

CITY OF  
PLEASANT  
RIDGE



COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN  
2015



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# *Introduction*

# History

Pleasant Ridge's roots date back to the early 1800s. It was originally part of three land grants made by the federal government shortly after the first U.S. land survey of Oakland County conducted by John Wampler in 1816 and filed with the land Surveyor General in Washington in 1818.

The government began selling land shortly after this time in the land office in Detroit. To facilitate the orderly and precise identification of land boundaries, the government surveyors divided the land into one-mile squares called "sections." These "sections" were then further subdivided into quarter sections. Government surveyors made Base Line Road (currently known as Eight Mile Road) the reference point or "base-line" for all measurements north and south. Some of the lines marking off these sections and quarter sections on the surveyors' maps form the present day boundaries of Pleasant Ridge. The eastern boundary follows the quarter section line slightly east of Barber Avenue (commonly known as Eprize Drive), and the northern boundary is formed by Ten Mile Road.

Originally the southern boundary between Woodward Heights Boulevard and Oakridge Avenue was the quarter section line. This created a problem in that part of the backyards of the Oakridge Road residents were in Pleasant Ridge. Several Ferndale residents tried to vote in Pleasant Ridge given their backyards were part of the community.

## *Pleasant Ridge Timeline*

- 1816-17 Royal Oak Township surveyed
- 1820 Michigan's first inland settlement, Pontiac, becomes a village
- 1824 Governor Cass orders Woodward Avenue extended to Pontiac
- 1825 Erie Canal opens
- 1827 Royal Oak Township, which had been part of Bloomfield Township, joined Troy Township
- 1832 Royal Oak Township detached from Troy Township
- 1836 Royal Oak village laid out
- 1837 Michigan statehood
- 1843 Detroit to Pontiac rail opens
- 1883 Detroit Zoological Gardens opens on Belle Isle
- 1891 Royal Oak Village incorporated
- 1900 Detroit has more interurban trolley mileage than any other city in the nation
- 1906 Pleasant Ridge platted
- 1909 First mile of Woodward paved, between Six and Seven Mile
- 1910 Ferndale platted at Woodward and 9 Mile
- 1912 Woodward paved through Ferndale
- ~1914 Land purchased for Detroit Zoo
- 1914 Oak Park, which had been privately held, sold to Majestic Land Company to become a subdivision
- 1916 Huntington Woods platted
- 1916 Entire length of Woodward paved
- 1918 Ferndale incorporated as a village
- 1919 Pleasant Ridge incorporated as a village
- 1919 Woodward gets traffic lights
- 1921 Royal Oak incorporated as a city
- 1926 Huntington Woods incorporated as a village
- 1926 Woodward transformed into 8-lane boulevard from Six Mile to Pontiac
- 1927 Oak Park incorporated as a village
- 1927 Ferndale incorporated as a city
- 1928 Pleasant Ridge incorporated as a city
- 1928 Detroit Zoo opens at its current location
- 1931 Commuter rail service begins between Detroit and Pontiac on Grand Trunk Western Railroad
- 1932 Huntington Woods incorporated as a city
- 1945 Oak Park incorporated as a city
- 1945 Transit ridership peaks in metro Detroit with busses, streetcars, and commuter rails
- 1963 First segment of 696 opens west of Telegraph
- 1983 All commuter train service ends
- 1989 Last segment of 696 opens through Pleasant Ridge



Finally, Pleasant Ridge and Ferndale signed an agreement that the boundary would be distinguished with a line that separated the backyards of the property on Woodward Heights and Oakridge Road. West of Ridge Road, the rear property line of the homes on Cambridge and Oakridge Roads would delineate the southern boundary.

A similar problem developed regarding the western boundary of Pleasant Ridge, which took in part of the backyards of the residents living on Sherman Road in Oak Park. The County required Pleasant Ridge to include this property on its tax rolls, but Oak Park was also assessing the property. As a result, residents of Sherman Road were being taxed twice. It took a joint action between the two cities, Pleasant Ridge and Oak Park, to come to an amicable solution. Pleasant Ridge would set its western city limits at the back property line between the residences on Maplefield and Sherman Roads.

The three original land grants from which Pleasant Ridge was created were:

- John Voorheis obtained the area from Ridge to Barber Road (now Eprize Drive) between Ten Mile Road and the southern boundary, from the government on February 10, 1824, as part of a larger tract of land.
- David Standard obtained the area from Ridge Road west to approximately the eastern edge of Oakdale Road from the government on July 9, 1823.
- Douglas Houghton, Henry G. and Thomas H. Hubbard, obtained the area west Oakdale Road to approximately the western city limits from the government on August 12, 1837.

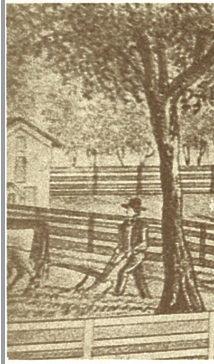
Within fifty years of the signing of the Constitution in 1787, all of the land within Pleasant Ridge's boundaries was in private hands. In 1837, the

Northwest Ordinance governing Michigan was passed as law.

In 1910, a residential core began to take form. These families met in various homes to discuss the problems of the community. In 1912, the group began discussing what to name this area. A resident, Mrs. Leila Kennedy, had fond memories of her childhood in Kentucky where she had lived in Pleasant Valley. From Mrs. Kennedy the first word "Pleasant" came, and given the fact that the so many of the residents lived on Ridge Road, which followed the top of the sandy ridge of land that had been used to traverse the otherwise semi-swampy area, it was decided to combine the names and hence "Pleasant Ridge" was born.

In the spring of 1919, the residents voted to incorporate and became the village of Pleasant Ridge. By making itself a village, the community established itself as a separate governmental unit, capable of indefinitely perpetuating its separate identity and no longer subject to uninvited annexation by an adjoining municipality. Through its village charter, Pleasant Ridge gained powers to establish, control, and enforce local policies, to maintain the type of local government it preferred and to initiate and finance various types of public improvements its property owners desired and needed.

Incorporation as a village brought with it these advantages, but it could not sever certain political ties to Royal Oak Township. Only incorporation as a city would accomplish that. It would take ten years for Pleasant Ridge to press forward to the next step and incorporate as a city. In 1927, with the threat of annexation into either Ferndale or Royal Oak pending, Pleasant Ridge voted to incorporate as a city.



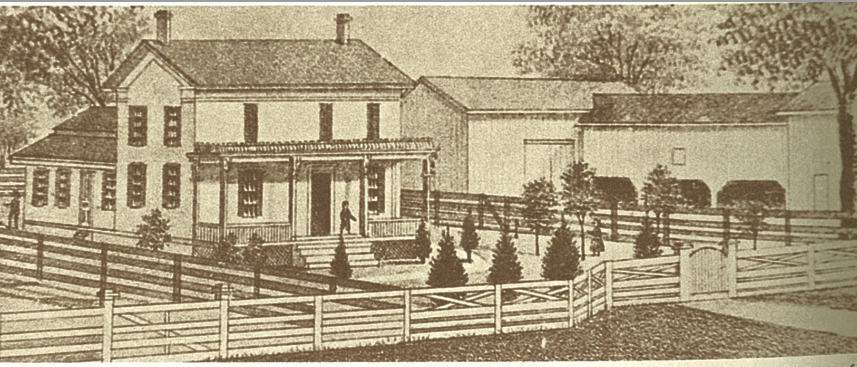
This sketch of Clark Rose, Oakland County.





## 2. Historic photos

Source: Pleasant Ridge, Then and Now



's house and farm, said to be located near Woodward and Millington, appeared in a 19th Century history of



This traffic jam occurred on Woodward about 1925 or 1926.

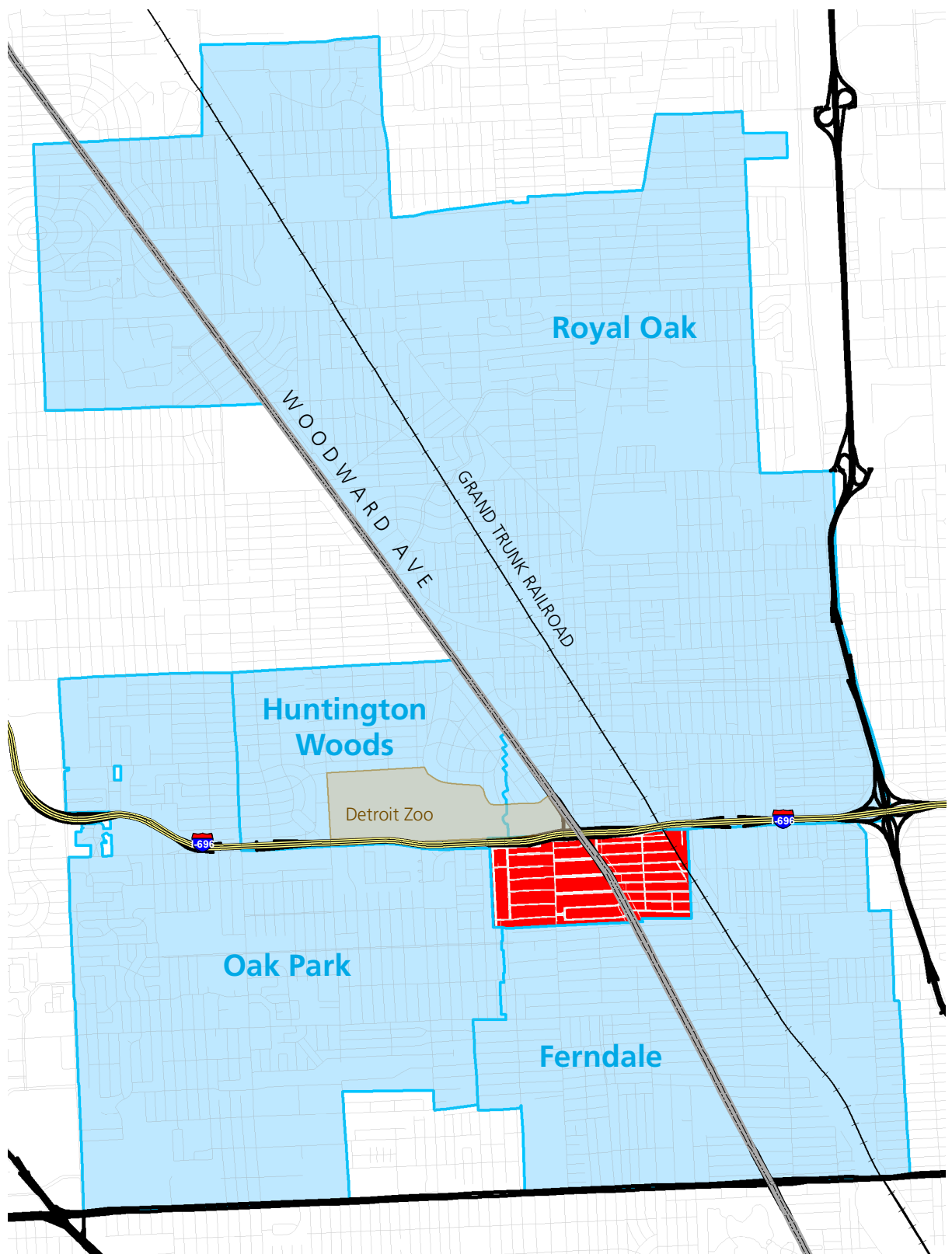
# Regional Context

Today, Pleasant Ridge occupies a portion of southeast Michigan that is heavily defined by its proximity to the City of Detroit.

It is bisected by the Woodward Corridor, bounded to the north by Interstate 696 and to the east by a Canadian National rail line, and adjacent to the Detroit Zoo. Its neighboring communities are Ferndale to the south and east, Royal Oak to the north, Oak Park to the west, and a northwest corner shared with Huntington Woods.

## Woodward Corridor

When the French trader Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac landed on the banks of the Detroit River in 1701, he arrived at an already bustling gathering and trading place for Native communities across the state. The French settlement yielded to British governance in 1760, under which Detroit remained until 1796 despite having been ceded to brand-new America in 1783. After the little town burned to the ground in 1805, President Jefferson's Chief Justice appointee, Judge Augustus Brevoort Woodward, drew up a bold city plan using the latest techniques patterned after Pierre L'Enfant's plan for Washington, DC. Much of its elaborate hexagonal pattern never materialized, but the beginnings of the principal artery planned for 40 miles northward along the Natives' Saginaw Trail had carved out its place and taken the judge's name by 1807.



CITY OF PLEASANT RIDGE

## Context

Data Sources: City of Pleasant Ridge, GIS 2003; Michigan Geodatabase Library

0 1,200 2,400 3,600 4,800 Feet



3. Context map

- Pleasant Ridge
- Neighboring communities
- Detroit Zoo

- I-696
- Woodward Avenue
- State roads
- Roads



Governor Cass extended Woodward Avenue to the four-year-old Village of Pontiac, Michigan's first inland settlement, in 1824 "as part of his plan to aid the disbursement of settlers arriving in Detroit by steamship to take advantage of public land sales." It worked: as development built up to a frantic pace with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and Michigan's statehood in 1837, the byway became so fully lined with communities that only 0.7 discontinuous square miles of Royal Oak Township are un-annexed today. The Village of Royal Oak was laid out in 1836 and incorporated in 1891 ; Pleasant Ridge was platted in 1906; Ferndale was platted in 1910 ; the land under Oak Park was sold to the Majestic Land Company for subdivision development in 1914 ; and Huntington Woods was platted in 1916. All were incorporated as villages by 1927 (Pleasant Ridge: 1919) and as cities by 1945 (Pleasant Ridge: 1928).

The same year that Pleasant Ridge got its last neighbor, the entire 27-mile length of Woodward Avenue was paved. Traffic lights arrived in 1919, and by 1926, construction was underway to transform the entire length from Six Mile Road to Pontiac into an eight-lane boulevard. It received the state highway designation M-1 in 1970 (part of it had been designated M-10 before that). In 1999, Michigan awarded "Recreational Heritage Route" status to the entire length of Woodward, calling it "rich in 200 years of urban history, bright with city lights and shaded in suburban green," and the America's Byways program named it an "All-American Road" in 2009.

In its introduction, the America's Byways website says, "If Broadway = Theater and Rodeo Drive = High Fashion, then Woodward = the Automobile." But this was not always the case. In the beginning of its life, "Woodward was known as one of the busiest streets in the nation. Along with cars, transportation modes included interurban lines, railroads and streetcars." The Detroit City Railway had begun horse-drawn rail service on Woodward from Jefferson to Adams in 1863, and the area had more interurban trolley mileage than any other city in the nation by 1900. Metro Detroit's first regional transportation plan, published in 1919-1920, reflected existing conditions when it recommended a multi-modal system: "In 1920, Woodward and Michigan was touted as the nation's busiest intersection with 18,000 cars passing through it within a 10-hour period. In 1925, Woodward and State beat New York's Broadway in Time Square as the busiest pedestrian crossing with 1,233,025 in an 18-hour period."

Overall, however, the route to a fully multi-modal Woodward Avenue has historically proved all but impassable. Long-running populist sentiment against the railway companies (and perhaps a hint of professional bias) led Detroit mayor and Ford Motor Company general manager James Couzens to veto a bond to construct a subway system in 1919, instead orchestrating a municipal takeover of the streetcar operations to create the largest city-owned transit system in the country. Plans for 25 Grand Trunk Western Railroad trains per day between Detroit and Pontiac

were scrapped in 1929 with the market crash (conventional commuter rail service began in 1931), and a subway plan was turned down by state government in 1933. Transit peaked in 1945 with the availability of buses, streetcars, and commuter rails.

And then car culture arrived. “The auto industry literally grew up in the Woodward Corridor. The area and its resources encouraged the initiation of many automobile companies, as well as scores of businesses that supplied auto parts and accessories. ... Woodward Avenue became a beneficiary of this expansion of wealth.” So even though a 1953 metropolitan transit study called for a “balanced system of highways and mass transit,” the last streetcars disappeared in 1956 and were replaced by buses. A regional monorail system was advocated in 1958 plan, rapid rail transit was recommended in 1969, and President Ford offered \$600M for rail in 1976, but none were ever built. Even standard commuter train service throughout metro Detroit ended in 1983.

Woodward Avenue is again in transition as the 21st century waxes. Rail and bus options are being given serious consideration (with bus winning out – some things change VERY slowly) to offer commuter options besides driving alone. The vast corridor is undergoing a “Complete Streets” study concurrently with the writing of this report to determine improvements which will “enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.”

## Rail

The charter for the Detroit & Pontiac Railroad was one of the earliest in the entire Northwest Territory when it was issued in 1830 as part of the plan “to connect Detroit with the rich agricultural region of Oakland County, and the flouring mills, which were already operating in that section.” When no rails materialized, a subsequent charter was issued to another company in 1834; horse-drawn loads could get as far as Royal Oak in 1838 and Birmingham in 1839. By the time the railroad reached Pontiac in 1843, a locomotive had been purchased.

In the famously frequent reorganizations that characterized the rail boom, the line had undergone two name changes and landed under Canadian financial control by 1860. It has remained there through several more name changes, settling on the Grand Trunk Western as the US subsidiary of Canadian National railway. It is a Class 1 railroad, the highest class of operating revenue, with a maximum gross weight of 286,000 pounds and accommodating cars of 47’ or longer.

## Detroit Zoo

The Detroit Zoo is Pleasant Ridge’s largest neighbor, running along the western half of the city’s northern border on the opposite side of I-696. The two arrived on the scene together: At about the time that Royal Oak Township was being platted for a village every couple of years, the Detroit Zoological Society was looking to purchase land on which to build a

fabulous showcase for the animals that Detroit residents had rescued from a bankrupt traveling circus back in the 1880s and housed since then on Belle Isle. One hundred acres of farmland along Woodward Ave. 10 miles north of the Detroit River fit the bill. By the time the Detroit Zoological Park opened in 1928 to 150,000 guests (considered particularly impressive as the new Fox Theatre was showing its first all-talking movie that day), Pleasant Ridge had already achieved “city” status.

Today, the Detroit Zoo is the largest paid family attraction in Michigan. Over a million visitors have come to see its 3,300 animals in each of eight consecutive years, with a modern single-day attendance record of 20,113 visitors set on August 3, 2013. Its 51,000 member households and 1,100 volunteers attest to the community’s continued support.

## I-696

As a freeway system was developed throughout the Detroit region, an east-west route across the northern portion of the metropolitan area had been planned as early as the 1950s. The route would bypass Detroit’s heavy congestion as it connected Michigan’s Lansing-Grand Rapids-Muskegon corridor (now I-96) with its cross-state St. Joseph-Port Huron course (I-94). The first 8.9 mile segment, stretching from I-96 to Telegraph Road (M-24), opened in 1963 and stopped about 7 miles shy of Pleasant Ridge, its signage instead following Telegraph into Detroit. The second segment to open was the eastern approach, 10.62 miles between

I-75 and I-94 that were added to the state trunkline system in 1968 and opened to traffic in 1979.

The middle section of the freeway, however, met with such strong opposition that construction was delayed for another decade. Detroit Zoo officials worried about the effects of noise and air pollution on the animals, requiring a new entrance and parking structure. The Orthodox Jewish community in Oak Park required pedestrian access across the route in order to reach its synagogues on the Sabbath, during which driving is forbidden; the three landscaped plazas over the depressed freeway have been touted by the Michigan Department of Transportation as an example of “context-sensitive design” as recently as 2006. The City of Detroit put up a fight before eventually redesigning its largest public golf course. About 40% of the homeowners whose property was acquired for the right-of-way went to court over the state-offered settlements. Pleasant Ridge, with 10% of its tax base on the land in question, persisted with lawsuits and eventually won a jury verdict of \$3.5M in the early 1990s that was negotiated into a \$4.25M settlement including fees and costs.

The final segment of the Walter P. Reuther Freeway, named for a prominent auto industry union head and frequently referred to as simply “The Reuther,” opened to traffic at 5 pm on December 14, 1989 (it may surprise no one that its first accident was reported at 6:21 pm). On average, 176,200 cars per day make use of this “northern bypass.”

#### 4. Woodward Dream Cruise; I-696





# Demographics

## People

As of the 2010 Census, Pleasant Ridge had 2,526 citizens in 1,115 households. By a slight majority (52%), most of the households are comprised of husband-and-wife couples; six in ten of those households have children. Twenty-three percent of households are female-headed, including 72 female householders over the age of 65 who are living alone (7% of all households) and 33 households with her own children present (3% of all households). Males head 14% of Pleasant Ridge households, including 33 male householders over the age of 65 who are living alone (3% of all households) and 13 households with his own children present (1% of all households). Overall, 26% of households have one or more minors, while 23% have at least one senior citizen. Nonfamily cohabitants ("householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom s/he is not related," US Census) make up 11% of households. The median age in Pleasant Ridge is 43.4. The largest cohort of residents is the baby boomers, who are between the ages of 49 and 68 in 2013 and make up about 30% of the population. The second largest cohort is children, representing 21.5% of the population.

A noticeable dearth of young adults aged 20-24 (2.3% of population) may be related to the community's high educational

achievement, as many of those in that age bracket may have relocated for college. Ridgers are impressively well-educated. Nearly every resident (98.7%) has a high school diploma, which is a full ten percentage points above the state rate. Almost two-thirds (64.2%) of the population aged 25 and older has a bachelor's degree, much higher than in Michigan (25.3%) or Ferndale (35.9%) and significantly higher than in Royal Oak (49.4%) or Oakland County (42.4%). The percentage of Pleasant Ridge's population which has a graduate or professional degree is a remarkable 33.2%, as compared with 17.8% in Oakland County and a mere 9.7% in the state of Michigan.

## Housing

A greater percentage of homes in Pleasant Ridge are owner-occupied (94%) as compared with Ferndale (68%), Royal Oak (70%), or the state of Michigan as a whole (74%). Both the median home value (\$254,000) and the median gross rent (\$1,639) are also higher in Pleasant Ridge than in the comparison communities (ranges: \$115,900-\$167,000 home value and \$742-\$835 gross rent). The largest number of homes, about 30% of the total housing stock, is valued between \$200,000-\$299,999; no homes are valued below \$50,000 or over \$1M. The vacancy rate of 2.1% is well below that of the state of Michigan (15.6%),

Oakland County (8.7%), Royal Oak (6.8%), or Ferndale (10.7%). About half the homes (49%) have three bedrooms, while another 29% have four bedrooms and 17% have two bedrooms. More people lived in the same house at this time last year in Pleasant Ridge (92%) than in any of the comparison communities (range: 83%-86%).

## Income

The median household income in Pleasant Ridge is \$107,750, which is 1.6 times the median income in Oakland County and 2.2 times the median income in Michigan. Two thirds of households are "high income" or above using the state median as a calibration point; there are 3.57 households earning \$150,000 or above for every one household earning \$25,000 or below. In each of the comparison communities, this ratio is less than 1. Poverty is correspondingly low: at 3.5%, the rate is below all comparison communities (range: 6.9%-15.9%). The poverty rate for those under 18 is even lower at 2%, an impressive circumstance given that the child poverty rate is frequently higher than the rate for all persons due to the same economic circumstances affecting more than one child in a household (in Michigan, the child poverty rate is 1.4 times the total poverty rate). Median earnings for full-time, year-round female workers are 77% of the earnings for full-time, year-round male workers (\$69,250 vs. \$89,414), a ratio that is identical

to Royal Oak's, higher than that in Michigan and Oakland County (73% and 69%), and lower than Ferndale's (88%).

## Work

About three quarters of Pleasant Ridge residents aged 16 and up are in the workforce. The unemployment rate is 6.2%, lower than in any of the comparison communities (range: 7%-12.3%). Thirty percent of workers are employed in the fields of education, health care, and social assistance, while another 19% work in professional, scientific, administration, or management fields. This concentration of workers in the growth-oriented "ed and med" fields is higher in Pleasant Ridge than in any of the comparison communities, which all hover around 23%. Overall, Pleasant Ridge's workers are in well-paid fields. There are 2.45 manufacturing workers for every retail worker, and those manufacturing workers' median earnings are about 6.5 times the earnings of the retail workers. More broadly, median earnings in the fields of retail, art, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service combined are only about 20% of the median earnings of all other fields combined; in Pleasant Ridge, there are about 8.5 workers in "other fields" for every worker in retail, art, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, or food service.

Ninety-seven percent of Pleasant Ridge's workforce has some sort

of commute. By a vast margin (95%), that commute is made by driving alone; 55 workers (3.8%) report carpooling and another 18 (1.3%) either walk or use public transportation. The average commute is 21.6 minutes. This "workshed," or the geographic area accessible within that commute, stretches from M-59 in the north to the Detroit River in the south, and from the I-275/I-696 interchange in the west to St. Clair Shores in the east.

## Businesses

Note: This section refers to businesses located within the City of Pleasant Ridge and the persons who work at those businesses ("employees" or "jobs"), in contrast to the previous section which referred to the industries and occupations held by persons who are Pleasant Ridge residents ("workers").

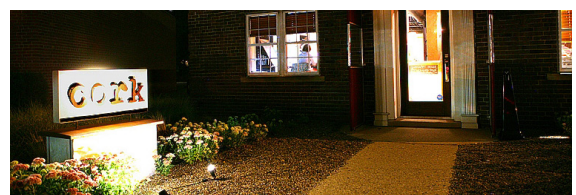
The proprietary software company Esri lists 193 businesses with a total of 483 employees within the city limits. As there are 1,487 Pleasant Ridge residents in the labor force, this means that the jobs-to-workers ratio is 0.32—about a third of a job per worker. Although this number of businesses and employees appears to be high for such a geographically small community, a search on USDirectory.com quickly identified 67 businesses within the City Limits and many within the neighborhoods. So

while most residents leave the city for work, there are a number of home occupations.

Just under one third of the Pleasant Ridge business community is concentrated in fields with the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code of "Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services." This classification makes up 32.1% of businesses (62 businesses) and 34.2% of jobs (165 employees). The next largest sector is "Administrative, Support, Waste Management, and Remediation Services," with 34 businesses (17.6%) and 83 jobs (17.2%). "Retail Trade" rounds out the top three with 16 businesses (8.3%) and 34 workers (7.0%).

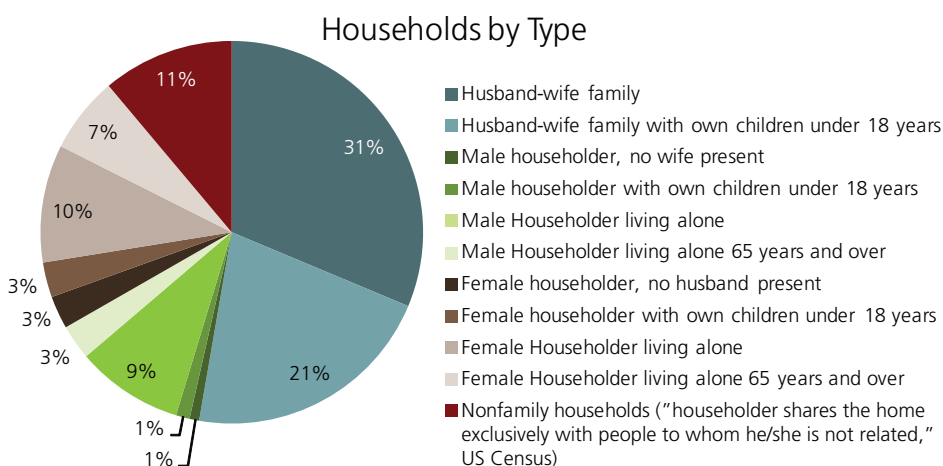
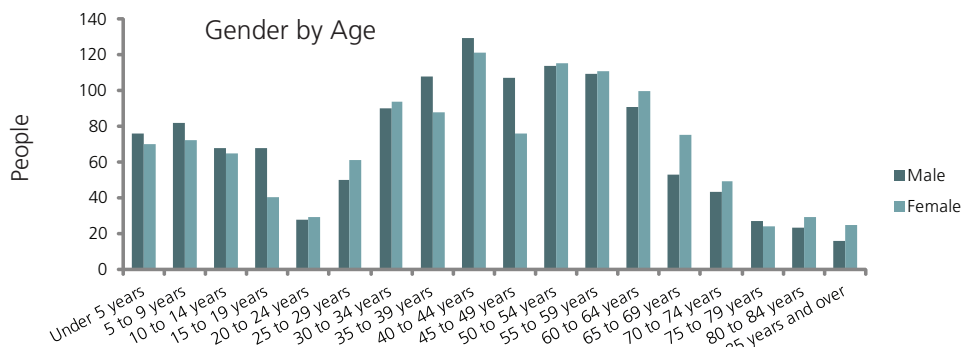
An unusual feature of the Pleasant Ridge business landscape is the dominance of small businesses. In each category, the share of businesses is about proportional to the share of employees, and the largest ratio of employees to businesses (which can be thought of as the average number of employees per business in each category) is just 4.5 in the "Food and Beverage Stores" category. Overall, Pleasant Ridge businesses average about 2.5 employees.

The "demographic dashboard" on the foldout presents a visual representation of these conditions.



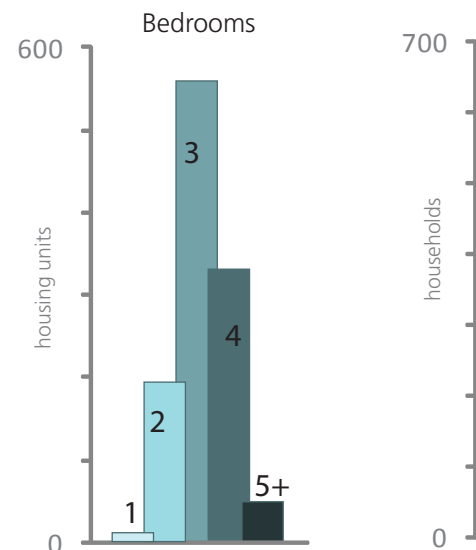
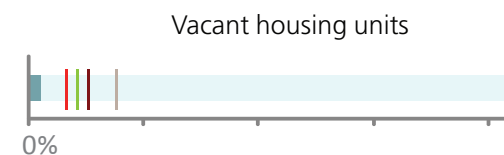
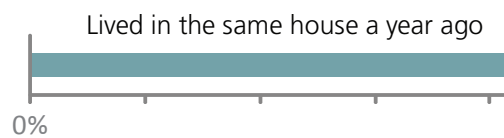
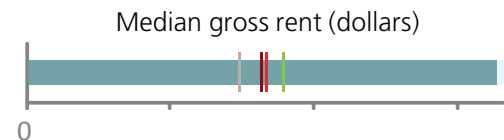
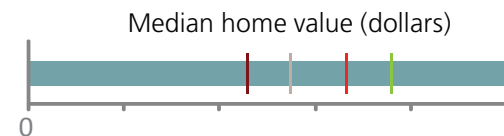
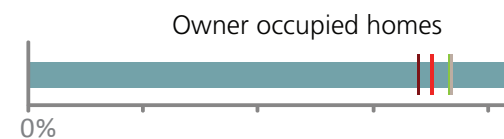
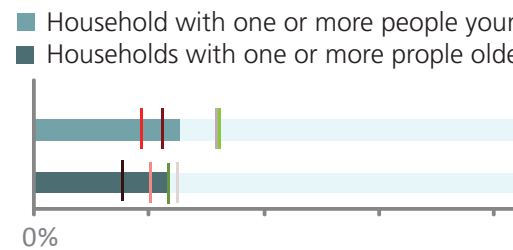
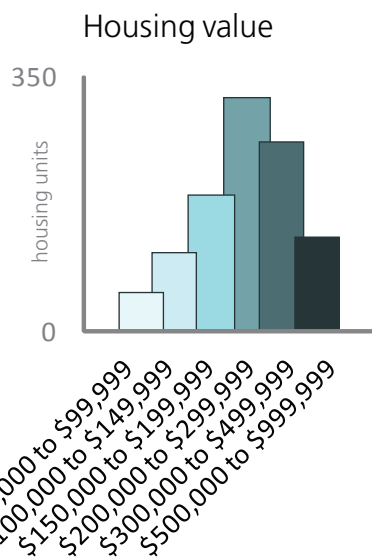
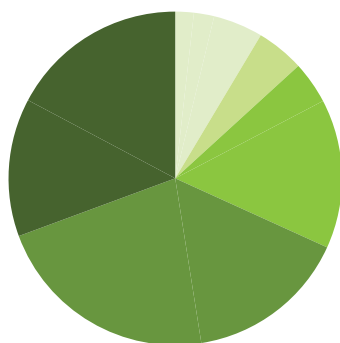
# Pleasant Ridge

Ferndale Royal Oak Oakland County Michigan



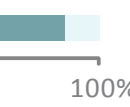
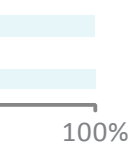
- Income**
- Very low income (less than \$25,000)
  - Low income (\$25,000-\$34,999)
  - Moderate income (\$35,000-\$74,999)
  - High income (\$75,000-\$149,999)
  - Very high income (\$150,000 and up)

Classifications modified from HUD guidelines using the state median income of \$48,432





onger than 18  
er than 65



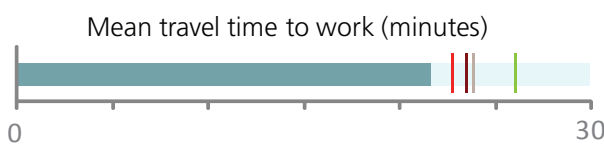
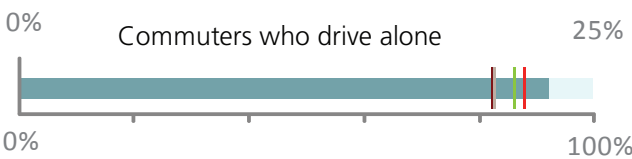
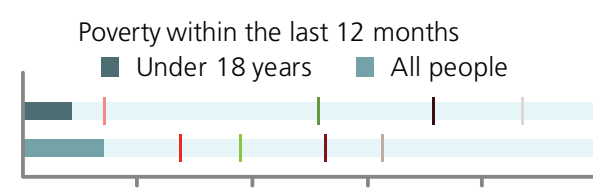
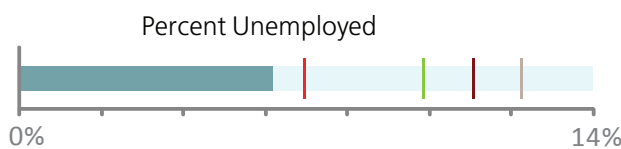
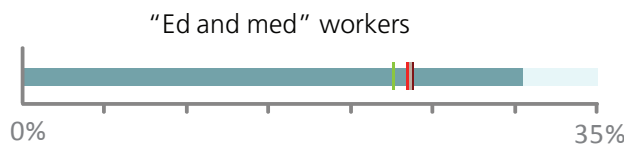
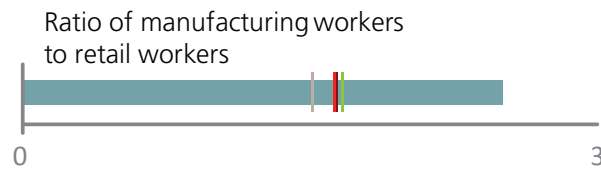
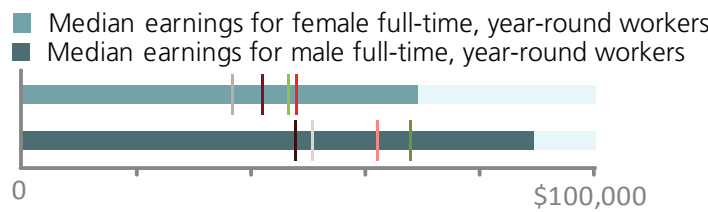
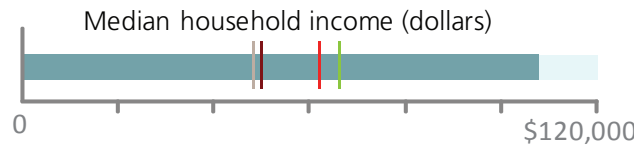
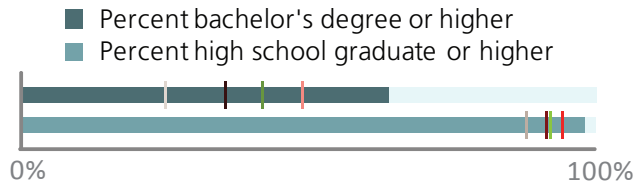
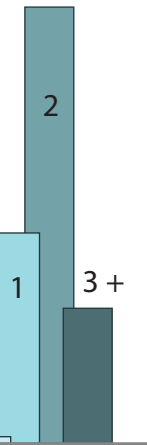
\$300,000

\$2,000

100%

100%

Vehicles



## Households

2.26  
person average household size  
\$254,000  
owner-occupied median home value  
\$1,639  
median gross rent

## Education

98.7%  
high school graduate or higher  
64%  
bachelor's degree or higher

## Commuting

97%  
workers who commute  
95%  
commuters who drive alone  
21.6  
minute average commute

## Employment

6.2%  
unemployment rate  
8.5  
ratio of nonretail workers to those in art, retail, accommodation, food service  
30%  
workers in "ed and med" fields

## Income

\$107,750  
median household income  
\$60,122  
median earnings for workers  
\$89,414  
male full-time, year-round earnings  
\$69,250  
female full-time, year-round earnings  
3.5%  
population in poverty  
2.2%  
children in poverty

## Top Industrial Sectors

30%  
education, health care, social assistance  
19%  
professional, scientific, administration, management  
17%  
manufacturing

# Cultural Resources

The Pleasant Ridge Historical Museum is housed in the city's original 1929 Police Booth, which was removed from harm's way during the I-696 construction and placed behind the City Hall building on Woodward Ave.

The structure was eventually restored by the Pleasant Ridge Historical Commission (established in the 1960s) and filled with Pleasant Ridge relics and information for public display. The Commission hosts an annual home and garden tour in early summer.

In 1991, the City of Pleasant Ridge obtained a grant from the State of Michigan Bureau of History to perform a historical survey and inventory of all structures in the municipality. The city retained the professional services of an historic preservation consultant to perform the inventory and photographic documentation. As a result of the findings of this inventory, properties west of Woodward Avenue and east of Ridge Road were nominated and listed in the National Register of Historical Places on August 11, 1992 as The Pleasant Ridge Historic District (NRIS No. 10001024). The east side of Woodward Avenue was added to the National Register of Historic Places on February, 1, 2007 and referred to as the

Pleasant Ridge East Historic District (NRIS No. 06001329).

On December 13, 2012 the west portion of the community between Ridge Road and Maplefield was added to the 1992 Pleasant Ridge Historic District (NRIS No. 92000165), thus incorporating nearly the entire City.

"The Pleasant Ridge Historic District is an early twentieth-century neighborhood containing a concentration of notable examples of Colonial and period revival, Prairie School and arts-and-crafts-inspired single-family houses set on a series of boulevard streets. The well preserved neighborhood contains Pleasant Ridge's most architecturally distinguished historic homes. The earliest developed part of what is now Pleasant Ridge, the district contains homes and one early civic building, the former police station; that possess direct associations with Pleasant Ridge's founding years as an independent community."



PLEASANT RIDGE MASTER PLAN

## Pleasant Ridge Historic Districts

- Pleasant Ridge Historic District - 1992
- Pleasant Ridge East Historic District - 2006
- Pleasant Ridge West Historic District Addition - 2010

6. Historic Districts map





# Open Space and Recreation

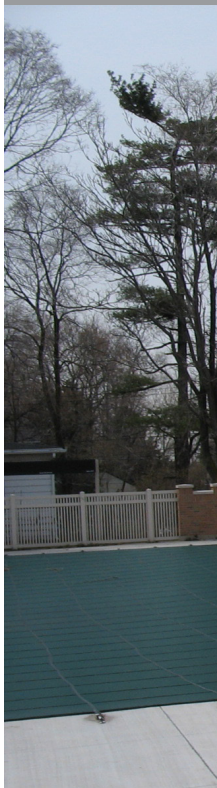
Pleasant Ridge has two major recreational areas: the Community Center and Pool at 4 Ridge Road and Gainsboro Park lining the eastern edge of the community.

Pleasant Ridge lost approximately 2.38 acres of its 4 Ridge Road recreational complex when property was taken by the State of Michigan Department of Transportation for construction of I-696. The site's total acreage was reduced to approximately 1.25 acres, and the facilities lost included a playground, two tennis courts, a ball field, a soccer field, an ice-skating rink, and approximately 10 paved parking spaces. Since the loss of those facilities, the city has improved the facilities at Gainsboro Park to include two tennis courts, a basketball court, a small shelter, and community gardens.

Two passive parks flank City Hall. The Memorial Park greenway honors veterans with gardens, sitting areas, and a flag display; a 2005 reconstruction added new lights, sidewalks, and landscaping

improvements. Stevenson Park provides a green buffer between Woodward and the surrounding neighborhoods that can be used for picnicking. A third passive mini-park to the south, dedicated to William "Mr. Bill" Hessel, offers seating and picnicking facilities. Together, these form the Woodward Avenue greenbelt lining the west side of the corridor. Victory Park/Flynn Field, located at the end of Sylvan Avenue in an established neighborhood, hosts the largest baseball field in the city, picnic tables, play equipment, and green space. Finally, the popular Pleasant Ridge Dog Run off of Indiana St. along the I-696 service drive provides exercise and recreation for the community's canine population within a confined, safe setting.

## 7. Gainsboro Park





8. Memorial Park



9. Community Center



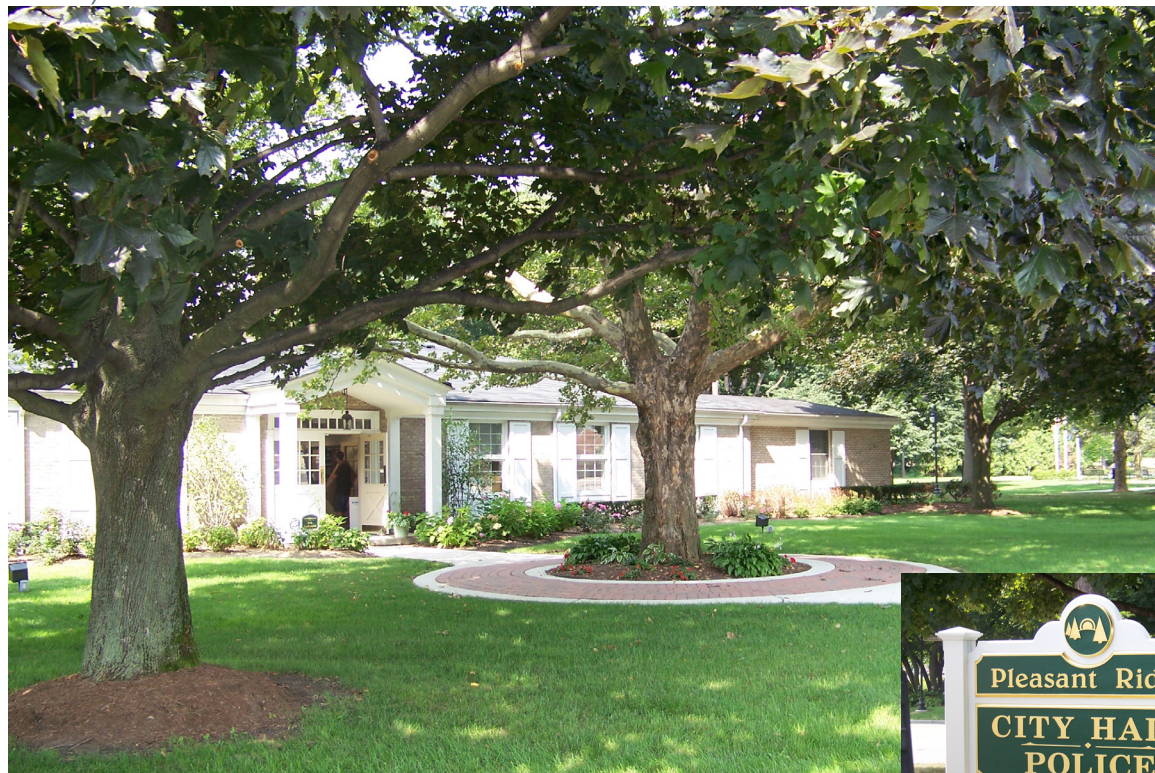


# Community Facilities

The City of Pleasant Ridge maintains a City Hall at 23925 Woodward Ave., with administrative offices and Council chambers. The City also has a seven-member police force. In addition to standard police duties, the department offers a “vacation house watch” service to residents. Dispatch services are contracted with the City of Berkley. Along with the Recreation Department and facilities described in the previous section, these constitute the scope of community facilities fully or mostly maintained by Pleasant Ridge.

The City also offers a wide array of other amenities and services to its residents through contracted or collaborative agreements with private companies, neighboring communities, and higher levels of government. These agreements have been formed over the years to reduce redundancy, create a more seamless service delivery, and save costs. The table below presents a comprehensive list of these agreements.

## 10. City Hall



## 11. Community Facilities Table

DEPARTMENT / Service	Type	Name
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Assessing	Contracted	Oakland County
Audit Services	Contracted	Abraham & Gaffney
Building Department	Contracted	Ray Rice
City Attorney	Contracted	Charles Cooper
Election Support	Collaboration	Oakland County
Engineering	Contracted	Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick
ICCA (cable television)	Collaboration	Various Cities
Information Technology	Contracted	Tech Resources
Liability Insurance	Contracted	MMRMA
Library Services	Collaboration	City of Huntington Woods
Payroll	Contracted	Paychex, Inc.
Pension Administration	Contracted	MERS
Planning Consulting	Contracted	Beckett & Raeder, Inc.
Tax Bills	Collaboration	Oakland County
Treasurer/Accounting	Contracted	Plante & Moran
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>		
Auction Services	Collaboration	State of Michigan
Fire Protection/EMS	Collaboration	City of Ferndale
Lien Service	Collaboration	Oakland County
Police Car Purchasing	Collaboration	State of Michigan
Police/Fire Dispatch	Collaboration	City of Berkley
<b>WATER &amp; SEWER</b>		
Sewer Televising	Collaboration	Oakland County Road Commission
Water and Sewer Maintenance	Collaboration	City of Royal Oak
Water Lab Testing	Collaboration	SOCWA
Water Purchases	Collaboration	SOCWA
<b>PUBLIC WORKS</b>		
Bulk Salt Purchase	Collaboration	State of Michigan
Garbage Collection/Recycling	Collaboration	SOCRRA
General Service	Contracted	Brilar
Leaf Collection	Contracted	Brilar
Leaf Disposal	Collaboration	City of Ferndale
Sign Fabricating	Collaboration	City of Royal Oak
Street Sweeping	Contracted	Brilar
Traffic Signal Maintenance	Contracted	Oakland County Road Commission
Tree Service	Contracted	JH Hart / Brilar
<b>RECREATION SERVICES</b>		
Building Use	Collaboration	Ferndale Schools
Mobile Recreation	Collaboration	Oakland County
Pool Reciprocal Agreement	Collaboration	City of Huntington Woods
Youth Sports	Collaboration	City of Ferndale/Hazel Park/Oak Park

# *Preferred Future*

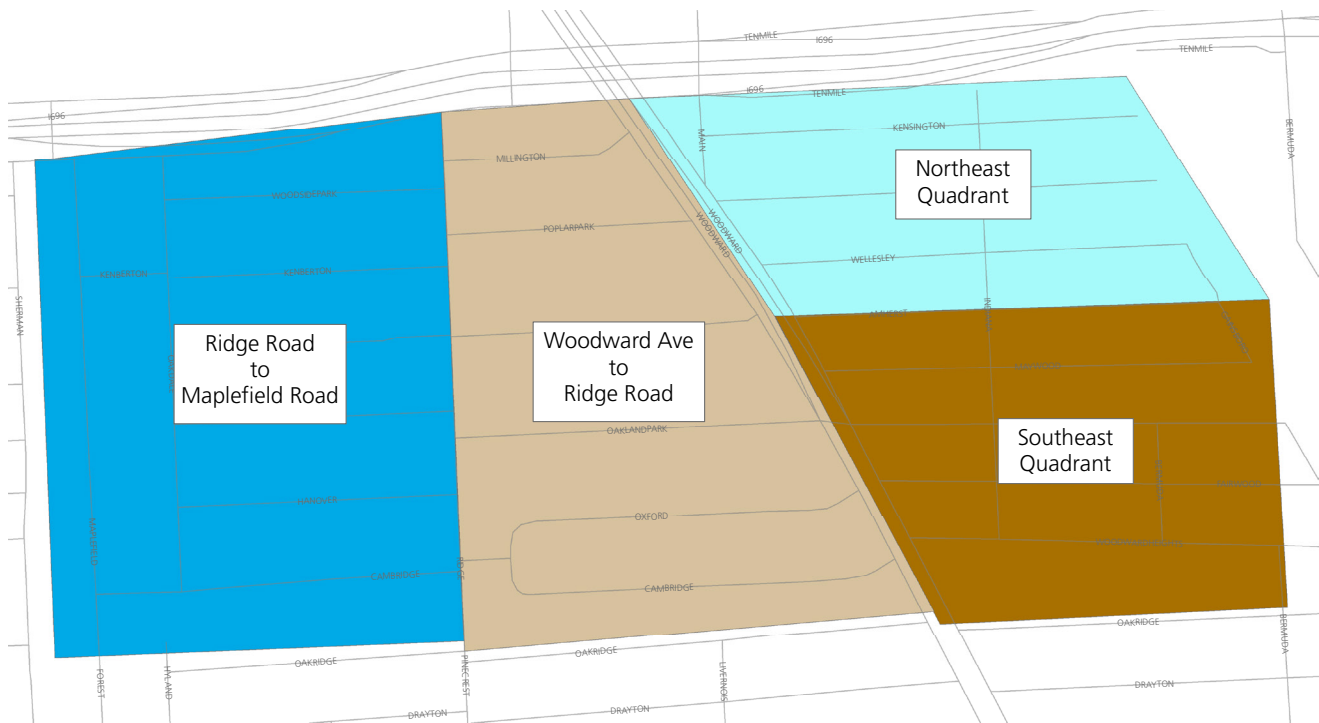


# Community Expectations

A community survey was conducted among residents of Pleasant Ridge between October 7 and October 22, 2013. Questions were developed by the master plan steering committee, then presented to the full Planning Commission for refinement and public comment. Primary administration was through SurveyMonkey.com, and paper copies were available through the City.

Of the 216 households which completed the Community Survey, 201 did so online and 15 returned hard copies to the City. A plurality (41%) of respondents has lived in the city for 15 years or more, while more than a quarter (28%) arrived

within the last five years. Respondents were well-represented geographically, with a slightly higher share of responses coming from the northeast quadrant of the city (31%, bounded by I-696, Amherst, Grand Trunk Railroad, and Woodward Ave.) and the westernmost quarter (29%, bounded by I-696, Ferndale city limits, Ridge Road, and Oak Park city limits) than the area immediately west of Woodward Ave. (21%, bounded by I-696, Ferndale city limits, Woodward Ave., and Ridge Road) or the southeast quadrant (20%, bounded by Amherst, Ferndale city limits, Grand Trunk Railroad, and Woodward Ave.).



CITY OF PLEASANT RIDGE

**Master Plan Survey Areas**

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet  
12. Survey areas map

When asked about the number and ages of household members, the 216 survey respondents indicated that they represented a total of 463 Pleasant Ridge residents, including 147 children and teenagers. The average household size among respondents, 2.14 persons, is slightly smaller than Pleasant Ridge's average household size of 2.26 persons. The greatest share of respondents (31%), and of represented citizens overall (27%), were between the ages of 40 and 49. Just over one quarter of respondents (27%) had children in school at the K-12 level. The largest share (37%) attended private school, followed by public schools other than Ferndale (29%), and Ferndale Public Schools (25%).

Seventy-three percent of respondents listed a ZIP code for their place of employment, presenting a geographical range that stretched out over 58 ZIP codes. The largest concentration, in Pleasant Ridge's 48069 ZIP code, only comprised 19% of employed respondents; no more than 5% of employed respondents worked in any other single ZIP code. The largest share (29%) reported careers in the professional, scientific, and management fields. The second largest group of respondents (17%) indicated that they were retirees.

In addition to the standard analysis, survey results were also cross-tabulated in two ways: by geographic location of the respondent and by tenure in the City of Pleasant Ridge. Where applicable, these

results are referenced below.

A Community Visioning Session was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at the Pleasant Ridge Community Center to provide citizens with an opportunity to offer more open-ended, face-to-face input to the master plan. Thirty-one people attended the session that was facilitated by Beckett & Raeder, Inc., Pleasant Ridge's planning consultants. Attendees arrived to find tables set with exercise sheets and other materials. The facilitator asked a series of 6 questions, giving the groups approximately 5 minutes to develop as many answers as possible to them. Each individual then used dot stickers to indicate his or her preferred answers. When each table had generated and voted on its top three visions for the future, participants were asked to offer three strategies for achieving each vision. A representative from each group then presented these visions and strategies to the audience as a whole while a facilitator wrote the visions on poster-sized sheets. These "Collective Priority" sheets were hung near the exit, and attendees were asked to use their remaining three voting stickers to indicate their top priorities among all of the suggested visions.

Residents were notified of both the survey and the vision session through the community newsletter, *The Ridger*, as well as through the City's website and the website dedicated to the Pleasant Ridge Master Plan, [www.theridger.org](http://www.theridger.org).



### *Community Expectation 1: Walkable, bikeable Woodward*

Woodward Avenue is rightly nationally celebrated as the road that "put the world on wheels," and its contribution to the global car culture is difficult to overstate. That culture is fully evidenced in Pleasant Ridge, where over 90% of survey respondents indicated that personal vehicles are their primary mode of transportation to

work, shopping, entertainment, and dining out. None said they took buses or taxis, and just one motorcycle rider used that form of transportation for entertainment. However, when asked about the primary mode of transportation used for leisure, fully one-third of respondents said they preferred nonmotorized choices: 14%

13: Pleasant Ridge visioning session images



by bicycle and 21% on foot. Ninety-five percent of respondents said they walked, biked, or both within the City of Pleasant Ridge. Three quarters of residents had used nonmotorized transportation to get to Ferndale, and approximately 60% had arrived in Royal Oak or at the Detroit Zoo via bike or foot. When asked during the visioning session what Pleasant Ridge should look like ten years in the future, participants gave “a walkable and bikeable Woodward” the highest number of votes at any table and made it the second most-voted-for collective priority. All four participating tables mentioned that sidewalk maintenance and repair could be done better within the City, and two tables added that snow removal could also use improvement.

According to the survey, those on the east side of Woodward Ave. were more likely to walk or bike to their dining and entertainment than those on the west side (ranges: 2.6%-10.3% and 0%-1.7%), but those between Ridge Road and Maplefield were the most likely overall to walk or bike for leisure (42% vs. 24%-39%). The most pronounced differences, however, were associated with tenure, with newer residents considerably less car-dependent than those who have been in Pleasant Ridge longer than five years. For both entertainment and dining out, the rate of those in this

### *Community strategies: Walkable / bikeable Woodward*

- Develop the vision through a dedicated planning process
- Stakeholder approval: MDOT, residents, business owners, DDA
- Secure financing
- Traffic solution; reduce speed and lanes
- Safer / more crosswalks
- Snow and ice removal in public right-of-way
- 696 - pedestrian crosswalk



group using a car or truck as their primary mode of transportation dipped below 90% (88% and 83% respectively), and the percentage of those using a car or truck for leisure was a startlingly low 48% (range for other groups: 69%-71%). They are the most likely to use a bicycle as transportation for all purposes, sometimes representing the only bicyclists among all respondents.

This reflects a national trend of increased biking and walking, with a 50% increase in trips taken via those modes since 1990. In response to this trend, several regional agencies have been evaluating the I-696 / 10 Mile / Main Street / Woodward Avenue area for ways to make it friendlier to multiple modes of transportation. When asked to rank a series of potential strategies, the highest overall weighted ranking went to, "Rework all of the intersections to make them safer for pedestrians," with 74% of citizens placing it in the top two slots and none at all relegating it to the bottom of the list. "Make pedestrian crossings more pronounced" also enjoyed wide overall support, with half of respondents naming it among their top two preferences. The most frequent first-place response was "Cap I-696 and connect Pleasant Ridge and Royal Oak with a park" (41%), but another 22% of participants put it last, indicating a potential for division within the community over the issue. Interestingly, this option received the strongest support from the one study area which is not adjacent to I-696 (the southeast quadrant). Neither

a reduction in traffic speed nor in the number of travel lanes was popular; over a third of residents marked each strategy as the least preferred of them all.

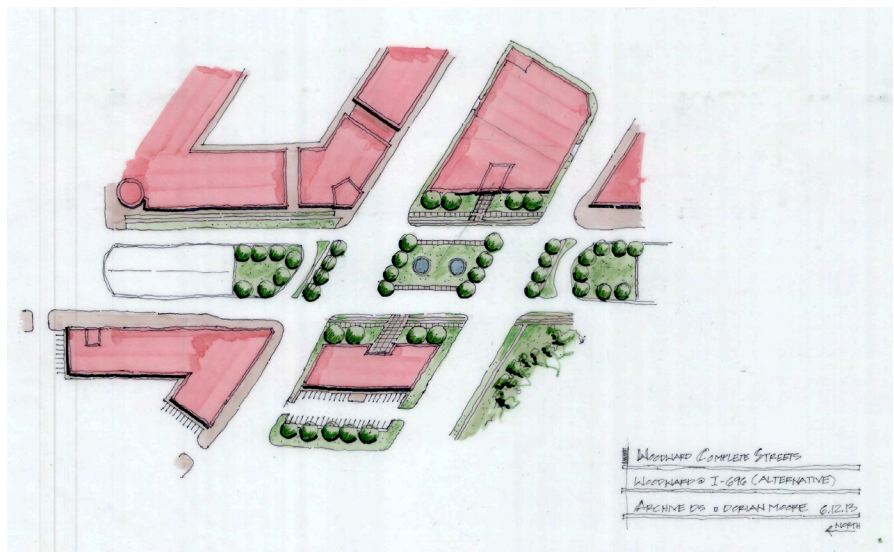
Vision session attendees reinforced the need for specific focus on this area. "An attractive and functional I-696 / M-1 interchange" received the second highest number of votes at any table, and participants cited the busy, confusing intersection as the fourth greatest barrier to success in the community. Suggested strategies included a planning and visioning session dedicated to exploring options and feasibility, and enlisting help from neighbors and other entities such as the Michigan

Department of Transportation. They were also keenly aware of the dramatic costs associated with such an undertaking, recommending securing "financing and more financing."

Metro Detroit took steps toward increasing its public transportation options with the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority in 2012, and the first corridor under study for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is Woodward Avenue from Detroit, through Pleasant Ridge, to Pontiac. Vision session attendees named the RTA as an agency that should be "in the sandbox" to help make decisions about the future of Woodward Ave. Sixteen percent of survey respondents

14: Conceptual image of cap on I-696 at 10 Mile / Woodward Ave.

Source: Woodward Avenue Complete Streets



### Community Strategies: Attractive, functional 696 / M-1 interchange

- Develop the vision through a dedicated planning process
- Stakeholder approval: neighboring cities, residents, RTA, MDOT
- Secure financing and more financing



said they would definitely use BRT if it were available, another 48% said they would use it as long as the system met their standards for cleanliness, reliability, and safety, and 15% said they needed more information. Only a fifth of respondents answered, “No, I wouldn’t consider it.” Little variation was associated with tenure of residency, but overall support was slightly stronger in the southeast quadrant (73% would consider using BRT) and slightly

lower between Woodward Ave. and Ridge Road (57% would consider it).

Of those who did not dismiss BRT out of hand, the largest share (49%) said they would use it “occasionally,” followed by “weekly” (28%), “monthly” (16%), and “daily” (7%). The two groups most likely to use the service “daily” were those with less than five years’ tenure and those in the southeast quadrant, both reported at 12%. (These groups

represent some overlap, as the highest percentage of those with less than five years’ tenure live in the southeast quadrant, but their answers are by no means identical.) These were also the sectors which reported the highest likelihood that the arrival of BRT would have the potential to change the number of cars in their households (17% and 20% respectively, compared to 0%-9% and 0%-12.7%).

## *Community Expectation 2: Maintain Pleasant Ridge's character*

The City of Pleasant Ridge is a geographically small community which nevertheless has a diverse array of assets stemming from its built environment, location, and history. To determine the most natural choices to capitalize on, residents were given a series of statements and asked to rank them in the order they felt best described Pleasant Ridge. Nearly four in five respondents (79%) gave first- or second-place ranking to the statement that the city is “a community with historic and well-maintained neighborhoods,” while 46% offered one of those positions to the descriptor “a community conveniently located close to work, shopping, and entertainment.” “A community that embraces diversity of lifestyles” appeared fairly evenly in each of the five ranking slots. Just under half of respondents (49%) placed “a community that appeals to young families” in one of the bottom two rungs, indicating some lack of

identification with that trait. And although more than a third of respondents placed “a community where neighbors know each other” dead last, marking it as the least descriptive characteristic of Pleasant Ridge according to those residents, the most common words used by vision session attendees to describe their community were “neighborhood / neighborly / neighbors.” These were mentioned at all four tables and received the highest number of votes in that exercise.

### *Community Strategies: Preserved houses and trees*

- Ordinance / code enforcement
- Continue to maintain / replace tree stock

Pleasant Ridge residents value their neighborhoods’ character deeply: 89% of respondents to a survey conducted in conjunction

with the 1999 master plan felt it was “very important” to “maintain the present character of Pleasant Ridge”; 51% of respondents to the survey conducted in conjunction with this master plan felt the statement that best described Pleasant Ridge was “A community with historic and well-maintained neighborhoods”; and “Preservation of community character” was the third highest collective priority at the vision session. However, this has not translated into support for a local historic district: in both surveys, approximately 65% of respondents said they would not be in favor of establishing such a district throughout the City. The exception was among 2013 survey respondents who have lived in Pleasant Ridge less than five years. This group overwhelmingly gave the highest rating to the “historic” and “well-maintained” description, with 65% percent placing it in the top spot and another 23% putting it in second place, and exactly half

said they would be in favor of a local historic district commission. During the vision session, “pride of home ownership / property maintenance” was fourth on the list of things that attendees felt the community had done well, cited by three tables. Overall, preservation of community character was the third-highest collective priority.

Pleasant Ridge’s proximity to a number of well-established centers of entertainment, shopping, and dining offers the community the flexibility to decide how much of the “downtown” experience it would like to provide within the city limits. To determine how the need for this experience is currently being met, residents were asked, “What do you consider to be your downtown?” and given seven communities to rank. Most chose Ferndale or Royal Oak, which received 46% and 31% of first-place rankings respectively and no responses at all placing

them in the bottom two rankings. Geography seemed to play the deciding role between the two, with those living in the northeast quadrant and between Woodward Ave. and Ridge Road most likely to cite Royal Oak (42% and 35% respectively), and those in the southeast quadrant and west of Ridge Road choosing Ferndale (59% and 63% respectively). Fifteen percent of all respondents selected Detroit as their primary downtown, though most (57%) placed it in the middle of the pack. Pleasant Ridge received first-place status from 6% of residents and last-place status from another 6%; the largest share of respondents (26%) ranked it fourth. Neither Berkley nor Birmingham appeared anywhere in the top three slots for more than 12% of the surveyed population, indicating that most residents would prefer to congregate elsewhere. Well, anywhere but Hamtramck: fully

80% of respondents said that given the options, that is the last downtown they would choose.

Overall, citizens are largely satisfied with the condition of the Pleasant Ridge portion of the Woodward Avenue corridor while acknowledging room for improvement. The best feature is the series of Woodward Avenue greenbelt parks, which were rated as “attractive” by 68% of respondents; only 3% felt they needed improvement. A plurality of the residents found each of the remaining features “acceptable,” including the north (Royal Oak) and south (Ferndale) entrances to the city and the physical condition of the buildings and median along Woodward Avenue. Few found either the south entrance to the city or the buildings to be “attractive” (16% and 9% respectively), and the buildings along Woodward received the most votes for “needs improvement” (40%).

### *Community Expectation 3: Quality mixed-use redevelopment on Woodward*

Pleasant Ridge’s frontage along Woodward Avenue is in many ways its “face” to the rest of the world. While the commercial opportunities it presents are readily apparent, the city has also chosen to establish a unique “greenbelt” along the west side consisting of parks and sidewalks. The small size of the city means that all change will necessarily have an impact on existing land uses and must be carefully considered.

Mixed-use development along Woodward was the fourth highest collective priority in the vision

session, and one exceptionally complete picture of its future on offer consisted of “Thriving multi-use/mixed-use frontage on Woodward Avenue with more commercial and retail opportunities, better parking and connectedness, slower traffic, and windmills.” In the survey, residents were asked about redevelopment generally along the east (commercial) side of Woodward Avenue, and on two specific sites. Presented with a series of five strategies for the east side of Woodward and asked to rank them, citizens had

a clear favorite: the majority of respondents (52%) gave first-place ranking to “Woodward Avenue should be redeveloped as a mixed-use district with a combination of retail shops with upper level residential living units.” The strongest support came from those who have lived in Pleasant Ridge for less than five years, with 69% selecting this option as opposed to 39%-57% from the groups who had lived in the city longer. Support for redevelopment “as a professional office district” was evenly spread out among all respondents, with 39% placing it

in the top two tiers and 36% placing it in the bottom two. The remaining three categories, “no change,” “should be converted to a publicly owned greenbelt,” and “should be redeveloped as a higher density residential district” were assigned one of the bottom two slots on approximately half of respondents’ lists.

Residents were also asked about redevelopment on a one-acre parcel near Kensington known as “the triangle.” About two-thirds of respondents (68%) indicated some level of support for redevelopment of “the triangle,” with answers split fairly evenly between “agree” and “somewhat agree.” The exception was among those who live in the northeast quadrant of the city, nearest the site: 40% of those respondents were not in favor of redevelopment. The strongest support came from those with less than five years’ tenure, who also provided the most emphatic response to which type of use they would like to see on the parcel by giving 72% preference to “combination commercial with residential above the first floor.” This option was the favorite overall (64%), even among those few in the northeast quadrant (71%) who agreed to the redevelopment, but it dropped sharply to 47% among those living between Woodward Ave. and Ridge Road. That group preferred standard commercial development (37%).

The figures were reversed in the case of the greenbelt parcel between Millington Road and Poplar Park Blvd., with 68% of

### *Community Strategies: Thriving multi-use/mixed use frontage on Woodward avenue with more commercial and retail opportunities, better parking and connectedness, slower traffic, and windmills*

- Separate Planning Commission and DDA, with DDA having a business voice and more active board
- Better vision for Woodward, including especially parking changes, traffic speeds, etc.
- Working more closely with Ferndale, Huntington Woods, and Royal Oak

### *Community Strategies: Mixed development*

- Zoning improvements
- Parking both sides
- Embrace mixed / stable business development; residents be flexible
- Tax / business revenue

citizens indicating that they would “disagree” with redevelopment on that site. Asked which type of use they would most strongly support, the clear winner again was “combination commercial with residential above the first floor” with 61%. Opinions on mixed use development held through cross-tabulation here too, with 71% of those with less than five years in Pleasant Ridge favoring it more strongly than the other groups (range: 50%-67%) and a mere 20% of those between Woodward Ave. and Ridge Road expressing support (range of other areas: 57%-82%). In this case, that group preferred multiple family residential development similar to the apartments on Woodward between Maywood and Sylvan Avenues.

In addition to geographic and use considerations, the disbursement of liquor licenses is another factor that can affect the character of

redevelopment opportunities. The city has issued its two liquor licenses to Cork and Mae’s restaurants, and licenses may be also available either through a transfer from another community or through a program available to the Downtown Development Authority. Citizens were most inclined to issue such hypothetical licenses to a fine dining venue, with 61% “in favor” and another 22% “somewhat in favor.” A family style restaurant and a microbrewery/pub each received 39% support “in favor” and approximately 25% “somewhat in favor.” The majority of respondents were “not in favor” of a national franchise (86%), a carry-out venue (74%), or a sports bar (69%). In every case, there were fewer respondents from the under-five-year-tenure group who were “not in favor” of a given establishment than from the other groups, sometimes by wide margins.

### *Community Expectation 4: Maintain financial stability and independence*

#### ***Community Strategies: Completely maintain independence***

- Maintain Pleasant Ridge police forever
- Independent recreational teams
- Continued community involvement

#### ***Community Strategies: Fiscal stability***

- Match revenue and expenses
- Financial forecasting - long-term
- Expand the “revenue pie”
- Competitive City contracts
- Tax / business revenue
- Responsible budget

The City of Pleasant Ridge is in an enviable financial position compared to many communities. Its 2013-2014 projected expenditures match its projected revenues, and its fund balance is approximately 16% of revenue. Though declining home values and changes to the State revenue-sharing program have made their presence known in Pleasant Ridge, they have been managed without drastic cuts to services or other reductions in quality of life. It was somewhat of a surprise, then, when vision session attendees named “financial stability” as their top collective priority overall. As in many communities, lack of money and/or resources was named as the top barrier to success, but no particular vision was cited as being thwarted for lack of funds. Rather, the recommended strategies suggest forward-looking, practical concerns of savvy and engaged residents.

However, participants were very concerned about maintaining their independence overall; this ranked fifth among the collective priorities. In particular, the Pleasant Ridge police force—an item with a large presence on the balance sheet, accounting for 32% of all expenditures—was the top item that they felt the community had “done well,” mentioned at three of the four tables and receiving the highest number of votes. Another strategy advocated for maintaining Pleasant Ridge’s independence was the continued support of its own recreational teams. These are especially poignant against the backdrop of all that Pleasant Ridge does collaborate on successfully, from libraries to schools to fire services. Taken together, the picture is one of a city that is deeply embedded in the fabric of the wider community yet prefers to rely on itself for protection and values the social bonds and identity reinforcement provided by recreational teams.

### *Community Expectation 5: Accommodate existing and encourage new demographic shifts*

The median age in the City of Pleasant Ridge has increased from 37.0 in 1990 to 43.4 in 2010. As a population ages, its housing needs change: rooms and yards to accommodate active children diminish in importance, and architectural features such as multiple levels can become harder to navigate, for example. Nearly all surveyed residents either “agreed” (73%) or “somewhat agreed” (20%)

#### ***Community Strategies: Increasingly diverse community, economically and culturally***

- Implement viable, comprehensive senior program
- Affordable housing plan
- Public education support

with the statement, “It is important for Pleasant Ridge to encourage mature families and retirees to remain in the community.” Support dropped sharply when the discussion turned to specifics, however. Far fewer respondents “agreed” (23%) or “somewhat agreed” (35%) that “there is a need for housing for elderly households,” and the majority of respondents (53%) disagreed with the statement, “The City should



help facilitate the development of housing for elderly residents.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with the longest tenure (15 years or more) were the most likely to buck this trend, with 72% recognizing a need for elder-appropriate housing and 67% expressing support for city-facilitated development of it. Though only 22% of the residents

said they used the “Dog Park” facility, 35% were opposed to considering the use of that site for senior housing.

In addition to accommodating a changing landscape with regard to residents’ ages, vision session participants were concerned with economic, cultural, and

architectural diversity. Three of four tables said the city could be described as “culturally and architecturally diverse,” and this item was the second highest vote-getter in that category. Overall, “economic and cultural diversity” ranked 8th among collective priorities.

### *Community Expectation 6: Well maintained recreational assets*

Pleasant Ridge’s recreational assets were mentioned frequently during the vision session. The Community Center is heralded as a jewel, taking second place among all the things citizens felt have been done well in the City. A vision of green spaces, improved parks, and well-maintained recreational assets ten years in the future got the fourth-highest number of votes in that category, while a beautiful and completed Gainsboro Park was sixth. They got specific when asked what the community could have done better, citing the Department of Public Works building and lot,

the sidewalk system, and another mention of Gainsboro Park.

A survey conducted in conjunction with the 2013 update to the Pleasant Ridge Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan found that an overwhelming 97% of residents “strongly agreed” (80%) or “somewhat agreed” (42%) with the statement, “Parks and recreation facilities and services are important to our community and worthy of taxpayer support,” and 88% felt that the City’s parks and recreation facilities were “extremely important” (47%) or “very important” (41%) to their sense of community.

#### *Community Strategies: Well maintained recreational assets*

- Timely maintenance: replace or remove disrepaired streets
- Continue to improve and add recreational assets
- Prioritization
- Beautiful Gainsboro Park
- Implement the plan
- Maintain the changes; increase Parks and Rec budget
- Pursue creative funding sources



# Issues Worth Resolving

## Basic framework

Pleasant Ridge’s basic planning framework aligns well with the State of Michigan’s recent focus on “placemaking,” or the creation of high-quality, amenity-rich spaces which have the capacity to attract and retain the talented knowledge workers who are driving the 21st century economy. Basic components include understanding a community’s place within the region and its unique contributions to it, ensuring the availability of recreational and social opportunities, encouraging a built environment that is scaled to the human form, and facilitating a range of transportation choices. Pleasant Ridge has a solid history of providing the first two and a demonstrated interest in moving toward the second two.

Another statewide initiative that may benefit Pleasant Ridge is the “Redevelopment Ready” program from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. This is a set of best practices designed to create a predictable experience for investors, businesses, and residents working within a community in order to attract the highest-quality and most suitable development. Pleasant Ridge already engages in many of the practices outlined below, and so may be in a position to substantially improve outcomes with a reasonable amount of effort.

## Demographics

The two demographic trends most likely to have an impact on Pleasant Ridge are the increasing median age and the shrinking household size. The median age of a community affects both

its demand for services and its built environment. An older population needs fewer schools, playgrounds, and youth-oriented recreational programs but more medical facilities, attention to full accessibility, and adult recreational options. While this shift should be kept in mind when planning in order to accommodate the changing needs of the community, it is also important not to swing too far in the other direction. Items with the greatest applicability across diverse age groups, such as full accessibility, should receive the most attention. In a fully built environment such as Pleasant Ridge, a drop in household size signals a drop in overall population. Though the tax base remains unaffected because it is tied to housing structures rather than people, revenues from fee-for-service programs such as water use will diminish. Commercial enterprises may also feel the result of a decline in overall consumer demand.

	1990	2000	2010
Population	2,833	2,594	2,526
Household size	2.59	2.33	2.27

Survey analysis reveals a pocket of support for many of the community’s overall goals that is strikingly strong among those Ridgers who have arrived within the last five years. Making up 28% of survey respondents, this group’s attitude toward transportation is markedly multi-dimensional: they leave their cars behind for fun, ride their bikes when no one else does, find ways to get to work besides driving alone, and

## Redevelopment-Ready Communities Best Practices

### Community Plans and Public Outreach

- ☒ Master plan updated, in-use and accessible online
- ☒ Specific areas targeted for reinvestment
- ☒ Master planning aligns with budget
- ☒ Public continually involved to achieve cohesive vision

### Zoning Policy and Regulations

- ☒ Zoning ordinance supports goals of master plan and accessible online
- ☐ Zoning ordinance allows for mixed-use by right in specific districts
- ☐ Flexible parking regulations to decrease re-development barriers

### Development Review Process

- ☐ Site plan review process is clearly outlined and accessible online
- ☐ Roles and timelines are clearly defined and online
- ☐ Development materials and contact information is easily accessible and found together online

### Education and Training

- ☒ Staff and officials regularly attend trainings to make more informed decisions
- ☒ Newly elected and appointed officials receive an orientation regarding their role in redevelopment in the community

### Redevelopment Ready Sites

- ☒ Redevelopment opportunities are identified and prioritized
- ☒ Public is involved in visioning for important sites
- ☐ Potential resources are identified for sites
- ☐ Priority sites are packaged and actively marketed online

### Community Prosperity

- ☒ Community has an economic development and marketing strategy
- ☐ Community website is easy to navigate and find relevant development information

are eager to put the BRT to regular enough use to replace a household car. Their support for redevelopment in general and mixed-use development specifically outweighs all other groups. They value Pleasant Ridge's historic character most keenly, demonstrating that value by offering the greatest support for encoding it in a local historic district. They are also the least likely to oppose the distribution of a liquor license to any particular kind of establishment. Taken together, the concentration of these preferences in Pleasant Ridge's newest (and youngest among survey respondents) residents points to an organically-occurring paradigm shift that seems likely to grow over time. Therefore, it further seems reasonable that implementation of the physical aspects represented by this shift—accommodation of nonmotorized transportation and mixed-use development in particular—is an investment that is well-suited to the community's future and well worth making.

## Housing and neighborhoods

Since the writing of the last master plan, nearly all of the residential parcels within the City of Pleasant Ridge have been included in historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is an indication of both the value Pleasant Ridge places on its heritage and its desire to continue to identify with its historic character. Strong support does not currently exist within the community to institute a local historic commission, which would have the power to review external modifications to private residences in order to ensure that they are in keeping with the historical character of the community.

The residences within the city are almost exclusively detached single-family, a lack of diversity that may not match up well with the coming demographic changes. In particular, an aging population is faced with a dearth of age-in-place housing. Though only a minority of survey respondents considered this an issue to be addressed at the municipal level, citizens and leadership would be wise to understand that aging happens to everybody, and the option to do so among long-standing neighbors

and in the environment we have chosen to spend our most productive years in has benefit to the community fabric. Smaller and/or attached housing units would suit both aging and shrinking households.

### Multi-jurisdictional collaboration

As noted in the Community Facilities section, Pleasant Ridge enjoys robust and fruitful relationships with many of its neighboring jurisdictions. These connections have allowed the City to realize substantial cost savings in service provision and have positioned the community favorably under recent state revenue sharing requirement changes.

In addition to these service agreements, Pleasant Ridge will benefit from the establishment of regular communication and deep collaboration with its neighboring communities throughout the Woodward Avenue BRT and Complete Streets processes. This principal thoroughfare across the tightly-developed fabric of metro Detroit is by nature multi-jurisdictional, yet the success of its transformation into a public space that accommodates all modes of transportation must be a highly coordinated effort with significant buy-in from all parties. By taking the initiative to establish a working “block” of communities with a cohesive vision, including Birmingham, Royal Oak, Ferndale, and Huntington Woods, Pleasant Ridge can have a greater influence on a final design that satisfies its needs.

### Woodward Avenue business district

The arrival of Bus Rapid Transit and Complete Streets on Woodward Avenue has the potential to change the look and function of the corridor substantially, and Pleasant Ridge should seek to dovetail its efforts with these regional strategies wherever possible. A key complement to these transportation changes is the development of mixed-use facilities, which should be permitted

and supported by Pleasant Ridge’s zoning ordinance. Special attention should also be paid to the lone remaining development site within the City, the one-acre parcel known as “the triangle” which sits at the node of Woodward Ave. and I-696.

### General infrastructure

Overall, Pleasant Ridge has a complete infrastructure system including basics such as water, sewer, and roads as well as amenities like lighting and sidewalks. Though rarely boasted about in real estate ads, these items present a powerful image: well-kept infrastructure communicates safety and well-being to current and prospective residents. Maintenance of this system, which is now many decades old, can be both costly and time-consuming, but it is an investment that pays dividends in taxable value, real estate prices, and occupancy rates.

### Sustainability

The City of Pleasant Ridge and its “Woodward 5” neighbors (Berkley, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, and Royal Oak) collaborated on the “Woodward 5 Sustainability Partnership” in 2012-2013.

The purpose of this collaboration was to establish an overall vision of the communities’ sustainable future, describe preferred economic, environmental, and community outcomes, identify indicators of those outcomes and measure baseline data related to them, set targets measurements for each indicator, and propose actions to achieve those targets.

Pleasant Ridge measured 17 of the 48 indicators identified by the partnership. The indicators demonstrated strong alignment with Pleasant Ridge’s community expectations, particularly in relation to transit and recreation. They also highlighted some of the existing conditions in Pleasant Ridge which already support the sustainability framework, such as the number of well-educated residents, the general fund balance, and tree canopy coverage.



Indicator	Units	Baseline Year	Pleasant Ridge Baseline	W5 Baseline	Target
<b>COMMUNITY</b>					
<b>Strong Engagement with Science, Arts, Historical &amp; Cultural Programs and Institutions</b>					
Arts & Culture Program Spending	% Public Funds	2011	3%	5%	↑
<b>Well-Educated</b>					
Residents with Bachelors Degree or Higher Degree	% Population	2010	63%		↑
<b>Healthy Community</b>					
Recreational Pathways	Miles of Trail per Square Mile	2012	7.4	6	↑
<b>Diverse Community</b>					
Racial Diversity Index	0-100	2010	11.69	18.38	↑
<b>ECONOMY</b>					
<b>Economic Development Friendly</b>					
Commercial Site Plan Reviews	Days	2011	30		↓
<b>Economic Diversity</b>					
Young Professionals	% Population Age 24-35 with Bachelor's Degree	2010	72%	68%	↑
Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	% Workforce Employed in Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	2010	67%	51%	↑
Commercial, Office, and Industrial Parcels within ¼ Mile of a Bus Stop	% Units Measured Along Road Network	2012	84%	75%	↑
<b>Fiscal Sustainability</b>					
General Fund Balance	% Fund Balance vs. General Fund Expenditures		21.6%*	21.90%	↑
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>					
<b>Green Infrastructure</b>					
Residential Parcels within ¼ Mile of Public Recreation Land	% Units Measured Along Road Network	2012	98%	80%	↑
Active Parkland	Acres per 1,000 Residents	2012	3.27	9.08	↑
Public Recreation Funding	USD per Resident	2012	\$190.15	\$47.69	↑
Tree Canopy Coverage	% Area	2008	33%	26%	↑
<b>Transportation</b>					
Walkability	% Residential Parcels within ¼ Mile of a Commercial Parcel	2012	61%	76%	↑
Transit Access	% Residential and Business Units Within ¼ Mile of a Bus Stop	2012	19.80%	33%	↑
Recreational Pathways	Miles of Trail per Square Mile	2012	7.42	5.98	↑
People Biking or Walking to Work	% Population	2010	0.90%	2%	↑

\*updated June 2014

# Goals and Strategies

Goals and strategies are the heart of a master plan: they tell us where we're going to go and how we're going to get there. Developed directly from citizen input received through the citywide survey and the visioning session, the following pages present both the general framework for Pleasant Ridge's desired future and the specific actions we can take to achieve it.

## ***Create a vibrant, diverse, mixed-use, mixed-density district along Woodward Avenue.***

Contrary to the long tradition of use-based classification and separation of our built environment, a new awareness is dawning of the value and utility of mixed-use development and increasing density. Mixed uses are an essential component of a walkable community, eliminating the "space barrier" between all-residential development and the goods and services its residents regularly require. It also offers greater flexibility to developers and businesses, which are presented with a wider array of opportunities to fill local needs using the space available, not to mention a customer base with a high convenience incentive to use its goods and services. Similarly, single-density residential development is receiving a long-overdue rethinking as household sizes shrink and the "standard" household of a married couple with children makes up an ever-decreasing share of actual households. By contrast, mixed-density housing expands household-appropriate residential offerings in the community while enhancing the viability of commercial enterprises by intensifying the customer base. In particular, there

is a range of "missing middle" housing options which can comfortably provide higher density that have received scant attention over the past several decades. These include duplexes/triplexes, "mansion-style" apartment buildings, townhomes, and live-work units with commercial space on the first floor.

Pleasant Ridge citizens are already on board. When asked about their preferred redevelopment strategy for the east side of Woodward Avenue, residents most strongly supported "a mixed use district with a combination of retail shops with upper level residential living units" (52%) over any single-use strategy such as an office district or green space (both 12%), higher-density residential development (3%), or even the status quo (20%). Commercial/residential mixed use development was even more strongly preferred for individual potential redevelopment sites at "the triangle" and along Woodward Ave. between Millington Road and Poplar Park Blvd., with approximately 65% of residents choosing that over either apartments or standard commercial development.

### Strategies:

- Fully explore the use of form-based code as a tool to shape the many changes in progress and on the way along Woodward Avenue
- At a minimum, make appropriate changes to the zoning ordinance to allow mixed uses
- Examine an overall parking strategy for the City as a whole
- Investigate possible utility of and sites for “missing middle” housing to increase density along Woodward Ave.
- Explore potential consequences and benefits of separating the Planning Commission and Downtown Development Authority to encourage a more focused approach to the business community
- Communicate the benefits of mixed-use development and increasing density to residents and encourage them to support these strategies
- Investigate potential positive tax value implications of increased density
- Work closely with Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Birmingham, and Royal Oak to understand the full context of development along the Pleasant Ridge portion of Woodward and make complementary choices
- Link strategies for a walkable, bikeable, and traffic-calmed Woodward Ave. to the health and vibrance of the business community
- Keep relevant and actively participate with the procedures and policies of MDOT, SEMCOG, the Oakland County Road Commission, and other regional entities

17: Maywood Townhomes photo





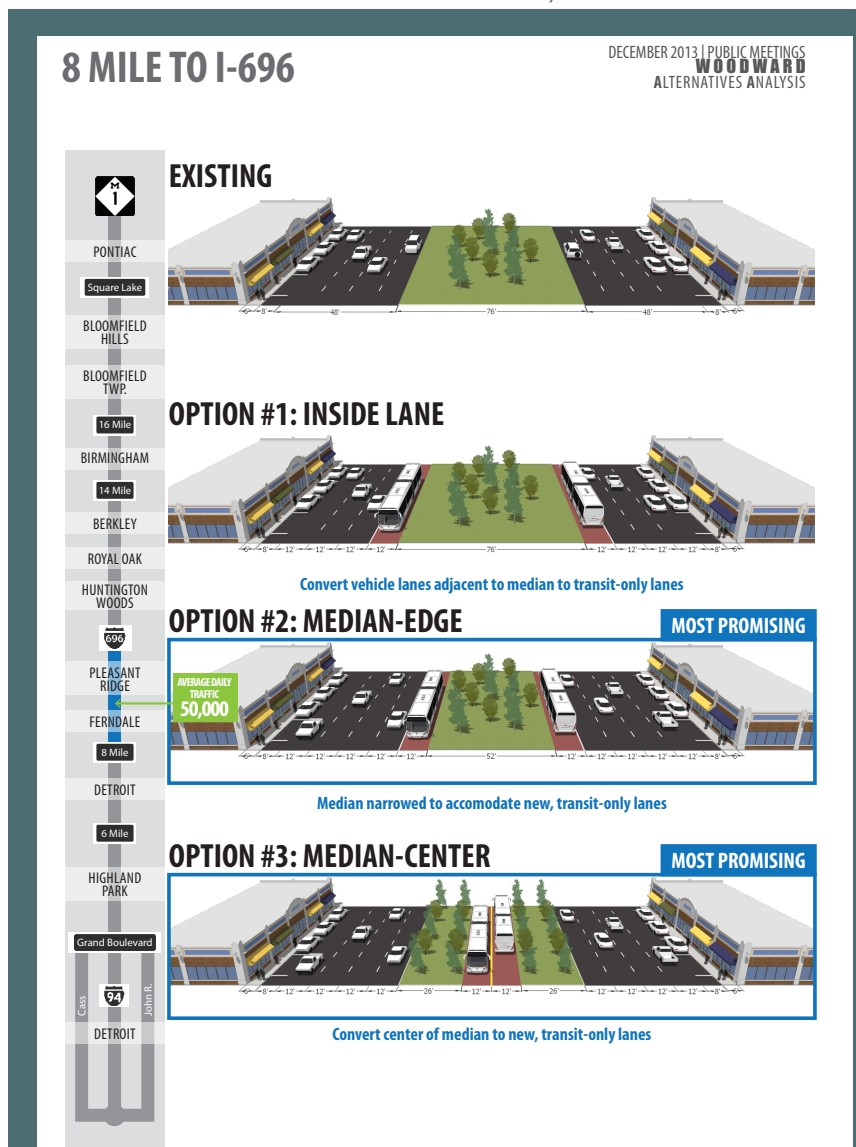
***Expand transportation options within the City to include a walkable, bikeable Woodward Ave., and take advantage of regional transportation changes.***

While Americans, metro Detroiters, and Pleasant Ridge residents still love cars and depend on them heavily for the freedom of mobility they offer, a growing desire for an expanded palette of transportation options is beginning to take its place among land use considerations. The biggest example is the ongoing conversation about public transportation along the Woodward Corridor, which has recently included every scale of government from the City of Detroit to the United States Secretary of Transportation. At the time of this writing, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) has conducted an alternatives analysis and settled on Bus Rapid Transit as the most appropriate choice for mass transit, with tentative stops at 9 Mile Road and the Detroit Zoo (I-696). SEMCOG envisions that these stops will improve pedestrian crossings, calm traffic, and improve safety and security along Woodward Ave. Under this scenario, the impact to Pleasant Ridge will be largely indirect because the route will not require much if any land under Pleasant Ridge's jurisdiction to be used for a transit stop, but it will provide much greater access to the City—particularly within a comfortable walking distance to each station—and commercial and residential land use opportunities should be considered against that backdrop. However, the analysis omitted any detail whatsoever about the I-696 / Detroit Zoo stop and potential approaches to it, presumably because of the practical difficulties posed by the complicated intersection of I-696 and Woodward Ave.

The Woodward Avenue Association is developing a Complete Streets plan for the corridor, a concurrency that is important for providing non-

vehicular connections between riders' points of origin—their homes, workplaces, and shopping destinations—and the BRT line. A draft concept in the plan, released in September 2013, envisions a reduction in travel lanes from four to three for the stretch between 8 Mile Road and Oakridge, with an exclusive lane for the BRT in the current median. The excess right-of-way would be repurposed to provide a buffered two-way bicycle track on both sides and

## 18: Woodward Avenue BRT alternatives analysis



to expand the sidewalk from six feet to 25 feet. In addition to the focus on the Woodward Ave. right-of-way, the “Bicyclist’s Guide to Southeast Oakland County,” prepared by the County with the support of the Beaumont Health Center, indicates “high comfort” bicycle travel on Ridge Road, Oakland Park Blvd., and the portion of Indiana between Sylvan and Woodward Heights as well as “medium comfort” travel on Woodward Heights from Indiana to I-75.

Taken together, these changes have the character of the Woodward Avenue Corridor from the familiar,

thoroughly vehicular through-way to a new kind of “place” accommodating a multitude of users and activities. Survey results indicate that the residents of Pleasant Ridge are in a good position to look forward to this transition. Eighty percent of Pleasant Ridge survey respondents have indicated that they would at least consider using BRT; a significant proportion enjoy walking (21%) and biking (14%) enough to use them as their primary mode of transportation for leisure; and the majority (52%) support the creation of a mixed-use district, which is particularly well-suited to non-car forms of transportation.

## I-696 TO 14 MILE

DECEMBER 2013 | PUBLIC MEETINGS  
**WOODWARD**  
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS



PONTIAC

Square Lake

BLOOMFIELD HILLS

BLOOMFIELD TWP.

16 Mile

BIRMINGHAM

14 Mile

BERKLEY

ROYAL OAK

HUNTINGTON WOODS

690

PLEASANT RIDGE

FERNDAL

8 Mile

DETROIT

6 Mile

HIGHLAND PARK

Grand Boulevard

Cass

94

John R.

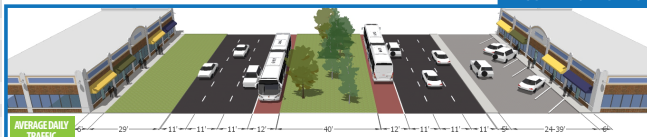
DETROIT

### EXISTING



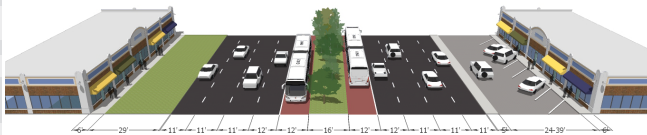
### OPTION #1: INSIDE LANE

**MOST PROMISING**



Convert vehicle lanes adjacent to median to transit-only lanes

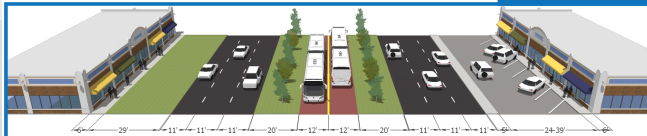
### OPTION #2: MEDIAN-EDGE



Median narrowed to accommodate new, transit-only lanes

### OPTION #3: MEDIAN-CENTER

**MOST PROMISING**



Convert center of median to new, transit-only lanes and convert adjacent vehicle lanes to median

### Strategies:

- Develop a “Pleasant Ridge preferred” plan for the BRT stop at I-696/Detroit Zoo and for a walkable, bikeable Woodward that considers traffic solutions, pedestrian/bicycle safety and amenities, and transit-oriented development as well as the placement and approach of the stop itself
- Establish a regular meeting schedule with Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, Ferndale, and Birmingham to develop a coordinated vision
- Monitor the progress of Woodward Avenue Bus Rapid Transit and Complete Streets plans and implementation, and look for opportunities to coordinate development with it; investigate cost savings associated with such coordination
- Make appropriate changes to the zoning ordinance and consider a local complete streets ordinance
- Continue to investigate improvement to Woodward Ave. and Sylvan intersection

## ***Preserve the historic, stable, attractive neighborhoods of Pleasant Ridge***

Most of the City of Pleasant Ridge is comprised of its greatest asset: its desirable, historic residential areas. Making up 97% of all parcels and 96% of the taxable valuation of the city, their preservation, protection, and enhancement are central to the community's success. The City has already taken the bold step of listing nearly its entire land area on the National Register of Historic Places. This provides formal recognition and documentation of a property's significance based on uniform standards, and it implements a review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation any time a proposed Federal project will affect a registered property—in this case, anywhere within the City. It does not place any obligations on private property owners to maintain or restore their historic resources, however, because such protection can only be accomplished with a local historic district as provided for by Michigan Public Act 169 of 1970 and as noted in the Community Expectations, a majority of residents do not support the institution of such a district. But this combination has so far appeared to work well for

Pleasant Ridge: the national designation addresses externally generated infrastructure decisions such as those which have been controversial in the community's past, while the homeowners who have been responsible for the current excellent quality and character of the neighborhoods are not troubled by more burdensome restrictions.

In November 2013, voters agreed to extend until 2035 a millage of up to three mills per year "to be used to finance street, sewer & water system repairs, sidewalks, alleys, parking lots, parks, and general infrastructure improvements within the City of Pleasant Ridge." First levied in 1994, this millage has allowed the City to maintain its curb appeal and well-kept image as communities all over the state found themselves having to sacrifice infrastructure quality in the face of diminishing general fund balances. This in turn has helped Pleasant Ridge avoid the worst of the "housing bust" by remaining an inviting, attractive option to those seeking to purchase a home.



*Photo: Andrew Jameson, Wikimedia Commons*

### Strategies:

- Institute a sidewalk replacement program
- Consider converting street lighting to LED
- Devote appropriate resources to ordinance and code enforcement
- Continue to maintain and replace tree stock
- Continue the infrastructure reconstruction program
- Encourage cooperation among neighbors: reciprocate each others' judgments out of deference, mutuality, and respect
- Engage in long-term financial forecasting and capital improvements planning to ensure the best return on infrastructure investments



## Provide high-quality recreation programs and facilities within the City limits.

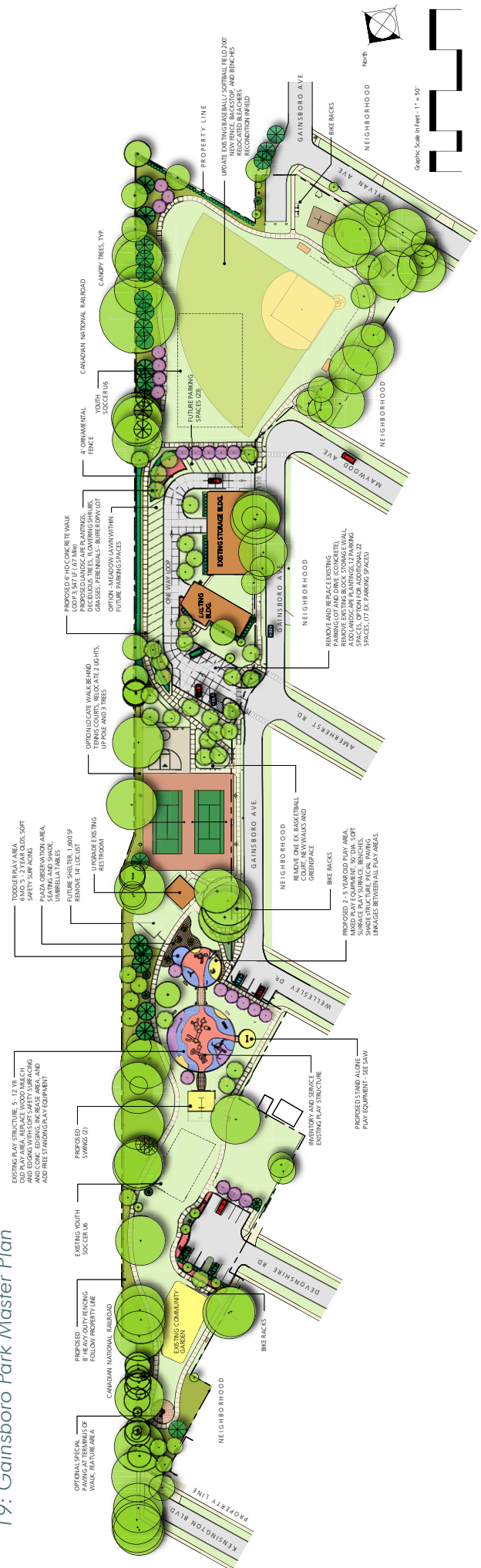
Residents highly value Pleasant Ridge's recreational offerings. Visioning session participants firmly included this component in their ideal image of the community's future, and survey respondents clearly indicated the importance of recreation to their sense of community. In a community that collaborates with jurisdictions of all levels on a wide variety of services, independent recreational teams provide one sense of identity and an opportunity to get to know their neighbors in a deeper way than offered by simple geography.

As noted in the Community Expectations, a survey conducted in conjunction with the 2013 update to the Pleasant Ridge Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan found that the most-used recreation sites in Pleasant Ridge are the two major facilities: the indoor Community Center / Wellness Center / Community Pool at 4 Ridge Road, and the outdoor Gainsboro Park along the eastern boundary of the City. Differences in the condition of the two facilities are pronounced. About four in five survey respondents said the indoor facilities were "extremely well" or "very well" maintained, as opposed to just over a third of respondents (36%) who said the same about Gainsboro Park. Pleasant Ridge currently hosts just under ten acres of recreation land, less than a third of the area recommended by the Michigan Recreation and Park Association for a community of its size, and deserves to have its available recreation land developed to its fullest potential. The facilities and activities that survey respondents would most like to see in Pleasant Ridge were walking and exercise trails, play structures for toddlers and older children, community gardens, and cultural events / public art. Gainsboro Park provides an excellent current or potential site for all of these, and a Gainsboro Park Master Plan developed in 2013 incorporates all of them.

### Strategies:

- Continue to maintain, improve, and add recreational assets and parks
- Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Gainsboro Park Master Plan
- Pursue creative funding sources
- Maintain Pleasant Ridge's independent recreational teams

### 19: Gainsboro Park Master Plan



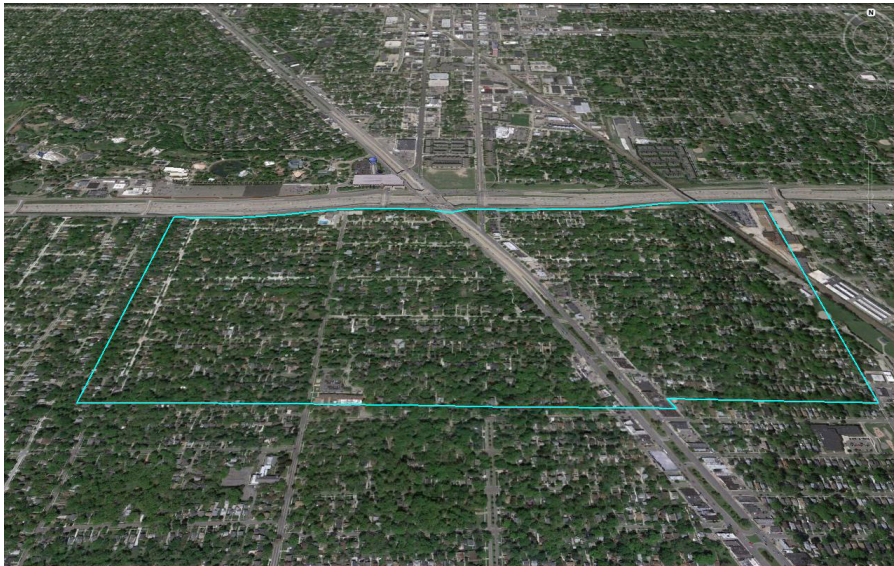
# *Strategies and Land Use*

# Existing Land Use

Land use within the City of Pleasant Ridge is overwhelmingly residential: 61% of the land area and 91% of the parcels are so classified.

Land use within the City of Pleasant Ridge is overwhelmingly residential: 61% of the land area and 91% of the parcels are so classified. The two multifamily parcels within the City limits total 0.5 acres and make up just 0.13% of the land area, so nearly all of the 1,144 housing units are single-family. Lots smaller than 8,000 square feet represent the largest share of both acreage (26%, or 95 acres) and parcels (57%, or 716 parcels). The east side of the city is composed almost solely of these parcels, and they line both sides of Maplefield Road on the western border. The west side of the city contains

the bulk of lots between 8,000 and 13,999 square feet, largely concentrated between Ridge Road and Oakdale Blvd. as well as along Oxford and Cambridge Heights Boulevards at the city's southern border. These make up 20% of the city's land area (71.8 acres) and 25% of its parcels (306). All but one of the remaining lots are larger than 14,000 square feet and less than one acre, comprising about 9% of the parcels (117) and 15% of the land area (53 acres). They make up the heart of Pleasant Ridge's west side, lining Poplar Park, Elm Park, and Oakland Park Avenues as well as Ridge Road. The



20: Pleasant Ridge aerial image

Photo: Google Earth



# CITY OF PLEASANT RIDGE 2014 Land Use

Data Source: City of Pleasant Ridge

- Single Family, 1 to 2.4 acres
- Single Family, 14,000 to 43,559 sq. ft.
- Single Family, 8,000 to 13,999 sq. ft.
- Single Family, Less than 8,000 sq. ft.

- Multiple Family
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/Conservative
- Transportation/Utility/Communication



0 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

21. Existing Land Use map

largest residential lot in the city, at the corner of Ridge Road and Oakland Park Ave., is 1.1 acres—a greater percentage of land area (0.3%) than both multifamily units combined. The majority of the structures on the lots (70% of housing stock) was built before 1940, and most are three- or four-bedroom homes (49% and 29% respectively).

Public land use makes up the second largest classification within the City, even though its percentages are relatively tiny at 2.6% for recreation land (9.6 acres) and 1.7% for all other public land (6 acres). These parcels, 44 in all, are concentrated along the city's corridors: Gainsboro Park along the Grand Trunk Railroad corridor in the east, City Hall and the greenbelt along the west side of the Woodward corridor, and the Community Center and Roosevelt School at either end of Ridge Road. Buildings on these lands include City Hall, the historic police booth, the Community Center, the Gainsboro Park shelter, and the now-vacant Department of Public Works building; other structures and improvements include children's play equipment, athletic fields and courts, trails, picnic tables, gardens, benches, lighting, parking, and landscaping. This category also includes two small parking lots.

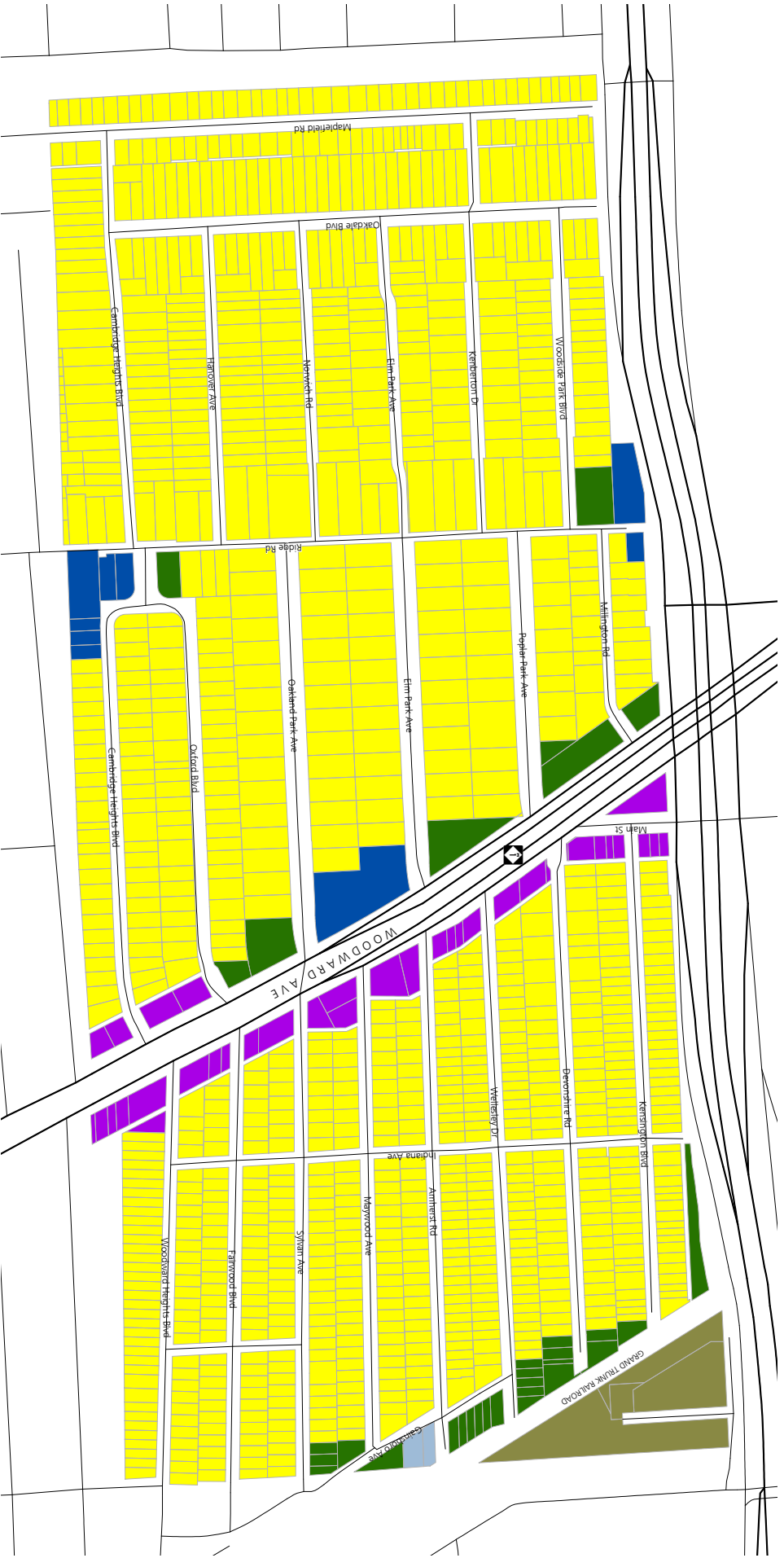
Pleasant Ridge's commercial district lies on the east side of Woodward, spilling over to the west side only on the last two blocks before the southern city limits. Its 29 parcels (2.3% of total parcels) are spread out over 6 acres (1.6%). Buildings are mostly one-story but do display some height variation, and they either abut the sidewalk or are set back about 10 feet. The streetwall is regularly broken up to provide for off-street parking or access to off-street parking, including the two lots under City ownership.

Right-of-way is a significant land use in Pleasant Ridge—30% of the total acreage. Defined here as parcel line to parcel line, Woodward Avenue alone takes up 3.9% of the city's available land (14.1 acres) and is comprised of a number of types of features. These include vehicle travel lanes, on-street parking, curb bump-outs, medians (both landscaped areas and concrete dividers), sidewalks ranging in width from 5 to 20 feet, landscaping that includes both trees and groundcover, and lighting. About 18% of the land is used for movement between parcels on residential rights-of-way, and the community accommodates buffers along I-696 and the Grand Trunk Railway with about 7.2% and 1% of its land area respectively.

# CITY OF PLEASANT RIDGE Future Land Use

Data Source: City of Pleasant Ridge

- Residential
- Woodward Ave. Mixed Use Corridor District
- Public/Institutional
- Recreation/Conservative
- Transportation/Utility/Communication
- Office Redevelopment Area



22. Future Land Use map



# Future Land Use

Because nearly all of Pleasant Ridge's land area has been developed, the Future Land Use map does not represent any significant broad changes to land use.

Single-family residential lots continue to dominate the community's land area and parcel classifications with no change at all. The public/institutional land uses at City Hall, the Community Center, and Roosevelt School will also continue without change. Recreational offerings at the Community Center, Gainsboro Park, and the Woodward greenbelt will be preserved or enhanced with no change to their footprint on the land.

It is envisioned that the parcels along the east side of Woodward avenue as well as the southernmost two blocks of the west side of Woodward Avenue will continue to provide commercial and multifamily residential land uses as well as parking. However, the way in which these uses are configured will be re-examined with an eye toward the following considerations:

- An increased understanding of and appreciation for the benefits of mixed uses on a single site;
- A Woodward Avenue right-of-way that provides a safe and appealing experience for nonmotorized transportation users;
- Provision of parking on a citywide scale, rather than on a per-lot scale;
- Balancing commercial offerings with recognition of the community's commercial needs which are already successfully being met in neighboring jurisdictions;
- Understanding how multifamily offerings can contribute to the residential character of Pleasant Ridge, to the success of local commercial offerings, and to the success and utility of proposed transit investments along Woodward Avenue.

In its final form, the footprint now occupied by the commercial and multifamily parcels as well as the two municipal parking lots on the east side of Woodward will comprise a Pleasant Ridge Mixed-Use Corridor District. Due to the lack of depth of the lots on the east side of Woodward, the preferred land use development type would emphasize the vertical dimension by consisting of three- to three-and-a-half story buildings in a manner similar to the townhomes at Maywood Avenue. As parcels are redeveloped, these buildings can provide residential alternatives to single-family detached dwellings such as townhomes and lofts, offer opportunities for retail and office uses on the ground floor, and accommodate the physical constraints of the properties themselves.

# Zoning Plan

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA33 of 2008) requires the inclusion of a zoning plan in the master plan. The zoning plan calls attention to changes that need to be made to the current zoning ordinance in order to align it with the new master plan.

Specifically, the zoning plan looks to show the relationship between the future land use map and the zoning map, and to suggest ordinance revisions to strengthen that relationship. Because zoning is the single most important legal device for regulating land development, the changes suggested are necessary in order to implement specific aspects of the master plan.

No change is anticipated for the regulations governing the R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1D, or R-2 zoning classifications. Yard and bulk requirements for these single- and two-family residential classifications have been calibrated based on lot size and have been shown over time to preserve the desired residential character within the City limits. Similarly, no change is anticipated to the Parks, Recreation, and Municipal (PRM) or Manufacturing (M) classifications, which define standards that are currently successfully serving established and desired uses on those sites.

The present Commercial (C), Restricted Office (RO), Multiple Family (RM), and Parking (P) districts are all located within the Pleasant Ridge Mixed-Use Corridor District as shown on the Future Land Use Map. As currently defined, these classifications are incompatible with several of the considerations the district is designed to address. Most notably, the current zoning ordinance is a traditional, “Euclidean,” or use-based ordinance. This type of ordinance, which makes up the vast majority of all zoning in the United States, is designed to spatially separate each kind of use in order to minimize conflicts arising from incompatible uses. While this practical goal is well accomplished by this tool, it also has unintended consequences. By assuming that different uses are necessarily incompatible, such a scheme offers no opportunity to develop or accommodate a set of compatible uses: the benefit of spatially separating offices, shopping, and certain types of residences, for example, is much less clear than the cost associated with the inability to access three types of establishments

### *Elements of a Form-Based Code*

Form-based codes commonly include the following elements:

- **Regulating Plan.** A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.
- **Public Space Standards.** Specifications for the elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, street furniture, etc.).
- **Building Form Standards.** Regulations controlling the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
- **Administration.** A clearly defined application and project review process.
- **Definitions.** A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

Form-based codes may also include:

- **Architectural Standards.** Regulations controlling external architectural materials and quality.
- **Landscaping Standards.** Regulations controlling landscape design and plant materials on private property as they impact public spaces (e.g. regulations about parking lot screening and shading, maintaining sight lines, ensuring unobstructed pedestrian movement, etc.).
- **Signage Standards.** Regulations controlling allowable signage sizes, materials, illumination, and placement.
- **Environmental Resource Standards.** Regulations controlling issues such as storm water drainage and infiltration, development on slopes, tree protection, solar access, etc.
- **Annotation.** Text and illustrations explaining the intentions of specific code provisions.

that people visit on a regular basis without introducing a transportation component between them. In this way, geographic separation has an effect on transportation more generally by heightening its importance in development considerations and by favoring motorized modes which handle this increased importance most efficiently.

This type of zoning ordinance also provides very few tools a community can use to shape its public spaces. Largely limited to lot size, setback, height, and floor-area considerations, these per-parcel considerations are inadequate to produce the kind of cohesive streetscape that can define and support a community's overall character, accommodate multiple modes of transportation, and produce an experience for visitors and residents of a memorable "place" that is more than a square of pavement sandwiched between a busy road and a commercial establishment.

Form-based coding is designed to address these concerns by shifting the regulatory emphasis away from a particular parcel's use and toward the shape, or form, it projects into the community. "Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are...keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types." This master plan supports the development of a form-based code to govern future redevelopment in the Pleasant Ridge Mixed-Use Corridor District, finding it a tool that better promotes the mixed-use, multi-modal, character-centric environment desired by Pleasant Ridge than the conventional use-based code currently in place.





# Implementation Program

The overall success of the Pleasant Ridge Master Plan will be determined by how many of the recommendations have been implemented.

This connection between master plan acceptance and its eventual implementation is often the weakest link in the planning and community building process, and this disconnect represents not one but two wasted opportunities: that of capitalizing on the work and effort spent creating the plan, and that of

reducing project work by using data and decisions already generated during the master planning process. The Implementation Program below is meant to help bridge that gap by providing concrete details about the timeframe and responsible parties for recommendations.

## 24. Implementation table

ACTION ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
"Pleasant Ridge preferred" I-696/ Zoo BRT stop conceptual design	Convene a committee to work with Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Birmingham, and Royal Oak to offer a conceptual proposal for the BRT stop at I-696 / Detroit Zoo that was excluded from the Woodward Avenue Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis	Committee	In progress
Regional liaison	Designate an individual or committee responsible for tracking developments related to BRT and Woodward Complete Streets and ensuring that those developments are reported and included in future plans and projects	TBD	Immediately
Public education	Communicate the benefits of mixed-use development and increasing density to residents and encourage them to support these strategies; link strategies for a walkable, bikeable, and traffic-calmed Woodward Ave. to the health and vibrance of the business community	Everyone	Ongoing, beginning immediately
Code enforcement	Enforce the provisions of the Pleasant Ridge Zoning Ordinance through observation, notification, negotiation, and citation	Staff	Ongoing
Tree planting	Maintain and enhance Pleasant Ridge's tree canopy	Staff	Near-term
Form-based code	Create and adopt a form-based code for the portion of the Woodward Corridor that runs through Pleasant Ridge, including a complete streets ordinance	Planning Commission	Near-term
Gainsboro Park	Implement the recommendations in the Gainsboro Park Master Plan as well as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan	City Commission	Near-term
Infrastructure	Institute a sidewalk replacement program and consider converting street lighting to LED; examine ROI through financial forecasting and capital improvements planning	Committee	Medium- to long-term

City of Pleasant Ridge  
Oakland County, Michigan  
Master Plan Resolution of Adoption  
January 26, 2015

**WHEREAS**, the City of Pleasant Ridge Planning Commission, under the provisions of PA 33 of 2008 of the State of Michigan may adopt a Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, PA 33 of 2008 requires the Planning Commission to review and, if necessary, revise or amend the Plan once at least every five years and the current Pleasant Ridge Master Plan was adopted in 1998; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Pleasant Ridge Planning Commission recognized the need to revise and adopt a Master Plan, including establishment and support of visions, goals, actions, implementation, and the Future Land Use Plan as described in this document; and

**WHEREAS**, in connection with the preparation of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission carefully and comprehensively surveyed and studied present conditions, projections of future growth of the City of Pleasant Ridge, and the relation of the City of Pleasant Ridge to neighboring areas and jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Master Plan has been prepared for the purpose of guiding and accomplishing coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the City of Pleasant Ridge and its environs; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan was distributed for review by surrounding communities and other public agencies as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

**WHEREAS**, the Pleasant Ridge Planning Commission has provided multiple opportunities for public participation in the planning process and a public hearing conforming to the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, that the City Commission concurs with the Planning Commission and adopts the Master Plan as presented at a public hearing held January 26, 2015, pursuant to MCL 125.3843 of PA 33 of 2008.

This Resolution being put to vote on roll call, the Planning Commission voted as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Lenko, Decoster, McAuliffe, Christensen, Bolach, Laidlaw,  
McCutcheon, O'Brein.  
NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Schlesinger.

I, Amy M. Drealan, duly certified Clerk of the City of Pleasant Ridge do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a resolution unanimously adopted by the Pleasant Ridge Planning Commission at its Public Hearing and Regular Meeting held Monday, January 26, 2015.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand and cause the Corporate Seal of the City this 11th day of February 2015.



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Amy M. Drealan  
City Clerk



City of Pleasant Ridge  
Oakland County, Michigan  
Master Plan Resolution of Adoption  
January 26, 2015

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This Resolution being put to vote on roll call, the City Commission voted as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Foreman, Perry, Krzysiak, Scott, Mayor Metzger.  
NAYS: None.  
ABSENT: None.

I, Amy M. Drealan, duly certified Clerk of the City of Pleasant Ridge do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a resolution unanimously adopted by the Pleasant Ridge City Commission at its Public Hearing and Regular Meeting held Tuesday, February 10, 2015.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand and cause the Corporate Seal of the City this 11h day of February 2015.



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Amy M. Drealan  
City Clerk

