kids
47	I like how homie it is Everyone's so nice to each other
48	small community.
49	Access to parks, the river, and the fun festivals/community events.
50	River
51	The Cass River going through the center of town. It makes us unique
52	Small and safe, everyone still knows everyone else and we work together when needed

53	Overall friendly/safe community, rail trail and accessibility to parks, library
54	Have never lived anywhere else in my 65 years, love the way the community comes together when one of our needs help, such good caring people are all around, the flowers that line the highway is so beautiful and makes me so proud of our town as visitors pass through and comment.
55	Small town, rail trail, beautiful flowers, old buildings.
56	the waste water treatment plant
57	It's a growing town that still maintains a small town feel
58	Playgrounds & rail trails
59	Small town/prideful town atmosphere
60	Cute, small town look, quick to navigate, fairly walkable, love the rail trail and forest and river
61	the small community,
62	It's my hometown
63	quiet/safe -- not crazy all the time like Frankenthuth but we need MORE
64	Small town
65	RAIL TRAIL AND REC TRAIL ACCESS.
66	calm community
67	I really like Vassar overall great place to live and raise a family
68	The small community help
69	Community pride and spirit. Low crime rate. Cass River.
70	the petunias
71	Small town that comes together for those in need
72	The rail trail and other family friendly opportunities provided
73	the residents
74	I love the small community feeling, mosyt of the people are childhood friends and family. Most of the people are good people. I love the holl and buidling and flowers while driving down it. I love to see a house be restored, especially an old historical one.
75	Small Town atmosphere... close to big city conveniences (hospitals,shopping,restaurants)
76	Very close knit town
77	my childhood memories at the school
78	small town
79	grew up here
80	most of the people are friendly
81	The people in the community
82	safe
83	History of its founding
84	Sense of community
85	Small community pride
86	Friendly community
87	small safe community
88	We all know each other.. tight community .
89	small town pride
90	That's it's a "tight-knit" community
91	small town atmosphere
92	Small town, country, friendly people
93	railtrail and the parks
94	the schools
95	small town atmosphere
96	old buildings, small town
97	Great potential for growth
98	It is a quiet place and relatively safe.
99	home town feel
100	small beautiful town with lots of potintal to be a wonderful place to live
101	Rail Trail
102	Small town feel
103	It quiet and things will get done with time.
104	Location, size
105	The small town atmosphere
106	parks
107	people
108	community attitude
109	movie theater

110 School system, Community support for most

111 Size

112 A nice place to raise children. Good grocery store and hopefully the movie theater will re-open soon.

113 small historic town

114 Physical characteristics of town with hill and river.

115 small town, friendly, quiet

116 its safe for families, always lived here and most families help each other

117 small community

118 the easy access to things that are here

119 Small town friendliness

120 it was the school but not anymore these days.

121 Safe, small town

122 Low taxes. Light, friendly government.

123 small town

124 Close kind community.

125 The near non existent crime rate and small town feel.

126 hometown feel

127 It's peaceful!

128 Hometown, familiar

129 Home town vibe

130 Great, friendly, non-violent community.

131 the people

132 Townsend North Playground

133 schools

134 The small town feel

135 ice cream

136 town

137 townsend north park

138 small town

139 The small community

140 That its a small town

141 i like that the community participates in the towns events

142 they are a cool city

143 the gym

144 its little

145 The Small Town Feel

146 mcdonalds

147 DOWNTOWN

148 the friendliness

149 McDonalds

150 football games

151 Football

152 Football

153 The community events

154 the park

155 Community Events

156 Parks

157 Parks

158 the movie theater

159 Vassar Theatre

160 Dragon Palace

161 The theater

162 The people are friendly

163 Small community/feeling.

164 it's a small town with very little crime. Mostly safe.

165 city

166 the parks

167 its a quiet town.

168 The River

169 nostalgia

170 quiet, nice, everybody minds their business

171 hometown spirit

172 No tourists

173 home town spirit

174 everything

175 It has a nice small town feel.

176 It has alot of nice parks and general recreational areas

177 Sports

178 I liked the movie theatre but it needed to be bigger and have maybe one or two movies playing at one time.

179 park and school

180 Football

181 Parks

182 I like the Music programs provided by the schools and city.

183 the parkes

184 small town community

185 I like that it is friendly, I love the Cass River, I also like the Seasonal activities.

186 mcdonalds

187 The cass river

188 The football program

189 Cass River

190 the location

191 That everyone knows each other well

192 river fest

193 How small and friendly the town is

194 small town

195 Small town America

196 it's size, people, and history

197 It is small and quiet, but should not be labeled a city

198 safe, quiet

199 Small town atmosphere - use of rail trail

200 It's history.

201 Small town, with great people

202 parks and rail trail

203 Peaceful/friendly

204 Its history and river

205 Community involvement, especially through the Library

206 safe tight knit community.

207 The schools.

208 cass river

209 low drug problems sometimes

210 rail trail, cass river,

211 Subway, Mc Donalds, rail Trail, parks

212 rail trail and parks

213 the cigarette butts all over the side walks and the dog shit is wonderful!

214 the cass river and the nature along the railtrail

215 Friendliness of residents

216 The Cass river and the wooded natural areas

217 Subway

218 Rail trail and the mighty cass river

219 The river

220 The Cass river

221 rail trail

222 My church

223 The rail trail and wooded area

224 Not much

225 The rail trail and the nature along it

226 fishing

227 Brad Barretti! Awesome manager

228 not much

229 Rail trail

230 Our towns people

231 The small population

171 hometown spirit

172 No tourists

173 home town spirit

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224 Not much

225 The rail trail and the nature along it

226 fishing

227 Brad Barretti! Awesome manager

228 not much

229 Rail trail

230 Our towns people

231 The small population

- 232 Rail trail for sure!
- 233 small home town
- 234 safety and freedom to walk about safely
- 235 safety
- 236 Support for small business
- 237 It is quiet, small town
- 238 small town feel, and community involvement
- 239 people in the community
- 240 it's a small community
- 241 flowers next to the road, river, almost everything you need in a small area
- 242 Friendly people, safe environment
- 243 quiet life, Mayberry
- 244 small town, low crime
- 245 Access to river, rail trail,
- 246 History
- 247 Its scenic. The hill and downtown.
- 248 The river.
- 249 The library
- 250 Small town feeling
- 251 my family
- 252 Small town atmosphere. The parks are great!
- 253 not much probably the cass river
- 254 The people who care, are will to step up.
- 255 Fairway store
- 256 community coming together helping each other out
- 257 Small town atmosphere with a lot of potential.
- 258 Small Town Vibe, Friendly People
- 259 Small town
- 260 Church
- 261 There are a lot of special activities with many churches involved. Vassar is a very friendly town.
- 262 Small town atmosphere, generally nice for senior citizens

## 26. What do you like least about Vassar?

There are 259 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	blight, lack of community pride regarding blight and run down homes and yards.... lack of restaurant options
2	condition of the school system!
3	Nothing to do
4	Like anywhere, instead of stepping up to make things better, we have a lot of people who just complain about how things are. We would be a stronger community if we acted like a team more often.
5	Good old boy mentality on city council
6	Lack of businesses and job opportunities
7	dying schools and downtown
8	our schools
9	Taxes
10	The loss of helpfulness being rendered from the city management .
11	How it's declined in a short time
12	Politics. The council needs to come together and work for the people and not themselves.
13	I have to drive to Birch Run or Saginaw for restaurants or more than a gallon of milk
14	Lack of commercial/industrial/retail development and industry - most importantly a lack of jobs
15	School systems
16	poor performance of public schools
17	Lack of recreational shooting sports areas like archery and gun range.
18	schools
19	schools
20	Not enough restaurants/businesses. Hate seeing the theater closed although I know there's not much to be done there
21	School system and local governments
22	Feeling of decline
23	nothing to do....ghost town
24	school system
25	cost
26	everything closes so early and no delivery
27	Use of the Cass river and other recreational areas not as encouraged & kept up with as it could be.
28	schools are terrible
29	The downtown looks like crap
30	The overall poor/run-down look of the town and school.
31	dead downtown
32	No local jobs
33	a lot of things honestly, I selected them in the bubble sheet thing above
34	The school district
35	The lack of diversity or culture.
36	becoming trashy
37	one grocery store, not enough businesses
38	The fact that this place is beginning to look like a ghost town.
39	Not enough jobs for the youth or adults
40	Empty buildings
41	lacking some basic services that cause me to go to neighboring towns when I would prefer to do business here
42	lack of activities/community involvement
43	The inability to come up with positive solutions from the City Council and City Hall staff that will benefit the larger community, not the just the individuals with some power.
44	schools
45	Not enough to offer so we have to branch out and go to bigger cities!!
46	The lack of EVERYTHING....
47	I don't like how theres nothing fun to do for family's Meet the easter bunny or santa I rather spend my money in vassar instead of frankenmuth. In frankenmuth theres alot of things to do with family splash waterpark,golfing,cookoff,meet the easter bunnie
48	public school system. I'm from vassar, would like to, but would not move back unless public school system improves significantly.
49	City government feels like a burden. Why can't we call for a burn permit instead of picking up a hard copy like Saginaw County does?

- 50 Schools
- 51 zoning and animal restrictions, property owner rights
- 52 Lack of restaurant choices/nice coffee shop
- 53 The lack of Senior citizens housing, affordable housing all on one level condos are not available!
- 54 Getting rundown, weeds and blight.
- 55 lack of leadership by city government
- 56 government
- 57 Not enough to do
- 58 Need more options in grocery and restaurants
- 59 Tea party
- 60 All the vacant buildings downtown and school system.
- 61 Not enough amenities, not enough cute mom and pop shops!
- 62 It is in the middle of nowhere and offers little opportunity or entertainment.
- 63 storefronts downtown that are empty
- 64 Low income housing
- 65 NOISE LEVELS IN THE EVENINGS
- 66 lack of employment and entertainment
- 67 School ranking real low. More restaurants.
- 68 The detouring
- 69 Bickering over snow removal. It is City responsibility to remove snow from city sidewalks, PERIOD!
- 70 empty buildings
- 71 Some of the people who are bad community members.
- 72 The empty businesses downtown
- 73 current business circumstances
- 74 Not enough jobs to attract young people
- 75 One Fast Food restaurant
- 76 how the school got so poorly managed
- 77 not enough businesses
- 78 The white trash population
- 79 local government officials (city manager)
- 80 The lack of funds available to the community
- 81 flooding
- 82 Loss of industry, the eyesores left from that loss which have so little hope of ever being utilized again or properly torn down. Possible ground contamination left from companies as well
- 83 Empty downtown
- 84 Run down homes and rentals that are owned by people outside vassar.
- 85 Lack of diversity in shopping. Gas prices
- 86 lack of options/nothing to do (have to leave town frequently for errands and entertainment.)
- 87 Everyone here seems exceptionally broke .... low income
- 88 economic opportunities are non-existent
- 89 School system at the moment
- 90 crime, drug use in town
- 91 empty business storefronts
- 92 downtown business are closing
- 93 the gossip
- 94 lack of communication from city hall to many local business owners . Non-residence requirement for city migr.
- 95 not maintained...worn down houses, not mowed and weeded, trashy
- 96 City manager
- 97 That it takes so long to get something done and not enough variety of stores
- 98 Lack of business diversity downtown.
- 99 the tea party
- 100 not a lot of community involvement (although getting better)
- 101 The lack of restaurants
- 102 Lack of things to do for the kids
- 103 some people want things their way and won't listen to others
- 104 The cost of gas.
- 105 The complaining and everyone giving a million reasons why things can NOT be done. Just do them or let someone do them!
- 106 schools
- 107 lack of opportunity/recreation for youth
- 108 lack of activities for young people in the summer
- 109 blind roads
- 110 Some of the population seems to lack a bit of culture or perspective (close-mindedness)
- 111 The empty factory buildings without lawn care
- 112 The price of gas! It is consistently higher here than anywhere in the surrounding communities.
- 113 How run down and doesn't have anything to attract people to stop when traveling M15
- 114 There is very little change/development.
- 115 how ugly it looks when driving through downtown or south m15
- 116 too much money being spent on police dept in a town with little crime.
- 117 drugs
- 118 the deterioration of the town and the feeling of a town dying around us
- 119 Talking the talk but not following up with action
- 120 taxes, cops why do we need so many??, watching city worker's waste time badly, (not all but most), need to fix drains and just not talk about it.
- 121 Downtown seems almost dead
- 122 Few jobs
- 123 school is getting bad.... teachers been there too long.
- 124 Losing employment opportunities, therefore population and students.
- 125 The lack of places to eat and shop
- 126 lack of business/water taste bad
- 127 drifters
- 128 It is going downhill, businesses closing
- 129 Lack of shopping
- 130 No lakefront beaches
- 131 some of the people
- 132 bumpy roads
- 133 All of the empty shops....it feels more like a ghost town than anything else when you're in downtown
- 134 constant road construction
- 135 how small it is
- 136 the people
- 137 theres nothing here
- 138 The falling economy
- 139 There isn't much to do besides the parks
- 140 roads.
- 141 lack of beauty and lack of access to nature
- 142 they are a cool city
- 143 not enough shops
- 144 not alot of shops
- 145 Businesses Closing
- 146 Main bridge
- 147 the lack of commercial businesses
- 148 the school
- 149 idk
- 150 No Taco Bell
- 151 No businesses
- 152 The school
- 153 school
- 154 School
- 155 Cops.
- 156 Trash
- 157 road conditions
- 158 Not Enough affordable recreation/ fast food places.
- 159 we don't have enough successful businesses in town
- 160 that the cass river is disgusting
- 161 the way the roads are all messed up. Too many pot holes
- 162 People in charge who aren't making good decisions, for the school especially.
- 163 There is obvious crime on the other side of the tracks and no one is doing anything to stop it.
- 164 junk yards
- 165 the roads
- 166 not enough stuff to do.
- 167 No Fish
- 168 mcdonalds
- 169 we dont have enough resturants and the movie theater is gone

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- 167 No Fish
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170	school system	221	Unleashed animals from dogs to stray cats. We also need more police willing to put effort in for the safety of our children
171	No decent shops	222	cops not doing there jobs letting vicious dogs run loose
172	nothing fun to do	224	the bars and the noise and danger they bring
173	Nothing	225	Lack of proper police enforcement.
174	It has a Palmer.	226	Our Mayor, our lack of police properly enforcing laws. Drunk driving is a crime and a danger to us all patrol the bars!
175	i dislike how low the school funding and lack of interest in academic success	227	Having to be fearful of the pitbull thats able to run free on rummels property
176	School	228	drugs and drunks near bars
177	How there aren't big grocers that you can buy food	229	lack of services - grocery, fast food
178	alot	230	Trashy look of some residential areas
179	Not enough tourist attractions	231	There are a lot of empty buildings/businesses
180	roads	232	Schools
181	I am not fond of all of the buildings that have gone out of business. I dont like driving through town and feeling like a ghost town.	233	It's so far from so many activities
182	nothing to do	234	no jobs for full-time employment
183	it is a small town, it does not have a lot of stores or restaurants.	235	job opportunities for our young adults
184	lack of fast food	236	lack of choices
185	How dirty our sites are	237	The houses look run down. Are there any industrial jobs left here?
186	No movie theater	238	dogs not being picked up after, not on leash
187	Schools	239	speeders, need a speed bump top of the hill
188	the government	240	lack of businesses and attractions, high city taxes
189	small and river fest is the only "fun" thing for young people	241	that there are essentially four retail areas instead of just one. Dollar General has helped out a lot, but that area needs to be developed more as a business area instead of downtown
190	Not enough restaurants	242	Flooding
191	the lack of things to do in town	243	The lack of career (not job) opportunities within the city limits.
192	It's depressing. No opportunity. City Council Members act like babies fighting and bickering with each other instead of serving with Honor. "The I don't care attitude", Lack of entrepreneur-spirit.	244	Lack of accessibility to the river.
193	some people and lack of retail stores	245	Unfriendly attitude. Car is now a city too and has taken away Vassar's bragging rights. The school is falling and businesses are closing.
194	the favoritism in this town and lack of community pulling together to help one another out.	246	car lots, roads
195	you have to leave town to shop and eat	247	Lack of industry
196	Bumpy streets	248	The dwindling downtown area.
197	poor support by community members	249	lack of police willing to put effort in where effort is actually needed bars, parks, uncontrolled animals
198	businesses leaving	250	Lack of entertainment and reasonably priced/"greasy spoon" restaurant options
199	dogs running loose and not cleaning up after dogs	251	Lots of entitlement attitude. There kids are the ones that wonder the town from sun up to sun down.
200	Streets turn up too much	252	Small minded thinking
201	loss of pride in houses and businesses (upkeep)	253	schools
202	limited shopping and food/dinning options. not enough activities	254	We have not reached our potential
203	Dirty River.	255	Blighted Homes, Junk Cars, Overgrown Yards
204	drugs, the new police officer, loud bar fights, drunks leaving the bars	256	City manager
205	you waste too much money	257	The corruption
206	The dog shit in front and behind of local businesses. The dangerous lose dog near the high school. Andys st, birch st, and the dog at rummel insurance. The alcoholics leaving the bars. Kids driving thru town to fast. Stray cats, drug dealing. Need better school security maybe add an armed officer and drug free school zone my teen daughter was offered meth during school hours and seen a lot of drug activity. Vassar could be better if the police stepped up and enforced the laws. Maybe have the state police help guide your department.	258	Some areas are a little run down
207	The lack of police and the lack of police enforcing laws. Does it not occur to you all people that are drunk and can barely walk are leaving the bars and problem they dig in my trash regularly	259	Lack of local transportation and very bad sidewalks
208	not enough police on duty and the drunks leaving the bars put us citizens in danger how about monitoring cheeks n cork pine parking lots. The dogs that are roaming freely. stray cats, school needs security ideally an armed officer and make eliminate drugs at school		
209	The fact that the police ignore the problem areas of town the parks and the bars behind both bars is awful fights and drunks driving		
210	police dont watch the problem areas of the town.		
211	Roads filled with potholes, and lines wearing off.		
212	Nuisance cats and unchained dogs.		
213	The Dog that a lady lets roam the rummel property and behind the Vassar bar its a danger!! Also I hate the fact the cars fly through Vassar and the pedestrian crossing lights only give u a second if that to cross the road.		
216	lack of proper enforcement of laws.		
217	the noise and the trash the bars bring I suggest a police unit control these areas		
219	The effectiveness of the Vassar police. The animals that run free and unsupervised		
220	Probably the lack of police actually enforcing laws. The bars are another big problem area from the trash the customers leave behind to the driving intoxicated after leaving the bars.		

27. What is the one thing you would do to improve Vassar?

There are 250 response(s) to this question.

#	Response
1	enforce ordinances for blight, tall grass, etc
2	Get our school system on firm ground again, so we can draw people to live here!
3	Bring in more activities
4	Get community members to care and work together, rather than just being cynical or apathetic.
5	Develop retail based businesses in downtown
6	Our school system. WE NEED A NEW SUPERINTENDENT!!
7	bring business downtown and improve our park systems
8	encourage businesses
9	no illegal immigrants and fix our school system
10	Ask community before big changes
11	Try to enforce the mindset of helping each other with our lives with more thought and concern for an individuals needs.
12	Work to bring in new business to the city.
13	Anything to encourage employers to come here and to encourage people to move here.
14	Improve school systems to increase people coming into Vassar.
15	FIND WAYS TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO PLANT THEMSELVES HERE.
16	improve schools
17	get a turn light put in at E. Huron and M-15 so you can turn left without getting hit or turning on red light.
18	schools!
19	Encourage small business growth
20	a new school board
21	Fix the downtown area
22	bring back businesses
23	improve school
24	let industry in
25	places open later
26	improve and add access points to the Cass river for multiple recreational activities (fishing, canoeing)
27	better schools
28	Tear down some buildings for parks...buy them if needed
29	I would fire the superintendent of the school, make better access to the Cass river, and fix up the downtown area.
30	clean up the main drag starting from Goodrich border to M15 border on the hill
31	More manufacturing
32	Good question. That I really cant answer, because id do a lot of things to improve it.
33	More appealing places for the youth
34	Replace the older businesses with newer, more current and useful ones.
35	bring in more tourists
36	add more fast food
37	I would bring in more businesses & industrial jobs. I would really like to see a few more benches placed in shaded areas along the rail trail, maybe a few picnic tables in the grassy area along the rail trail on Water St. near the informational sign about Vassar. (I'm sorry that was more than one.
38	bring jobs in and lure business to down town to help vassar look like a thriving town as it once was
39	Help schools out more
40	improve opportunities and benefits for small independent businesses
41	MORE LOCAL BUSINESS!
42	More eateries
43	More police
44	Give the town something to put us on the map...
45	Family places meet the eater
46	improve public school system by removing self serving leadership at all levels. hire and fire according to performance.....not tenure.
47	Offer areas where people could put up graffiti as art expression.
48	Better Schools
49	eliminate some of the parks to reinvest in the more active ones
50	Increase community involvement in town activities
51	The school system needs improvement, very concerned where the current administration is taking our students!!
52	Landscaping and restoring buildings or tear down and build new up the hill.
53	economic growth

54	government
55	More community events (e.g. sport activities, rec center)
56	Something encouraging gardening/growing own food, small farm animals (chickens etc) to help forward self-sustainability
57	Improve the pride in the community versus the bickering between leaders.
58	Fill in the Empty downtown buildings
59	I would not do just one thing.
60	The schools have always been an issue - start looking at who is doing the hiring and WHO IS IN CHARGE
61	PROMOTE WALKING/BIKING AS VEHICLE ALTERNATIVES. ENCOURAGE A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY
62	add businesses for employment, entertainment, and clean up areas of the community
63	Really Schools should be the most important
64	Fill the empty buildings and make some use of them to attract guests
65	Re-open the theater!
66	work with business opportunities, make downtown inviting
67	More business encouragement for employment opportunities for residents.
68	Revitalize downtown...open the theater, open new businesses
69	be more proactive in encouraging new business
70	Find something that would keep or attract a younger workforce
71	Bring more to the town
72	more businesses
73	more businesses
74	encourage new businesses
75	hire a new city manager that cares about more than just himself
76	Continue to seek grants and outside sources of funding
77	more business
78	Start a foundation to feed the elderly/ help repair their property
79	Offer FREE high speed internet
80	Community center
81	We need more commercial businesses including restaurants, entertainment, retail, coffee shops, etc.
82	More local things to do and jobs..
83	bring in businesses
84	improve the education being provided to our students
85	ordinances, noise and blight
86	fill the storefronts with businesses or apartments renovated so that the town looks nicer to those who drive through.
87	to see a dog park and fast food resurants
88	more volunteer/service activities
89	Encourage more downtown business and spruce up the downtown area.
90	clean it up, bring back the movie theater
91	Get rid of the manager
92	Make it easier to get things done by working closer with organizations that are trying to make vassar a better place to live and visit
93	Get rid of the blight around town - makes us look like a shabby area when really the city is uite beautiful.
94	school and library funding
95	Schools need more funding and better parks
96	I would like to see the theater reopened
97	if funds allowed I'd re-open the theater
98	Downtown shopping
99	Encourage businesses to come in. Encourage entertainment and culture. Clean it up and keep it clean.
100	add more events to rivertest
101	add to the park system...spray park or dog park. I do not have children, but have dogs, and have spent a lot of time at the Frankemuth dog park. I have taken my young family members to the spray park in Bay City.
102	more police
103	Increase access to the art/music
104	build a stronger education system to draw in more families to our community
105	Do whatever it takes to bring in new businesses.
106	Create stores etc that would get travelers to stop when traveling M15. Help give downtown a big face lift.
107	Bring in industry.
108	enforce clean up and repair
109	beautify the areas surrounding the river.
110	less drugs
111	encourage businesses to come even if they are in competition to other existing ones....our businesses are failing because they have become complacent and are losing business because there is less and less product to chose from
112	Get rid of the negativity starting with school system and ending with city council

113 fire city manager and his good old boys club.

114 Improve schools

115 Focus on basic services and low cost of doing business in town. Make it a nice clean town.

116 spend money on updating school and getting new teachers.

117 Offer Community education classes

118 I would attempt bring a walmart or meijers to our community so our citizens don't have to drive at minimum 17 miles to the nearest walmart and 30 miles to the nearest meijers. The restaurants and other businesses will follow if you bring a real store to our community.

119 more business/good tasting water/apartments geared toward early 20's-mid 25's single people that allow pets

120 I'd be sure there would be busing systems

121 Need an environment favorable to business, need people willing to create them

122 Develop downtown district with antique and gift shops to encourage tourism

123 Build a dam to create a lake & put a sandy beach park in. A side benefit would be hydropower.

124 have a better schooling system

125 better roads

126 I would like to add more shops to the downtown (especially a coffee shop!!!)

127 build a taco bell

128 more stores

129 put more stores and options

130 Pay money

131 The Cass River because I like to be around water

132 roads

133 I would improve the parks and bring in more art and culture to our town, I would like there to be murals painted by local artists

134 nuke it

135 fix abandon stores

136 the abandon stores

137 Bring More Business In

138 Open the Theater

139 More commercial and natural support

140 get more food places

141 downtown

142 Get a Taco Bell and More Businesses

143 Business

144 The school

145 TACO BELL

146 School

147 Get a Taco Bell.

148 Taco Bell

149 more community events and improve road conditions and put in a Taco Bell or Hungry Howies

150 More hang out places, besides McDonald's.

151 put focus on the education system

152 Add more shops downtown or places to hang out

153 Create a group for those who need help

154 Re-open the movie theater, fix the school system, get more businesses.

155 Increase businesses in our town.

156 Redoing the old buildings in the city, keep them

157 the roads

158 Add Fish

159 build a motor speedway

160 idk

161 Re-open the movie theater, get a decent coffee shop

162 open the theater

163 Anything

165 I would elect to hire someone more interested in academic success

166 Water park

167 Make some more businesses appear and more jobs for people so the city can grow.

168 make sure idlols stop doing drugs

169 Improve schools and add resurants

170 the roads

171 improve the look of the buildings, and overall quality of the whole town. Oh we need a coffee house.

172 More things for teens

173 I would like to improve the parks for the children

174 get more fast food

175 The roads

176 open the movie theater

177 Schools

178 help keep the school running

179 make a young adults hang out

180 Less abandoned buildings

181 School

182 Get business back in this town

183 Make the TOP of the hill the new Down Town. Make it the most vibrant, culturally compacted, business, retail, entertainment hub in the area- to play off of Birch Run and Frankenmuth- MAKE VASSAR a needed stop on a family's Birch Run-Frankenmuth visit.

184 make an effort to promote equality, acceptance, and understanding of people from all cultures

185 we need more jobs. we need to get the foundry back and make use of the old factory buildings or tear them down, that is what made Vassar and we lost it.

186 bring business in to town

187 Improve the streets

188 encourage businesses into the downtown area

189 welcome new business, make them see the gold mine here

190 better use of parks especially north area

191 Vassar schools need re-vamping. To much focus on games and not on education

192 Getting people to work together for common goals

193 Have more jobs in or close to town - industrial and commercial

194 see above

195 Clean up the river.

196 more faithful police, enforce dog leash laws, leave more nature, kill stray cats, leash rummel agencies dog also the dogs on the side streets running amuck, fix cracks in side walks hard for my old bones I take many trips

197 Fire all City workers

198 let the veterans run veterans park not people who did not serve, veterans have \$27000.00 at the park now.

199 More police

200 Police department more police on duty

201 police force are not doing a very good job, they need to focus on the problem areas in our town. examples parks bar parking lots.

203 Controlling stray cats and aggressive dogs

204 Re-pave most of the streets.

205 Enforce the laws already on the books.

206 More faithful police on duty that will uphold the oath they took.

207 More police that know the laws and that will enforce the laws.

208 Change people running city hall

209 Remove the bars if the police cant control whats leaving them drunks put us all in danger.

210 better law enforcement

211 Id honestly fire our mayor ASAP

212 New Mayor!!

213 I would have to say... change the mayor and the city manager.

214 Patrol parks and bars

215 enforce more leash laws

216 remove our mayor

218 Hire some police that actually look out for the safety of the citizens.

218 Enforce the laws we already have on the books, examples Michigan leash law, drunk drivers, etc

220 More police willing to uphold Michigan laws

221 people being more involved

222 more business along m15 heading toward richville

223 Encourage use of vacant store fronts

224 I would like to see the city be warmer & more inviting. Brighter & perkier :)

225 I don't think there is one single answer it needs to be a combination of new business, school improvement, and continued public safety

226 lower taxes to bring in more industrial type jobs for full-time employment

227 new businesses on huron would resolve/continue both number 25 and 26

228 Me personally? Fill out a survey. Give money.

172 More things for teens

173 I would like to improve the parks for the children

174 get more fast food

175 The roads

176 open the movie theater

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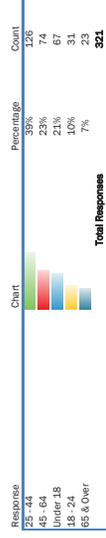
226 lower taxes to bring in more industrial type jobs for full-time employment

227 new businesses on huron would resolve/continue both number 25 and 26

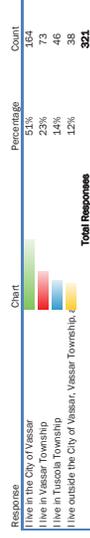
228 Me personally? Fill out a survey. Give money.

- 229 Encourage small businesses to open in town
- 230 speed bumps on athletic division, m15
- 231 incentives to attract business
- 232 I would get rid of 24/7 city police and just rely on Sheriff patrol and State Police
- 233 Attract more business
- 234 Have to start with the school system. The priorities are out of whack with what is really important.
- 235 Add a floating canoe/kayak launch.
- 236 Start a good will campaign.
- 237 More public serves
- 238 Try and bring back industry large and small.
- 239 Encourage downtown development.
- 240 New police with a drive and concern about public safety
- 241 Second bridge to cross the Cass River
- 242 Increase the Pride
- 243 Better, high paying jobs
- 244 add more stores bigger names... walmart or meijer
- 245 Encourage more activity and use of the downtown area
- 246 Restore downtown to Attract Retail Businesses
- 247 New manager
- 249 We need more restaurants.
- 250 Fix sidewalks and make them wider -- also shovel snow from them in winter

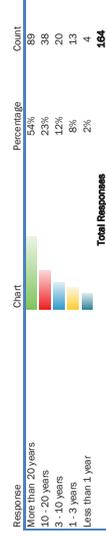
28. What is your age?



29. What is your residential status?



30. How long have you lived in Vassar?





# Appendix C

## Adoption Documentation

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# Resolution #2015-14

## Resolution to Approve and Adopt

## Master Plan for the City of Vassar

## By the City of Vassar City Council

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar Planning Commission has elected to draft, review, and adopt an update to the current Master Plan, adopted in 2000, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801, *et seq*; and

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan, inclusive of the charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals, for the City on May 18, 2015, at the City Hall; and

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar Planning Commission adopted a resolution on May 18, 2015 that recommended approval and adoption of the Master Plan to the City Council; and

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar City Council considered the proposed Master Plan, on July 6, 2015, at the City Hall.

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that the City of Vassar City Council hereby approves and adopts this Master Plan

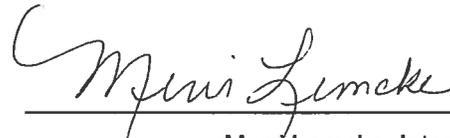
Motion by: Councilman Damm      Supported by: Councilman Atkins

Ayes: Mayor Bacon, Mayor Pro-Tem Sargent, Councilman Damm, Councilman Atkins

Nays: none

Absent: Councilman Gamet

**Resolution declared adopted July 6, 2015.**



Merr Lemcke, Interim City Clerk  
City of Vassar

## Resolution to Approve and Recommend Adoption

### Master Plan for the City of Vassar

#### By the City of Vassar Planning Commission

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar Planning Commission has elected to draft, review, and adopt an update to the current Master Plan, adopted in 2000, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801, *et seq*; and

**Whereas**, the City of Vassar Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan, inclusive of the charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals, for the City on May 18, 2015, at the City Hall; and

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that the City of Vassar Planning Commission hereby approves and recommends adoption of this Master Plan to the City Council.

Motion by: IAN Rudnick

Supported by: Penny Germain

**Ayes:** Stillwell-Binder, Rudnick, Germain, Damm, Miller, J. Miller, C. Miller  
Serey

**Nays:** NONE

**Absent:** B. Binder, Casper

**Resolution declared adopted May 18, 2015.**



Interim C.M.

Gary Kasper, Chair

Planning Commission, City of Vassar