



# Elevate Eaton

2023 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Eaton, Ohio

*Adopted February 20, 2023*



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## Introduction

The City of Eaton is a city that values its small-town, safe character. Located in the heart of Preble County, Ohio, the City serves as the central core of the county and the crossroads of the larger region. While the population of the City has grown at a relatively slow but manageable pace over the last two decades, commercial and industrial growth has been considerable. The City has actively used its past planning efforts to guide decisions and wanted to update its 2003 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the vision moving forward reflects the current value and needs of the entire community. This update is intended to streamline the document to focus on critical background data and recommendations. This plan also centers its recommendation around four main goals that include:

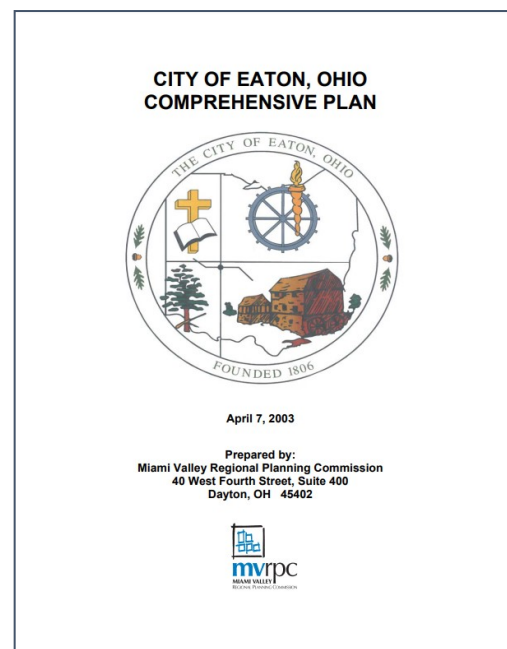
- **Maintaining Eaton's Small-Town Identity through Managed Growth**
- **Expanding Opportunities in Support of a Strong Economic Base**
- **Supporting Downtown Eaton as the Center of Our Community**
- **Leveraging Resources to Ensure Strong Infrastructure and Amenities**

These goals and the recommendations of this plan build off and modernize past planning goals and recommendations. They also are aligned with regional planning efforts that recognize the City of Eaton as a central location for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a planning tool that evaluates various aspects of the City and establishes a series of policies to help guide future decisions about the physical, economic, environmental, and social aspects of the City. Comprehensive plans are general in nature and are purposely long-term, recognizing that some visions cannot be achieved immediately but take years to accomplish. Other than the future land use plan, this plan does not make recommendations about the future of specific properties. Even within the future land use plan, the plan is merely a guide to community leaders on the vision of Eaton over the next 10 to 20 years.

All of the background information, goals, and recommendations can be used by city decision-makers, property owners, business owners, and even regional agencies to make decisions based on what the community desires to be in the long-term future. The adoption of this plan does not change any laws or zoning regulations as they apply to the City, nor does it mean that the City will aggressively pursue annexation where future growth areas are discussed. It does, however, provide guidance for future changes that may be made to city policies, laws, and regulations in the future.



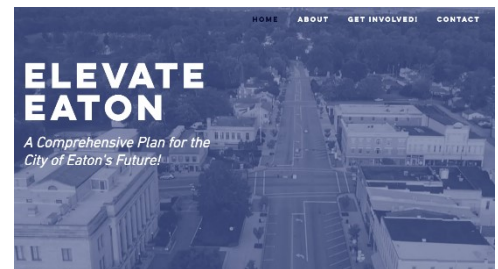
Cover of the 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan, Prepared by Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC)

## Summary of the Planning Process and Public Input

The City of Eaton has been proactive in its planning efforts, having developed its first comprehensive plan in 1967 with complete updates in 1989, 1994, and 2003. In addition, since 2003, the City has undertaken updates to the land use plan map that is a part of the 2003 plan. The City has continued to actively use its comprehensive plan as a guide for making policy decisions. As such, it must continually gauge whether the adopted goals and policies reflect its citizens' current desires.

For this 2023 Comprehensive Plan, the City engaged the assistance of Local Gov Consultants and Compass Point Planning to assist in the planning process, which included the development of a project website ([www.ElevateEaton.com](http://www.ElevateEaton.com)) to keep residents apprised of the planning effort. The process also included a series of public meetings where residents and business owners were invited to discuss what they felt were important issues that the plan should address. The public engagement began in June 2022, when the City hosted an engagement tent at the Eaton Community Fun Fest. The goal of that outreach was to let people know about the project, dates for upcoming meetings, and ask them to help identify what they love about Eaton. This event was followed by public meetings and an open house in July, October, and November 2022. The meetings were all interactive and sought out insight into what residents and businesses wanted to continue or change in the City. At the October 2022 public meeting, the discussion focused on three strategic areas, including future land uses, downtown, and quality of life in Eaton. All of the information and feedback gathered showed a general consensus that the City is on already moving forward in a positive direction but that there is undoubtedly a desire to see more housing options, downtown and park improvements, and more community events, just to name a few ideas that consistently arose out of the process.

In addition to the general public outreach, the City also utilized a steering committee consisting of City Council members, Planning Board members, and representatives of the community at large. The committee's purpose was to help delve into questions that arose from the data analysis phase and provide input on recommendations from the public meetings. They also provided a preliminary review of the draft plan before presentation to the public as part of the adoption process.



## Acknowledgments

This plan was prepared with the direct involvement of City leaders, staff, a steering committee, and the many residents and business owners who participated in the various outreach events. We thank you for your time and support!

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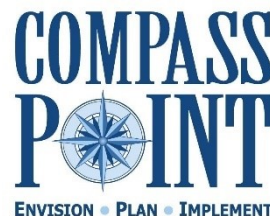
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### Elevate Eaton Consultants

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Compass Point Planning



Unless otherwise noted, all images in this plan are provided by the City of Eaton or the consultants.

## Existing Conditions and Trends

### **Existing Land Use**

How land in the City is currently used is an essential piece of information that must be evaluated in any physical planning effort. The Existing Land Use Map on the following page was created using property tax information, cross-referenced with aerial photography to showcase how properties are currently being used in the City. A land use map differs from a zoning map, which reflects how land uses are permitted in a particular area of the City.

There are instances in which properties may be currently used for residential housing but are zoned for commercial purposes and vice versa. The Existing Land Use Map classifies properties in Eaton under one of the existing land use categories described below. The map and related data do not focus on individual vacant lots within a subdivision or large-scale development but rather on the broader use of land within the City. For this reason, an entire subdivision may be shown as single-family residential even though several lots may remain vacant, or there might be one or two duplexes mixed into the subdivision. Simply put, the purpose of the existing land use analysis is to establish the general land use characteristics of the City thus far in its development history.

#### **Existing Land Use Categories**

- **Single-Family Residential** uses are properties within the City with one detached dwelling unit located on a single parcel.
- **Multi-Family Residential** uses are properties within the City where multiple dwelling units are attached in a single structure and located on a single parcel. This land use category may include apartment buildings, townhomes, duplexes, two-family homes, and other attached housing.
- **Commercial and Office** uses cover those areas of the City where the primary use is the provision of goods and services to the general public in a commercial setting or where there are establishments that provide executive, management, administrative, medical, dental, or professional services in either small or large-scale office buildings. In addition, this category can include mixed-use buildings with a residential component on the upper floors.
- **Industrial** uses are properties used for the manufacturing, assembly, or distribution of goods or services that do not typically include the retail sale of such goods or services except as a minor accessory activity to the industrial use.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space** uses are properties used for public or private open space and recreational uses such as playgrounds, ball fields, and open spaces, including streams and creeks, and other local or regional parks.
- **Public and Institutional** uses are properties and structures used to provide services related to the general public (e.g., city offices, public utilities, or fire stations) or institutions such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship.
- **Agriculture, Vacant, or Undeveloped** uses are areas of the City that are maintained as farmland, fields, and large tracts of properties that are not currently being used for any category listed above or have not been developed for a permanent use.





## Floodplains

In addition to the existing land uses, the recommendations in this comprehensive plan consider any potential constraints to development. While there is some slight topography throughout the area, there are no large areas of steep slopes that could potentially limit future development in the City. On the other hand, there are some areas of land where special flood hazard areas will hinder future development. Figure A below shows the boundaries of the current special flood hazard areas as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Any development in the blue or pink bounded areas will be limited with minimal construction within those boundaries or construction of structures specially designed to withstand periodic flooding without increasing the potential for flooding other areas.

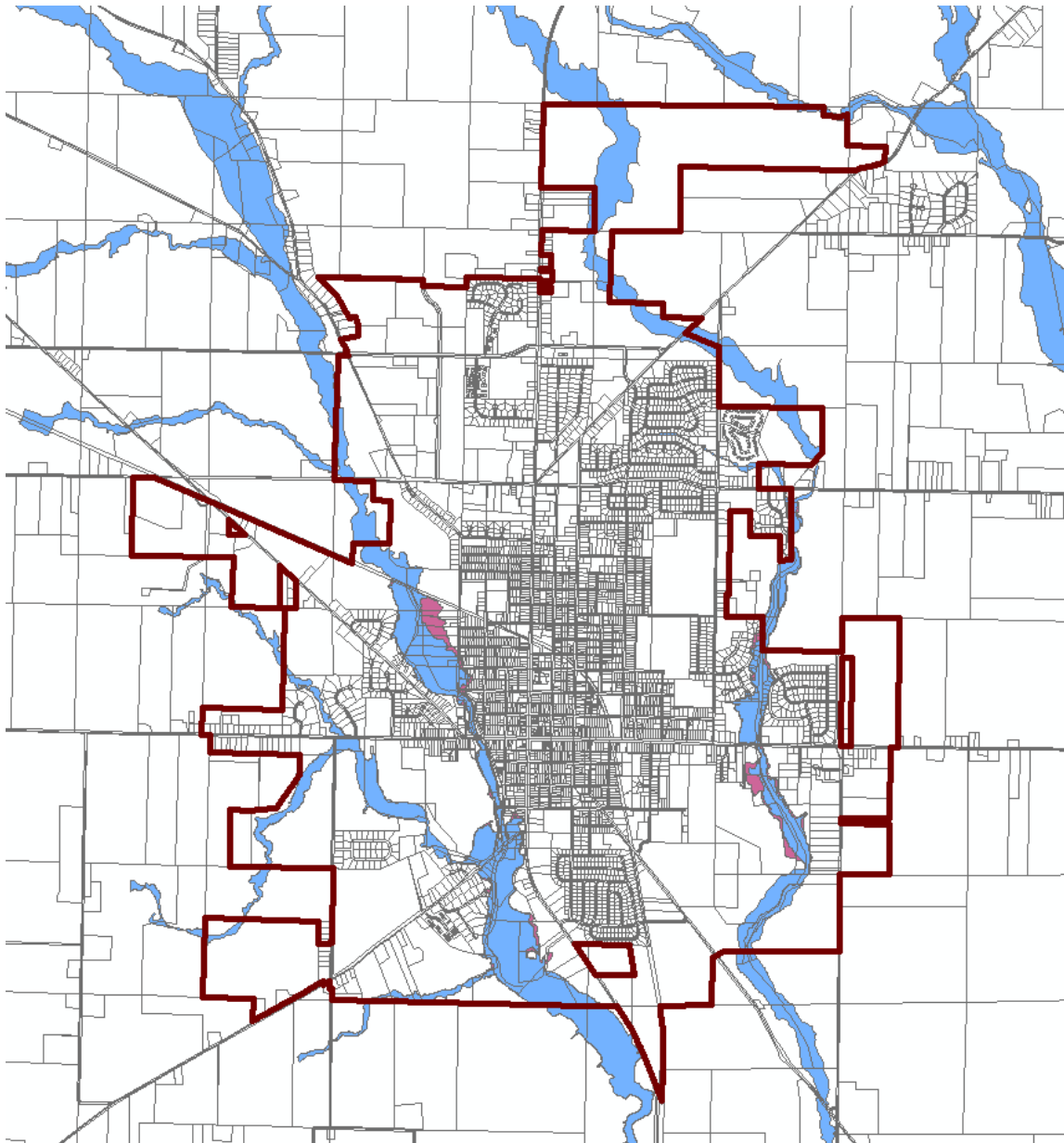


Figure A: Floodplain map of the City of Eaton, with blue representing the 100-year floodplain area and the pink fringe area representing the larger 500-year floodplain area.



## Population

Table 1 illustrates the historical population trends for the City of Eaton, the county and township, and the cities of Oxford and Germantown for comparison purposes only. The table shows that Eaton, like the county and township, experienced significant periods of growth before 2000, but then the population started to stabilize with some minor ups and downs. The stagnant population in the region could be due to the lack of opportunities for new residential developments, a lack of housing choices for those who may want to live in Eaton (i.e., workforce housing), and a national trend of declining household sizes that are impacting community populations far beyond Preble County.

**Table 1: Population Growth**

	1980 Pop.	1990 Pop.	1980-1990 Change	2000 Pop.	1990-2000 Change
Preble County	38,223	40,113	4.9%	42,337	5.5%
<b>City of Eaton</b>	<b>6,839</b>	<b>7,396</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8,133</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
Washington Township	1,941	1,974	1.7%	2,104	6.6%
City of Germantown	5,015	4,916	-2.0%	4,884	-0.7%
City of Oxford	17,655	19,013	7.7%	21,943	15.4%
	2010 Pop.	2000-2010 Change	2020 Pop.	2010-2020 Change	
Preble County	42,270	-0.2%	40,999	-3.0%	
<b>City of Eaton</b>	<b>8,407</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>8,375</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>	
Washington Township	1,824	-13.3%	1,809	-0.8%	
City of Germantown	5,547	13.6%	5,796	4.5%	
City of Oxford	21,371	-2.6%	23,035	7.8%	

*Data Source: U.S. Census*

This early surge in growth before 2000 was a trend discussed in the 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan. The plan also included population growth estimates based on those historical growth trends. See Figure B. For the time being, it is expected that the City of Eaton's population will remain relatively stable in the upcoming years unless there is a policy shift to encourage the development of more housing in the City and a policy shift to accommodate a broader range of housing options. Even then, other market influences and supply chain issues will likely impede significant growth surges in the near future. While early community participation has spoken about a desire to maintain the small-town character of Eaton, there has not been a push to stop growth completely, so now is a good time for the City to evaluate what the policies for future growth should be to help tailor changes necessary to implement those policies within the plan.

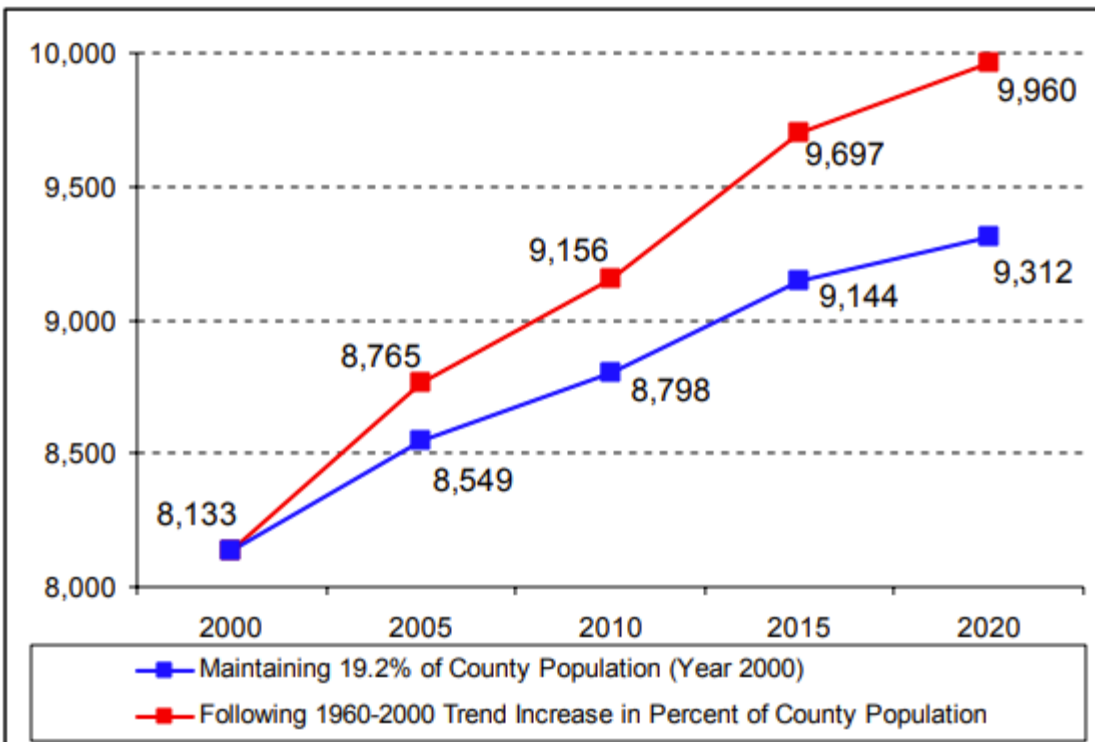


Figure B: Population growth estimate graphic from the 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan.

**Population - Race and Ethnicity**

As noted in the 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan, the City has not been historically racially or ethnically diverse, which continues to be common across many midwestern cities. However, since the 2003 plan, there has been increasing diversity within the City, county, and state, primarily within the Hispanic ethnicity and the Black and Asian racial population. Table 2 focuses on the changes within these larger populations in the region.

Community	Year	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White-Alone	Non-Hispanic Black-Alone	Non-Hispanic Asian-Alone
State of Ohio	2010	2.9%	81.2%	12.1%	1.6%
	2020	4.4%	75.9%	12.3%	2.5%
Preble County	2010	0.6%	96.3%	0.4%	0.4%
	2020	0.9%	94.4%	0.4%	0.4%
City of Eaton	2010	0.8%	96.7%	0.6%	1.0%
	2020	1.1%	92.3%	0.9%	0.9%

*Source: U.S. Census 2010 and 2020 Census and American Community Survey*

**Population - Age**

The age of a population can be an important indicator of the City's future needs. National trends have indicated that there is an increase of residents who wish to 'age in place,' which means that as a population ages, the services that need to be provided to residents must shift as well. Building off of median age information in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, Table 3 illustrates the changes in a community's median age over the decades. In 2020, the City of Eaton had the highest median age of all the communities within the comparison, including a higher median age than the county and state. The City witnessed a significant increase in the median age between 2000 (38.8) and 2020 (46.5). Looking at the breakdown of age brackets (Figure C), you can see major increases in the older brackets. Some of this can be attributed to people generally living longer, but it could also indicate that younger people and families are not moving to the City and young residents are not returning after graduating from the school system.

Community	1990	2000	2010	2020
Ohio	33.3	36.2	38.3	39.5
Preble County	33.7	37.5	40.3	43.1
<b>City of Eaton</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>46.5</b>
Washington Township	35.8	38.8	38.3	43.2
City of Greenville	38.4	40.4	43.0	44.7
West Alexandria Village	32.1	35.6	30.2	34.4
New Paris Village	32.6	36.6	34.6	34.2
New Lebanon Village	32.6	35.3	34.5	38.4

*Source: 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 & 2020 U.S. Census*



As the age of the population changes, so does the demand for different housing options and services. Trends have shown that young professionals seek urban living options to accommodate their transient lifestyles. Traditionally, they have sought rental housing or apartment living where they can walk to work and access various points of interest such as shops, restaurants, cultural venues, and recreational activities. As stated earlier, an important aspect of evaluating the age of the population is that different age groups demand different services. In response to the change in population demographics, the City may need to consider providing services and businesses to support the general aging trend of Eaton. Moreover, suppose the City would like to change the population trend outlook in the next decade. In that case, the City may want to provide services that accommodate the needs of the age groups they wish to attract to maintain a balanced population.

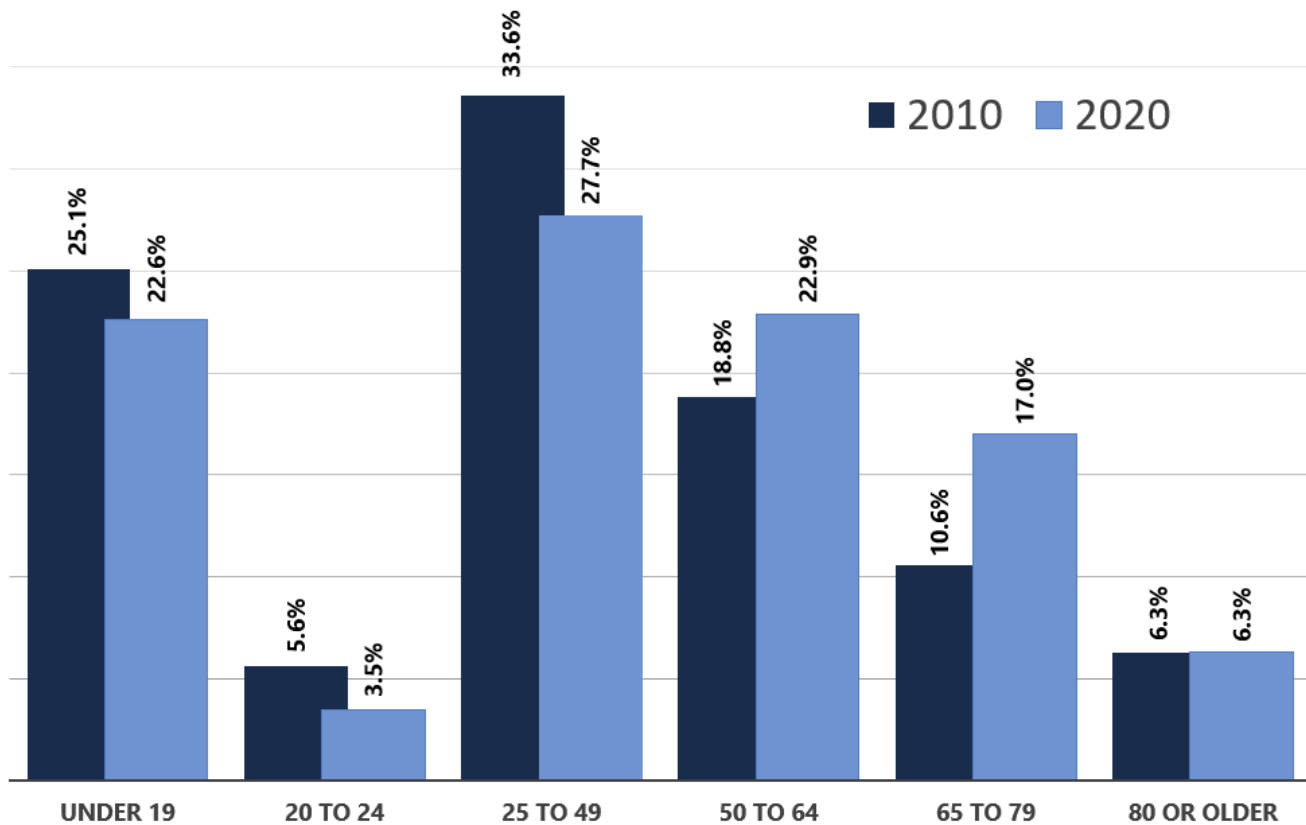


Figure C: Eaton population shifts, by age bracket, between 2000 and 2020.  
 Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

## Housing

As with other demographics in Eaton, the amount of housing in the City has remained essentially stable over the years. The 2020 U.S. Census shows 3,970 housing units in the City, a slight increase from the 2000 Census, which said there were 3,903 housing units. This slight increase of 1.7% takes into account all new units but could also account for the demolition and replacement of certain housing and a margin of error in the U.S. Census estimates. Regardless, there has not been a significant shift in housing numbers in the City of Eaton over the last decade. In Ohio, the number of housing units increased by 2.2% at the same time. Reiterating the sentiment from the population analysis, unless the City makes an intentional shift in its policy about housing involving higher densities as part of redevelopment activities, it is unlikely that there will be any significant changes in the number of units in the next 10 to 20 years.

### Housing - Occupancy

Of all the housing units in Eaton, approximately 6.5% of the total units are vacant. This percentage is much lower than Preble County (8.4%) and the State of Ohio (9.6%), demonstrating a tight housing market explained further in the later section. Additionally, the number of vacant units shows that the City has not experienced excessive vacancies like other communities have suffered, particularly during the latest 'great' recession.

In 2020, 3,715 housing units were occupied in the City of Eaton; 66.2% of the properties were owner-occupied, and 33.8% were renter-occupied. Like the vacancy rate, housing occupancy rates have not changed much since 2010. These findings are generally in line with trends in Preble County and the State of Ohio.

	2010		2020	
	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
City of Eaton	65.7%	34.3%	66.2%	33.8%
Preble County	78.7%	21.3%	78.1%	21.9%
State of Ohio	69.2%	30.8%	66.3%	33.7%

*Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2020*

**Housing - Cost of Housing**

According to the 2020 American Community Survey, the median value of an owner-occupied home in the City of Eaton is \$105,700 compared to \$139,000 in Preble County. This is not surprising given that Eaton is the only City in the county and, thus, will likely have some of the more affordable housing across the county due to higher densities/smaller lots. It is also important to note that there is a margin of error of nearly \$16,000 for the City's median value compared to a \$5,000 margin of error for the county's housing value. Strong housing values can contribute to a stronger community and local economy. However, high housing costs can limit housing options and may prevent people who work in Eaton from living in the City. The median cost for rental properties is \$674 per month in the City and \$736 in the county, including rent for apartments and detached homes.

In order to provide relevant information regarding current-day home prices in 2022, a basic search of homes and lots for sale was conducted using www.realtor.com. The search captured a sample of real-life housing availability within the City as of the timing of this report. The search yielded only 24 current listings of homes and lots for sale within city limits. Of those 24 listings, only 17 were homes, and 7 were vacant lots. Regarding rental opportunities, neither realtor.com nor apartments.com, two sites commonly used to list rentals, identify any active rental unit availability.

The limited number of houses and rentals listed reflects the tight housing market. Table 5 illustrates the breakdown of prices of the available housing stock within the City. Roughly 80% of those homes listed are above the 2020 median home value of \$105,700, as identified by the American Community Survey (U.S. Census). The majority of the homes for sale, three-fourths of the housing, were listed for well over \$250,000. At the time of the review, the most expensive listing was a historic home on 10 + acres listed for \$385,000.

<b>Listing Value</b>	<b>Homes Listings (17 Total)</b>
Under \$100,000	3 (17.7%) <sup>1</sup>
\$100,000 to \$200,000	5 (29.4%)
\$200,000 to \$300,000	4 (23.5%)
\$300,000 to \$400,000	5 (29.4%)
<i>Source: Realtor.com, October 2022</i>	

Of the seven lots currently listed for sale, one is for a condominium plot, where the cost is \$62,000 for a 2,052-square-foot condo plat. The remaining six properties are for sale at a range of \$60,000 to \$110,000 per acre. While most lots will not sell for the asking price, it demonstrates that the cost of land will significantly impact development costs in the City of Eaton.

<sup>1</sup> One home was listed for \$50,000 but the property details note that this is the minimum reserve for a forthcoming auction.



**Housing - Housing Types**

The final component of the housing analysis is a breakdown of the existing housing types in the City. Housing occupancy and listings showed that the City has a tight housing market, with most of the housing stock available at higher than median housing costs. The final housing analysis on available housing types within the City was conducted to explain further why the community has a general population of its current composition.

In this evaluation, the size of existing housing, the types of housing units, and the age of the housing units will be analyzed. Housing trends can alert the City if the population is aging and if there will be a more significant hurdle for residents to maintain their properties. For instance, the decline in individual owners and the increase in renters can lead to absentee landlords, which could delay property maintenance and cause an increase in code enforcement and property maintenance complaints. In 2020, the U.S. Census estimated that 68.0% of all occupied housing units in the City of Eaton were single-family detached dwellings (See Figure D.). This is a decrease from 2010, when the Census reported 73.1% of occupied units were single-family detached dwellings. It appears that some of the change came from a slight increase in the number of low-intensity attached dwellings in the last ten years.

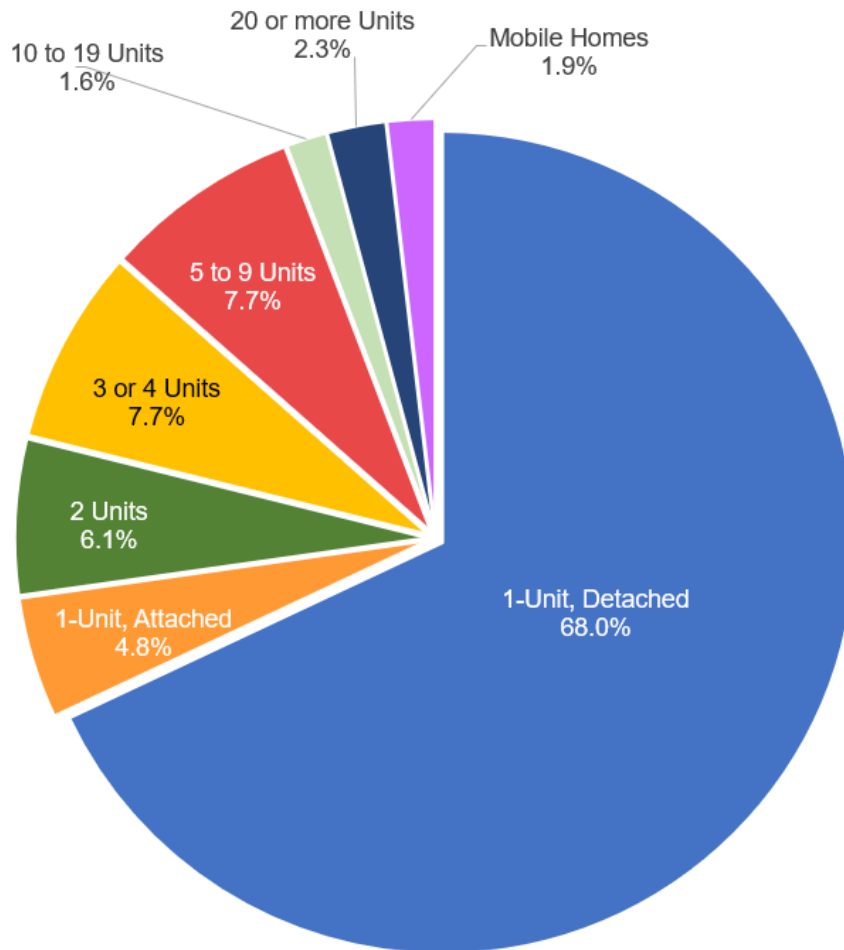


Figure D: Breakdown of the number of housing units in residential structures.  
Source: 2020 U.S. Census

**Housing - Age of Housing**

As stated earlier in the discussion about population trends, Eaton experienced a high level of growth before 2000. Just under 90% of the City’s housing units were built before 2000. This is very much in line with the age of housing in Preble County and Ohio overall. The age of housing is a critical factor because it sheds light on the quality of the homes that were constructed and the types of modern amenities included in the homes. Homes built in the post-war boom and earlier tend to be smaller than those built in more recent years. These homes also tend to be smaller and less expensive than homes built more recently. Housing built after the 1990s is typically 80% larger than housing built during the 1940s. As the existing housing stock continues to age without new housing being built or home renovations and modernizations being implemented, there may be growing concerns related to the condition of housing in Eaton and their conformance with the existing codes.

Taken together with similar trends across the state, this information also helps support concerns over the underproduction of housing, which is considered one of the reasons for the lack of housing affordability in current times. A recently released report entitled "2022 Housing Underproduction in the U.S." by Up for Growth (<https://upforgrowth.org/>) shows that there is currently an underproduction of over 50,000 housing units in Ohio alone. Encouraging more housing units and a more diverse allowance of housing types is something the City will need to consider to ensure the continuance of a healthy and affordable housing stock.

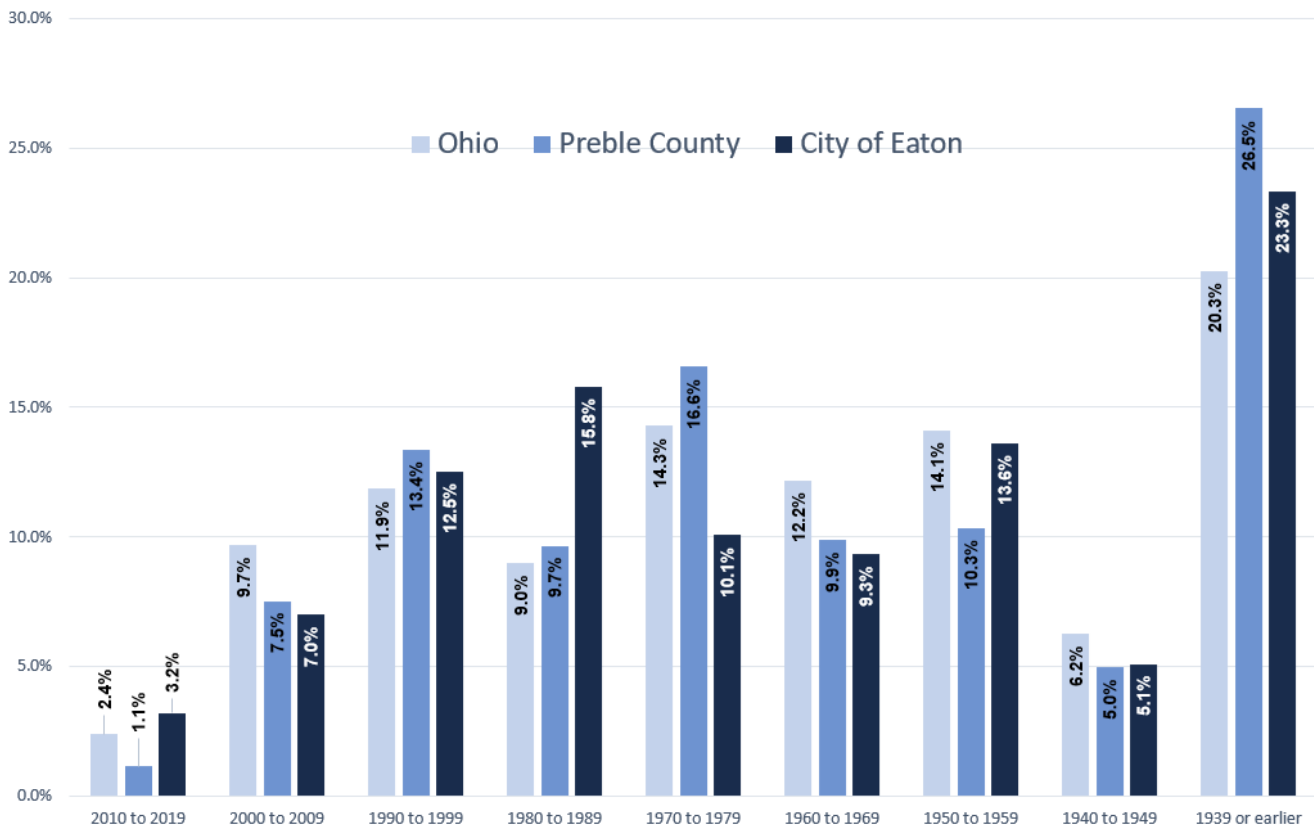


Figure E: The years a structure was built based on the total number of occupied housing units.  
Source: 2020 U.S. Census

**Housing – Year of Move In**

The final piece of the housing analysis was to look at the year when the household moved into their housing unit. This ties together population, household, and housing data. Figure F illustrates that the City of Eaton has experienced more of a recent housing turnaround than Preble County or the State of Ohio. Occupancy of over half (56.6%) of the City's occupied housing units was taken since 2010, which is close to the state numbers. Preble County, however, shows that just over 42% of households moved into the county in that same time, and over 20% have lived in their housing unit before 1989.

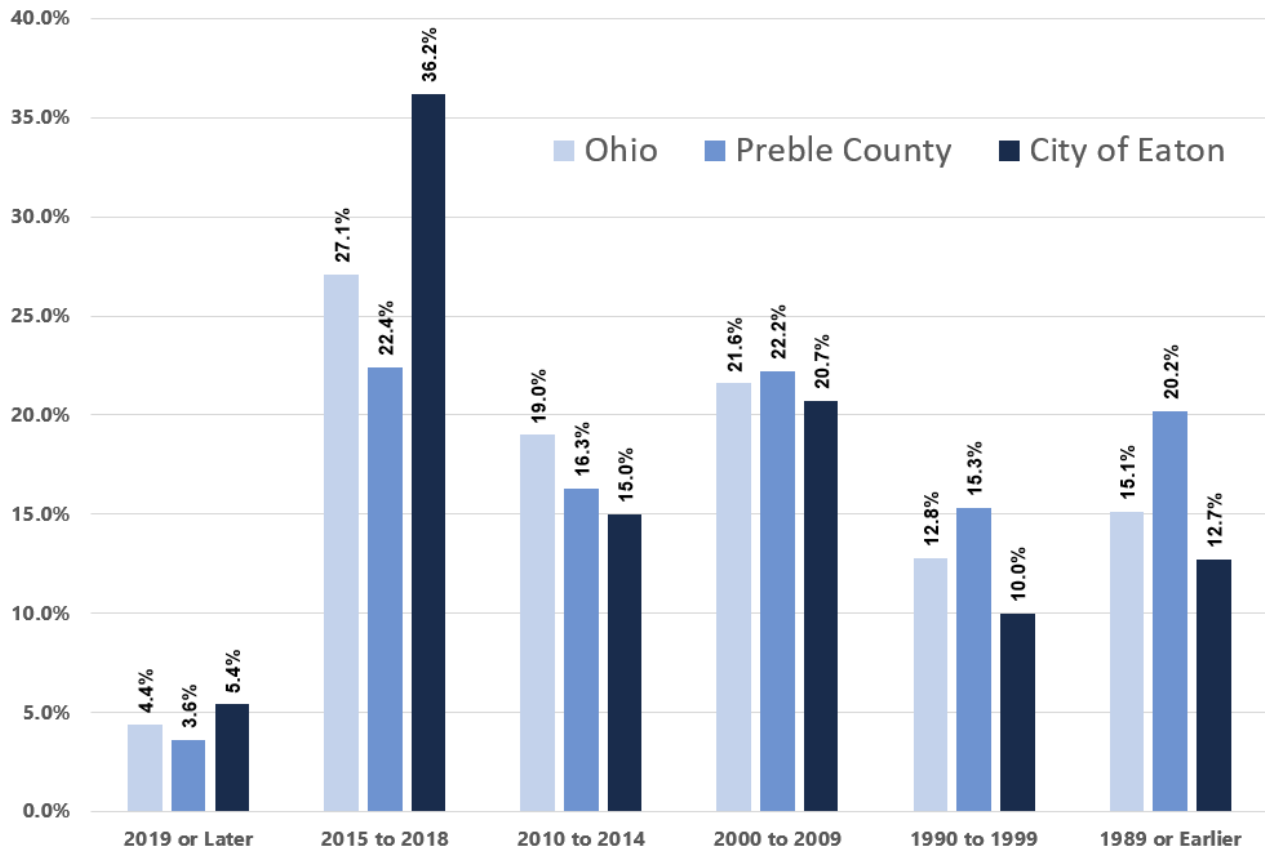


Figure F: The years a household moved into their housing unit.  
Source: 2020 U.S. Census



## ***Economic Development***

The economic development analysis is based on three components: occupations, where residents work and where workers live, and income levels of workers and residents. Findings from this analysis were derived from U.S. Census data and the OnTheMap tool, a mapping application created through a partnership between the U.S. Census and the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) partner states. The information is gathered from several sources, including payroll taxes and tax payment records maintained by the State of Ohio. The information provided in this section and other sections of this economic development analysis utilizes data from the year 2019, which is the most recent information available.

### **Economic Development - Occupations**

The first component of this economic development analysis pertains to occupations. These analyses were conducted to establish a side-by-side understanding of the potential mismatch between jobs in the community and the occupations of residents. First, the occupation of residents (who are 16 years and older and employed in the civilian sector of the labor force) was categorized by the U.S. Census based on the industries in which residents were employed. Next, the information was compared to the OnTheMap data regarding the occupations of people who work in the City of Eaton.

In 2019, an estimated 4,783 people worked in Eaton, and 8,183 people lived in the City. In that same year, 34.7% of the residents in the labor force worked in the manufacturing industry, and another 20.8% worked in education and the health care fields, often referred to as the 'Eds and Meds' field. Eaton appears to have a large manufacturing base (roughly 2,469 people in 2019) and an 'Eds and Meds' base (which employed 3,678 people in 2019). Nevertheless, many of these people leave the City to work, which is why a much smaller number of people work and live in Eaton. Table 6 on the following page shows examples of where a mismatch exists between jobs and residents. In certain industries, there are more jobs that are not represented by the occupations of residents or vice versa.

As a community that relies on the income taxes of employees who work in the City, this comparison offers an important economic development consideration for the City. The City must decide whether it should make accommodations for the existing workforce to live within the city limits in order to retain steady employment in the area. To do this, the City could prioritize attracting more residents to work within the City by developing broader housing options that fit the needs of the current workforce that commute into the City. The comparison also begs the question as to whether the City should attract more industries in which residents are employed to reduce the need for residents to commute outside of Eaton for work.



<b>Table 6: Industries of Employees and Residents in Eaton (2019)</b>		
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Occupation of Employees</b>	<b>Occupation of Residents</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.1%	0.0%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	0.3%	1.4%
Construction	1.7%	3.8%
Manufacturing	51.6%	34.7%
Wholesale trade	1.1%	0.4%
Retail trade	10.4%	8.5%
Transportation and warehousing	2.0%	5.1%
Information	0.2%	1.4%
Finance and Insurance	2.1%	4.7%
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.3%	0.5%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	2.5%	4.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.0%	0.0%
Administration & support, waste management and remediation	1.9%	3.7%
Educational services	0.0%	5.2%
Health care and social assistance	14.0%	15.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.2%	1.1%
Accommodation and food services	9.2%	2.7%
Other services (excluding public administration)	2.3%	5.3%
Public administration	0.0%	1.7%
<i>Data Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap for the year 2019 and U.S. Census 2019 American Community Survey</i>		

**Economic Development - Employment Commuting Patterns and Transportation**

The second part of the economic development analysis considers where residents work and where workers with jobs in the City live. In order to establish a baseline of residential and workforce commutes, this analysis was conducted using U.S. Census estimates derived from payroll tax and unemployment insurance payment records maintained by each state through a program called OnTheMap. Here are some statistics related to employment commuting patterns:

- The 2019 OnTheMap data estimates that approximately 898 people both lived and worked in the City of Eaton, while 2,182 residents left the City to work elsewhere, primarily in the City of Dayton and Montgomery County. At the same time, 3,885 people who reside outside of Eaton have jobs in the City. See the figures and tables below for more detail.
- These numbers are a slight increase from the 2002 estimates except for the number of people entering the City to work, which grew by 1,000 people. This information demonstrates the need for strong connectivity throughout the region while also showing regional commuting patterns.

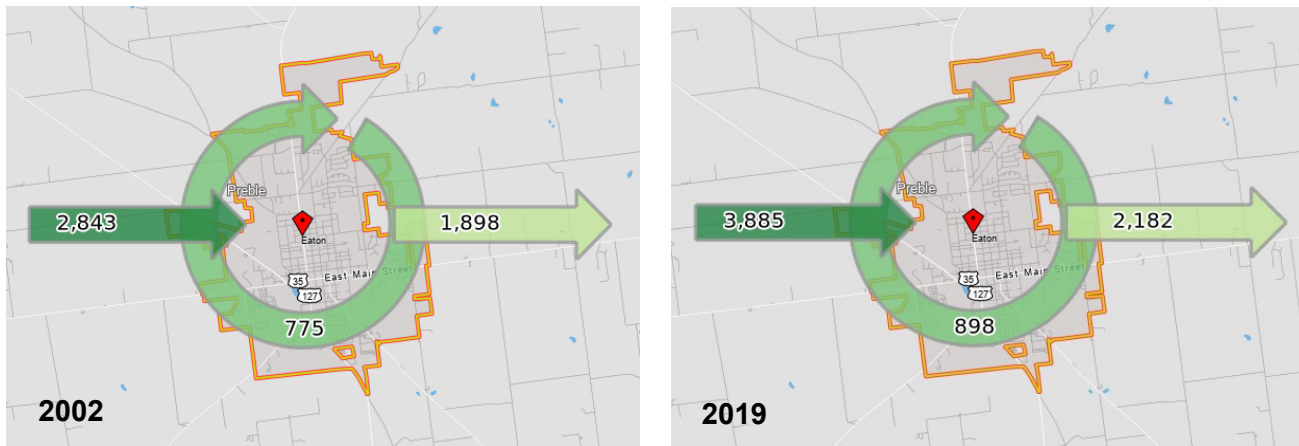


Figure G: Illustrations of the inflow (people commuting into Eaton) and outflow (residents commuting outside of Eaton) as well as the number of residents who live and work in the City for both 2002 and 2019.

Table 7: Counties Where Residents Work	
	# of Employed Residents
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>3,080</b>
Preble County, Ohio	1,148
Montgomery County, Ohio	585
Butler County, Ohio	200
Wayne County, Indiana	157
Hamilton County, Ohio	102
Greene County, Ohio	90
Franklin County, Ohio	88
Warren County, Ohio	67
All Other Counties	643

Table 8: Counties Where Employees Reside	
	# of Workers
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>4,783</b>
Preble County, Ohio	2,335
Montgomery County, Ohio	573
Wayne County, Indiana	347
Butler County, Ohio	282
Darke County, Ohio	183
Warren County, Ohio	104
Hamilton County, Ohio	100
Miami County, Ohio	79
All Other Counties	780

Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap for the year 2019

**Economic Development - Workers and Household Income**

The incomes of residents in Eaton are lower than the county, Montgomery County, the state and the U.S. This is important when considering the cost of housing and the disposable incomes of community members. Table 9 below compares the median income of all households and family households for the City, counties, state, and nation. The median income is the income of a resident in the financial middle of the rest of the community, meaning half of the households in the jurisdiction make less than the median income and the other half of residents make more than the median income. It is important to note that because of the higher median age in Eaton, the lower median incomes within the City could partially be attributed to retirement income (Social Security, 401k, pensions, etc.) that tends to be less than the income received by persons in the workforce.

<b>Table 9: Median Family and Household Incomes</b>		
	<b>Median-Family Income</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
City of Eaton	\$73,549	\$49,375
Preble County	\$73,166	\$61,338
Montgomery County	\$69,893	\$53,064
State of Ohio	\$74,391	\$58,116
United States	\$80,069	\$64,994
<i>Source: 2020 U.S. Census</i>		

In addition to evaluating the income of households, the U.S. Census provides information on the general income of employees in Eaton through the OnTheMap program. Table 10 illustrates the income for employees in Eaton as compared to the counties, City of Dayton, and state. As with the median income of households and families that live in Dayton, the percentage of workers in Eaton making more than \$3,333 a month is the lowest of all compared communities.

<b>Table 10: Income of Employees</b>	
<b>Job Locations</b>	<b>% of Workers Making \$3,333 per month or more</b>
City of Eaton	41.0%
City of Dayton, Ohio	49.8%
Preble County, Ohio	41.1%
Montgomery County, Ohio	45.5%
State of Ohio	45.9%
United States	Information not available
<i>Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap for the year 2019</i>	

**Parks and Recreation**

During the initial rounds of public engagement, it was clear that everyone loves the quality of life in Eaton and appreciates all the parks and recreational activities available to residents. While some people have noted a desire to see some improvements, the City should take pride in the park and recreational system that supports a strong quality of life. Table 11 summarizes the various parks and amenities found in the City of Eaton.

**Table 11: Summary of Existing Parks and Amenities**

Park Name	Acres	Restroom	Playgrounds	Shelter/ Gazebo	Other Amenities
Fort St. Clair	76.79	1	1	3	2 cabins; outside fireplace; 50-60 picnic tables; parking
Waterworks Park	25	1	1	1	Dog park; water treatment facility; picnic tables
Clarence E. Hook Memorial Park	8.37	0	1	1	No restroom, large wooded area; small parking
Blakeman Fields – Little League Park	10	1	0	1	Concession stand; five baseball fields – one with lights; parking
DPL Ball Fields / Brooke-Gould Memorial Tennis Complex	17	1	1	1	One basketball court; concession stand; one sand volleyball court; five softball fields; five tennis courts; parking
Seven Mile Park	42.18	1	1	1	Concession building; picnic tables; walking track (1.9 mile and 1.2 mile); park benches; picnic tables; open fields for soccer; parking
Brooke-Gould Memorial Bicentennial Park	0.1	0	0	0	William Bruce Statue; park benches
Youth Center	0.47	1	0	0	Parking; full kitchen; 137 capacity; banquet tables and chairs; ADA accessible; air-conditioned
Crystal Lake / Roberts Bridge	6.41	0	0	2	Park benches; parking
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186.32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	

The National Recreational and Park Association (NRPA) provides guidance and recommendations for parks and recreational facilities for communities across the U.S., generally based on the size of the population. On average, a typical park and recreation agency (or community park system) will offer one park for every 2,323 residents, with 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, along the lines of what the City of Eaton offers for its population of 8,376. However, it is important to remember that park and recreation agencies are as diverse as the communities they serve, and what works well for one City may not be best for Eaton.



Figure H gives an overview of the 2022 data and trends collected by the NRPA.



Figure H: National data and trends related to parks and recreation

Table 12 highlights how the trends illustrated on the previous page compare to what the City of Eaton offers. For the purposes of listing out trends for certain amenities, this table only includes a handful of the most popular park and recreational amenities, but the NRPA includes trends on many other amenities.

<b>Table 12: Comparison of National Trends to Eaton's Park System</b>			
<b>National Trend<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Needs for Eaton Based on Current Population of 8,376</b>	<b>Existing Condition in Eaton Today</b>
Median residents per park	1,233	6.7 Parks	9 Parks
Median acres per 1000 population	12.9	108.05 Acres	186.32 Acres
<b>Amenities based on Median Residents per Amenity</b>			
Playgrounds	1,986	4-5	5
Basketball courts	3,750	2-3	1
Diamond fields: baseball – youth	3,107	2-3	10
Tennis courts	2,723	3	5
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	4,362	2	9
Dog parks	11,100	0-1	1
Diamond fields: softball fields – adult	5,667	1-2	3
Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	5,339	1-2	5
Diamond fields: baseball – adult	7,954	1	3
Swimming pools	8,637	1	1
Community gardens	8,773	1	0
Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	3,504	2-3	9
Multi-use courts: basketball, volleyball	5,400	1-2	0
Tot lots	6,642	1-2	1
Rectangular fields: soccer field – adult	8,017	1	9
Skate parks	11,100	0-1	0

<sup>2</sup> This information is based on parks and recreational agencies/communities serving a population of less than 20,000 people. Larger agencies and communities tend to provide for more recreational facilities.

### **Staffing Comparison**

Because park and recreation agencies differ by size and jurisdiction served, so do staffing levels. Staffing at the typical park and recreation agency includes 49.4 full-time equivalents (FTEs) with a mix of full-time and part-time staff. Staff size, however, expands rapidly as the size of the population served by an agency increases. Park and recreation agencies serving jurisdictions of less than 20,000 residents have a median of 11.8 FTEs on staff. Agencies serving areas with 50,000 to 99,999 people have a median of 64.1 FTEs, while those with more than 250,000 residents have a median of 273.6 FTEs on staff.

Staffing dedicated to parks and recreation needs compared to the national average of a typical community of under 20,000 residents would require Eaton to have between 5.4 FTE dedicated staff on the lower end to 23.8 FTE staff on the highest end, with the median agency having 11.8 FTE dedicated to parks and recreation operations.

### **Parks and Recreation Budget Comparison**

Normalizing operating expenditure data by population served by an agency is a much more accurate and meaningful way of articulating and comparing spending. By this measure, the typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$93.01 per capita. Moreover, the denser the population served by an agency, the higher the per capita operating expenses: the typical agency serving a jurisdiction of less than 500 people per square mile has per capita operating expenses of \$57.53, while one serving a jurisdiction of more than 2,500 people per square mile has a median of \$108.36 per resident. At the same time, per capita operations spending is inversely related to the population of the area served. For example, agencies serving less than 20,000 people have a median operating expenditure of \$117.36 per person. That figure declines to \$54.92 per resident for agencies serving jurisdictions of more than 250,000 people, declining further to \$40.28 in jurisdictions of more than 500,000 residents.

To meet the national average of a typical community of under 20,000 residents, Eaton should fund the budget for parks and recreation annually between \$779,015.76 and \$1,457,636.12. Using the lower quartile averages because Eaton's population is far less than 20,000 equates to an average annual park and recreation budget between \$430,526.40 and \$679,720.90.



## Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The City of Eaton has a water distribution system that serves an approximate population of 8,400 people with around 3,700 customer accounts. The water system consists of the following components:

- Eaton Water Plant (3 wells) - This plant is an iron removal plant served by three wells. It is fully automated and can be operated manually as required.
- Black Water Plant (5 wells) - This plant is an iron and manganese removal plant served by five wells. It is also fully automated and can be operated manually as required.
- Two Water Tower Storage Tanks - Two elevated storage tanks provide a capacity of 0.75 Million Gallons (M.G.) and 1.5 MG. The system can operate with one tank out of service. However, should the 1.5 MG tank be out of service, normal fire flows could be a problem in the event of a major fire.
- The distribution is approximately 55 miles long of pipe varying in size from 2" to 12".
- There are approximately 475 fire hydrants around the City.
- Current Design of Water Plants: 1.7 Million Gallons per Day (MGD)
- The average daily water use is 1.2 MGD. The water system is currently running with an average of 30% excess capacity.
- Elevated Storage Water Capacity: 2.25 MGD
- Wastewater Treatment System Current Design: 1.9 MGD
- The average daily wastewater system use is 1.4 MGD. The wastewater system is currently running with an average of 26% excess capacity.

The following maps and graphics provides an overview of this critical infrastructure.

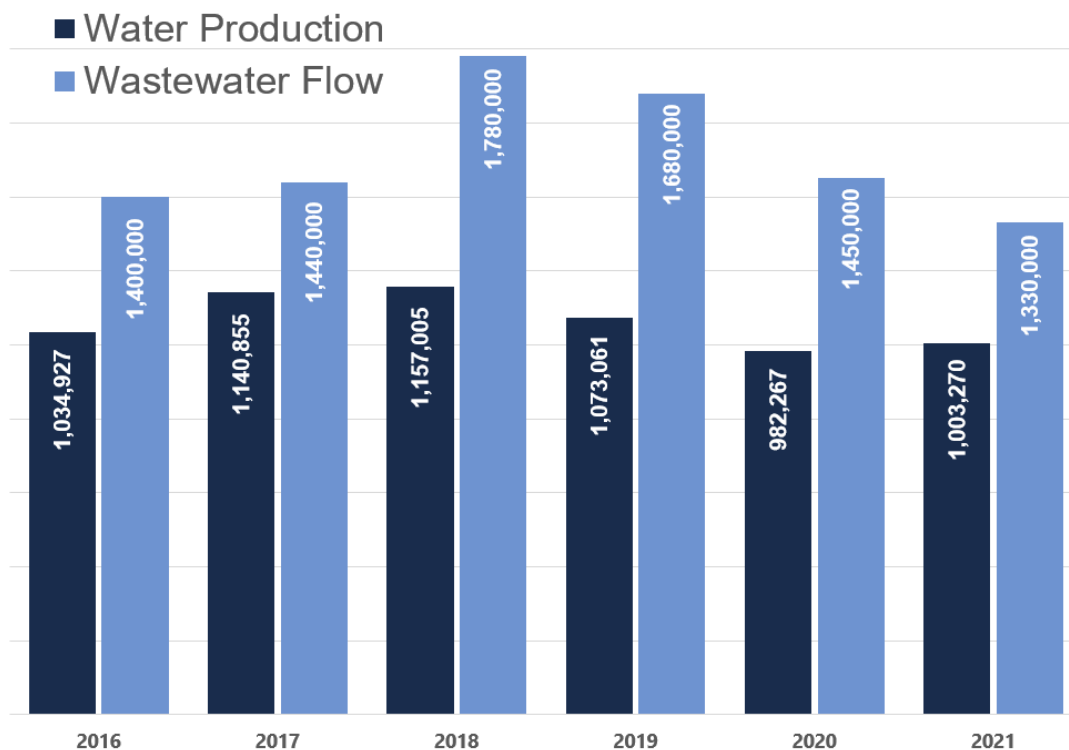


Figure I: Average Daily Water Production and Wastewater Flow 2016-2021. Source: City of Eaton



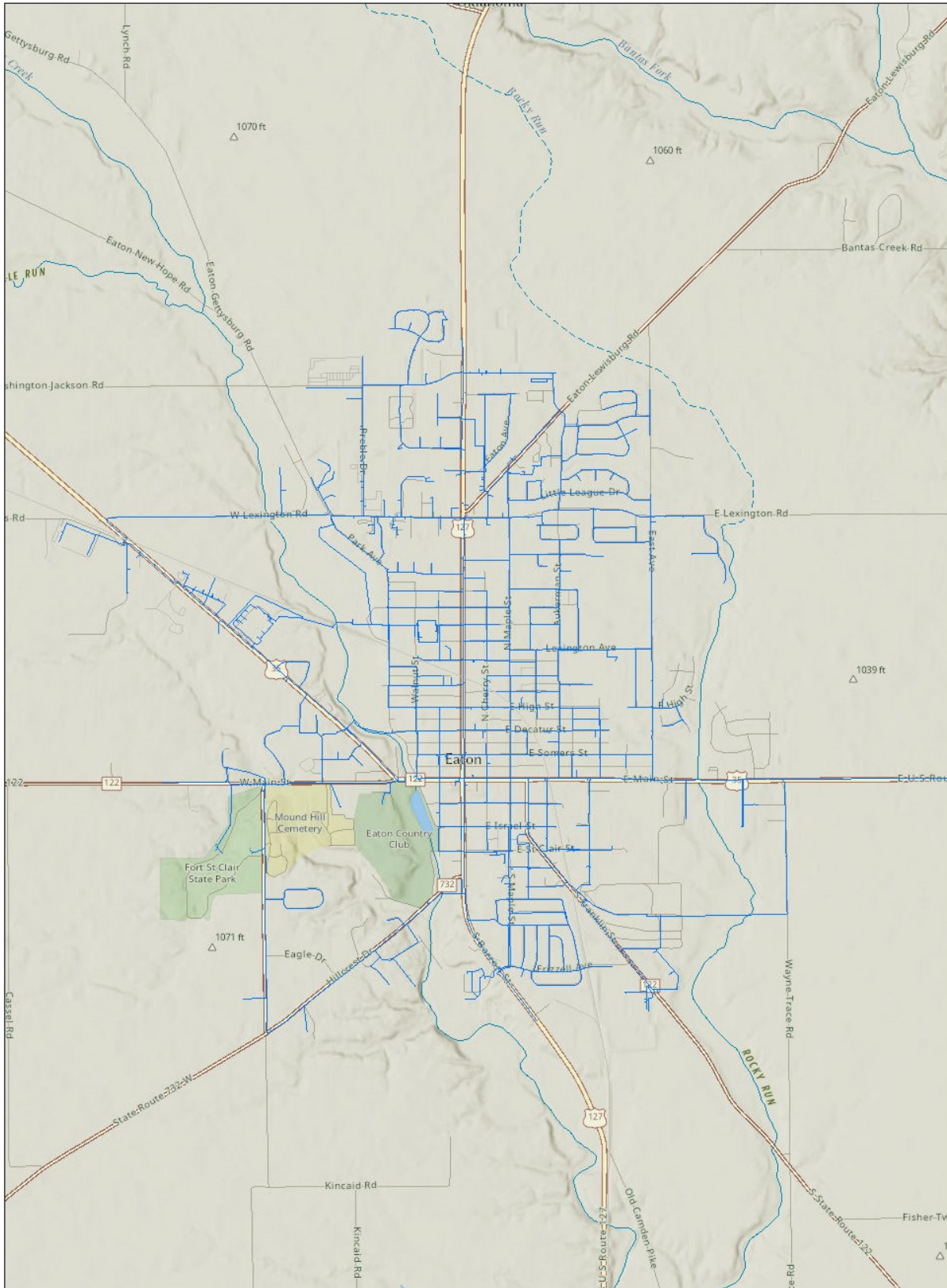


Figure J: Water distribution line system. Source: City of Eaton



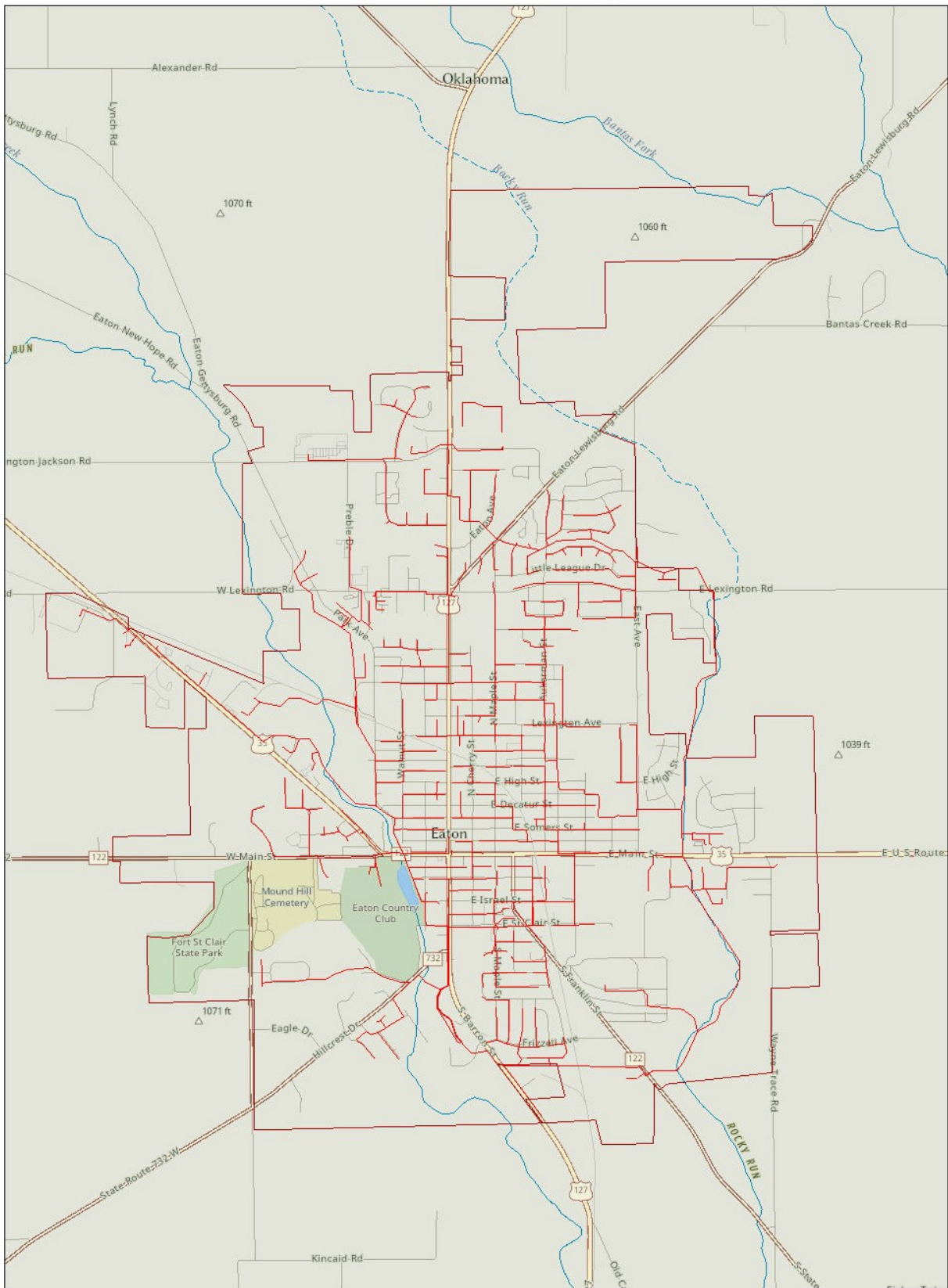


Figure K: Sanitary sewer line system. Source: City of Eaton

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## **Street Infrastructure**

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The City of Eaton operates a full-service Public Maintenance Division responsible for the infrastructure mentioned earlier and for the streets, public parks, and the cemetery. The City of Eaton is rather unique among municipal service departments in that it operates as a large labor and equipment pool rather than creating divisions specializing in municipal functions. All City of Eaton Public Maintenance Division employees plow snow, mow grass, patch potholes, pick up dead animals along the roadway, collect leaves or chip brush, maintain equipment, and perform other diverse public maintenance functions. This provides variety to the public maintenance employees but also provides the Public Maintenance Supervisor and his Crew Leader flexibility to assign work daily based on the community's needs rather than hamstrung by silos of a more extensive operation. Some public maintenance employees have developed specialties, and some have important credentials (e.g., spray license), but all employees can do a wide range of public maintenance tasks on a given day.

### Public Maintenance Services:

- Brush and leaf pick up
- Building maintenance
- Dead animal removal and disposal
- Park and recreation facility maintenance
- Set up support during and clean up after special events
- Snow removal
- Street sweeping
- Storm sewer maintenance and repairs
- Catch basin cleaning
- Grass mowing of parks, the cemetery, and roadsides
- Guard rail installation and repair
- Signs: stop signs, street names, speed zones, etc.
- Traffic lights, walk lights, etc.
- Cemetery duties

Eaton currently utilizes a five-year capital improvement planning process to prioritize roadway resurfacing and enhancement projects. The annual budget for these efforts is \$600,000 (not including grants or other outside funding sources). When prioritizing projects, the plan considers multiple factors such as safety, pavement condition, traffic counts, growth, and potential funding sources.

This is a "reactive program" that bases improvements on known problem areas and complaints.

## Goals and Objectives

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to help guide the community's future development over the next 10-20 years. Central to that guidance are the goals, which form the foundation of a long-term vision for Eaton. The goals provide the overarching policies for the various plan recommendations, including housing, land use and growth, downtown investment, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and community facilities, and provide general guidance to community leaders when making decisions about the City's future. The following goals serve as the basis for the plan recommendations that follow. As the City continues to evaluate this plan and development tools in the future, the City should first consider how any proposed action will fit within the context of these goals. If the proposed action generally complies with the goals, then the action will likely result in furthering the City's achievement of the vision of this plan. This evaluation will allow the City to maintain the flexibility of considering tools, investments, and projects that may not have initially been envisioned as part of this plan due to changes in state or federal laws and funding.

Unlike the specific, actionable tasks defined in the implementation chapter of this plan, a **GOAL** is a broader statement of a desired end state or target that, if pursued over the long term, will contribute to the attainment of the established community vision. In some cases, these goals reflect current policies that the public desires to see continued (e.g., the City will focus on maintaining its small-town identity.) as Eaton continues to grow. In contrast, others will ultimately require additional work to accomplish the stated goals (e.g., improving marketing efforts related to vacant or underutilized buildings.). Each main goal is accompanied by supporting objective statements that arose from discussions with the boards, steering committee, and the public during this planning effort.

The following are goals and objectives broken down into four major themes for the plan. These goals and objectives incorporate some of the direction established in the 2003 Eaton Comprehensive Plan because many of the goals and objectives from that plan continue to reflect the resident's vision of Eaton 10 to 20 years from today.



## Maintain Eaton's Small-Town Identity through Managed Growth

**Goal: The City of Eaton will provide for the future growth of neighborhoods, downtown, and business centers in a managed approach that will allow the City to maintain its small-town identity. We will accomplish this by:**

1. Encouraging the development of single-family residential neighborhoods while providing housing options through the provision of strategic multi-family and mixed-use developments in appropriate places.
2. Encouraging property owners to maintain and rehabilitate (when necessary) the community's existing housing stock and neighborhoods.
3. Supporting efforts to construct and maintain affordable housing for the elderly, handicapped, and other disadvantaged persons in areas with convenient access to recreation, commercial activity and other services.
4. Promoting development patterns that follow guidelines for planned growth that is located where infrastructure is readily available and minimizes impacts on sensitive development areas (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, and slopes).
5. Providing residential development guidelines that stress flexibility and creativity in neighborhood design that focuses on neighborhood character, landscaped streets, open spaces, the human scale and walkability.
6. Balancing the needs for future development while preserving and protecting the City's existing assets and character.
7. Requiring quality development and land use through fair, equal, and uniform review processes, land use designations, subdivision regulations and other activities relating to planning.
8. Encouraging effective site, architectural, and landscape design to facilitate higher-quality development and minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses.

## Expand Opportunities in Support of a Strong Economic Base

**Goal: The City of Eaton will encourage and promote the development of a stable and diversified economic base that embraces new employment opportunities while continuing to support the community's current businesses. We will accomplish this by:**

1. Ensuring the City continues as a vital component to a solid local and regional economy by increasing economic diversity and creating expanded employment opportunities.
2. Participating in regional economic efforts and encouraging the recruitment of clean industries in designated areas when adequate infrastructure is available.
3. Working with the City's major employers to ensure needed expansion opportunities are available within Eaton.
4. Encouraging small business development, entrepreneurship, and growth by providing adequate areas for commercial development and professional offices and encouraging support services and technical assistance for small businesses, especially for local start-up companies.
5. Improving marketing efforts regarding vacant or underutilized land and buildings.
6. Collaborating with state and regional business and educational parts to support workforce development.
7. Expanding housing options to increase the opportunities for people to live and work in Eaton.



## Support Downtown Eaton as the Center of Our Community

**Goal: The City of Eaton will continue to promote and expand on the understanding that Downtown Eaton serves as the community's geographic, cultural, and social core. We will accomplish this by:**

1. Fostering local businesses located downtown through continued business support activities and public investment in the downtown.
2. Promoting the area as a destination for locals and visitors by expanding event opportunities and promoting businesses.
3. Encouraging the identification, restoration, and protection of all significant historic buildings, structures, and other features.
4. Providing for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings to ensure flexibility to accommodate business and residential uses that are compatible with the downtown character.
5. Enhance the street network with pedestrian elements that add to the downtown character while expanding connections to other neighborhoods and business activity centers in Eaton.

## Leverage Resources to Ensure Strong Infrastructure and Amenities

**Goal: The City of Eaton will use its resources strategically to support this plan's other goals and maintain its robust quality of life. We will accomplish this by:**

1. Encouraging the preservation of open spaces, green areas, and parks, both publicly and within new developments.
2. Pursuing grants and other funding opportunities to assist in expanding parks, infrastructure, and amenities that provide a beneficial return on investment made by the City.
3. Seeking a balanced approach between annual increases in revenue and annual improvements for all services and facilities.
4. Continuing to update the City's parks and recreation master plan on a routine basis.
5. Keeping existing infrastructure efficient by promoting restoration and redevelopment of property already in development areas. New nonresidential uses, multi-family housing, and other higher-intensity uses should be near uses with a similar character and development intensity.
6. Ensuring adequate water, sewer, solid waste services, and other utilities are provided efficiently and safely.
7. Encouraging continued efficient public safety services, including police, fire, and emergency services, by coordinating and addressing all new development during coordinated development review.
8. Promoting the coordination of transportation and infrastructure improvements between local, county and regional jurisdictions.
9. Providing a balanced multi-modal transportation system by increasing public transit opportunities and encouraging citizens to walk or bicycle whenever possible by providing safe sidewalks, street crossings, bike paths and other alternatives to vehicular transportation.
10. Encouraging local and regional cooperation and coordination in the provision of regional community services.



## Future Land Use Plan

The City of Eaton Future Land Use Plan establishes the desired future land use types for properties throughout the City based on the community's overall vision, the existing land uses, environmental conditions, and general development patterns of the surrounding area. The plan is a graphic representation of many of the goals and objectives. This plan will help guide the decisions of the Eaton City Council, Planning Commission, and other committees and agencies regarding issues such as zone changes, capital improvements, development of public facilities, and similar decisions.

### **General Land Use Guidance**

The future land use categories are described further below, but in general, there are a number of broad guidelines the City should use when considering land use and development decisions based on the future land use map and other recommendations of this plan.

- The future land use plan map is not intended to provide parcel-specific land use recommendations.
- The future land use plan map is intended to serve as a broad guide for continued development and redevelopment within the boundaries of Eaton. The map is not a zoning map. It only serves as a general basis for the decision-making bodies of the City. Adopting this comprehensive plan does not change any zoning in the City unless the City Council, Planning Commission, or a private property owner initiates a zone change that requires a separate and distinct hearing process with specific public notice requirements.
- In making any decisions around the edges of recommended land uses, the City should consider existing land uses in the area, the use and character of surrounding properties, the proposed development, and the general goals of this plan as it relates to the land use categories shown on the map to determine the best land use for a particular site.
- Public and institutional uses (e.g., schools, places of worship, and community buildings), as well as parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces, are appropriate in all residential neighborhoods. However, those uses should be sited to avoid excessive traffic on local streets with a focus on providing vehicular access from collector and/or streets with a higher capacity for traffic and safe connections to nearby sidewalks and trails for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- This plan is not designed or intended to prevent anyone from reasonably developing their private property unless state or federal laws prohibit development (e.g., no development allowed in the floodways).
- The future land use map incorporates recommendations for future land uses outside of the current city boundaries. The purpose of this is to recognize that the City may have opportunities for future annexations. In this case, the plan will remain current with recommendations for the areas most likely to be annexed. This plan is not intended to state that any of these areas should be annexed into the City or that the City has specific plans to annex additional land. It is simply a method of planning for the future should annexations occur.



## ***Future Land Use Categories***

### **Agricultural**

The agricultural areas on the future land use plan are primarily located outside the City's current municipal limits. They reflect the predominant use and character of rural Preble County, which is agriculture and single-family detached residential uses on large lots. These areas will not likely have access to centralized water and sewer in the near future and should remain as agricultural and low-density residential uses even if they are eventually annexed into the City. Should these areas be annexed and provided with infrastructure service, the City should consider amending the land use plan to determine an appropriate future land use for the area served.

### **Residential Neighborhoods**

Eaton is a city with some very definable neighborhoods, including the older neighborhoods that were developed as an extension of the urban downtown area and newer subdivisions that reflect modern suburban development styles. In the future, there will be opportunities for additional investment and redevelopment of areas with the core residential neighborhoods (older) and new development in the suburban residential neighborhoods. The following are some guidelines for development in each of these neighborhood categories.

#### **Residential Neighborhoods: Core Neighborhoods**

- The primary land use in the core neighborhoods should continue to be single-family detached homes with a density of 5 to 10 units per acre.
- Multi-family residential uses ranging from duplexes to townhomes and other attached housing types are already found in all of the City's neighborhoods, but the core neighborhood areas have more robust infrastructure and connectivity to accommodate these higher-density uses.



Eaton should provide for the establishment of multi-family residential uses in the core residential neighborhoods with the creation of new uses with the following considerations:

- New multi-family uses should be confined to a maximum of 16 dwelling units per acre.
  - The density and design of the proposed residential use should blend in with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
  - Multi-family residential uses should be located on collector or arterial streets.
  - Multi-family residential uses may be allowed in areas adjacent to nonresidential uses to serve as a land use transition or buffer between the more intense nonresidential use and nearby residential properties.
  - Duplexes and multi-family housing should not be used as infill development in a block that is predominantly single-family detached residential but could be an opportunity if an entire block is to be redeveloped.



## **Residential Neighborhoods: Suburban Neighborhoods**

- The primary land use in suburban neighborhoods should be single-family detached homes with a density of 5 units per acre or less.
- Higher-density single-family detached housing of up to 8 units per acre may be appropriate if designed for patio homes.
- Some low-intensity, multi-family residential uses, such as townhomes, small apartment buildings, or condominiums, may be appropriate at a density of up to 8 units per acre if they are built in an area that will serve as a transition between commercial areas and lower density residential uses or along arterial or collector streets. These attached housing options could also be part of a large planned development where they are designed to be located internal to the larger development in order to provide multiple housing types within a single development.
- Senior living developments that contain a mix of detached and attached living options are appropriate for suburban neighborhoods.



*Image Source: Google Street View*

## **General Business Area**

This land use is characterized by a variety of building sizes that incorporate commercial retail, services, and office uses that typically have on-site parking, most often located in front of and around the buildings. These areas typically contain the largest scale commercial and office uses that attract local residents and people from the surrounding region. These commercial areas are an essential part of the local economy and should be maintained with a focus on improving the quality of design for longevity as well as improving access to the local transportation network. Redevelopment of underutilized lots is highly encouraged, and any new development or redevelopment should be designed to provide a buffer between the nonresidential uses and adjacent residential properties.

## **Downtown Core**

This land use designation serves as the City's principal center for commercial activity. It contains a compact arrangement of business and office enterprises together with financial, cultural, entertainment, and governmental uses with some minimal single-family residential uses on the fringe of the downtown core. Buildings in this core area tend to have little to no setback from the back of the sidewalk and a height of at least two to four stories. The long-term goal for this area is to preserve the existing building stock as an area of mixed-use buildings with commercial activities along the first floor and commercial or residential uses on the upper floors. If a new building or block is to be redeveloped, all efforts should be made to construct a new building that reflects the current historic character of Downtown Eaton.



### **Urban Mixed-Use**

The urban mixed-use areas of Eaton are both transitional areas between urban and suburban areas and areas where there could be a wide range of uses, including multi-family residential, commercial, and office uses. These areas are ideal for more intense land uses than those that might be found in suburban neighborhoods. The following are appropriate uses and guidelines for development in this area:

- Higher-density residential developments, such as townhomes, rowhouses, condominiums, and apartment buildings, are appropriate in these areas, with a maximum density of 16 units per acre.
- A broad range of retail and service commercial uses, including office space, are appropriate and should be designed to accommodate neighborhood-scale uses rather than big-box commercial developments or strip centers.
- Mixed-use buildings and live/work units with commercial or office space on the first floor and residential or office units above or behind the commercial and office space are appropriate.

### **Industrial**

Industrial areas and industrial parks will provide employment-oriented land use types in Eaton that reflect the predominant non-retail centers in the City today. These areas should continue to be areas with a focus on non-retail-oriented jobs. These developments should be light industrial uses, including clean manufacturing centers, technology/data centers, distribution centers, supporting offices, research facilities, and other similar uses where business activities take place indoors. Buffering and good site design will be necessary to accommodate heavier truck traffic and minimization of impacts on any adjacent neighborhoods.



### **Parks and Recreation**

The parks and recreation category identifies land used for public and/or private recreational purposes, including parks, playgrounds, open spaces, walking trails, ballfields, and similar uses. While the future land use map only designates existing parks and recreational uses, such uses may also be appropriate within other land use categories. New developments, in all other land use categories, are encouraged to incorporate parks and recreational components within the design of the developments, especially for residential construction.

### **Public and Institutional**

The public and institutional uses shown on the future land use map are existing areas that include a broad range of uses such as government buildings, schools, places of worship, and other public or semi-public buildings and uses. This category may include buildings or activities related to providing utilities such as gas, electric, water, sewer, cable television, or other similar infrastructure. Additionally, other uses related to, or supportive of, public and institutional uses are appropriate to these areas (e.g., medical and dental offices near the hospital). While the future land use map only designates existing large public and institutional uses, public and institutional uses may be appropriate in other areas of the City, regardless of the future land use designation. When considering the siting of a public or institutional use, the City should consider the impact the buildings or use will have on the surrounding area and apply appropriate conditions to help mitigate those impacts, such as buffering or access management.



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## Implementation

The final element of this plan focuses on implementation, that is, the steps the City and other agencies need to take to work toward the stated goals and objectives. While the goals and objectives are broader statements that comprise a vision, this element narrows those concepts to actionable items.

Table 13 lists the actionable tasks developed as part of this update under the established goals. The focus of this table is to summarize actions that the City should consider as part of its annual actions and budgetary process. Some tasks may be simple and easy to accomplish within a few years, while others may take more planning and resources and, therefore, could take longer. This table is not intended to be an exhaustive list of ideas or implementation tools but an initial list that combines some actions from previous plans and new strategies to address any additional community issues identified during this planning process. An important part of this planning process will be the continual monitoring of the goals and implementation tasks.

### ***Plan Monitoring***

A comprehensive plan is a long-term visionary document, but this does not mean the City should update the plan every 5 or 10 years and not look at it again until the next update is due. As part of this process, this section outlines a monitoring system that will make this plan a more readily used document that can be adjusted based on the changing needs and resources of the City.

#### **Regular Review and Update of the Implementation Tasks**

Planning and demographic trends, as well as resources, shift much faster than most comprehensive plan goals, and what is a priority or possibility now may not be next year. At the same time, the amount of available resources (financial and staffing) can vary over the years. As such, it is crucial that the City review the plan, but more specifically, this implementation section every one or two years, possibly at the annual strategic work session. This annual review can be used to:

- Create specific, quantitative goals for various goals. For example, if one goal is to acquire additional lands for parks and recreation, the City can set a specific goal of the amount or type of acreage to be acquired within a specified timeframe.
- Determine if certain programs to implement the goals are creating successes and whether there is a need to modify the programs to make them more useful.
- Identify those tasks completed in the previous year and reevaluate the priorities for the remaining tasks based on the imminent needs of the community and available resources.
- Update Table 13 to reflect the abovementioned changes and add new tasks as necessary.

#### **Five- or Ten Year Review**

Significant changes can occur in a very short time. Because infrastructure changes, the transportation system, development methods, and even changes in elected officials, state law or other regulations can significantly impact the recommendations of this plan, it is necessary to review the document for substantive changes periodically. It may not be necessary to go through a long and intensive review process, but the City should take steps to involve the public in this review process to ensure that the goals and objectives are still relevant. The review should also identify major infrastructure and transportation changes and trends that may change the plan's recommendations.

## General Implementation Strategies

In addition to the specific tasks established in Table 13, a few implementation strategies discussed below apply to all aspects of this comprehensive plan and address future planning topics. The following is a brief discussion of each general strategy:

### Involve the Public

Elected and appointed officials of Eaton and the city staff are responsible for a growing population and business base where public input helps ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of those citizens. As the City continues to grow, public input will be a key ingredient in the process and needs to include multiple formats, including public meetings, articles in the newspaper, social media posts, public surveys, and other innovative forums.



### State and Regional Cooperation

The City recognizes that it is not an isolated community and that what impacts the state and region impacts Eaton. As such, city officials and residents alike have made a concerted effort to immerse themselves in state and regional plans and agencies. The City is already involved with multiple state agencies, Preble County, the Preble County Development Partnership, and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. The City should continue its involvement in any group that will help address Eaton's interests through planning and progress at the regional and state levels.

## Specific Implementation Strategies

Implementation is the realization or execution of a plan and is ultimately about action. This section of the plan is intended to identify specific actions or strategies that the City should undertake to achieve the goals established early in this planning document. Table 13 on the following pages identifies specific strategies to implement the City's overall goals. In addition, the table identifies the various plan components that the implementation strategy helps support.

The City could theoretically establish an exhaustive list of strategies to undertake as part of this implementation section that might include hundreds of tasks, but the reality of the situation is that the City does have a limit on resources (funding and staffing). Therefore, Table 13 intends to include those strategies that are most realistic at this point in time or are vital steps for the immediate issues. In recognition that additional resources may become available, priorities change, and new tools may become available to the City, this portion of the plan is intended to be updated more frequently than the remainder of the plan. As noted in the chapter on goals, those goals and objectives are what the City should use to consider future actions, and the City is not beholden to ONLY work on tasks proposed in Table 13.

**Table 13: Implementation Tasks**

<b>Implementation Task</b> (Not Listed in Any Particular Order)	Themes/Goals			
	Small-Town Identity	Economic Opportunities	Downtown	Infrastructure & Amenities
Update the planning and zoning code to correspond with recommendations of the future land use map, including the development and revision of existing zoning districts, where appropriate, to expand housing opportunities. The update should also consider modern zoning reforms related to ease of permitting, reduction of parking requirements, basic design standards for downtown and commercial areas, and modernization of infrastructure requirements to allow for more green infrastructure options (rather than gray/concrete infrastructure). In all cases, the development regulations need to be consistent in requiring that the improvement of land that will continue to mitigate or reduce stormwater and flooding.	X	X	X	X
Incorporate context-sensitive infill and redevelopment zoning regulations that support the innovative and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties and quality redevelopment projects, especially downtown, and in the areas designated as urban mixed-use, that do not take away from the character or value of surrounding properties. This may include establishing some basic design standards for new construction downtown that does not require a historic preservation review.	X	X	X	
Open a dialogue with more local developers to target the development of attached residential housing units or varied detached residential housing units (e.g., patio homes, small floor plans, etc.) that provide more diversity in housing values and options in the City.	X	X		
Establish periodic meetings and surveys with existing businesses to ensure the City is developing programs that support the continuation of those businesses and promote business and job growth.		X		
Work with businesses operating out of their homes (home occupations) to assist in business expansions within Eaton and expand work-from-home opportunities.		X		
Encourage mixed-use development downtown and along major roadways that can provide residential opportunities close to jobs and where retail uses can prosper from the proximity to businesses and residents. This higher-density development can also serve as a transitional buffer between more intense uses and nearby, lower-intensity development.	X	X	X	
Establish a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) in the downtown area to expand opportunities for local restaurants and breweries and create an additional purpose for downtown to be a regional destination.		X	X	
Expand streetscaping and beautification efforts throughout downtown with additional seating, plantings, and other simple efforts that will make downtown even more of a destination.			X	

**Table 13: Implementation Tasks**

<b>Implementation Task</b> (Not Listed in Any Particular Order)	Themes/Goals			
	Small-Town Identity	Economic Opportunities	Downtown	Infrastructure & Amenities
Continue regional economic development and transportation efforts through cooperation and coordination of efforts with other groups, including the chamber of commerce, Downtown Eaton Inc., the Preble County Development Corporation, and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission.		X		X
Work with Preble County to develop and maintain an inventory of potential development sites (available or not) with information on zoning, development constraints, incentives, costs, etc., and develop an online web-based platform to showcase the properties beyond traditional real estate listings. Provide easy links to the information from Eaton's and other organizations' websites with appropriate contacts to people within the City.		X		
Work with Preble County to enhance digital mapping and communications beyond the existing county Geographic Information System (GIS) to promote available sites, as noted above, but also to provide basic information such as zoning, future land use recommendations, shovel-ready sites, etc., as part of an interactive and easy to use website.		X		
Incorporate stronger connectivity requirements (vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle) for all new developments, especially if the connections are identified in adopted plans. Require a high level of connectivity for all modes of travel to the maximum extent feasible.				X
Expand requirements for sidewalks and/or trails for developments to expand non-vehicular options and increase recreational opportunities. Utilize the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide future connections between local and regional parks.				X
Continue to monitor and implement the Eaton Parks and Recreation Master Plan to ensure that future parks and recreational improvements meet the needs of the citizens.				X
Expand the programming of activities at local parks while ensuring accessibility to parks and community services for all citizens, regardless of age and/or ability.				X
Provide adequate maintenance for all park and recreational facilities (e.g., trash, garbage collection, vegetation control, trail maintenance, painting, etc.)				X
Implement a protocol for evaluating the incorporation of public art in significant capital improvements such as trails or street improvements, utility upgrades, park investments, etc., to enhance a sense of place in Eaton.	X			X
Identify potential industrial land opportunities and the necessary improvements to make the sites "shovel-ready" for quick turnaround and then prioritize investments on those sites that will provide the largest economic impact for the community.		X		

**Table 13: Implementation Tasks**

<b>Implementation Task</b> (Not Listed in Any Particular Order)	Themes/Goals			
	Small-Town Identity	Economic Opportunities	Downtown	Infrastructure & Amenities
Look for funding and development opportunities that could potentially result in the development of outdoor gathering spaces (e.g., an amphitheater) and an indoor, multi-use event, conference, and/or recreation space for residents of the City and for visitors.		X		X
Expand on the current list of civic, arts, and entertainment events to generate more activities for residents and businesses that will allow for more community gatherings. Events in downtown and in local parks are appreciated explicitly by residents and businesses as they serve as the core of the City's quality of life.	X		X	
Work with Preble County and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission to develop more public transit opportunities within the region, especially to ensure people of all abilities can access work and their daily needs.				X
Undertake a detailed housing study that will identify key information about the existing housing stock and housing demand beyond the U.S. Census data; evaluate the impacts of the City's regulations and policies on housing development; and identify key initiatives the City can undertake to accomplish the housing goals of this plan.	X	X		X
Coordinate growth activities with fire, police, and emergency safety services to ensure the continued quality of life people have come to expect and the continuation of a safe community.				X
Work with the Preble County Land Bank to help address vacant buildings and underutilized lots in Eaton	X	X	X	
Coordinate with the regional Wi-Fi and broadband services to ensure that residents and businesses have consistent and reliable service.				X
Collaborate with schools, universities, and large employers to provide additional educational opportunities, including more childcare/pre-school opportunities (all hours) and workforce education.		X		X
Develop a program for establishing monuments and/or memorial spaces to recognize people and special places in the City.				X