

Photo: The Better Block

West Akron Neighborhood Plan
ECONOMIC AND HOUSING ASSESSMENT

KM Date Community Planning, LLC
*Prepared for: MKSK
and The Progressive Alliance Community Development Corporation, Akron OH*

FINAL REPORT August 4, 2023



This Page Intentionally Left Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
Introduction	5
The West Akron Market Area	5
Neighborhood Economic Factors.....	7
Retail Findings.....	8
Business Activity Findings	8
Housing Findings	9
Stakeholder Interviews	9
Conclusions and Recommendations	10
INTRODUCTION.....	11
The West Akron Economic and Housing Strategy	11
The West Akron and Sherbondy Hill Neighborhoods	11
Outline of this report	12
Caveats.....	12
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS.....	13
Overview	13
Neighborhood Assets.....	13
Neighborhood Challenges.....	14
Stakeholders’ Big Ideas	16
RETAIL MARKET ASSESSMENT	17
The West Akron Retail Market Area	17
Neighborhood Retail Demand	19
Retail Supply in the Neighborhood.....	23
Comparing Supply and Demand	24
Restaurant Analysis Drilldown	27
Retail Findings.....	30
BUSINESS ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT	31
Neighborhood Business Activity	31
Location-Quotient Analysis.....	35
Micro-Cluster Analysis	38

HOUSING ASSESSMENT	40
Introduction	40
Characterizing West Akron’s Housing.....	40
Housing Affordability	45
Housing Findings	47
RECOMMENDATIONS	48
Introduction	48
Retail Recommendations	48
Business Activity Recommendations	49
Housing Recommendations	50
General Recommendations	52
CONCLUSIONS AND CAVEATS.....	53
Conclusions	53
Caveats and Limitations	53
APPENDICES	55
Useful Ideas for Redeveloping Commercial Main Streets	55
Stakeholder Interviews – Summary Report.....	66
Inventory of West Akron-Sherbondy Businesses	80
Micro-Cluster Analysis Tables	80



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In collaboration with the City of Akron and Akron-based foundations, the Progressive Alliance Community Development Corporation is working with MKSK on a neighborhood plan for the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods, west of the City of Akron, Ohio. This study was done as part of that plan, to provide recommendations for economic development and housing in revitalizing the neighborhood. Recommendations were based on data collection and analysis, and an extensive set of interviews with neighborhood stakeholders. This report summarizes findings on retail goods and services, dining, other business activity, housing, and general community development ideas that came up in the stakeholder interview process.

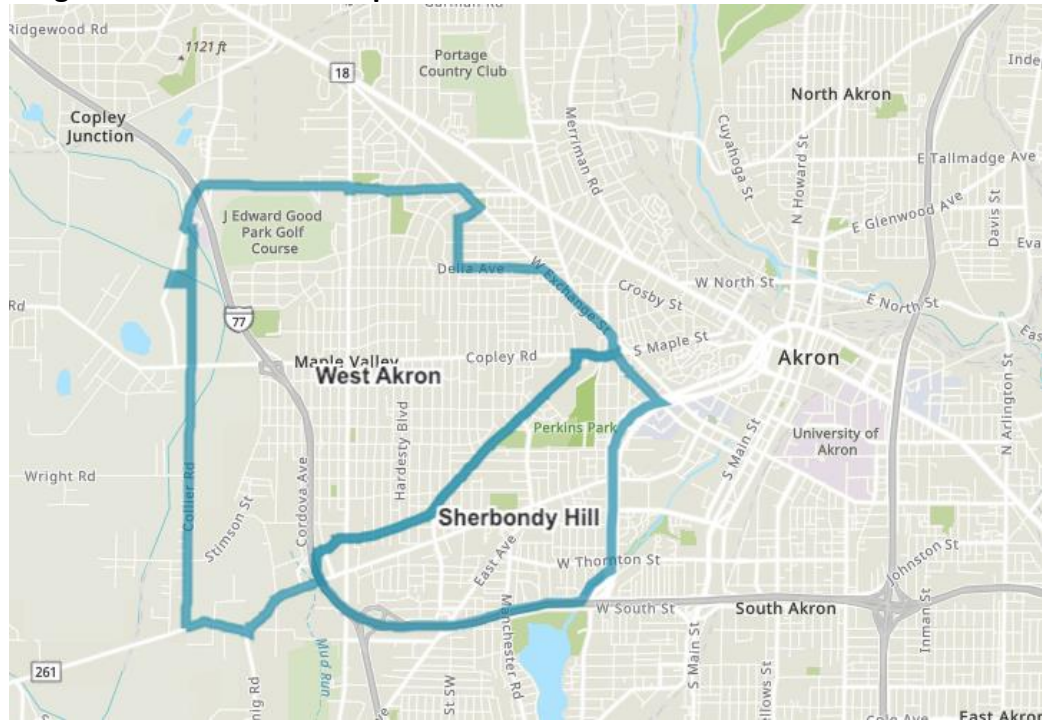
As with any such analysis, data and interviews can only go so far in determining potential opportunity for business and revitalization success. Other key factors, such as the vision, business and marketing savvy, and capital capacity of the entrepreneur/project proponent, and changing market conditions, have a profound effect on business success and are beyond the scope of this report. No guarantees are made with regard to potential business or redevelopment success are made with the recommendations given in this report.

The West Akron Market Area

The study area of this report included both the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods, located 5 minutes to the west of downtown Akron. The neighborhood as a whole has excellent freeway access, within 5 minutes of most businesses, off I-77 and I-76 to the west and south. Typical of many urban core neighborhoods in legacy cities of the Midwest, the neighborhood has a history of disinvestment and decline. Prior to the 1960's, it was a thriving African American neighborhood with several main streets featuring entertainment, dining, and full range of neighborhood-supporting businesses. In the present day, the West Akron

neighborhood is still a place of tree-lined streets and well-kept homes. There remains a strong African American cultural presence, and several major assets in or near the neighborhood, including the Akron Zoo, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General Hospital, historic assets, active churches, parks and community centers.

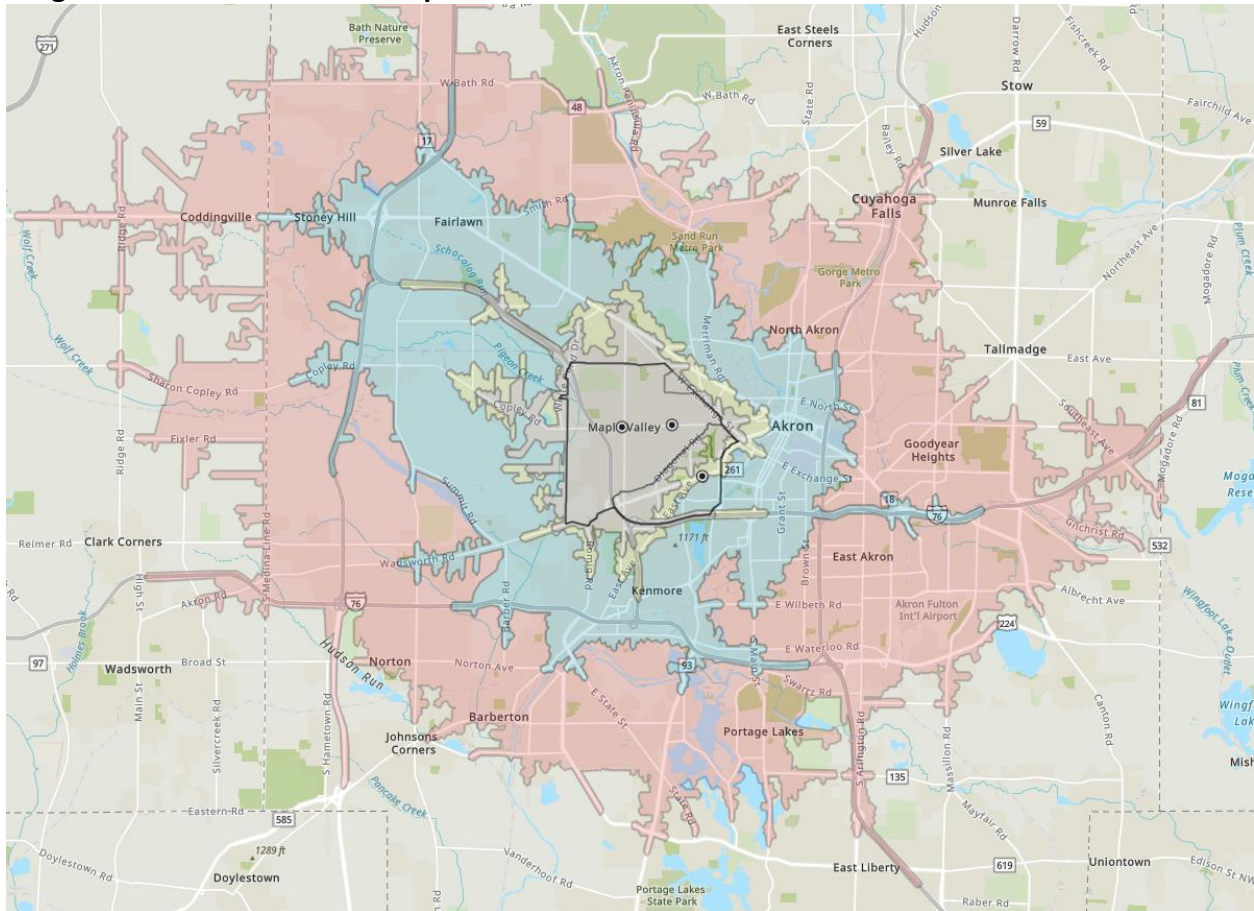
Neighborhood Location Map



Source: ESRI, KM Date Planning, City of Akron

As shown in the Trade Area map, drive times around the neighborhood were plotted at 5, 6, 10 and 15 minutes. The neighborhood boundary around the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods was chosen as the study Trade Area, due to its similarity to the 5- and 6-minute drive times, and because it includes areas of opportunity north of Copley Road. The map shows that beyond the trade area analyzed, there are a range of suburban markets within 10 and 15 minutes of the neighborhood center, including Fairlawn, Cuyahoga Falls and Barberton.

Neighborhood Market Area Map



Source: ESRI, KM Date Planning, City of Akron

Map Legend

- Black outline – Neighborhood boundaries
- Gray area – 5-minute drive zone
- Green area – 6-minute drive zone
- Blue area – 10-minute drive zone
- Pink area – 15-minute drive zone

Neighborhood Economic Factors

The West Akron neighborhood is home to 23,000 residents, and 10,000 households. Our analysis showed that the total buying power of these 10,000 households is \$500 million, which is solid for an urban neighborhood. At the 6-minute drive time, the total buying power increases to \$1 billion, which is solid for urban/suburban neighborhoods.

With its proximity to downtown Akron and suburban business zones, there are 93,000 workers within 10 minutes' drive of the neighborhood center. Inside the trade area boundary, the

average local household income was \$50,601 in 2022, falling in the middle income “quintile” of US households.¹

Retail Findings

Leakage (neighborhood household dollars being spent elsewhere) in the West Akron neighborhood is substantial. Analysis of retail supply and demand within the trade area shows that there is a leakage of \$14.1 million annually for dining alone, with \$13 million for hardware/home and garden, \$11 million for grocery, and \$6 million for clothing and accessories. There is a general merchandise surplus of \$24 million in the neighborhood, indicating that people are spending more at those stores (Dollar Stores, drugstores, Walmart, and the like) than at other retail opportunities; and that those stores are serving outsiders as well. Similarly, personal, repair and similar services (such as hair salons, auto repair) also have large surpluses, indicating outside clientele and dollars coming in. Pet services/supplies, legal services, and entertainment are the services with the largest leakage, at \$2 million, \$1 million, and \$1 million respectively.

More detail is included in the full report, covering 37 retail niche categories, as well as dining by subcategory.

Business Activity Findings

An analysis of business activity, including retail and all other commercial entities, shows that there are 327 businesses with commercial locations in the neighborhood, plus 69 home businesses.

Strengths in the neighborhood, when compared to the City and County, include education, health care, hospitality and services, motor vehicle and parts dealers, and gas stations. The Akron Public Schools and the Akron Zoo, among the largest employers, are very important assets for workforce development efforts.

The large number of workers within 10 minutes is another opportunity that neighborhood businesses can build on. In addition, larger businesses and employers are likely bringing potential customers to the doorstep of smaller businesses.

Micro-clusters with more than four businesses, and the greatest potential for collaboration, include marketing, design, and publishing; hospitality and tourism; financial services; education and knowledge creation; and business services.

See the full report for a detailed discussion of business activity, and the Appendix for detailed tables.

¹ Source: ESRI 2022, based on American Communities Survey data.

Housing Findings

The West Akron neighborhood has been cited as the “single largest swath of residential housing in Akron.” Many long-term residents still maintain their properties, and many streets are still tree-lined. 90% of 1, 2 and 3-family properties are in very good, good, or average condition.

Of the 11,773 units in the neighborhood, 77% are single-family homes, with another 10% duplexes or single-family attached homes. Half of neighborhood householders are renting, and the other half are owners. The majority (85%) of householders over age 65 are homeowners; half of all units are owned by seniors. Across the neighborhood, there is a 15% vacancy rate, which is high, and indicates poor condition, high rents, or both. The owners of 77% of residential parcels in the neighborhood are based in Akron; 8.7% of owners are out of state, and 6.8% are in Ohio but outside Summit County

About 5.3% of 1, 2 and 3-family properties are in fair condition (about 485 properties), which are at risk of falling into acute disrepair. About 73 homes are in poor or very poor condition and in need of immediate intervention.

A housing affordability analysis was done, which compares household incomes to housing price points for renters and owners, based on the assumption that households can afford to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs. The analysis indicates that there is a gap in owner-occupied housing valued over \$150,000. About 1,000 households could afford housing valued higher than \$150,000 which is not available in the neighborhood. When examining rental properties, the situation changes. The gap in rental housing is for units with rents below \$500 per month. 1800 renting households are shown to be spending more than 30% of their income on housing.

For more detailed information, see the full report.

Stakeholder Interviews

28 interviews were completed with neighborhood stakeholders, including new and longtime residents, new and longtime business owners, developers and a real estate agent working in the neighborhood, elected officials, city staff, schools leaders, and leaders of churches and nonprofits.

The discussions addressed neighborhood assets and challenges, and big ideas and priorities for revitalizing the neighborhood. Stakeholders’ big ideas included restoring commercial vitality, strategic investment, creating catalytic regional attractions, strengthening relationships, and many others. Findings were summarized in more detail later in this report. A full report was also written, which is included in the Appendix.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The West Akron neighborhood presents many opportunities for economic growth – ranging from commercial area rejuvenation to business recruitment and expansion, to new housing opportunities. Key recommendations of this report include:

- Strengthen the Copley Road commercial area as a core Main Street which serves local residents and families, workers, and outside visitors
- Create a regional draw, either offering recreation, entertainment and/or employment, with clean and safe parking and lighting, to attract outside visitors and workers to the neighborhood
- Work with local major employers to provide opportunities for workforce development
- Recruit new businesses, and support existing businesses as they grow
- Work with home businesses with the potential to transition to bricks-and-mortar
- Address the need for code enforcement, outside landlord management, and limiting dollar stores, through regulation
- Develop a strong economic development presence collaboratively with the City to work with businesses and seize on opportunities
- Develop a Community Investment Fund to support local businesses and provide supportive investment opportunities for stakeholders (including neighborhood alumni)
- Strategically revitalize the housing market through targeted new development, renovation, and neighborhood improvement
- Address gaps in the housing market to provide a wide range of housing types and price points
- Support residents and small landlords in housing repair through a variety of programs
- Develop and implement a robust marketing/branding program, to provide accurate and positive information about the neighborhood to the public and residents
- Reach out to residents, potential new residents, former residents and Buchtel alumni, businesses, workers in the neighborhood and downtown, and residents of adjacent neighborhoods to establish relationships and change public perception
- In the long term, as the neighborhood revitalizes, re-create a community-serving retail core in the Sherbondy Hill area

For more detail and information, see the full report.

INTRODUCTION

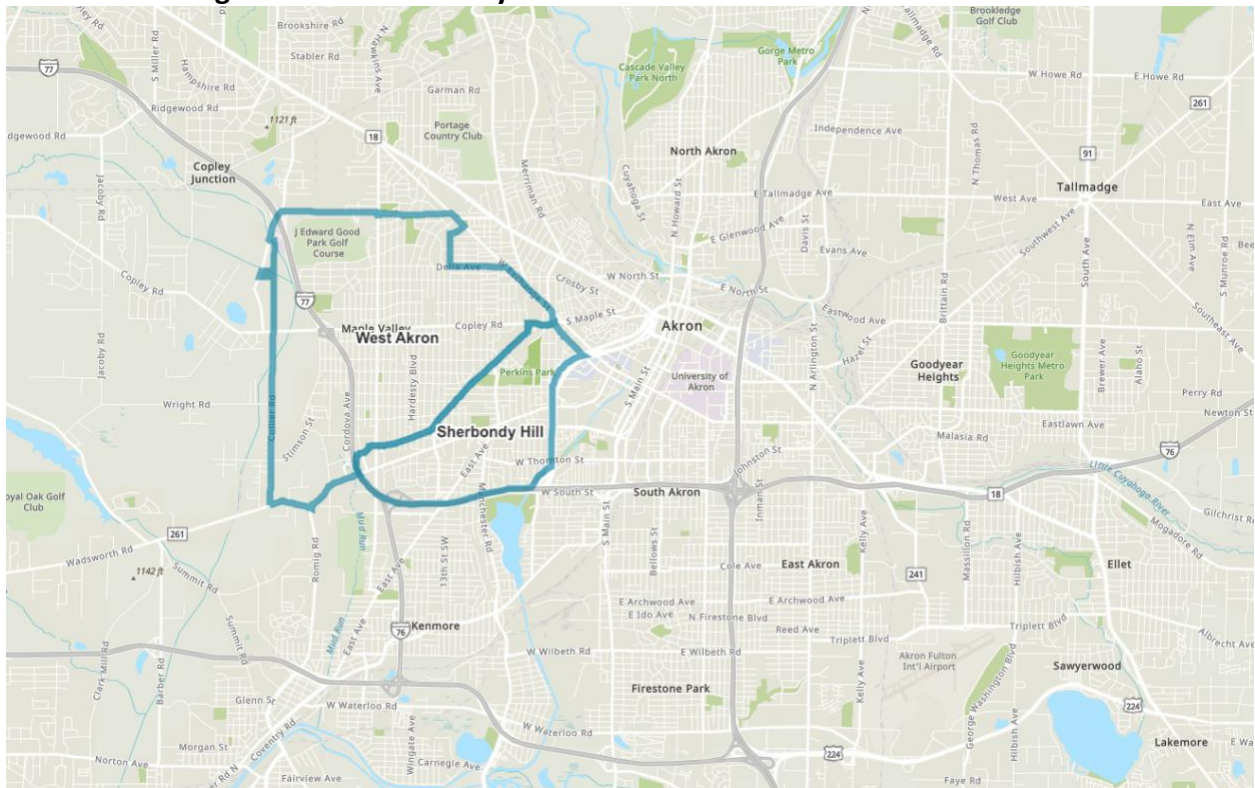
The West Akron Economic and Housing Strategy

The purpose of this study is to identify opportunities in the West Akron neighborhood that can help move neighborhood residents and businesses toward a thriving future. Economic development assesses the community from the standpoint of economic sustainability, and outlines specific steps that can be taken by partners to help the neighborhood’s economy grow. A strong economic strategy examines local business activity, but it also examines the market for that activity, and the neighborhood housing and living environment, making recommendations that will help attract new residents and businesses, as well as help existing residents and businesses to grow.

The West Akron and Sherbondy Hill Neighborhoods

The West Akron Neighborhood Plan study area is made up of the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods. As shown on the map, these neighborhoods are just west of downtown Akron, and therefore within 5 minutes’ drive of downtown vibrancy. Bounded by I-77 to the west, and I-76 to the south, the neighborhood has excellent freeway access.

West Akron Neighborhood Plan Study Area



Source: KM Date, ESRI, City of Akron

The West Akron Neighborhood Plan study area (going forward identified as the West Akron Neighborhood) is home to 23,000 people, and 10,000 households, with an average household income of \$51,000. It is flanked by economically strong Wallhaven to the north, downtown to the east and growing Kenmore to the south. While the neighborhood has seen disinvestment and decline, like many urban neighborhoods in legacy cities, it is receiving revitalization attention from the City of Akron and Akron's philanthropic organizations.

Prior to the 1960's, the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill area was a thriving African American neighborhood with several main streets featuring entertainment, dining, and full range of neighborhood-supporting businesses. In the present day, the neighborhood is still a place of tree-lined streets and well-kept homes. There remains a strong African American cultural presence, and many key major assets in or near the neighborhood, including institutions such as the Akron Zoo, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General Hospital, Buchtel Community Learning Center and elementary schools, the Urban League, two branches of the Akron Public Library, and City parks and community centers, and historic assets. The Progressive Alliance CDC, numerous strong churches, and social organizations create a framework for social development and neighborhood activism.

Outline of this report

This report addresses several key components of economic strategy. After this first chapter, we summarize an extensive interview project conducted to understand the interests of a variety of neighborhood stakeholders. Next, we examine market supply and demand data for retail, dining and general business activity, and highlight the key findings that characterize opportunity in the neighborhood. We examine housing and neighborhoods in order to understand ways to stabilize property value and quality of life in the neighborhood. And finally, we summarize recommendations to move West Akron forward in the coming years. In the Appendix, data is provided which can be useful in developing relationships with local properties and businesses, and assisting them to grow.

Caveats

As with any such analysis, data and interviews can only go so far in determining potential opportunity for business and revitalization success. Data, while quantitative, attempts to approximate reality, but statistical margins of error and inaccuracies in data provided by others exist. Other key factors, such as the vision, business and marketing savvy, and capital capacity of the entrepreneur/project proponent, and changing market conditions, have a profound effect on business success and are beyond the scope of this report. No guarantees are made with regard to potential business or redevelopment success with the recommendations given in this report.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Overview

Interviews with key stakeholders provide context for data collection and are critical inputs to understanding the economy of a neighborhood. As part of this project, 28 interviews were conducted between December 2022 and March 2023. A few interviews were in person, but most were done by telephone.

Stakeholders interviewed included business owners, property owners, longtime and more recent residents, developers, real estate agents, elected officials at the City and County levels, and representatives of City government, churches and nonprofit organizations, and the Akron Public Schools.

Questions discussed in the interviews addressed neighborhood connections, neighborhood assets and challenges, and interviewees' big ideas and priorities for neighborhood revitalization. The following is a brief summary of interview findings; a full summary report is included in the Appendix.

Neighborhood Assets

Interviewees identified a range of assets they felt the neighborhood could use to build on. Key mentions included:

Human (People and Organizations) Capital. Many interviewees identified “the people” as the neighborhood’s greatest asset. There is a lot of neighborhood pride. They expressed an awareness that there are many dedicated people with strong skills and the will to improve the neighborhood, they just need access to resources and opportunity to make it happen. Community development organizations such as Mustard Seed, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Black Wellness and Economic Coalition, Project Ujima, The Urban Leagues, and youth organizations were also identified as assets strengthening the community. Youth were specifically mentioned as an untapped asset who are smart and need good, positive ways to channel their creativity and intelligence.

Customers and shoppers. Their customers were seen as an asset by business owners, many of them neighborhood residents and workers. Some interviewees mentioned the strength of neighborhood block clubs working in the area. One interviewee mentioned famous people who grew up in the neighborhood – Rita Dove, Thaddeus Garry, Leon Harris. Another mentioned the people who are coming back and buying homes in the neighborhood. The diversity of the neighborhood was also cited as an asset, noting that more non-Black people are moving in, while the Black community remains strong.

Small businesses. Small businesses that are not chains but family-run places were seen as assets, especially restaurants, beauty/barber shops.

Residential neighborhoods. The neighborhood’s residential character was mentioned by several interviewees. “West Akron has the largest swath of single-family homes in the City.” Others mentioned the tree-lined streets, good housing stock, and the good job most homeowners are doing in keeping up their property, and that people are respectful of art in the neighborhood.

Churches. The churches were also identified by many interviewees as very important assets, providing a framework and community within which people can take action. There are at least twelve in the neighborhood with substantial membership from within and outside the neighborhood, strong and active leadership, and buildings which act as centers of community.

The Akron Zoo. The Zoo was mentioned by several interviewees as significant assets. The Akron Zoo has multiple projects working in the neighborhood nearby, and is a major employer.

Health facilities. While not in the neighborhood directly, Cleveland Clinic-Akron General and Akron Children’s Hospital are immediately adjacent to the neighborhood’s border with downtown, and present an opportunity for employment and institutional partnerships. In addition, the neighborhood’s Summa Health Equity Center is an asset that should be better publicized and utilized.

City Parks and Community Centers. The parks mentioned included the community centers and pools, Schneider Park and Forest Lodge, Kerr Park, and the golf course (it was noted that the golf course is deed restricted and cannot be developed). City-run community centers: Forest Lodge, Balch Street, Lawton Street, and Ed Davis were specifically mentioned.

Buchtel Community Learning Center and Akron Public Schools. The schools remain a source of pride, particularly among Buchtel alumni, and the point of recent investment by the School District. Many facilities have been rebuilt, and Buchtel in particular is a vibrant place of learning, with up-to-date computer facilities and places for community learning as well. Buchtel alumni were identified as an untapped resource that could be a force in the future revitalization of the neighborhood.

Additional assets mentioned included: Customers and shoppers, Small businesses, and Historic museums including the Perkins Stone Mansion.

Neighborhood Challenges

Interviewees had specific ideas for how to address these challenges that are noted in the Big Ideas section following.

Poor condition of commercial areas. The poor condition of commercial areas, in contrast to the condition of residential areas, was noted. It is a challenge to get outside business owners and property owners to care for their property, bringing the overall value of the commercial area

down. Interviewees appreciate the work of the Merchants' Association but note that it can only go so far if property and business owners don't cooperate.

Youth Challenges. A wide range of challenges were noted related to youth: infant mortality, low birth weight, third grade reading, older youths' need for direction, mentoring and training.

Fresh Food Desert. The lack of fresh food in the neighborhood, and the poor quality of food available, was noted. This, along with the perception of lack of safety, was cited as a primary reason that people who can, leave the neighborhood for grocery shopping.

Poor social outcomes. Several interviewees discussed the social determinants of health, and their impact on individual and family health, with poor outcomes for families.

Communication with the City and philanthropy. Several interviewees mentioned lack of good communication on the part of the City and philanthropy regarding asking about the neighborhood's wants and desires.

Safety/Security. Interviewees had wide-ranging ideas about safety and security in the neighborhood. Some felt that this was a real deterrent to people wanting to move and shop there, and send their children to the schools. Others felt that they were safe living in the neighborhood, and that the lack of safety is largely a factor of public perception that could be changed via a marketing campaign, and storytelling about the good people and projects accomplished in the neighborhood.

Communication and coordination within the neighborhood. The difficulty getting the word out to residents and businesses was mentioned by many people – "the services and assets are here, but people don't know about it". Getting people to work together can be a challenge.

Residual Effects of Urban Renewal. The Innerbelt's urban renewal effect on the neighborhood is remembered and mourned. Several interviewees were nostalgic for the vibrant Black commercial areas at Wooster Avenue and Howard Avenue. There is a hope for rebuilding Black success to build wealth and neighborhood vibrancy.

Limited funding resources. Limitations in the amount of funding and resources available were mentioned by many. Some reflected on the need to reduce competition for limited funds by developing a strategic coordination of service organizations.

Poor condition of rental housing. While housing is seen as an asset overall, the poor condition of rental housing was noted by many. Absentee property owners are seen as an issue in residential rental property, just as it is a problem in commercial property.

Lack of Coordination. Several interviewees noted the need for a coordinated effort among organizations.

Other challenges noted included: a need for better employment and training opportunities; the high cost of renovating housing vs. the lower market value of the property – doesn't pencil out, making loans impossible to obtain to do the renovation work; difficulty getting bank loans for renovations or small business in the neighborhood due location. See the full report in the appendix for further discussion.

Stakeholders' Big Ideas

Stakeholders discussed their Big Ideas for the neighborhood at length. Their ideas reflect much past consideration of the neighborhood's future. See the full report in the Appendix for detailed discussion. Ideas presented include:

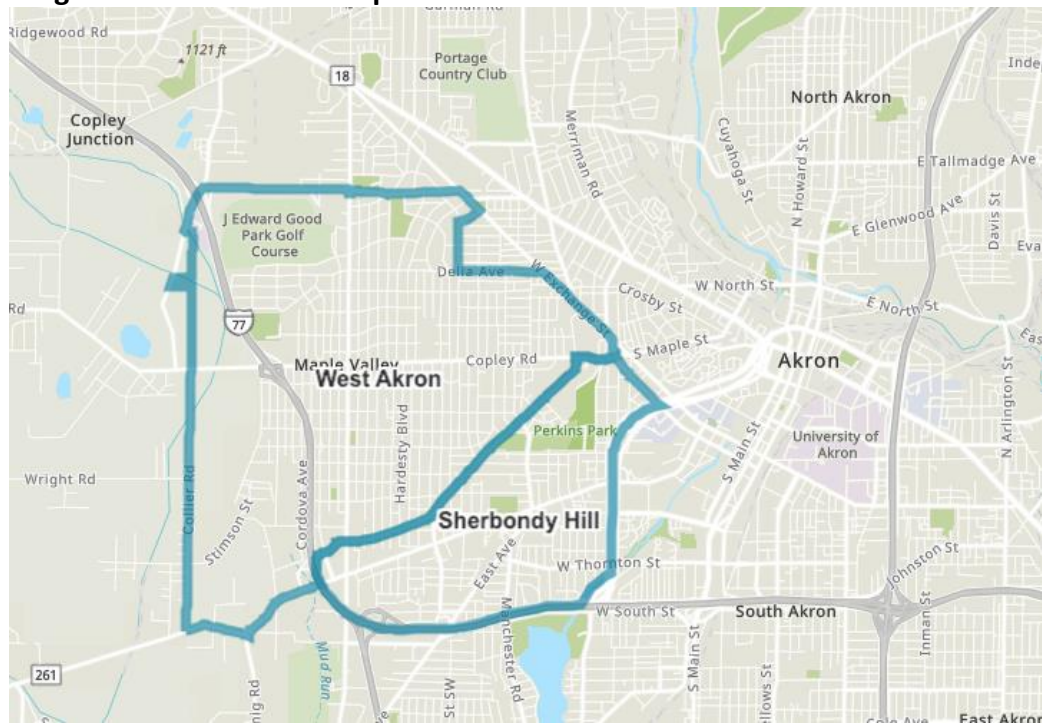
- Restoring vibrancy to the Copley Road commercial area
- Enhancing regional attraction with a catalytic investment
- Developing commercial opportunities in the Vernon Odom area with major employers
- Create a new vibrant local retail streetscape in the Sherbondy Hill (V. Odom) area
- Develop anchor institution relationships with the Akron Zoo and hospitals
- Develop a community-driven multi-purpose center
- Initiate a community development investment fund
- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing, public relations, and information approach that serves residents, businesses, and outsiders
- Strategically stabilize neighborhoods and address housing needs
- Strategically organize collaborative community efforts
- Improve parks and recreation opportunities
- Improve neighborhood signage
- Strategically spur more investment

RETAIL MARKET ASSESSMENT

The West Akron Retail Market Area

Overview. The study area of this report included both the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods, located 5 minutes to the west of downtown Akron. The neighborhood as a whole has excellent freeway access, within 5 minutes of most businesses, off I-77 and I-76 to the west and south. Typical of many urban core neighborhoods in legacy cities of the Midwest, the neighborhood has a history of disinvestment and decline. Prior to the 1960's, it was a thriving African American neighborhood with several main streets featuring entertainment, dining, and full range of neighborhood-supporting businesses. In the present day, the West Akron neighborhood is still a place of tree-lined streets and well-kept homes. There remains a strong African American cultural presence, and several major assets in or near the neighborhood, including the Akron Zoo, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General Hospital, historic assets, active churches, parks and community centers.

Neighborhood Location Map



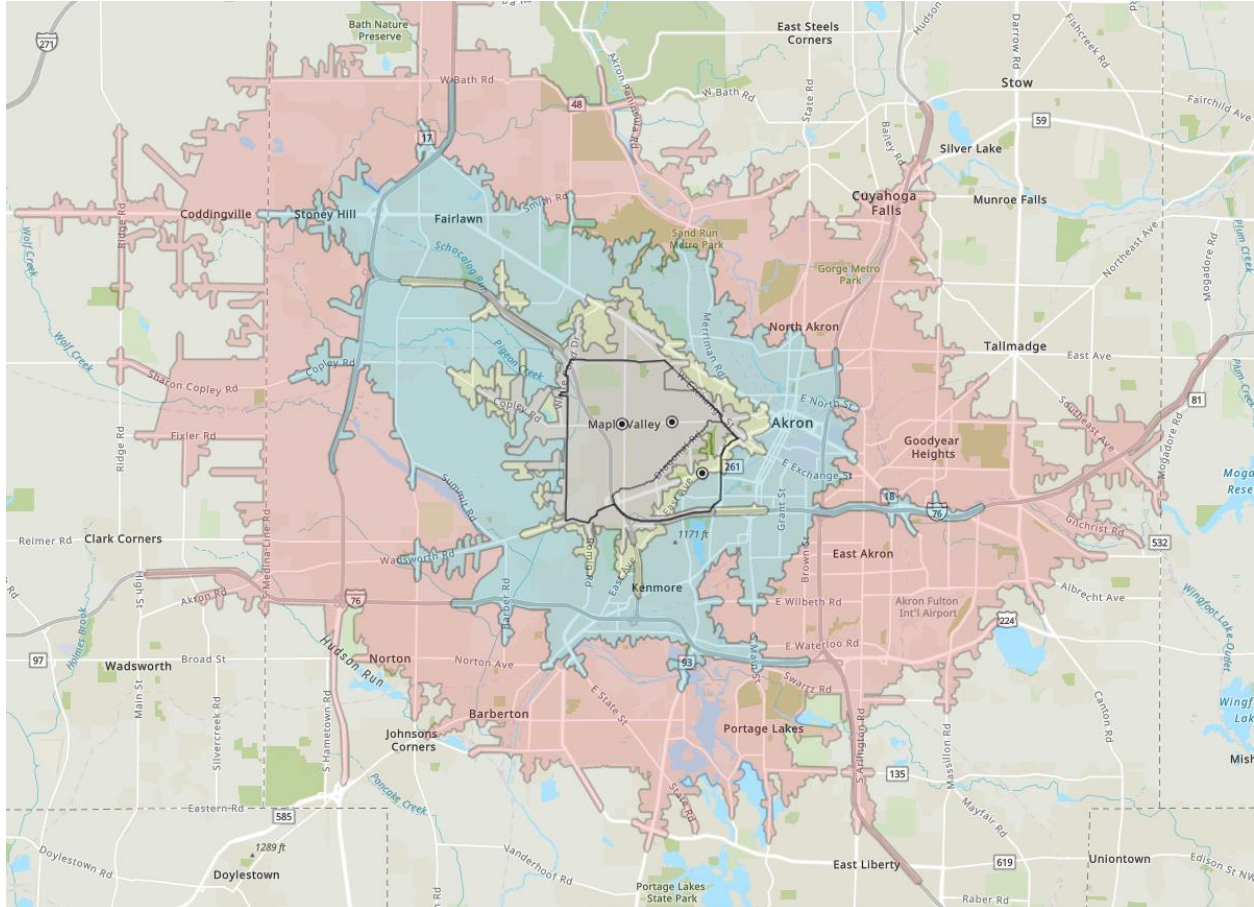
Source: ESRI, KM Date Planning, City of Akron

Opportunity and Potential

As shown in the West Akron Neighborhood Market Area map, drive times around the neighborhood were plotted at 5, 6, 10 and 15 minutes. The neighborhood boundary around the West Akron and Sherbondy Hill neighborhoods was chosen as the study Trade Area, due to its similarity to the 5- and 6-minute drive times, and because it includes areas of opportunity

north of Copley Road. The map shows that beyond the trade area analyzed, there are a range of suburban markets within 10 and 15 minutes of the neighborhood center, including Fairlawn, Cuyahoga Falls and Barberton.

West Akron Neighborhood Market Area Map



Source: ESRI, KM Date Planning, City of Akron

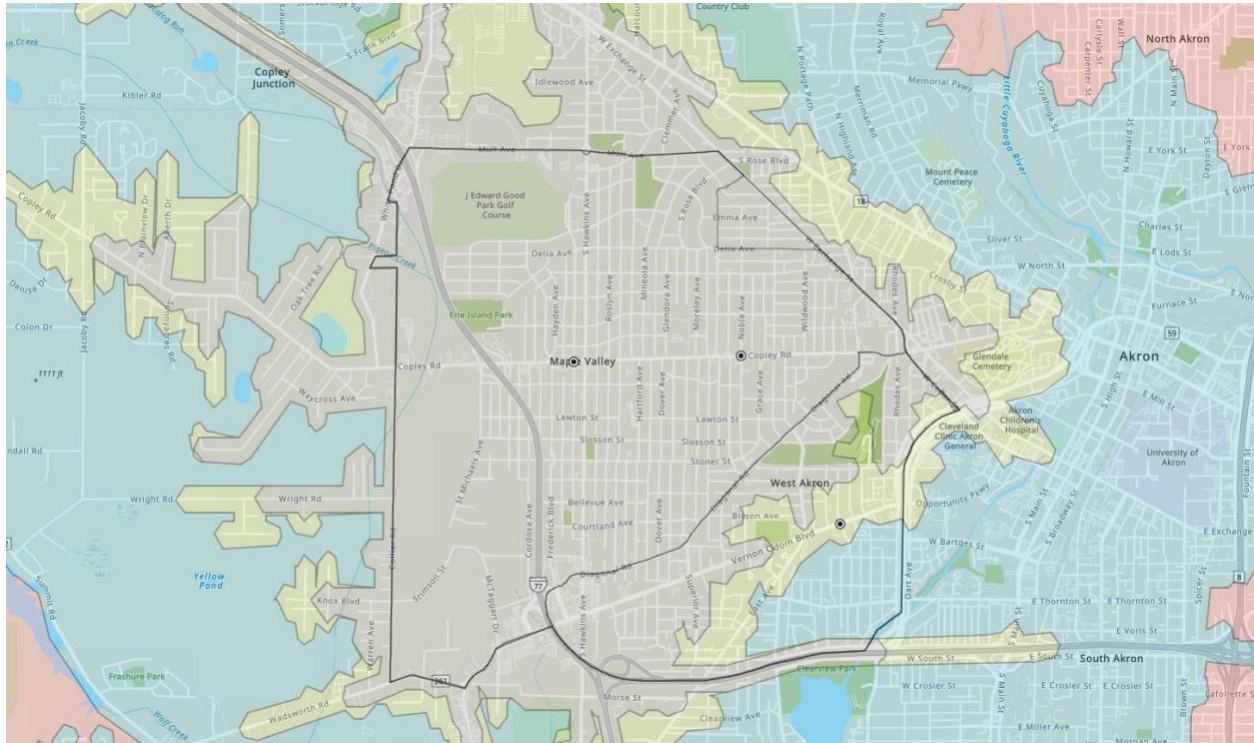
Maps Legend

- Black outline – Neighborhood boundaries
- Gray area – 5-minute drive zone
- Green area – 6-minute drive zone
- Blue area – 10-minute drive zone
- Pink area – 15-minute drive zone

As shown in the Trade Area Map, the neighborhood/study area boundary is a conservative choice, smaller than the 5-minute drive time area. This boundary was also chosen to enable a better understanding of the neighborhood’s potential. Interviewees also confirmed that the neighborhood boundaries reflected the potential for customer patronage of businesses, if quality businesses with good selection and offerings exist to draw them in. It was noted in interviews that wealthier patrons north of Delia on the north end of the neighborhood do not currently patronize Copley Road businesses, but given their close proximity within a 5 minutes’

drive, they represent a strong potential market to support commercial activity in the neighborhood.

West Akron Trade Area Map



Source: ESRI, KM Date Planning, City of Akron

Neighborhood Retail Demand

Community Profile

As shown in the Community Profile table, four drive times were analyzed as well as the neighborhood (Trade Area). The West Akron neighborhood is home to 23,000 residents, and 10,000 households. Our analysis showed that the total buying power of these 10,000 households is \$500 million, which is solid for an urban neighborhood. At the 6-minute drive time, the total buying power increases to \$1 billion, which is solid for urban/suburban neighborhoods.

With its proximity to downtown Akron and suburban business zones, there are 93,000 workers within 10 minutes’ drive of the neighborhood center. Inside the trade area boundary, the average local household income was \$50,601 in 2022, falling in the middle income “quintile” of US households.²

² Source: ESRI 2022, based on American Communities Survey data.

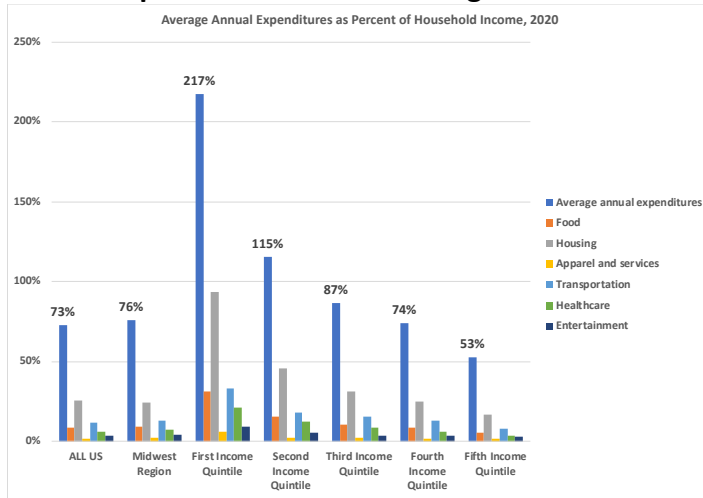
Community Profile Summary Table

	Neighborhood	5 Minute Drive Time	6 Minute Drive Time	10 Minute Drive Time	15 Minute Drive Time
2022 Total Population	23,372	24,295	36,145	110,485	267,083
2022 Total Daytime Population	18,849	20,653	37,570	154,242	297,791
Workers	4,333	6,397	17,372	93,840	156,349
Residents	14,516	14,256	20,198	60,402	141,442
2022 Households	10,338	11,010	16,992	48,524	116,085
2022 Average Household Size	2.26	2.2	2.11	2.18	2.25
2022 Housing Units	11,671	12,376	19,064	54,486	128,035
Owner Occupied Housing Units	46.0%	48.4%	44.9%	46.0%	52.1%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	42.6%	40.6%	44.2%	43.1%	38.6%
Vacant Housing Units	11.4%	11.0%	10.9%	10.9%	9.3%
Median Household Income 2022	\$ 32,287	\$ 37,436	\$ 38,753	\$ 43,139	\$ 47,863
Average Household Income 2022	\$ 50,601	\$ 57,367	\$ 59,694	\$ 69,622	\$ 72,304
Total Household Buying Power	\$ 523,113,138	\$ 631,610,670	\$ 1,014,320,448	\$ 3,378,337,928	\$ 8,393,409,840
2022 Population by Age					
Total	23,374	24,296	36,145	110,485	267,085
Under 18	23.2%	21.7%	20.9%	19.2%	20.4%
18 +	76.8%	78.3%	79.1%	80.8%	79.6%
65 +	19.5%	20.3%	19.7%	19.0%	18.7%
2022 Population by Race/Ethnicity					
Total	23,372	24,295	36,145	110,486	267,083
White Alone	17.5%	27.1%	36.1%	53.9%	63.0%
Black Alone	74.9%	65.2%	55.9%	34.5%	24.1%
Two or More Races	5.4%	5.4%	5.6%	6.3%	6.6%
Hispanic Origin	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%	3.1%	3.0%
Other	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	5.2%	6.3%

Household Expenditures and Income

When considering the buying power of households, it is crucial to understand the pattern of household expenditures, as they vary by income quintile. As an illustration, as shown in the Average Annual Household Expenditures chart, average annual household expenditures on food, housing, apparel and services, transportation, health care, and entertainment represent only 53% of average annual household income for households in the top (fifth) income quintile of the United States, while it represents 87% of household income for those in the middle (third) income quintile. It is highest, at 217% and 115% respectively, for the lowest (first and second) income quintiles, due to income supplements and subsidies.

Annual Expenditures as a Percentage of Household Income, US 2020



Our first step in analyzing retail demand in the West Akron neighborhood was therefore to understand where neighborhood households fall in the income quintile categories. As shown in the Income Quintile Chart below, West Akron’s Mean Household Income is \$50,601, falling between the lower limit of the third and fourth income quintiles. This means that the typical neighborhood household expenditure patterns likely follow the third income quintile, at 91% for 2021.

Income Quintile Chart, 2021

Item	All consumer units	Lowest 20 percent	Second 20 percent	Third 20 percent	Fourth 20 percent	Highest 20 percent
Number of consumer units (in thousands)	133,595	26,642	26,677	26,626	26,801	26,849
Lower limit of quintile - Household Income	n.a.	n.a.	\$24,128	\$46,506	\$78,259	\$129,534
Mean Household Income Before Taxes	\$87,432	\$13,165	\$34,767	\$61,214	\$100,527	\$226,386
Average Annual Household Expenditures	\$66,928	\$30,869	\$43,918	\$55,914	\$75,284	\$128,213
% Average Annual Household Expenditures	77%	234%	126%	91%	75%	57%
West Akron Neighborhood Mean HHI				\$ 50,601		

Source: US Consumer Expenditures Survey, 2021

**Consumer Expenditures on “Bricks and Mortar” Retail Goods and Services
Third Income Quintile, 2021**

Expenditures	percentage of Household Income
Average Annual Household Income	100%
Average Annual Expenditures	91.34%
Expenditures on Retail Goods including Grocery	23.06%
Expenditures on Dining and Beverages Outside the Home	4.57%
Expenditures on Consumer Services	4.66%
Total Retail Demand in Bricks and Mortar Stores (1)	32.3%

Source: US Consumer Expenditures Survey 2021; US Census of Retail

(1) Note: Calculations exclude expenditures for e-commerce, which is tracked separately by the US Department of Commerce

Once the income quintile is determined, the US Department of Labor Consumer Expenditures Survey, and the US Department of Commerce’s Survey of Retail Trade, are analyzed to understand the percentage of household income expenditures in categories of interest to us. These include select retail goods, dining, and consumer services that are located in bricks and mortar stores. The Consumer Expenditures Table summarizes the goods, dining and consumer services income expenditures percentages. Further breakdown of the Retail Trade Survey yielded demand for each individual niche.

In addition to demand within the neighborhood, our analysis assigned an additional demand for selected niche categories where demand is highly likely to come from outside the neighborhood. This includes all dining, and certain retail goods such as hardware, grocery, used merchandise and gifts. Consumer services with calculated outside demand were limited to funeral services in this analysis.

Capture of Outside Sales

Consumer Niche	% for Outside Sales
DINING	
Restaurants - full service	50%
Bars/Taverns	50%
Restaurants - limited service	50%
RETAIL GOODS	
Hardware/Home/Garden Stores	50%
Grocery and Specialty Foods Stores	10%
Home Furnishings and Accessories Stores	50%
Sporting goods/outdoors/bikes Stores	50%
Hobby/Toy/Game Stores	50%
Used merchandise Stores	100%
Gifts/novelties Stores	50%
Gas Stations/Convenience Stores	50%
Health and Personal Care Stores (incl Drug Stores)	10%
General Merchandise Stores	5%
CONSUMER SERVICES	
Funeral Services	100%

Source: KM Date Planning

Typical business characteristics

In addition, typical business characteristics such as typical square footage and annual sales for each category were factored into the analysis. This data was a combination of what is available through commercial data sources such as Data Axle; measurements by the KM Date team; and KM Date’s historic database of businesses.

Retail Supply in the Neighborhood

The next step in the analysis is to understand the supply of retail-serving businesses in the neighborhood now. A detailed inventory was prepared of all 146 retail businesses within the neighborhood trade area. The Retail Supply table summarizes our findings. For a detailed inventory, see the Appendix. Further breakdown by category is included in the following section, “Comparing Supply and Demand”.

Retail Supply in the West Akron Neighborhood

Consumer Category	Estimated Square Feet	Estimated number of Employees	Number of Businesses
Total Dining, Restaurant and Bars/Taverns	88,285	444	30
Total retail goods	383,446	421	59
Total consumer services	261,070	666	57
All consumer goods and services	732,801	1,531	146

Source: Data Axle, KM Date Planning

Significantly, the following niches were not represented in the neighborhood:

- Books/recorded music
- Music/musical instruments
- Office supplies/stationery
- Sporting Goods
- Hobby/Toy/Game
- Computer/Electronics repairs
- Eyecare
- Repairs: shoes, jewelry, furniture, and others
- Legal services
- Rentals

Comparing Supply and Demand

The final step in retail market analysis is to understand, based on consumer demand, the gaps and surpluses that exist in the neighborhood in specific categories. In these analyses, the term “leakage” is used to describe demand within the neighborhood that is being met outside of it. Consumers go outside the neighborhood for various reasons – the good or service is not available in the neighborhood, or certain characteristics are not met for quality, selection, price, or convenience. “Leakage” represents the entire unmet demand in the neighborhood, and is the full potential for increased sales within the neighborhood. Within the 100% leakage amount, a smaller percentage is likely to be realistic, because of consumers’ preferences to shop around. Some leakage is normal, however large amounts of leakage in a category indicate potential demand for the entrepreneur to capture.

On the opposite side of the supply/demand comparison, surpluses indicate categories where there is more supply in the neighborhood than neighborhood demand might indicate. Large supply, in categories where the businesses are thriving, indicate that a larger demand trade area is being met by consumers outside the trade area. These are likely visitors and workers who patronize these businesses because they are in the area, or are drawn in because of the nature of the business.

One special area of surplus should be noted – “General Merchandise” stores. These include Walmart, Target, Dollar Stores, and similar establishments that sell a variety of goods crossing

over multiple niche categories. The US Department of Commerce now tracks sales at these stores separately from their subcategories such as grocery, clothing, home and sporting goods, so the demand we analyzed for “clothing stores”, for example, is above and beyond that of the clothing in the General Merchandise stores. It is very typical for General Merchandise in any neighborhood to be so far surplused that the amount equals or is greater to the total leakage for other types of goods; so leakage estimates need to be taken conservatively. However, given the tendency of General Merchandise stores to draw customers from outside, and the limited selection and quality they provide, leakage in other categories can still be interpreted as opportunity.

Dining

As shown in the table below, approximately \$15 million is going outside the neighborhood for dining, \$13 million for full-service restaurants alone. Limited-service restaurants are oversupplied by \$1.8 million, yet the net leakage is still large. Some leakage for dining is very normal, up to 50% – people like to eat at a variety of places! – but these results indicate there is strong opportunity for more dining in the neighborhood. See the “Dining Drilldown” section for more detailed information.

Dining – Comparison of Supply and Demand

Consumer Niche	Existing Stores in SF	Total Gap in SF (Surplus)	Total No. Stores Represented by Leakage	Total Sales Represented by Leakage (Surplus)
DINING				
Restaurants - full service	15,656	88,634	29.5	\$ 13,295,074
Bars/Taverns	13,069	42,266	14.1	\$ 3,169,981
Restaurants - limited service	59,560	(6,052)	-2.4	\$ (1,815,595)
Total/Net	88,285	124,848	41	\$ 14,649,460

Source: KM Date Community Planning

Retail Goods

Retail goods include products which are purchased and used by households to meet their needs. Eighteen categories were analyzed for leakage and surplus. Hardware, home and garden; grocery and specialty foods; clothing/shoes/accessories; home furnishings/accessories; sporting goods; and other miscellaneous retail stores all had leakage over \$1 million (hardware and grocery over \$10 million) and indicate demand for these categories in the neighborhood. AS noted above, these projections need to be tempered by the surplus of General Merchandise stores, but nevertheless indicate gaps in quality and selection that could be met conservatively.

Retail Goods – Comparison of Supply and Demand

Consumer Niche	Existing Stores in SF	Total Gap in SF (Surplus)	Total No. Stores Represented by Leakage	Total Sales Represented by Leakage (Surplus)
RETAIL GOODS				
Hardware/Home/Garden Stores	14,334	43,971	8.8	\$ 13,191,410
Grocery and Specialty Foods Stores	23,340	26,132	2.6	\$ 11,106,069
Clothing/Shoes/Accessories Stores	5,800	30,085	12.0	\$ 6,016,939
Home Furnishings and Accessories Stores	1,240	24,745	12.4	\$ 4,948,963
Sporting goods/outdoors/bikes Stores	-	12,030	4.0	\$ 2,406,074
Other miscellaneous retail Stores	6,679	11,266	5.6	\$ 1,689,932
Hobby/Toy/Game Stores	-	5,770	3.2	\$ 865,481
Used merchandise Stores	6,474	4,503	1.5	\$ 450,300
Office Supplies/stationery Stores	-	1,003	0.3	\$ 250,774
Music and Musical Instruments Stores	-	1,630	0.9	\$ 244,477
Books and Recorded Music	-	1,378	0.8	\$ 206,721
Electronics and Appliance Stores	14,761	(4,545)	-2.3	\$ (1,022,670)
Gifts/novelties Stores	20,000	(15,275)	-7.6	\$ (2,291,317)
Auto Parts and Supplies, Tires Stores	35,534	(21,856)	-4.4	\$ (4,371,196)
Gas Stations/Convenience Stores	37,275	(8,793)	-2.9	\$ (6,594,615)
Beer/wine/liquor stores	13,946	(11,663)	-2.9	\$ (8,746,899)
Health and Personal Care Stores (incl Drug Stores)	54,176	(26,212)	-4.4	\$ (9,698,599)
General Merchandise Stores	149,887	(81,184)	-4.5	\$ (24,355,119)
Total/NET	383,446	(7,015)	23.2	\$ (15,703,275)

Source: KM Date Community Planning

Consumer Services

Consumer services include basic services provided to households. Sixteen categories were assessed. Note that medical services are not included in this analysis, beyond dental services, since they are typically provided on a regional basis independent of individual household or neighborhood demand. Dental services are analyzed because that category of healthcare is still provide in person, and often at the neighborhood level. Our analysis indicates that only demand for pet services and legal services exceed \$1 million per year, but along with entertainment, even other categories of leakage may generate enough demand for small businesses to be supported. In other areas of consumer services, such as personal care, laundry, funeral services, auto repair, and fitness, high surpluses indicate a large clientele from outside the neighborhood who are bringing their dollars to local businesses.

Consumer Services – Comparison of Supply and Demand

Consumer Niche	Existing Stores in SF	Total Gap in SF (Surplus)	Total No. Stores Represented by Leakage	Total Sales Represented by Leakage (Surplus)
CONSUMER SERVICES				
Pet Services	1,000	23,035	6.58	\$ 2,303,453
Legal Services	-	3,047	1.22	\$ 1,066,326
Entertainment Fees and Admissions (except movies)	33,132	19,681	1.97	\$ 984,029
Movie Theater Tickets	-	10,800	1.54	\$ 540,009
Furniture and other Repairs and Services	-	1,337	0.53	\$ 267,399
Accounting Services	2,327	432	0.17	\$ 86,353
Rentals	-	536	0.18	\$ 80,468
Shoe and Jewelry Repair	-	454	0.18	\$ 68,052
Computer and Electronics Repairs	-	125	0.05	\$ 43,657
Dental Services	17,859	(2,777)	-0.31	\$ (485,981)
Health Club/Fitness	22,232	(10,254)	-1.71	\$ (2,050,818)
Auto repair/services	61,937	(13,826)	-2.77	\$ (2,073,828)
Funeral Services	23,155	(14,001)	-1.40	\$ (2,100,093)
Clothing Laundry/Drycleaning/Tailoring/Storage/Rental	15,779	(12,392)	-2.48	\$ (2,478,411)
Personal Care Services (salon/barber, spa, tattoo, etc)	43,806	(26,014)	-11.31	\$ (3,902,068)
Other Repairs and Services	39,845	(39,845)	-13.28	\$ (13,945,593)
Total/NET	\$ 261,070	\$ (59,662)	\$ (27)	\$ (23,900,499)

Source: KM Date Community Planning

Restaurant Analysis Drilldown

Overview

Standard dining market analysis classifies restaurants into two categories, full service (typically patrons order and pay at their table, and there is wait service) and limited-service (patrons order and pay at the counter, with little or no wait service). This can be helpful for an overall sense of demand in a neighborhood, but it can be even more helpful to know what categories of restaurants there might be demand for, and how that demand is met in the neighborhood.

Methodology

For this analysis, KM Date has developed a model which uses the proportion of restaurants in the County as the standard against which restaurant supply is compared. Given the post-pandemic volatility of the restaurant market at the time we were doing this analysis, we used pre-pandemic restaurant categories in Summit County (2019) for the comparison.

Restaurant Categories

Within the Limited-Service category, we categorized five restaurant types, and within Full Service another five types. A third category, drinking places, is reserved for drinking-only bars and taverns with limited food offerings. More full food offerings at drinking places fall into the full-service restaurant according to the food type, or brewery/wine bar/craft beer/spirits where

a range of boutique liquors, with full-service food, are offered. Examples are given where appropriate to help the reader visualize the restaurant type. Note that any restaurant in any category can be local or national, chain or “Mom and Pop”.

- **Limited-Service Restaurants:** order and pay at the counter before eating
 - Beverage/Snack/Juice Bar/Cookie Bar
 - Coffee/Tea/Bakery (Starbucks, Gourmet Coffee, tea bar)
 - Fast Casual (Panera, Choo-Lah)
 - Ice Cream
 - Quick Service (fast food)
- **Full-Service Restaurants:** wait service, order and pay at table or at register
 - Casual Dining (Olive Garden)
 - Ethnic Dining (Chinese, Mediterranean, etc)
 - Family Dining (Perkins, Denny’s, diners)
 - Fine Dining (reservations, table linens, valet parking, high-end wines)
 - Brewery/Wine Bar/Craft Beer/Spirits (include a menu for full meals)
- **Drinking Places:** limited to bars and taverns, drinking-only establishments with limited “bar food”

For each restaurant or drinking place in Summit County (in 2019) and in West Akron (in fall of 2022), we utilized a web review of Google data, menus, reviews and business information, supplemented by spot checks on the ground, to assign the category.

Restaurant Supply in West Akron

We found 30 restaurants and drinking establishments, characterized in the West Akron Neighborhood Restaurants table. Of interest, only 1/3 are national chains, with a full 53% being single-location Mom and Pop-type restaurants. There are only 4 bar/taverns; and no ice cream, brewery/craft beer/spirits, coffee/bakery, beverage/snack, or fine dining. Existing dining is weighted toward “Quick service” – fast food – at sixteen restaurants, providing over half of the dining experience in West Akron. Six of the Quick Service restaurants are local shops, while ten are national chains. An estimated 350 people are employed by the 30 restaurants.

West Akron Neighborhood Restaurants

Restaurant Category	Number of Businesses	National Chain Businesses	Local Chain Businesses	Non-Chain Businesses	Estimated Average Number of Employees Per Store	Estimated Total Employees	Total Square Footage
Full Service Restaurants	6	-	1	5	19	29	15,656
Brewery/Wine Bar/Craft Beer/Spirits	0						
Casual Dining	2			2	4	8	9,365
Ethnic Dining	2			2	7	13	3,250
Family Dining	2		1	1	8	8	3,041
Fine Dining	0						
Limited Service Restaurants	20	10	3	7	35	128	59,560
Beverage/Snack	0						
Coffee/Bakery	0						
Fast Casual	4		2	2	15	30	17,331
Ice Cream	0						
Quick Service	16	10	1	5	20	98	42,229
Drinking Places	4	-	-	4	9	35	13,069
Bar/Tavern	4			4	9	35	13,069
All Categories	30	10	4	16		354	88,285
Percent of All	100%	33%	13%	53%			

Source: KM Date, Data Axle

Comparison of Dining Demand and Supply by Category

Our methodology takes into account the proportion of restaurants in the County as a basis, but also factors in the typical sales per restaurant to arrive at a weighted average projection of leakage. This allows us to project forward, based on overall limited-service and full-service restaurant leakage, the number of additional restaurants that might be supported in the neighborhood.

Restaurants in West Akron – Comparison of Supply and Demand

Subcategory	Category % of all restaurants in Summit County 2019	Trade Area Supply in Stores	Trade Area Supply in SF	Leakage in SF	Approximate Leakage in Stores	Approximate Leakage Sales
Full Service Restaurants						
Brewery/Wine Bar/Craft Beer/Spirits	1.5%	0	-	2,890	1	\$ 457,580
Casual Dining	7.2%	2	9,365	36,218	8	\$ 4,640,806
Ethnic Dining	13.1%	2	3,250	13,120	8	\$ 2,987,339
Family Dining	8.4%	2	3,041	12,608	8	\$ 6,011,984
Fine Dining	2.3%	0	-	7,755	2	\$ 1,661,740
Limited Service Restaurants						
Beverage/Snack	0.4%	0	-	251	0	\$ 20,050
Coffee/Bakery	7.6%	0	-	14,626	6	\$ 4,387,946
Fast casual	3.1%	4	17,331	(8,588)	(2)	\$ (1,387,440)
Ice Cream Shop	3.7%	0	-	3,506	2	\$ 888,156
Quick Service	29.0%	16	42,229	7,656	3	\$ 2,465,625
Drinking Places						
Bar/Tavern	23.7%	4	13,069	36,257	11	\$ 1,941,973
All Restaurants	100.0%	30	88,285	126,299	48	\$ 24,075,758

Source: KM Date

When we use this method to compare dining supply in West Akron to the overall proportion of restaurants by category in Summit County, the situation changes somewhat. While Quick Service restaurants appear to be a higher percentage of restaurants by count than in the county, the likely lower sales per store in West Akron means that there is still leakage of dollars to outside restaurants in this category. The only area of surplus in the neighborhood categories is fast-casual restaurants; restaurant leakage, or net demand, is distributed among all the other categories. In particular, family dining, casual dining, coffee/bakery, ethnic dining, and quick service present opportunities, but all categories except fast-casual indicate net demand.

Retail Findings

Key findings of the analysis include:

- There is strong demand for dining in West Akron. \$18 million is going outside the neighborhood for dining - \$10 million for full service, and \$5.6 million for fast service – at least 10 restaurants. When analyzed by category, all but one categories of restaurants indicate demand – but in particular, family dining, casual dining, coffee/bakery, ethnic dining, and quick service present opportunity.
- In retail goods, general merchandise (Walmart, target, dollar stores, etc) indicates a surplus of \$24 million, which wipes out all other categories. However, this is typical of most retail markets, while consumer interest in wider selection and quality persists
- Leakage of \$13 million in hardware/home/garden, \$11 million in grocery, and \$6 million in clothing and accessories is worth examining
- Personal, repair, and other services have large surpluses, likely indicating many outside customers coming in
- Pet services/supplies, legal services, and entertainment have the largest leakage at \$2 million, \$1 million and \$1 million respectively

BUSINESS ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Neighborhood Business Activity

Introduction

Business activity analysis helps to understand the neighborhood’s economy, in order to identify existing businesses that can be supported as they grow, and new businesses that might be recruited and do well here. This information can be used by local economic development professionals to understand what additional businesses can be recruited, what businesses are bringing the most value to the neighborhood, and what state support might be available; and to market the neighborhood to potential stakeholders, investors, and entrepreneurs.

To do this analysis, we inventory the businesses in the neighborhood and collect data on their location, size, estimated relative employment, and estimated sales. We then use this information to compare neighborhood business activity to activity in the city, county, and region, looking for relative strengths and relationships that we can highlight.

Business activity analysis looks at all business categories active in the neighborhood – retail, manufacturing, social services, professional services, construction, government, hospitality, and others. Home businesses, businesses based in “bricks and mortar” stores, and e-commerce are included. In the analysis, “Traded” and “Local” companies are noted. “Traded” companies have a special weight in the economy, because they bring in dollars from outside the region, generating multiple economic benefits in the neighborhood and beyond. “Local” companies typically serve the neighborhood or nearby consumers alone.

JobsOhio Targeted Industries

JobsOhio targets certain industries that they support in a variety of ways³. These are identified traded industries that have the most potential to generate economic growth across the state. New opportunities recruited to expand employment in the area would do well to focus on these industries. While West Akron is a microcosm of the regional economy, opportunities can exist at the single-site level that can help lift the neighborhood economy. Currently, financial services and health care exist in West Akron.

- Advanced manufacturing
- Additive manufacturing
- Aerospace and aviation
- Automotive
- Advanced mobility
- Energy and chemicals
- Financial services
- Insurtech
- Food and agribusiness
- Healthcare
- Gene therapy
- Logistics and distribution
- Military and federal
- Technology
- Cybersecurity

³ See <https://www.jobsohio.com/industries>

Businesses in the West Akron Neighborhood

The charts and tables on this and the following pages summarize businesses in the West Akron neighborhood (including Sherbondy Hill). A total of 393 establishments in the neighborhood employ an estimated 4,429 workers. The largest industries of employment are educational services (21.7%), other services (16.5%), health care and social assistance (15%), retail trade (13.5%) and accommodation/food services (11.1%).

A full inventory of businesses is included as a separate excel document. It must be noted that employment figures are estimates only, obtained from Data Axle, and may not be accurate, but do give us a rough sense of relative activity in the industry sectors. Most businesses do not share employment information readily in order for us to obtain a fully accurate picture.

Similarly, the list of Top 20 employers is based on employment estimates. This chart shows us that the Akron Public Schools and the Akron Zoo are important to neighborhood employment. Other large employers also play an important role. It should be noted that workers are key potential customers for neighborhood businesses during the day and early evening, and can be a focus of marketing efforts. The Zoo also brings potential customers to the neighborhood doorstep.

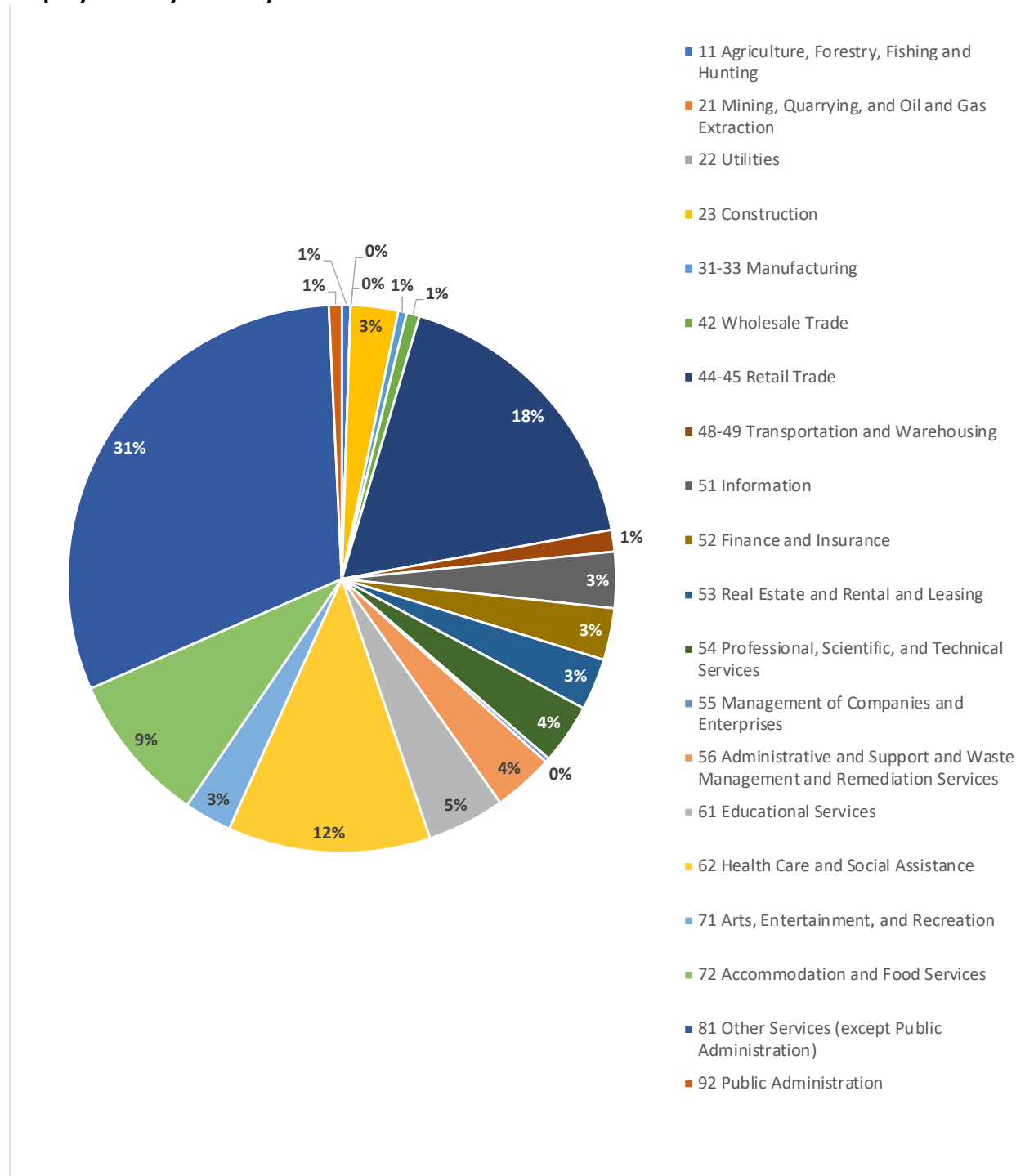
An estimated 68 home businesses in West Akron generate additional activity. Home-based businesses are important for future planning, because at least some of them may grow into bricks and mortar businesses. Economic development professionals can develop relationships with home-based businesses and help to support their growth.

Businesses in the West Akron Neighborhood by Industry

NAICS INDUSTRY CODE	Description	Number of Businesses	Estimated Number of Employees	Share of Employment
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	7	0.2%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	-	0.0%
22	Utilities	0	-	0.0%
23	Construction	11	54	1.2%
31-33	Manufacturing	2	7	0.2%
42	Wholesale Trade	3	40	0.9%
44-45	Retail Trade	69	597	13.5%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	5	46	1.0%
51	Information	13	68	1.5%
52	Finance and Insurance	12	56	1.3%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12	65	1.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	14	104	2.3%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	35	0.8%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation S	14	196	4.4%
61	Educational Services	18	962	21.7%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	47	663	15.0%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	11	278	6.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	35	492	11.1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	121	729	16.5%
92	Public Administration	3	30	0.7%
	Grand Total	393	4,429	100.0%

Source: Data Axle, KM Date Planning

Employment by Industry in West Akron



Source: Data Axle, KM Date

Estimated Top 20 Employers in West Akron

Naics Code	Description	Company Name	Estimated Number of Employees	Share of Employees in the Neighborhood
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Akron Public Schools	419	10.2%
611620	Sports and Recreation Instruction	Akron Zoo	150	3.6%
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	Mc Donald's	91	2.2%
611210	Junior Colleges	Hondros College of Nursing	90	2.1%
561720	Janitorial Services	Akron Area Commercial Cleaning	60	1.4%
441110	New Car Dealers	Summit Toyota	60	1.4%
712110	Museums	The Rage Gallery	53	1.2%
624120	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	Summit Adult Day Services	50	1.2%
443111	Household Appliance Stores	Clearwater Systems	50	1.2%
624410	Child Day Care Services	Akron Public Sch Early Lrnng	50	1.2%
621330	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except Physicians)	Minority Behavioral Health Grp	50	1.2%
624190	Other Individual and Family Services	Emerge Ministries Inc	45	1.1%
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	Circle K	42	1.0%
551114	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	American Tower Corp	35	0.8%
621420	Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers	Ramar Center	34	0.8%
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Summit Academy Akron Middle	34	0.8%
811121	Automotive Body, Paint, and Interior Repair and	Collision Right Doing Business	30	0.7%
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	Pizza Hut	30	0.7%
813319	Other Social Advocacy Organizations	Akron Urban League	30	0.7%
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	Domino's	30	0.7%

Source: Data Axle, KM Date

Home-Based Businesses in West Akron

3-Digit Naics Code	Naics Description	Number of Businesses	Share of Businesses
	Grand Total	68	100.0%
624	Social Assistance	8	11.8%
561	Administrative and Support Services	8	11.8%
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	4	5.9%
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9	13.2%
813	Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	8	11.8%
812	Personal and Laundry Services	4	5.9%
811	Repair and Maintenance	4	5.9%
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3	4.4%
238	Specialty Trade Contractors	3	4.4%
488	Support Activities for Transportation	1	1.5%
448	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1	1.5%
524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	2	2.9%
236	Construction of Buildings	2	2.9%
721	Accommodation	1	1.5%
442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	1	1.5%
112	Animal Production and Aquaculture	1	1.5%
323	Printing and Related Support Activities	1	1.5%
484	Truck Transportation	1	1.5%
485	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	1	1.5%
511	Publishing Industries (except Internet)	1	1.5%
523	Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities	1	1.5%
611	Educational Services	1	1.5%
512	Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	1	1.5%
517	Telecommunications	1	1.5%

Source: Data Axle, KM Date

Location-Quotient Analysis

Introduction

Location Quotient analysis is done to identify strengths and opportunities in the neighborhood. The Location Quotient method compares the proportion of industries in an area to the proportion in a larger area. Ratings of greater than 1.0 show strength compared to the identified region. Ratings of less than 1.0 show areas of opportunity.

West Akron shows distinct areas of strength and opportunity when compared to Summit County, the Akron Metropolitan Service Area (MSA), and the state of Ohio. In our analysis, strengths in Summit County (compared to the MSA and the State) were also assessed to identify potential opportunities for recruitment and collaboration in West Akron.

Results and Findings of Location Quotient Analysis

The following tables show the results of location quotient analysis for industries in the neighborhood and the county. Location quotients are shown for each industry comparison, as identified. A dark orange color indicates an area of solid strength, with LQ ratings over 2.0. A lighter orange color indicates an area of moderate strength, with LQ ratings between 1.0 and 2.0.

Findings are as follows:

Construction and Manufacturing. Beverage product manufacturing is a strength in Summit County and could be worth exploring. Printing, chemical/plastics/rubber products, and miscellaneous manufacturing are moderate strengths in the county.

Wholesale, Retail, and Transportation. Certain retail dealers are very strong or moderately strong in the neighborhood, compared to other regions. Many retail and wholesale dealers are moderately strong in Summit County and could be tapped for neighborhood locations.

Communication, Information, Technical and Administration. Information services and telecommunications businesses are strong in the neighborhood. Summit County has many moderate strengths in these categories.

Education, Health Care, Hospitality, and Services. The neighborhood has a very strong base in personal and social services, education, repair and maintenance, and religious and social organizations.

Overall findings. Areas of strength in the neighborhood include social, health and personal services, education, and information/communication. Businesses in strength areas can be visited to understand how they can be supported to stay and grow. Businesses in County strength areas are potential recruits for expansion in the neighborhood.

Construction and Manufacturing

Subsector	Description	West Akron Against Summit County	West Akron Against Akron MSA	West Akron against OHIO	Summit County against Akron MSA	Summit County against OHIO
221	Utilities	-	-	-	1.18	2.92
236	Construction of Buildings	0.97	0.92	0.84	0.96	0.87
237	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	-	-	-	1.11	2.04
238	Specialty Trade Contractors	0.21	0.21	0.20	1.01	0.95
311	Food Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.97	0.39
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	1.15	2.96
313	Textile Mills	-	-	-	-	-
314	Textile Product Mills	-	-	-	0.95	0.26
315	Apparel Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-
316	Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-
321	Wood Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.80	0.19
322	Paper Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.71	0.46
323	Printing and Related Support Activities	0.09	0.07	0.11	0.84	1.21
324	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	-	-	-	1.17	0.16
325	Chemical Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.97	1.34
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.72	1.57
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.46	0.20
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing	-	-	-	1.00	0.61
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.93	0.87
333	Machinery Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.87	0.93
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.84	0.96
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufactu	-	-	-	0.65	0.43
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.87	0.42
337	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.92	0.28
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	0.18	0.18	0.27	1.00	1.49

Source: KM Date

Wholesale, Retail, and Transportation

Subsector	Description	West Akron Against Summit County	West Akron Against Akron MSA	West Akron against OHIO	Summit County against Akron MSA	Summit County against OHIO
423	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	0.19	0.18	0.27	0.98	1.41
424	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.98	1.01
425	Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	-	-	-	1.06	2.10
441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	2.03	1.94	2.51	0.96	1.24
442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	0.78	0.79	0.63	1.00	0.81
443	Electronics and Appliance Stores	5.58	6.00	7.18	1.08	1.29
444	Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Deal	0.73	0.65	0.69	0.89	0.94
445	Food and Beverage Stores	1.10	1.09	1.36	0.99	1.24
446	Health and Personal Care Stores	1.56	1.59	1.88	1.02	1.20
447	Gasoline Stations	2.22	2.02	2.22	0.91	1.00
448	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	0.52	0.40	0.46	0.77	0.88
451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Store	-	-	-	1.00	0.99
452	General Merchandise Stores	0.77	0.65	0.71	0.85	0.92
453	Miscellaneous Store Retailers	0.50	0.52	0.53	1.03	1.06
454	Nonstore Retailers	-	-	-	1.12	1.49
481	Air Transportation	-	-	-	1.18	0.58
482	Rail Transportation	-	-	-	-	-
483	Water Transportation	-	-	-	-	-
484	Truck Transportation	0.02	0.02	0.03	1.00	1.62
485	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	0.29	0.35	0.22	1.19	0.77
486	Pipeline Transportation	-	-	-	0.97	0.15
487	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	-	-	-	1.17	5.02
488	Support Activities for Transportation	1.27	1.44	0.93	1.13	0.73

Source: KM Date

Communication, Information, Technical and Administration

Subsector	Description	West Akron Against Summit County	West Akron Against Akron MSA	West Akron against OHIO	Summit County against Akron MSA	Summit County against OHIO
491	Postal Service	-	-	-	-	-
492	Couriers and Messengers	-	-	-	1.19	0.97
493	Warehousing and Storage	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.07	0.99
511	Publishing Industries (except Internet)	0.07	0.08	0.07	1.11	0.95
512	Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	0.22	0.22	0.25	0.97	1.11
515	Broadcasting (except Internet)	-	-	-	1.19	0.68
517	Telecommunications	1.35	1.44	1.87	1.07	1.39
518	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	-	-	-	1.18	0.76
519	Other Information Services	2.57	3.07	2.64	1.19	1.03
521	Monetary Authorities-Central Bank	-	-	-	-	-
522	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	0.61	0.65	0.31	1.07	0.51
523	Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Invest	0.11	0.13	0.19	1.16	1.72
524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	0.25	0.29	0.22	1.15	0.89
525	Funds, Trusts, and Other Financial Vehicles	-	-	-	-	-
531	Real Estate	1.81	1.80	1.48	1.00	0.82
532	Rental and Leasing Services	0.38	0.42	0.35	1.09	0.91
533	Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyright)	-	-	-	0.68	0.29
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.45	0.48	0.47	1.07	1.04
551	Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.16	0.18	0.30	1.11	1.90
561	Administrative and Support Services	0.77	0.79	0.51	1.03	0.67
562	Waste Management and Remediation Services	-	-	-	0.98	0.46

Source: KM Date

Education, Health Care, Hospitality, and Services

Subsector	Description	West Akron Against Summit County	West Akron Against Akron MSA	West Akron against OHIO	Summit County against Akron MSA	Summit County against OHIO
611	Educational Services	9.53	9.34	7.08	0.98	0.74
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	1.18	1.24	1.17	1.05	0.99
622	Hospitals	-	-	-	1.09	1.00
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.97	1.06
624	Social Assistance	3.42	3.31	3.66	0.97	1.07
711	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	0.50	0.58	0.69	1.17	1.39
712	Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions	33.83	38.78	35.64	1.15	1.05
713	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1.18	1.22	1.19	1.03	1.01
721	Accommodation	0.62	0.54	0.39	0.87	0.63
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	1.29	1.25	1.30	0.97	1.00
811	Repair and Maintenance	2.99	2.99	3.52	1.00	1.18
812	Personal and Laundry Services	3.71	3.54	3.83	0.95	1.03
813	Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Orga	4.87	5.09	4.94	1.05	1.02

Source: KM Date

Micro-Cluster Analysis

Introduction

In any economic region, natural clusters of businesses help to strengthen each other, and make the area more attractive to additional businesses in the cluster “ecosystem”. They may benefit from materials sources who supply multiple businesses, or shared training programs or waste management. They may even find that one business’ waste is another’s source material. They can collaborate on special projects, share marketing, advocate for needed policy, or simply join together to support the local community. All of these potential benefits serve the business to help them be more effective, profitable, and committed to the community.

Cluster analysis allows us to identify potential clusters of businesses, comparing local businesses present in the neighborhood to nationally identified cluster groups. The results can indicate where there are clusters or micro-clusters present, and can also indicate additional businesses that can be recruited that will strengthen the cluster.

The following table is an example of a cluster analysis for the West Akron Neighborhood for Business Services. As shown, the table shows 3 subclusters of the Business Services cluster: Corporate Headquarters, consulting services, and business support services. Note that all of the clusters in this table are rated as “Traded” (see explanation in the introduction to this section of the report).

Businesses in West Akron are highlighted in green. In this set of subclusters, two West Akron businesses, American Tower Corp and By Any Means Entertainment, are present. Other businesses that could be recruited to complement their work might include consulting services, legal services, business support services, other technical services, and payroll services. Businesses in related fields might include (see the bottom of the table) marketing, insurance, performing arts, and printing. Of course, interviews with the businesses themselves can yield a lot of good information about other businesses that would complement them – the cluster analysis can serve as a starting point.

The cluster analysis included all traded clusters where there was at least one business existing in the West Akron neighborhood.⁴ Due to the detailed nature of cluster analysis, the full tables are included in the Appendix. The following findings summarize the main points of the table.

Key Findings

Micro-Clusters with more than four businesses, and potential for collaboration, include:

- Marketing, design and publishing
- Hospitality and tourism
- Financial services
- Education and knowledge creation
- Business services

⁴ For a full list of clusters in the US, see <https://clustermapping.us/>.

Business Services – Example Cluster Analysis

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses		
6	Business Services	1	Corporate Headquarters	551111	551	Offices of Bank Holding Companies	Traded			
				551112	551	Offices of Other Holding Companies	Traded			
				551114	551	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	Traded	American Tower Corp		
		2	Consulting Services					Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services	Traded	ByAnyMeans 330 Entertainment
				541611	541	Human Resources Consulting Services	Traded			
				541612	541	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services	Traded			
				541614	541	Other Management Consulting Services	Traded			
				541618	541	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services	Traded			
		3	Business Support Services					Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyrighted Works)	Traded	
				533110	533	All Other Legal Services	Traded			
				541199	541	Payroll Services	Traded			
				541214	541	Translation and Interpretation Services	Traded			
				541930	541	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Traded			
				541990	541	Facilities Support Services	Traded			
				561210	561	Professional Employer Organizations	Traded			
				561330	561	Telephone Answering Services	Traded			
		561421	561	Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers	Traded					
						Convention and Trade Show Organizers	Traded			
561422	561									
561920	561									
Related Clusters	Distribution & eCommerce; Marketing; Insurance; Education; Communications; Financial Services; Performing Arts; Biopharma; Printing									

Source: KM Date

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Introduction

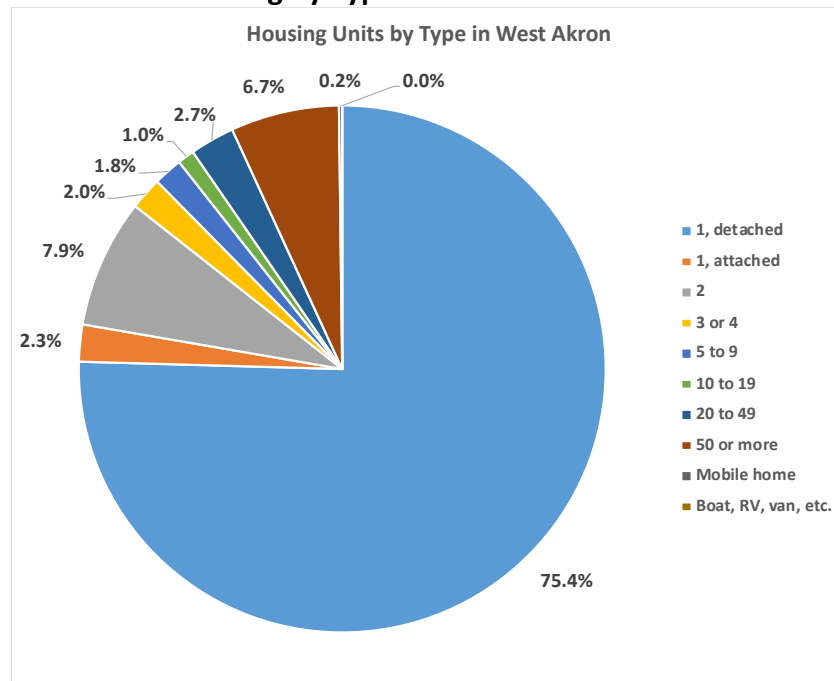
Housing is the foundation of a neighborhood, and is a critical factor in business and workforce attraction and retention, as well as overall quality of life in the neighborhood. This study included a brief analysis in order to set the context for the neighborhood plan and economic assessment.

Characterizing West Akron’s Housing

Type of housing

There are 11,773 housing units in West Akron, of which 77% are single-family homes. In interviews, one participant cited West Akron as “the largest swath of single-family neighborhoods in Akron”. Another 10% of homes are duplexes or single-family attached.

West Akron Housing by Type

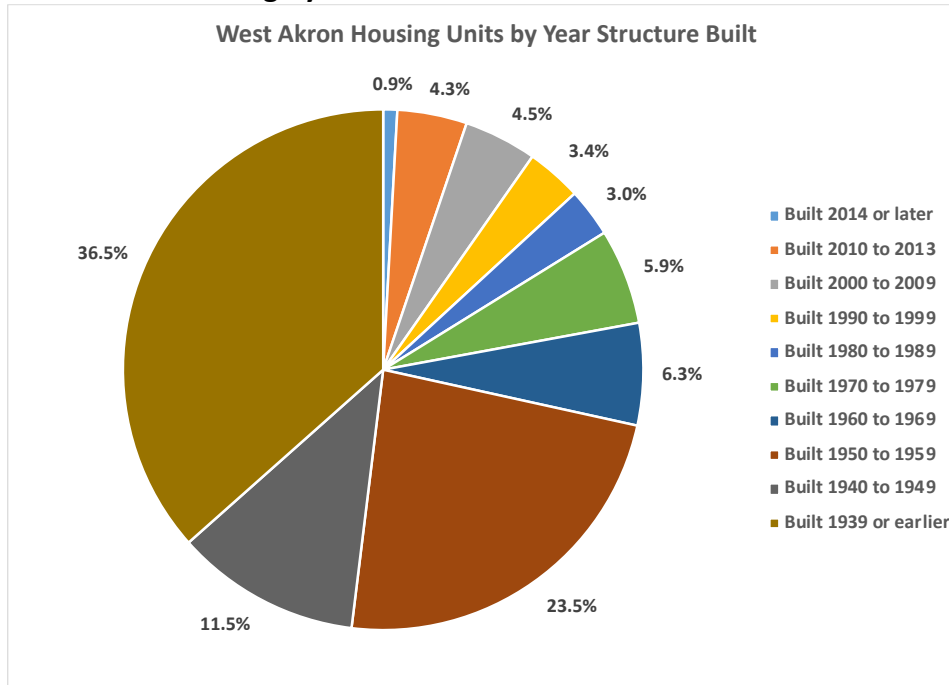


Source: ESRI based on American Communities Survey, 2021

Age of housing

West Akron’s homes are moderately old, with 48% of West Akron’s homes being built before 1950, 36% before 1940, and 72% before 1960. 5% were built since 2010.

West Akron Housing by Year Structure Built

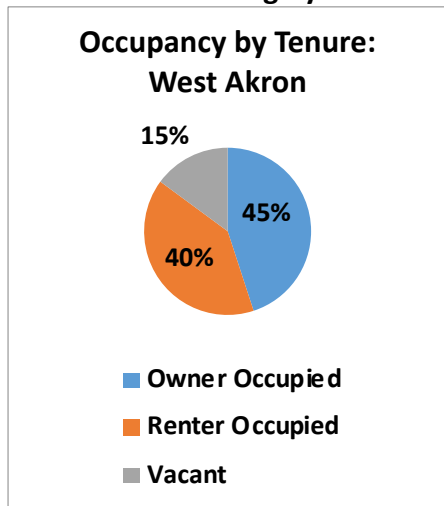


Source: ESRI based on American Communities Survey, 2021

Householders and Tenure

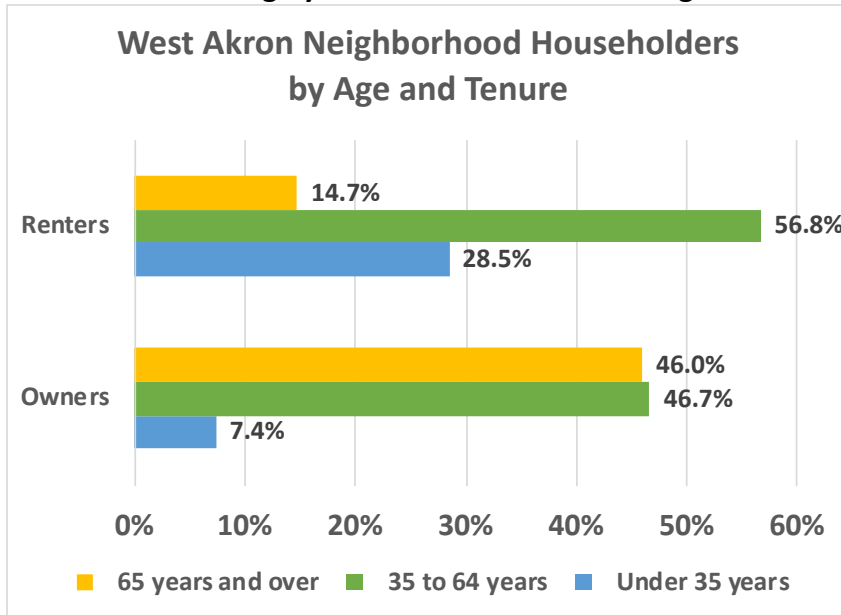
There are slightly more owners than renters in West Akron, with 45% of units owner-occupied, and 40% of units renter-occupied. 15% of units are vacant, which is high, with normal housing markets usually yielding vacancy rates of 5 to 10%.

West Akron Housing by Tenure



Source: ESRI based on American Communities Survey Data 2022

West Akron Housing by Tenure and Householder Age



Source: KM Date, ESRI based on American Communities Survey data 2022

Almost half of homeowner heads of households are over age 65, while only 15% of renters are over age 65. Householders of families with children are most often in the 35 to 64 age group.

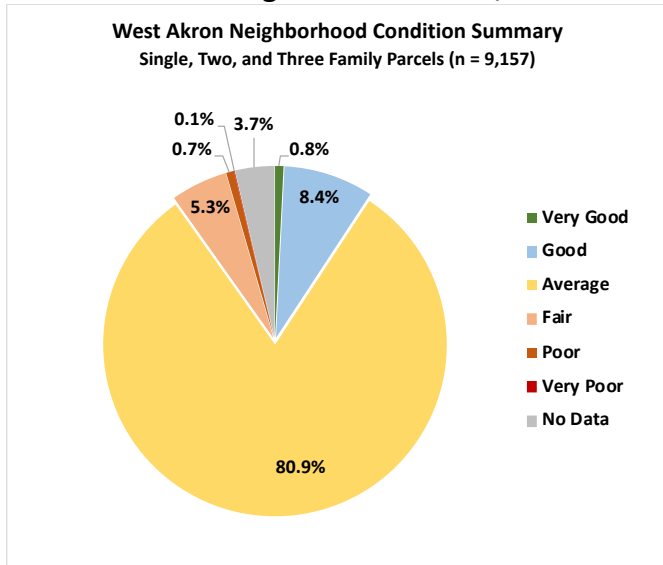
Property Condition

The Summit County Auditor rates the relative condition of the 9,157 1, 2 and 3-family units across the county. Properties are rated VG (Very Good), GD (Good), AV (Average), FR (Fair), PR (Poor), and VP (Very Poor), as shown on the map below.

It is helpful to use County Auditor ratings for condition because each property is evaluated regularly using the same criteria, so change can be monitored over time. Unfortunately, condition of commercial properties and multi-family properties is not rated the same way, and is not available as a public dataset.

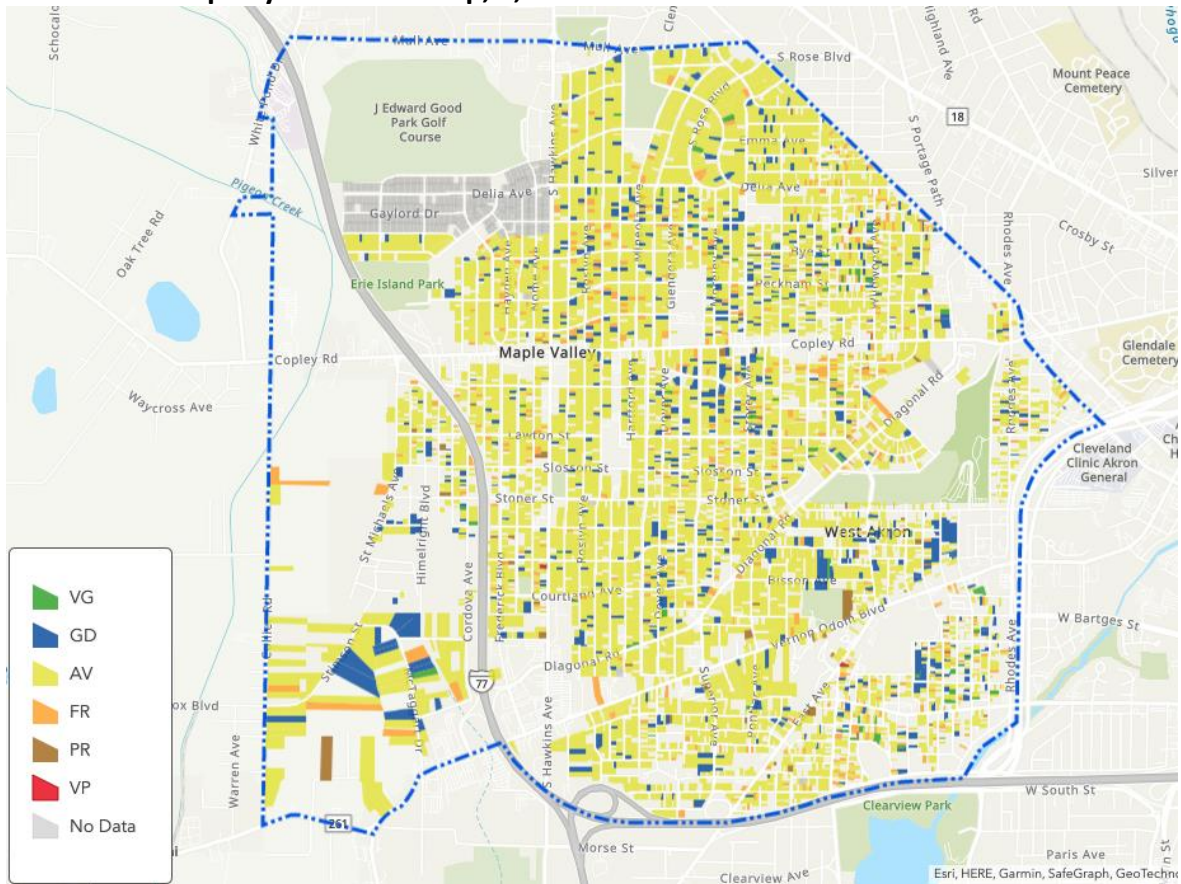
Property condition for 1, 2 and 3-family properties in West Akron is generally good. Just over 90% of properties are in very good, good, or average condition. There are about 485 properties in fair condition, which are of concern because they are at risk of falling into disrepair without maintenance attention. About 73 properties are in poor or very poor condition and in need of immediate intervention.

West Akron Housing – Condition of 1, 2 and 3-family properties



Source: KM Date, Summit County Auditor

Residential Property Condition Map, 1, 2 and 3 units



Source: KM Date, ESRI, Summit County Auditor

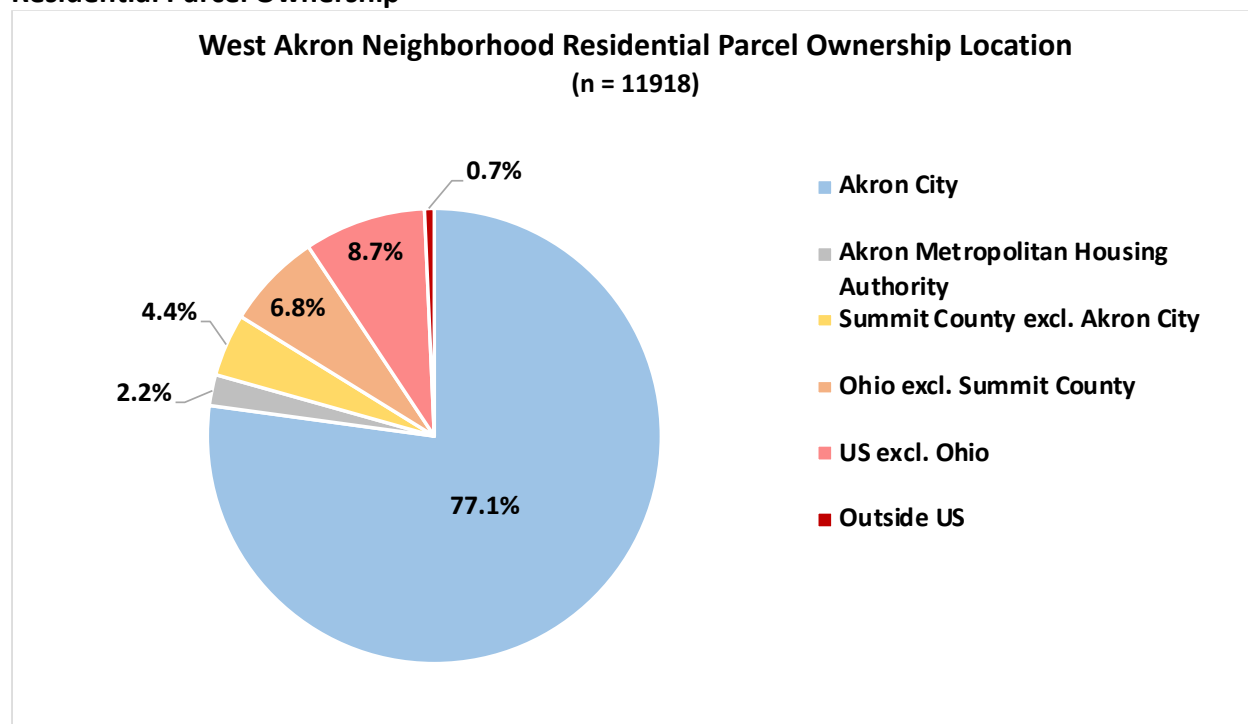
Property Ownership

Ownership of rental properties is a crucial question in the work to rebuild housing markets and stabilize the quality of life in neighborhoods. Ownership by small, local landlords is to be supported, because these landlords usually live nearby and are reasonably responsive, and are building wealth for their families while contributing needed rental housing to the community. It can be helpful to provide programs on maintenance, finance, and tenant-landlord relations to help them improve their knowledge and help to support quality housing.

In many urban neighborhoods, however, there is a trend for corporate investors from outside to purchase single-family houses in bulk for low cost and rent them for higher rents while neglecting maintenance. These landlords can be difficult to locate and hold accountable for complying with building and maintenance codes. The result can be a steady deterioration of the housing stock over time, while the costs of housing remain unaffordable.

The following charts and maps were based on the address of the tax-paying entity associated with the property. This is usually the owner, or an agent.

Residential Parcel Ownership

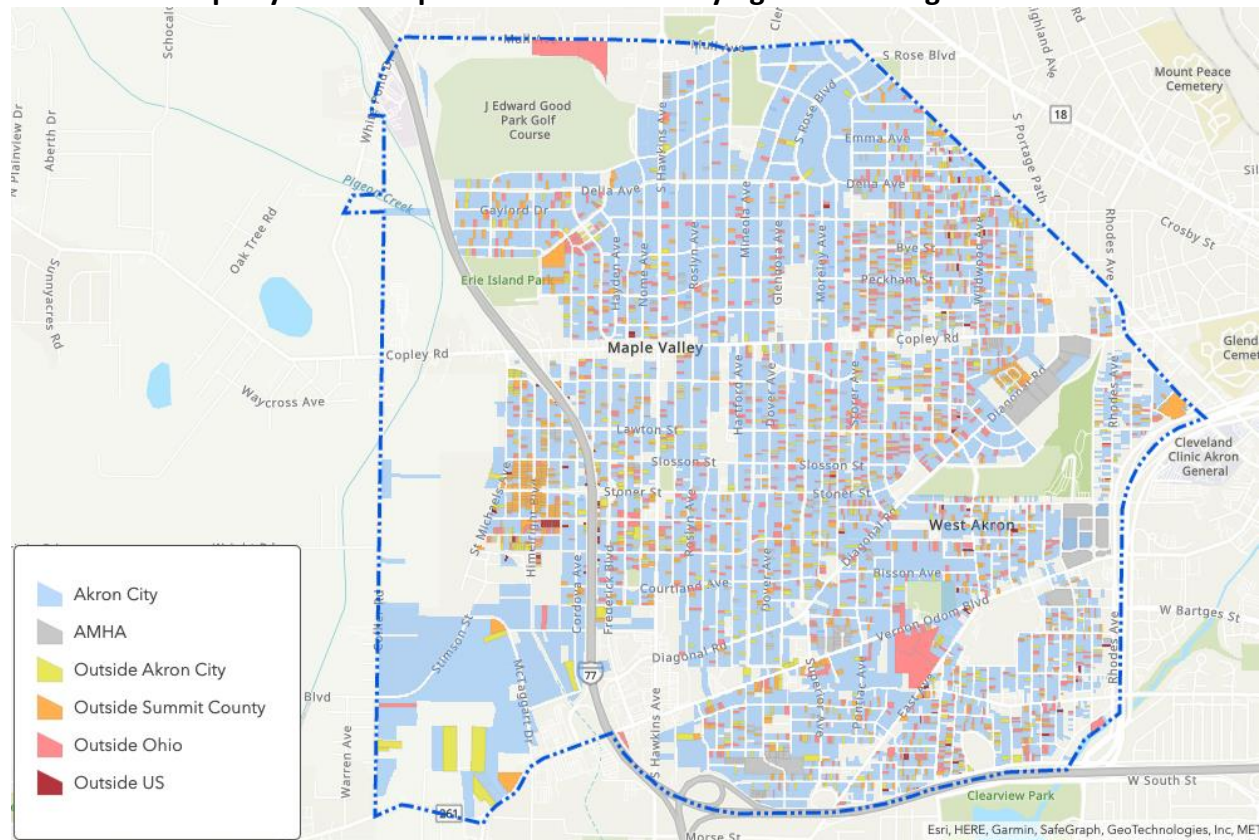


Source: Summit County Auditor, KM Date

In West Akron, 16% of all residential parcels are owned outside Summit County, and are likely rental properties at risk for lower-quality maintenance and management.

As shown on the map, ownership outside Summit County are the orange, pink, and red parcels. They show a scattered pattern without a lot of concentration. Of note, there is a concentrated area of parcels west of I-77 that are owned by Ohio entities outside Summit County. It is also worthy to note a lower level of outside ownership in blocks north of Delia. The majority of properties are blue (Akron-based), and likely indicate owner-occupied properties, and small local landlords.

Residential Property Ownership – Location of Tax-Paying Owner or Agent



Source: Summit County Auditor, KM Date, ESRI

Housing Affordability

If we assume that a household should spend no more than 30% of their income on housing and related costs, we can compare US data on household income and cost of housing to get a rough sense of affordability gaps in neighborhood housing. The following tables show an analysis of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing in West Akron, using ESRI interpretation of American Communities Survey data for 2020. In our analysis, we take likely housing-related costs, such as utilities, maintenance, property tax, insurance, and furnishings into account, in addition to rent and mortgage payments, providing an allowance of 25% over the mortgage payment for owners, and 15% over the rent payment for renters.

For owners, there is an indicated gap of about 1000 units valued over \$150,000. This means that about 1000 households are spending less than 30% of their household income on housing. There are some nuances to interpreting this data that we must keep in mind, because many households of higher income have the flexibility to choose not to spend 30% of their income on housing. They may choose to spend it on other expenses, goods and services such as travel, education, vehicles, or supporting family. However, with 1000 households under-housed, there are likely a certain percentage that would live in a more expensive home in the neighborhood if it were available.

The opposite scenario is apparent in the analysis for rental housing. Here, the large gap (1800 units) is for rental properties with rents below \$500 per month. This indicates that there are 1800 households who are housing cost-burdened, spending over 30% of their household income on housing and related costs. This analysis indicates a very strong need for more affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Owner-Occupied Housing, West Akron

House value low	House value high	No. units	Affordability Income Range Low	Affordability Income Range High	No. HH	Surplus (Gaps)
\$ -	\$ 49,999	894	\$ -	\$ 9,999	278	616
\$ 50,000	\$ 99,999	3,107	\$ 10,000	\$ 34,999	1,924	1,183
\$ 100,000	\$ 149,999	756	\$ 35,000	\$ 49,999	868	(112)
\$ 150,000	\$ 199,999	369	\$ 50,000	\$ 74,999	1,108	(739)
\$ 200,000	\$ 299,999	147	\$ 75,000	\$ 99,999	643	(496)
\$ 300,000	\$ 499,999	15	\$ 100,000	\$ 149,999	305	(290)
\$ 500,000	\$ -	11	\$ 150,000	\$ -	175	(164)
TOTAL		5,299			5,299	-

Source: American Communities Survey 2016-2020 5-year estimates. Table B25118, ESRI Business Analyst ACS Housing Summary 2016-2020 5-year estimates, KM Date Planning

Renter-Occupied Housing, West Akron

Rent low	Rent high	No. units	Affordability Income Level Low	Affordability Income Level High	No. HH	Surplus (Gaps)
\$ -	\$ 499	967	\$ -	\$ 24,999	2,855	(1,888)
\$ 500	\$ 999	2,797	\$ 25,000	\$ 49,999	1,287	1,510
\$ 1,000	\$ 1,499	825	\$ 50,000	\$ 74,999	275	550
\$ 1,500	\$ 1,999	100	\$ 75,000	\$ 99,999	129	(29)
\$ 2,000	\$ 2,499	11	\$ 100,000	\$ 149,999	113	(102)
\$ 2,500	up	35	\$ 150,000	up	74	(39)
Total		4,735			4,733	2

Source: American Communities Survey 2016-2020 5-year estimates. Table B25118, ESRI Business Analyst ACS Housing Summary 2016-2020 5-year estimates, KM Date Planning

Housing Findings

Single Family Neighborhoods. West Akron is home to many single-family blocks with tree-lined streets and good housing quality overall. This characteristic is crucial to the long-term economic status of the community, allowing the neighborhood to continue to draw families and new homeowners, keep those who are here, and attract businesses and workers.

Property condition. The 485 homes in “Fair” condition in the neighborhood must receive maintenance attention in order for them to remain assets. Furthermore, the 73 which are in poor or very poor condition should be addressed immediately. One or two “bad” houses can quickly draw down property values on an entire block, eroding family wealth and attracting corporate landlords.

Property Ownership. The 16% of residential properties that are owned by entities outside Summit County warrant attention to ensure that those landlords are accountable for proper maintenance and tenant response. City regulations that require local agents who are legally responsible for code compliance, and rental registration with required inspections and code enforcement, can go a long way to “level the playing field” and ensure that outside landlords provide a quality standard of living in their units.

At the same time, local landlords can be supported through education programs and assistance with grants and low-interest loans for maintenance.

Affordability. About 1800 households are cost-burdened and paying more than 30% of their income for housing, an indicator of a significant need for affordable housing. At the same time, demand is indicated for a modest amount of higher-value housing to help diversify the neighborhood housing stock and keep families of means in the neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The following is a list of recommendations related to economic revitalization that arise from data analysis, interviews, and discussion of findings with the project team. Some are short-term, and others are long-term. Some are likely to be implemented by Progressive Alliance CDC, some by the City; but most will require partnerships.

It should be noted that the most effective approach to revitalization is to start with a small core area – whether it is a corner or block of a commercial district, or a neighborhood block – and work to bring it up to its potential. That becomes the “seed” that helps to grow vitality outward, improving property values around it and changing perceptions as its effect spreads from the core. It is much less effective to distribute benefits around a larger area, where it takes longer to visualize the potential opportunity. For this reason, these recommendations focus on Copley Road, as the area in the neighborhood with the most potential to create that “seed” for revitalization.

Retail Recommendations

Copley Commercial Core. Restore the physical commercial area along Copley/Maple Valley to create a core area of revitalization and vibrancy. See the Stakeholder Interviews report in the appendix for a detailed list of improvements that could be made. Starting points would be to improve parking, landscaping, streetscape and lighting, while supporting upgrading of buildings and storefronts, and filling vacancies with quality businesses. (see recruit, below). Supporting existing neighborhood maintenance efforts is also important.

Code Work. Strengthen and enforce commercial building and maintenance codes. This will be an important component of Copley and any other Main Street revitalization, to ensure that all property owners are contributing equally to the success of the street.

Limit Dollar Store Proliferation. Dollar Stores are being proven to inhibit local business; target communities of color with predatory competition, poor property maintenance, and poor labor practices; and drive down property values. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has developed information on ways to limit the development of new dollar stores, including slowing down the process, finding legal bases for denial of approvals, enacting dispersal and conditional use ordinances, and galvanizing and educating the public about the effects on neighborhood economy.⁵ Neighborhood organizations should begin this conversation with the City and other partners and ensure that progress is made.

⁵ See <https://ilsr.org/dollar-store-strategy-guide/> and <https://ilsr.org/report-dollar-store-invasion/>

Recruit businesses. Focus on the Copley Road/Maple Valley core to recruit full-service restaurants (casual/ethnic/family/fine dining/coffee-bakery), "third spaces", grocery, clothing/accessories, home furnishings, and miscellaneous retail. Recruit and expand the consumer services available, including pet services, legal services, entertainment/movies, and repair. A list of "typical Main Street Businesses" (see side bar) will generate other ideas, such as an ice cream shop, fitness studio, laundromat/dry cleaner, and more. Keep an inventory up to date of vacant properties and their characteristics, and use it to inform inquiries from entrepreneurs and investors.

Support existing businesses. Work with the City and other partners to provide assistance to existing businesses with building upgrades, marketing, and business expansion. Recruitment of new businesses will also help everyone.

Entertainment and Programming. Work with partners including the City, the Merchants Association, individual businesses, and churches and social organizations, to support existing programs such as Juneteenth and holiday events, and continue to expand them.

Crime and Mental Health. Work with the City and County on managing mental health and crime issues in the neighborhood, especially in retail cores. At the same time, work on marketing to change the perception of insiders and outsiders about these issues so that perception more closely resembles reality. See further discussion under "General Recommendations" below.

Sherbondy Hill Commercial Core. Over time, as the Copley Road area strengthens, develop a new commercial core for Sherbondy Hill-Vernon Odom area, likely along Thornton Street. A pedestrian-scale street that supports local commercial business is needed, but will be a "start from scratch" situation. Vernon Odom itself does not have the scale for a true neighborhood commercial street. Similar steps to the Copley Revitalization would be taken here, although more new construction would be involved. This is a long-term strategy, but important to help heal the loss of Howard Avenue and other retail activity in this neighborhood.

Useful ideas for Redeveloping Commercial Main Streets. As part of the recommendations, we have included a set of informational slides on redeveloping Main Streets for use by Progressive Alliance and their partners. See the Appendix.

Business Activity Recommendations

Recruit a catalytic regional draw enterprise. Recruit at least one business with significant regional draw and employment. Such businesses can be recreation/entertainment-oriented, such as a theater or skating rink, or production-oriented, such as a light manufacturing establishment. In either case, provide a site with adequate space and well-lit parking, a prominent location, easy access to the freeways, and appropriate utilities. It has been

suggested that Vernon Odom area has the parcel sizes, traffic conditions, and zoning that would be suitable for such uses. This would be a long-term goal requiring strong partnerships and teamwork over time, but would be catalytic for the neighborhood economy.

Recruit to strengthen micro-clusters. Recruit and strengthen traded businesses that could strengthen micro-clusters in the neighborhood. Areas of focus could include:

- Marketing, design and publishing
- Hospitality and tourism
- Financial services
- Education and knowledge creation
- Business services

Strengthen Anchor Relationships. Develop and strengthen anchor relationships with the Akron Zoo and hospitals. Similar anchor approaches in neighborhoods around the country have resulted in improvements to employment and housing opportunities, education collaboration, and workforce training.⁶

Strengthen Home-Based Business relationships. Using the inventory and social media outreach, contact home-based businesses to understand which may need assistance with business management and expansion advice, and/or have the potential to grow, especially with future bricks-and-mortar recruitment in mind. Help to connect them to City services, training programs, financing assistance, and neighborhood relationships and events that can strengthen their business.

See also the “Useful Ideas” in the Appendix.

Housing Recommendations

Strategic Neighborhood Stabilization. As discussed in the introduction to this section, neighborhood stabilization should be strategic, with improvement of focus areas that can spread their influence to surrounding properties. Strategically identify blocks that could be catalytic in stabilization, and take a comprehensive approach to fund housing restoration, new housing infill, and improve streets, sidewalks, trees, and lighting.

Support new housing. In addition to smaller-scale infill housing, in areas identified by the neighborhood plan, and where developers are interested, support the development of blocks of new housing that can help to fill the need for affordable housing, as well as higher-end housing.

⁶ University Circle in Cleveland is one of the nation’s best example of anchor institution relationships. See <https://buildhealthyplaces.org/sharing-knowledge/blogs/expert-insights/clevelands-greater-university-circle-initiative-anchor-based-strategy-change/> and <https://www.universitycircle.org/about-us/university-circle-inc/anchor-district-council>

Housing maintenance and restoration. Take a comprehensive approach to housing maintenance and restoration, addressing a variety of related needs, working in partnerships with the City, lenders, and philanthropy. Many of these initiatives could be collaborative programs with other neighborhoods, that would benefit all corners of the City where housing restoration and maintenance are an issue.⁷

- Continue to provide and expand housing repair assistance for seniors
- Implement a repair-resell program, working with the Summit County Land Bank⁸
- Start a Do-it-yourself homeowner housing maintenance program, including a tool lending library, how-to workshops, reduced costs for materials, awards program for well-maintained homes. This may be a collaborative effort with other neighborhoods in the City.

Code work. Code enforcement and housing management go hand in hand, and can be a powerful tool in stabilizing housing stock in neighborhoods. Some recommendations include:

- Strengthen and enforce building and maintenance codes, paired with funding to assist with repairs. Take a “customer service” approach, especially with homeowners and small landlords, to support them in best practices for their properties.
- Require and enforce a rental registry, including requiring that all out-of-county landlords designate local agents who are legally responsible for rental housing code compliance.
- Reward “good landlords” with lower fees, less frequent inspections, and other perks. Good landlords are identified based on good inspections, transparent rental registration, good communication with City, and participation in City-sponsored education and information opportunities.

Affordable housing and homeownership. Address the need for affordable housing through new housing (see above) and other effective programs.

- Support housing diversity alternatives including co-ops, land trusts, co-housing, and “granny flats”
- Support pay-to-stay and source-of-income ordinances in the City⁹
- Start/expand a lease-purchase program, perhaps working with CHN Housing Partners¹⁰

body text

- side box: strengthening the neighborhood housing market

⁷ For an example, see the Housing Repair Resource Center in Cleveland Heights, which serves a larger area including Cleveland <https://hrrc-ch.org/>

⁸ For an example, see Slavic Village Development’s turnkey program, <https://www.slavicvillage.org/live/find-a-home/buy-a-home/>

⁹ See Cleveland and area communities’ “Pay to Stay” and “Source of Income” Ordinances <https://lasclev.org/paytostaycleveland/#:~:text=How%20does%20the%20Pay%20to,raise%20to%20protect%20the%20rights.,> <https://lasclev.org/04232021-3/>

¹⁰ <https://chnhousingpartners.org/about/lease-purchase-flagship-program/>

General Recommendations

The following recommendations apply to all aspects of economic vitality in the neighborhood – retail, business, and housing.

Improve Public Perception. Throughout the project, it is apparent that the perception of the neighborhood is different and more negative than reality, and that even local residents are in need of better information. It is strongly recommended that neighborhood partners develop and implement a robust marketing/branding program, working with the schools, churches, and other agencies, to help modify inaccurate public perceptions about the neighborhood. Target residents, potential new residents, former residents and Buchtel alumni, businesses, workers in the neighborhood and downtown, residents of adjacent neighborhoods .

Public information. Working with partners in the neighborhood, develop a robust program of information that can be easily accessible by residents and businesses to understand programs services and resources available in the neighborhood, City and County, share news, and celebrate neighborhood successes. This site can be a source of information for the marketing campaign as well.

Community Development Investment Fund. Develop a community fund that can allow community members and former members to participate in supporting businesses and building wealth.¹¹

Revitalization Without Displacement. Work with the City to implement measures to address the phenomenon of displacement of residents and businesses in revitalization areas. While increased vitality and property value increases help to build wealth in the neighborhood, a good thing, higher property values and taxes can squeeze existing residents and small business owners and lead to displacement over time. Best practices include property tax limits for longtime property owners, assistance with paying taxes, loan funds to help small business owners buy their buildings, and supporting rental housing and affordable housing initiatives, such as those listed above under housing recommendations.¹²

¹¹ Examples include The Fund by the Shaker Heights Development Corporation, <https://www.shakerdevcorp.com/thefund>, The NorthEast Investment Cooperative in Minneapolis, Minnesota <https://www.neic.coop/>, and the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund, <https://littletokyocif.com/>. See also <https://nextcity.org/ebooks/the-bottom-line-when-communities-own-spaces-for-business> (KM Date has a copy).

¹² See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/04/08/yes-you-can-gentrify-neighborhood-without-pushing-out-poor-people/>

CONCLUSIONS AND CAVEATS

Conclusions

West Akron has experienced the classic pattern of disinvestment found in urban communities of color across the country. And yet it is a place of opportunity that offers promise for revitalization. Its excellent location, in close proximity to freeways, Akron's downtown, and wealthier neighborhoods, is a fundamental characteristic that will benefit any business which locates there. The majority of housing in the neighborhood is in good repair, and it has tree-lined streets with a relatively young population including families and young professionals. Several major institutions are located within or adjacent to the neighborhood, including the Akron Zoo, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General Hospital, the Buchtel Community Learning Center which has received ongoing investment by the Akron Public Schools, two libraries, and multiple parks and community centers. The neighborhood's strong network of churches and social organizations, along with other community action groups, support a resource of human capital that is already working on revitalization efforts.

Consistent with the pattern of disinvestment, the neighborhood has developed challenges over the years which have led to a negative public perception. A comprehensive economic development strategy that incorporates focused commercial area revitalization, a comprehensive marketing and information program, and collaborative efforts with the City to address mental health, crime, and code improvements for both commercial and residential areas, will go far to move West Akron toward its potential. This report has attempted to outline the major elements of such a strategy.

Caveats and Limitations

Please note that this analysis was completed in the fall of 2022, and has not been updated for 2023 market conditions. Much economic data is only available at the county level, and has wide margins of error and suppression to protect privacy. Hand checking of data was done where possible, but no guarantees are made about its accuracy.

This market study is done in support of the neighborhood redevelopment strategy, to determine potential business opportunities as West Akron revitalizes. It is intended to be a broad market assessment of opportunity, to support planning for West Akron's future. It does not provide the detail that would be required for investors to evaluate market risk and define product characteristics and amenities. In this report, we make no assertions of the success of any business or development enterprise; many other conditions, such as business capitalization, the proponent's business vision and experience, market trend shifts, and fluctuating cost of materials and operations, must be taken into account and will have a greater impact on long term success.

These assumptions are conservative and based on best available data, but cannot predict future events and conditions. The retail environment in particular is changing fast due to e-commerce and work-from-home patterns, and growing income disparity; findings can only be a snapshot in time, with trends still developing.

APPENDICES

Useful Ideas for Redeveloping Commercial Main Streets



Keys to a Successful Main Street

Successful main street business districts are unique and provide one-of-a-kind experiences. On the other hand, there are several characteristics which they often have in common, and which can help economic development proponents to frame their conversations about priorities for creating a lively business environment.

- 16/7 Activities (7 am-11 pm)
- A whole day's activity - nearby recreation, entertainment, education
- Anchors drawing customers
- "Third Places"
- Smart, well-managed businesses with vision, marketing savvy and access to capital
- Diverse business mix
- Aligned business hours
- Safety, lighting, activity
- Design character
- Customer service
- Unique and local experiences



What is a “Third Place”?

The Foundation of Community Building

The term “Third Place” was coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in 1999. It describes places in any community where people can meet, greet and socialize outside of home and work or school. Examples include churches, coffee shops, beauty salons, auto repair shops, bike shops, fitness centers, and the street itself. “Third Places” are often referred to as critical to Main Street success. They can help to build community connections and social strength by providing a place for community interaction to happen.



Why is Main Street Important?

The most obvious purpose of Main Streets is to be a place where residents and businesses can find businesses offering dining, consumer goods, and consumer services. They may also provide public spaces and community services such as libraries, post offices, community centers and town halls. Above and behind storefronts, Main Streets often are a place of working spaces for professional offices, artists, and small-scale manufacturing.

While meeting community needs for goods and services, Main Streets also provide a central place for community identity, exchange of ideas, and “third places” for social interaction, the foundation of a strong community. They provide opportunity for local business investment, wealth-building, and growth, and offer local starter-level employment for youth. Main Streets provide an opportunity to capture outside visitor dollars in the community.

A successful Main Street will cater to multiple markets at once. Some of these include:

- First Market – longtime residents seeking affordable daily goods and services
- New Residents – seeking specialty goods and experiences (perhaps not arrived yet)
- Visitors – seeking specialty goods and experiences, evening venues, entertainment
- Workers – seeking meals, after work entertainment, some errands
- Families – seeking affordability, family-friendly venues, recreation/arts/crafts, educational opportunities
- Students – seeking affordability, something to do, “third places” to meet

A diverse and successful Main Street approach will identify markets at work in the community, and provide goods, services and activities for them all.



Nuestra Comunidad, Boston

Meeting First Market Needs

Meeting the needs of existing residents in a revitalizing community involves ensuring that convenient, affordable goods and services continue to be readily available. A high proportion of existing residents are seniors with fixed incomes and need for special services.

Key elements to address for all include:

- Ensuring affordable rental homes (renters)
- Ensuring affordable property taxes and assistance with home maintenance (owners)
- Affordable and accessible daily retail goods and services, affordable fresh foods
- Convenient and affordable transportation to work, school/training, shopping, services
- Social and community services
- Welcoming “third places”



Meeting New Resident and Outside Visitor Markets

New residents and outside visitors attracted to Main Street communities have interests in common: specialty goods and services, a focus on unique experiences, and walkable, historic street environments.

Key elements of a Main Street attractive to these markets:

- Attractive, well-maintained and vibrant street environment
- Branding and capitalizing on assets
- Dining and shops with unique offerings, locally sourced goods, healthy foods
- Strong arts presence
- Programs, events and live performances in all seasons
- Personal service and expertise



Meeting the Worker Market

- Lunch and after-work dining at various price points
- Good advertising
- Easy and convenient parking
- Convenient travel access
- Convenience services and goods such as grocery, drycleaning, health and beauty
- Daycare



Wikimedia Commons



Smitty's Cinemas

Serving Youth and Families

- Recruit arts programming and education/participation opportunities
- Explore opportunities for recreation opportunities
- Safe places for teens to hang out after school
- Restaurants with family-friendly menus
- Separated bike travel, especially connections to river path

Examples of Youth/Family-Serving Businesses and Activities

- Video and Gaming Arcade
- Game and activity center (such as “Recess”)
- Board Game Café
- Library programming or storefront outlet
- Tutoring, math/chess learning center
- Arts centers/classes or do-it-yourself crafts businesses
- Family movie/food venue
- Ice cream and soda shop



Taking a Customer Service Approach: “How Can We Help You?”

More and more community code enforcement teams are working to adopt a customer service approach to their activities. When entrepreneurs, property owners, residents, businesses, and visitors are all seen as customers, code enforcement becomes an outreach and communication opportunity. Helping people to “do the right thing” and “be a good neighbor” builds trust and encourages investment. Often the community has knowledge of funding opportunities that can be shared while encouraging compliance. A revisit to existing regulations is often a good idea to identify regulations that are necessary and important, versus those that are an unnecessary burden for property owners and the community alike. Openness to attracting new residents and businesses means sharing opportunities in town for them to invest and become a part of the community.



KM Date

What Economic Development Coordinators Can Do

Economic development coordinators, whether they are full time dedicated staff for a municipality, or a part-time nonprofit staff person, can play an important role in main street retail revitalization.

Some examples of activities that can make a difference:

- Maintaining a list of vacant properties and their characteristics, and becoming the point person for entrepreneurs and investors seeking places for their businesses, connecting property owners to interested parties and “gatekeeping” non-serious inquiries
- Developing relationships with existing businesses and property owners to connect them to each other and to resources they can use to thrive, assist with code compliance, and help them become valued partners on the street and in the neighborhood
- Organizing and assisting volunteers with entertainment, events and programs
- Using data on neighborhood strengths and assets, business opportunities, and vacant properties to reach out to businesses elsewhere to recruit them for possible new locations on your street
- Working with the municipality, banks, and grant makers to connect them to neighborhood businesses who would benefit from program participation



Ace Hardware



City of Olmsted Falls

What is Amazon-Proof?

Providing goods, services and unique experiences which cannot be acquired on the internet is key to local retail success. Such products and services include:

- Deepest discount/bulk/off-market pricing
- Luxury goods which customers prefer to select in person: jewelry, art, high end clothing, home furnishings
- Beauty, cosmetics and fashion goods, which customers enjoy seeing, trying on and selecting in person
- Establishments which provide an experience: activities and events, recreation and opportunities to engage with the proprietor, staff and other patrons, crafts, do it yourself arts and hobbies, unique store environment, unique and one-of-a-kind goods
- Dining of all kinds
- Establishments which provide personal services and advice, mentoring, lessons and how-to, such as hardware stores, musical instrument stores, salons, auto repair, dry cleaning, shoe repair
- Establishments which provide creative and professional services: arts, specialty foods, bakeries, hobby, custom, garden, accounting and legal advice, investment services
- Daily family grocery shopping is likely to continue to be an in-person business on some level due to shoppers' preferences to choose their own food (especially produce) and limit the cost of delivery and order fulfillment, and the last-minute nature of many grocery purchases



Ohio Department of Commerce

Liquor License Challenges

Ohio has strict laws about the type and number of liquor licenses that may be maintained in establishments in any particular city. In the present day, most communities have no more capacity for new licenses, and yet the ability to serve wine, beer and/or liquor is critical to the success of new full-service restaurants. There are several options that can be explored for revitalizing Main Streets. A strategic approach is required to evaluate the best strategy for your community.

Options may include:

- Recruit businesses such as coffee shops and micro-breweries that don't require liquor licenses, or can utilize limited licenses which may be available, such as beer-only
- Leverage pop-ups and events which qualify for temporary permits
- Acquire additional licenses on the secondary market, either from within Akron or TRES transfers from outside Akron. These are expensive and require legal advice, but may be doable for certain entrepreneurs
- Be in touch with existing license holders to know when their licenses may become available due to property or business transfer, or change of business plan
- Develop a Community Entertainment District, a special allowance for additional licenses in redevelopment areas. Timing is critical here to ensure that new licenses are not acquired by others when they become available.

Refer to the Ohio Liquor Control Board web site for more information (<https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/liquor-control/liquor-control>), or consult an attorney or economic development professional with experience in this subject area.

Stakeholder Interviews – Summary Report

**West Akron Neighborhood Plan
Interviews Summary
KM Date Community Planning, UPDATE 3-9-23**

INTRODUCTION

As part of the West Akron Neighborhood Plan, Kirby Date, of KM Date Community Planning, was engaged to assess the economic and housing environment in the neighborhood. One of her tasks was to complete interviews of community stakeholders to understand their thoughts and ideas about community assets, challenges, and big ideas.

The interviews were conducted in November of 2022 through early March of 2023. Most conversations were about a half hour long; after initial interviews in person, it became more convenient for the interviewees to meet by phone or Zoom. In the end, 27 interviews were conducted.

This summary is organized by themes that came up in the interviews. The detailed notes from each interview are kept confidential; this summary reports the opinions gathered in the aggregate, without identifying who said what.

Interviewees

A total of 28 interviews have been conducted to date; another three are pending as of this date.

- Margo Sommerville, Akron City Council Ward 3
- Russel Neal, Akron City Council Ward 4
- Veronica Sims, Summit County Council Ward 3
- Dr. David Nelson, Pastor, New Hope Baptist Church; and Executive Director, Progressive Alliance
- LaTonya Lewis, Progressive Alliance staff; and Akron Childrens' Hospital staff
- Brandi Davis, Progressive Alliance staff; and Director of Education, Akron Urban League
- Fannette Morris, Owner, Studio WNYH Salon; President, Maple Valley Merchants' Association
- LaKesh Hayes, Executive Director, Project Ujima (and West Akron Neighborhood Plan team)
- Reverend Robert DeJournett, Pastor, St. Ashworth Church; former staff of Summa Health
- Terrence Shelton, Black Wellness and Economic Coalition of Akron; formerly of the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce
- James Reddick, President, Dorchester Block Club; former staff, Nazareth Housing
- Toree Stokes, CEO, Mustard Seed Development Center
- Al Jones, Owner, Al Jones Marketing; also Manager of Member Engagement, Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce
- Dara Harper, Owner, Art Only Boutique; co-founder, Akron Black Artists' Guild

- Nicole Watters, Owner, Nicole’s Southern Kitchen
- Desaray Williams, Owner, Westside Coney Island
- Albert Bragg, Executive Director, and Al Thomas, COO, Alpha Phi Homes, developer of Good Park Homes (joint interview)
- Joel Testa, CEO, Testa Companies, Akron area developer active in West Akron
- Candice Eberhardt, Owner, Eberhardt Realty and Management; immediate past president, Akron Cleveland Association of Realtors
- Samuel DeShazor, Director of Economic Development, City of Akron
- Jason Segedy, Director of Planning, City of Akron
- Reverend Raymond Greene, Executive Director, The Freedom Bloc
- Bishop Joey Johnson, House of the Lord
- Mark Greer, Candidate for Mayor
- Cazzell Smith, Co-Founder EANDC, lifelong resident
- Ophelia Averitt, Property Owner, retired business owner, President Akron Chapter NAACP, Board Member, National NAACP
- LaCresia Beecher, Principal, Buchtel Community Learning Center
- LaTonda Mobley, Great Streets Coordinator, City of Akron

At least 16 of the interviewees grew up in West Akron, and at least 13 live there now. 6 own or owned for-profit businesses in the neighborhood, and 6 are active in the real estate development industry in the neighborhood. 14 are leaders of community organizations and churches that are active in the neighborhood.

The following are responses to key questions asked in the interviews.

WHAT ARE THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S ASSETS?

Human (People and Organizations) Capital. Many interviewees identified “the people” as the neighborhood’s greatest asset. There is a lot of neighborhood pride. They expressed an awareness that there are many dedicated people with strong skills and the will to improve the neighborhood, they just need access to resources and opportunity to make it happen.

- Some specific thoughts from interviewees: “People want to live and work here; they have a heart for the neighborhood”. “People have an optimistic mindset; if you ask them for help, they will.” “There are a lot of educated people who understand how important it is to be well-informed, understand the changes that could come, are able to speak boldly to what they want – they will want a plan to be implemented.” “The community is very rich in skills, wisdom, fervor, and passion. It’s there, it just needs to be tapped into.”

Customers and shoppers. Their customers were seen as an asset by business owners, many of them neighborhood residents and workers. Some interviewees mentioned the strength of

neighborhood block clubs working in the area. One interviewee mentioned famous people who grew up in the neighborhood – Rita Dove, Thaddeus Garry, Leon Harris. Another mentioned the people who are coming back and buying homes in the neighborhood. The diversity of the neighborhood was also cited as an asset, noting that more non-Black people are moving in, while the Black community remains strong.

Small businesses. Small businesses that are not chains but family-run places were seen as assets, especially restaurants, beauty/barber shops.

Residential neighborhoods. The neighborhood’s residential character was mentioned by several interviewees. “West Akron has the largest swath of single-family homes in the City.” Others mentioned the tree-lined streets, good housing stock, and the good job most homeowners are doing in keeping up their property, and that people are respectful of art in the neighborhood.

Churches. The churches were also identified by many interviewees as very important assets, providing a framework and community within which people can take action. Although all churches together were seen as important assets, specific churches mentioned included:

- New Hope Baptist
- House of the Lord
- United Baptist
- Mount Calvary
- Mount Olive
- Mountain of the Lord
- Providence
- First Apostolic
- St. Ashworth
- Antioch
- Jerusalem
- Peoples’ Baptist
- City of Joy

Zoo and Parks. The Zoo and the parks were mentioned by several interviewees as significant assets. The Akron Zoo has multiple projects working in the neighborhood nearby. Parks mentioned included the community centers and pools, Schneider Park and Forest Lodge, Kerr Park, and the golf course (it was noted that the golf course is deed restricted and cannot be developed). City run community centers: Forest Lodge, Balch Street, Lawton Street, Ed Davis were specifically mentioned.

Other assets identified:

- City libraries on Coventry and Sherbondy Hill
- Schools: Buchtel CLC and elementary schools; Buchtel especially was noted as being a source of pride for many who went there.
- The Urban League
- Strong womens’ business network, and the Copley Road/Maple Valley Merchants Association
- United Way
- National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, Cleveland chapter

- Shanti Community Farms near the zoo
- Great Streets Program of the City of Akron
- There is not a lot of restaurant competition (good from a restaurant owner’s perspective)
- Community development organizations such as Mustard Seed, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Black Wellness and Economic Coalition, Project Ujima, The Urban Leagues, and youth organizations
- Neighborhood has an excellent location, close freeway access, 20 minutes to anywhere in town, convenient to get to by car and public transportation
- Summa Health Equity Center
- John Brown House and Simon Perkins Mansion museums
- The Edgewood Housing development in the Sherbondy/Zoo neighborhood.

Potential assets as yet untapped:

Youth. Youth were specifically mentioned as an untapped asset who are smart and need good, positive ways to channel their creativity and intelligence.

Hospital. It was noted that the hospital (Akron General) is nearby and has the potential to be an asset, but is not yet well connected to the neighborhood.

Buchtel and neighborhood alumni. Buchtel alumni were mentioned as an untapped asset that could be strong supporters, along with “people who have historic ties to the neighborhood” who “would participate if they knew how, and what was happening”.

Other untapped assets identified:

- Rankin School was identified as a potential asset with its auditorium and stage.
- The Towpath Trail was identified as a potential asset whose connection to the neighborhood could be strengthened and bring business.

WHAT ARE THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S CHALLENGES, AND HOW CAN THEY BE ADDRESSED?

Many interviewees had specific ideas for how to address these challenges that are noted in the Big Ideas section following.

Poor condition of commercial areas. The poor condition of commercial areas, in contrast to the condition of residential areas, was noted by many interviewees. Interviewees are frustrated with the inability to get outside business owners and property owners to care for their property, bringing the overall value of the commercial area down. They appreciate the work of the Merchants’ Association but note that it can only go so far if property and business owners don’t cooperate. There is an acknowledgement that until this is improved, it will be hard to get people to patronize businesses in a big way, because the poor condition, dirt and trash and unkempt landscaping gives the impression that the area is not safe. In addition, loitering individuals in the commercial areas are seen as a challenge with similar inhibiting of customers.

Youth Challenges. A wide range of challenges were noted related to youth: infant mortality, low birth weight, third grade reading, older youths' need for direction, mentoring and training. It was noted by several interviewees that older youths' difficulties stem from magical thinking about an ideal wealthy lifestyle, lack of knowledge of what really matters in life (love, food, shelter, family, faith), lack of knowledge of how to resolve conflicts peacefully, and lack of knowledge of how to get and keep a job, work ethics and standards, managing income. Some of these can be helped by providing a coordinated youth services response, perhaps based in a community center (see Big Ideas). Youth should be reached in elementary and middle school and then outreach continued into high school. It was also noted that criminal backgrounds can be a barrier for youth in accessing training programs.

Fresh Food Desert. Many interviewees mentioned the lack of fresh food in the neighborhood, and the poor quality of food available. This, along with the perception of lack of safety, was cited as one of the primary reasons people who can, leave the neighborhood for grocery shopping.

Poor social outcomes. Several interviewees discussed at length the social determinants of health, and their impact on individual and family health, with poor outcomes for families. Issues such as single parent households, incarceration, poverty, lack of parental involvement, joblessness, mental health problems, lack of insurance, low income, etc. have a big impact and need to be addressed.

Communication with the City and philanthropy. Several interviewees mentioned lack of good communication on the part of the City and philanthropy regarding asking about the neighborhood's wants and desires. The City was also faulted for dim streetlights and poor response to 311 calls in the neighborhood.

Safety/Security. Interviewees had wide-ranging ideas about safety and security in the neighborhood. Some felt that this was a real deterrent to people wanting to move and shop there, and send their children to the schools. Others felt that they were safe living in the neighborhood, and that the lack of safety is largely a factor of public perception that could be changed via a marketing campaign, and storytelling about the good people and projects accomplished in the neighborhood. Increasing vibrancy through locating a major attraction designed so people could come from all over, and feel safe, could help.

Communication and coordination within the neighborhood. The difficulty getting the word out to residents and businesses was mentioned by many people – “the services and assets are here, but people don't know about it”. It was also noted that people don't know how to go about getting the work done, using funds well, etc. Getting people to work together can be a challenge. There was evidence in the interviews that even some leaders may not be fully aware of the neighborhood's assets and services available.

Residual Effects of Urban Renewal. The Innerbelt’s urban renewal effect on the neighborhood is remembered and mourned. Several interviewees were nostalgic for the vibrant Black commercial areas at Wooster Avenue and Howard Avenue. There is a hope for rebuilding Black success to build wealth and neighborhood vibrancy.

Limited funding resources. Limitations in the amount of funding and resources available were mentioned by many. Some reflected on the need to reduce competition for limited funds by developing a strategic coordination of service organizations. It was acknowledged that the neighborhood “doesn’t get its share of funding” with priorities going to downtown and other neighborhoods, and projects that support the mayor’s agenda; fewer funds are expended in Wards 3, 4 and 5. It is hoped the plan can help. There is a concern that the City’s grants for residential rehab and business cleanup can only fund a small amount, which then doesn’t get accessed because the small business or homeowner doesn’t have the remainder funds or required match needed.

Poor condition of rental housing. While housing is seen as an asset overall, the poor condition of rental housing was noted by many. “This is a public health issue: allergies, mold, asbestos, lead, nonworking utilities and appliances, dust, poor ventilation, flooding leading to asthma and illness. People are sick and can’t go to work or school.” It was noted that falling-down garages and trees in the back yards of properties are a hazard, yet too expensive for residents to remove. Absentee property owners are seen as an issue in residential rental property, just as it is a problem in commercial property.

Lack of Coordination. Several interviewees noted the need for a coordinated effort among organizations. “There are too many who want to lead, and not enough helpers”. If organizations come together, the advantages are that limited funds can be used strategically; their voice will be louder and more aligned, and heard better; organizations have a better chance of having more control over the use of funds in the neighborhood, rather than funders deciding how money is to be spent. A coordinated effort would also allow the next generation of leaders to be mentored. It was noted that the lack of coordination is often cited by the City and funders as a reason for not doing more – “we don’t hear a unified voice”.

Other challenges noted included:

- illegal gambling at three businesses at least – attracts unsavory clientele, take up regular business parking
- limited training in the trades available – former training academies have been discontinued
- retail is the main type of business available, and it doesn’t provide good quality jobs.
- schools still have low marks for student success
- Copley Road’s architectural “bones” are not as good as Kenmore’s, will need new development and some thinking about the street layout. Buildings are not as substantial or well built.

- parking on Copley is a serious challenge – it’s not enough, and sidewalk parking is not safe; side street and rear parking is not well lit.
- High cost of renovating housing vs. the lower market value of the property – doesn’t pencil out, making loans impossible to obtain to do the renovation work
- Difficulty getting bank loans for renovations or small business in the neighborhood due location
- The Sherbody/Vernon Odom area is seen as more challenged than the rest of the neighborhood; property values are lower and people are less likely to want to buy homes there; partly due to public perception of lack of safety. There is a lack of sense of community, and few places to create retail vibrancy and locate new businesses. Most existing businesses are chains and the scale supports the automobile rather than the pedestrian shopper.
- There are too many liquor stores, drive-throughs and dollar stores
- Several interviewees mentioned there is still a need for a grocery with high quality produce and fresh healthy food
- There is a big need for training entry-level entrepreneurs, who often face barriers to growth and success due to not understanding the business environment, proper use of funds, regulatory obligations (taxes, business licenses and registration, etc). This puts them at a disadvantage for leveraging capital.
- People have a hard time “being a community”. Many may not know how to participate in community, check on each other, contribute, make their voice heard, keep up their property, respect others’ property. A public education and information campaign in the neighborhood should strive to strengthen lines of communication, and sense of community.
- Among many residents, there is a sense of hopelessness, that nothing will change.
- Too many elementary schools were lost in the Akron Public Schools’ reorganization; this contributed to the breakdown of sense of neighborhood and community.
- There is a concern that in spite of the new Buchtel Community Learning Center and the work planned for City community centers, there is not a sense of community ownership at either of these places. Youth and community members may not feel welcome, or may be excluded from some parts of the building. For mentoring to occur, there may be a need for a separate space that is founded in the community and engages youth in mentoring relationships. (Note that the opportunities available to youth at Buchtel (eSports, coding classes, extracurriculars) may not be well understood in the community.) See Big Ideas below.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIG IDEAS FOR IMPROVING AND REVITALIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

This question garnered a wide range of creative ideas both large and small, some of which overlapped. The summary is organized by projects that could be undertaken. No attempt is made to differentiate priority or size of project in this list; further discussion is needed.

1. Copley Road Commercial Opportunity. Return Copley Road to its former vibrancy. It is recognized that the neighborhood can likely support one retail shopping area, and this would be the best place – it has the most suitable existing infrastructure and customer base, supportive zoning, and is closest to the vibrancy of Market and Exchange streets and Wallhaven, where potential customers with income reside. Many interviewees mentioned the vibrancy of the Better Block pilot and wished for that to become permanent.

Restoring vibrancy will mean a coordinated effort to:

- Focus on a 1 or 2-block area and expand outward
- aim to attract a wide audience at first, then introduce African American culture-specific businesses once the reputation of the neighborhood begins to shift. Be strategic to avoid excluding any group
- Set standards for out-of-town businesses and property owners on commercial property maintenance; City regulations may help; one interviewee mentioned developing a business partnership agreement that new businesses would sign in collaboration with the merchants' association
- Find a way to add a full-service grocery store that provides fresh produce and can be competitive with mainstream groceries outside the neighborhood. This is critical to meet the need for healthy food in the neighborhood, to keep leakage dollars inside the neighborhood, to change the perception of shopping in the neighborhood, and to act as a magnet drawing local shoppers back into the neighborhood.
- clean up abandoned lots and properties, cut trees and improve landscaping
- improve lighting and provide security camera systems
- provide on-the-ground police presence with community police who would walk the streets and get to know the neighbors, and help people with health and mental health issues on the street to access services
- assess the status of existing commercial structures, and invest in upgrades
- build new retail structures for businesses to fill in the street line;
- increase programming; a big festival to attract a regional audience was suggested; more festivals at the park, building on the ones that are strong now
- Over time, attract a range of new viable, strong businesses including a coffee shop, sit-down restaurant(s), specialty food, music venues, a bookstore, a bank, other “third places” where people can gather. Similar to a mainstream grocery store, one interviewee felt that a mainstream restaurant such as Olive Garden would help to change perceptions of the area as downtrodden and unsafe. Another interviewee expressed an interest in expanding nightlife with jazz clubs and nightclubs such as were present on Howard and Wooster Avenues.
- Provide an economic development function that would keep track of building space availability and vacancies, help to connect entrepreneurs and investors to property owners, and recruit businesses to fill spaces
- Parking should be expanded, well-connected and well-lit so people feel comfortable accessing the businesses into the evening.

- Address the need for safe crosswalks for pedestrians
- A community police presence could be established in the early phases to add to the sense of security and ownership.
- Establish a sense of ownership and safety with a community ambassador corps focused on having a street presence and cleaning up trash and street frontage.
- Enforce traffic laws
- Enforce building code, business and loitering violations, and find ways to close unsavory businesses when they are repeat violators
- recognize, acknowledge and welcome the diversity of people moving in
- incorporate more public art, creative and vibrant places; find ways for artists to collaborate with businesses as has been done in Kenmore

2. Enhance regional attraction with catalytic investment. Establish at least one major regional attraction in the neighborhood, preferably in the Copley Road area. It was noted that this/these attraction(s) need to be state of the art with a full selection of options and easy parking, clean and well-lit, in order to attract people. Ideas in the interviews included a “cool” food opportunity such as a restaurant or brew pub that is designed to attract a range of mainstream customers; full-service grocery with plenty of healthy offerings; skating rink; movie theater; bowling alley; indoor sports center with pickleball, basketball, volleyball, baseball, soccer. Work on continuing to develop/expand relationships and opportunities associated with the Akron Zoo, currently the primary regional attraction in the neighborhood. Such an investment can act as a catalyst, spurring other investment and breaking the barrier of outsiders coming into the neighborhood.

3. Vernon Odom Commercial Opportunity. Focus on bringing at least 1 or 2 major employers to the Vernon Odom area. The street scale, infrastructure, zoning, freeway access, and available property all support the expansion of employment in this area. Ideally these would be good quality jobs with training opportunities built in, and opportunities for advancement. Employers suggested included lithium batteries, other light manufacturing.

Once employment expands, find a place (off V. Odom) to begin creating a vibrant streetscape from scratch, where workers could find lunch and after-work meals and entertainment, and neighborhood goods and services could be clustered for residents. This may not replace Wooster Road, but would create opportunities for neighborhood vibrancy on a smaller scale. One interviewee suggested that the area around the zoo, with connections to the Towpath Trail, might be a good starting point. A grocery store is seen as critical, with this area also lacking fresh foods. Interviewees also expressed a desire for improved public transit and a gas station in the Vernon Odom area. It was noted that a current City project to re-imagine the Innerbelt should dovetail with this work.

4. Anchor Institution Opportunity. Establish a collaborative effort for a neighborhood workforce development program with Akron General, similar to programs in University Circle in Cleveland. Entry-level training in the health care sector that will lead to employment and

advancement, focused on neighborhood residents, would be a good start. Housing while in training would help.

5. Community-driven Multi-Purpose Center(s). Establish a full-service one-stop place for neighborhood residents and businesses to gather and to access services, that is driven and led by the community, and is embedded in the community. It should be in easy access/walkability for residents, trainees and youth alike. Since there is a known lack of awareness of services and assets already available in the neighborhood, such a project would start with an inventory and evaluation of what services are available, identifying ways to take advantage of those, enhance them and collaborate in expanding them, and then utilize a service center to fill in the gaps.

Specific Ideas that came up in interviews include:

- a coding, robotics and performance studio that would attract youth and give them opportunities to learn coding, electronics and engineering, while establishing mentoring relationships
- a dance studio, arts studio, gallery – place for youth/families who are not into sports with classes, programming, community spaces
- emphasize a “process” for youth and workforce development rather than a one-time “training program” – incorporate mentoring and longterm support
- a hub for workforce training
- provide pre-natal and post-natal care for mothers and babies
- provide urgent care 24 hours that is geared to everyone, including children and seniors
- provide easy access to services for seniors, perhaps with housing very close by
- be the hub for entrepreneurial and business training and advice
- provide micro-business incubator space for new businesses not yet ready for bricks and mortar, with business mentoring. Training for business would need to specifically address:
 - Small business funders should require a 40 hour workshop for eligibility.
 - business plan and business structure
 - financial information: developing good credit, consequences of mishandling funds, need to separate funds, managing cash flow, rents/costs, and major equipment purchases, payroll
 - filing taxes, registering the business and meeting other regulatory needs
 - unemployment insurance/obligations of being an employer
 - understanding profit/loss – cost of making something vs price that will sell
 - best practices for marketing, bringing in new customers
- collaborate with Urban League, Cooperative Extension, Buchtel CLC/Akron Public Schools, University of Akron, Stark State, and others providing mentoring, tutoring, computer skills, financial skills, and job training.
- address the need for housing for individuals who have aged out of foster care while they are in school or training, and while they get established – maybe as part of the complex.

- provide a bank, and financial literacy education for the general public and future homebuyers

6. Virtual Big Box. Create a virtual big box bricks and mortar location, with pickup services for Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Best Buy, etc – with trained service reps from the businesses involved

7. Community Development Investment Fund. Start a community investment fund where community members and other supporters (alumni, former residents, etc) could invest to help support businesses and grow/expand business opportunity, while building wealth for themselves and the businesses supported. One aspect of the Fund’s work could help to provide small business loans which may not be available to businesses in the neighborhood due to their location. Note that design of a Community Investment Fund should take into account the balance between keeping investment wealth in the neighborhood, and the need for profit maximization in wealth building for individuals.

8. Comprehensive Marketing/Public Relations Approach. Many interviewees mentioned the need for improved messages and communication in the neighborhood and with those outside it. Launch a coordinated public relations and marketing campaign to highlight positive stories about the neighborhood, showcase businesses, reach out to Buchtel alumni and neighborhood former residents, work with the press, and spread messages both in the neighborhood, and outside of it. Market the live-work-play potential of the neighborhood. Help to spread the word about existing and new programs in lead abatement, financial counseling, home energy programs, grant assistance, business support, workforce opportunities, and similar efforts of organizations working in the neighborhood. One interviewee suggested doing an annual report for the neighborhood, showcasing businesses and all that is being done to revitalize the neighborhood.

9. Strategically stabilize neighborhoods and address housing needs. Many interviewees mentioned the need for better quality and affordable housing.

Specific ideas discussed included:

- It was noted that new housing tends to focus on specific, limited projects, and is only a drop in the bucket related to overall existing housing condition and value in the community. Neighborhoods need a block-by-block strategy to infill vacant lots, repair and renovate homes, and re-establish housing comparable values in order to encourage more families to move in, provide decent suitable places to live, and ensure that housing is a good wealth-building investment.
- new affordable housing for seniors. Innovative smaller housing could encourage seniors to move and free up more moderate/larger housing for families. One person suggested a “senior swap program” where seniors could swap their family home for something newer and smaller.
- new housing that would attract families with children, noting that current housing stock is either too small or too large; need to address “affordable mid-sized” family housing.

- senior housing with wrap-around services, including a service that would check with residents daily and get medical and other help before a crisis occurs
- expanded rehabilitation funding for existing homeowners (especially seniors) who need workable funding streams to do major renovations, without requiring a match or up-front cash outlay; address the need for demolition and rehab of other structures on the property such as rundown garages and major tree hazards; address the need for modifications and repairs to enable seniors to age in place
- establishing a lease-to-own program in the community, patterned after successful programs in Cleveland
- establish a buy-fix up-resell program for housing stock, collaborating with the Land Bank, the City, and key neighborhood organizations to help stabilize neighborhoods and streets at risk for further deterioration, and create comparables to stabilize housing values
- establishing a living wage and provide rent support wherever possible to make families more able to afford decent housing
- (see above) find a way to hold landlords accountable for providing decent living conditions and responding quickly to maintenance needs
- address the need for a “gap financing” loan to help homeowners rehab lower-value homes where the existing value is not high enough to obtain mainstream loans; and to support the development of new construction until values rise in the neighborhood
- a tiny home neighborhood and food container housing were suggested as possible, with a focus on seniors and the homeless (provide services on site)
- provide tax abatement and other incentives to encourage new families to move into the neighborhood
- provide some upscale housing to change the perception of the neighborhood and encourage a mixed income community

10. Strategically organize collaborative community efforts. Self-determination and avoiding overlapping/duplicating use of funds were common themes that ran through many interviews, as did the need to get multiple organizations collaborating together. Several interviewees expressed an interest in finding a way to unify the work of community organizations and the churches that are operating in health, housing, youth, social services, finance, education, workforce training, and business development, to enable them to cooperate, and self-determine the strategic use of funds and programs available. Strengthening block clubs to enable them to play a local role in supporting community efforts was also suggested. It was suggested that the neighborhood needs a strong CDC that can be a catalyst for redevelopment – Progressive Alliance could grow. It was noted by more than one interviewee that a solid collaborative effort would take the leadership and commitment of elected officials with ties to the neighborhood – at the City, County, State and National level - sustained over time.

11. Improve parks and recreation opportunities. Several interviewees mentioned the importance of quality parks and recreation opportunities in the neighborhood. Parks should be enhanced to provide expanded opportunities for both passive and active recreation. They can serve as third places for gathering; informal sports; and community building, but need to be safe, well lit, well cared for, with good visibility and easy access.

12. Improve signage neighborhood-wide. This will help enhance the sense of community, improve a sense of safety and security, as well as point people to business districts, key neighborhood and regional amenities, and enable people to get around by bike and walking as well as by car.

13. Spur more investment strategically. One interviewee talked at length about the strategic process needed to spur more revitalization investment.

a) Go in to “fringe” neighborhoods that can’t support new construction with subsidies at first. Use HUD funding, tax credits, City funds, Hope VI, and others to create a catalyst for change. Focus on using new construction strategically, in focused and visible locations, to change the look of the neighborhood. Replace the most dilapidated homes/structures first.

b) Then move to market rate housing – townhouses are the least expensive – then lofts.

c) Then other types of housing and development can follow once property values begin to go up and pockets of the neighborhood begin to stabilize. It was noted that 5-10 houses can change a block overnight. The HBA “Parade of Homes” project is intended to do that.

d) A “cool regional opportunity” (see number 2 above) could be a start; then build housing around it; then add retail. For retail to be successful, housing needs to precede it, so customers are there to patronize the businesses.

14. Additional ideas mentioned include:

- Provide more comprehensive health service than is currently available. It should be easy to access, provide 24/7 and emergency response capabilities, and be able to conduct outreach to residents, especially seniors and others with chronic illnesses who need regular check-ins.
- set up community benefits agreements with developers to ensure that the community will benefit when new development happens
- Get a group of Buchtel HS alumni to patrol the halls at the school and be a secure presence
- Create a cultural center to talk about history, cultural assets of the neighborhood, issues like the KKK in Akron, John Brown, the Matthews Hotel, and the thriving Black commerce on Wooster Avenue and Howard Street.
- Redevelop the Erie Island School property, with its excellent location, for housing, and for a container-based micro-business incubator.
- Make a focused effort to keep youth in Akron. This is partly a perception and education effort – young people at University of Akron and who grow up in the neighborhood need to see it as a place with infrastructure, jobs and opportunity.

Inventory of West Akron-Sherbondy Businesses

This inventory was provided to Progressive Alliance CDC as a separate searchable excel document.

Micro-Cluster Analysis Tables

The following micro-cluster tables show businesses that are traded and exist in West Akron, and their relative clusters and subclusters. For an explanation of cluster tables and how they can be used to promote economic development, see the body of the report.

Business Services – Subclusters 1-3

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses		
6	Business Services	1	Corporate Headquarters	551111	551	Offices of Bank Holding Companies	Traded			
				551112	551	Offices of Other Holding Companies	Traded			
				551114	551	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	Traded	American Tower Corp		
		2	Consulting Services	541611	541	Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services	Traded	ByAnyMeans 330 Entertainment		
				541612	541	Human Resources Consulting Services	Traded			
				541614	541	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services	Traded			
				541618	541	Other Management Consulting Services	Traded			
				541690	541	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services	Traded			
		3	Business Support Services	533110	533	Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyrighted Works)	Traded			
				541199	541	All Other Legal Services	Traded			
				541214	541	Payroll Services	Traded			
				541930	541	Translation and Interpretation Services	Traded			
				541990	541	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Traded			
				561210	561	Facilities Support Services	Traded			
				561330	561	Professional Employer Organizations	Traded			
				561421	561	Telephone Answering Services	Traded			
				561422	561	Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers	Traded			
		561920	561	Convention and Trade Show Organizers	Traded					
		Related Clusters	Distribution & eCommerce; Marketing; Insurance; Education; Communications; Financial Services; Performing Arts; Biopharma; Printing							

Business Services – subclusters 4-8

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
6	Business Services	4	Computer Services	518210	518	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	Traded	
				541511	541	Custom Computer Programming Services	Traded	TH Design, Inc.; Contagious Marketing Designs
				541512	541	Computer Systems Design Services	Traded	
				541513	541	Computer Facilities Management Services	Traded	
		541519	541	Other Computer Related Services	Traded			
		5	Employment Placement Services	561311	561	Employment Placement Agencies	Traded	
				561312	561	Executive Search Services	Traded	
		6	Engineering Services	541330	541	Engineering Services	Traded	
				541310	541	Architectural Services	Traded	
		7	Architectural and Drafting Services	541320	541	Landscape Architectural Services	Traded	
				541340	541	Drafting Services	Traded	
				485310	485	Taxi Service	Traded	Orange Cab
		8	Ground Passenger Transportation	485320	485	Limousine Service	Traded	
				485999	485	All Other Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	Traded	
				532112	532	Passenger Car Leasing	Traded	
				Related Clusters Distribution & eCommerce; Marketing; Insurance; Education; Communications; Financial Services; Performing Arts; Biopharma; Printing				

Communications Equipment and Services

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses		
8	Communications Equipment and Services	1	Communications Services	515210	515	Cable and Other Subscription Programming	Traded			
				517210	517	Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except Satellite)	Traded	Metro By T-Mobile; Boost Mobile Store		
				517410	517	Satellite Telecommunications	Traded			
				517919	517	All Other Telecommunications	Traded	Clarktel Telecommunications		
		2	Communications Equipment	334210	334	Telephone Apparatus Manufacturing	Traded			
				334220	334	Radio and Television Broadcasting and Wireless Communications Equipment Manufacturing	Traded			
				334290	334	Other Communications Equipment Manufacturing	Traded			
		3	Communications Equipment Components	335912	335	Primary Battery Manufacturing	Traded			
		Related Clusters Distribution & eCommerce; Video Production; Marketing; Business Services; IT; Lighting; Education;								

Distribution and E-Commerce

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses		
10	Distribution and Electronic Commerce	13	Wholesale of Paper and Paper Products	424110	424	Printing and Writing Paper Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
				424120	424	Stationery and Office Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
				424130	424	Industrial and Personal Service Paper Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		14	Wholesale of Sporting and Recreational Goods and Supplies	423910	423	Sporting and Recreational Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		15	Wholesale of Toy and Hobby Goods and Supplies	423920	423	Toy and Hobby Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		16	Wholesale of Other Merchandise	424950	424	Paint, Varnish, and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
				424990	424	Other Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		17	Wholesale of Farm and Garden Machinery and Equipment	423820	423	Farm and Garden Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		18	Wholesale of Construction and Mining Machinery and Equipment	423810	423	Construction and Mining (except Oil Well) Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		19	Wholesale of Industrial Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies	423830	423	Industrial Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers	Traded	Akron Tractor & Equipment Inc		
				423840	423	Industrial Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded			
		20	Wholesale of Service Establishment Equipment, and Supplies	423850	423	Service Establishment Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	Traded	Belenky Inc		
		Related Clusters		Medical Devices; Marketing; Recreational Goods; Lighting; Business Services; Communications; Insurance; IT; Transportation; Education; Construction; Financial Services;						

Education and Knowledge Creation

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses		
13	Education and Knowledge Creation	1	Training Programs	611410	611	Business and Secretarial Schools	Traded			
				611420	611	Computer Training	Traded			
				611430	611	Professional and Management Development Training	Traded			
				611512	611	Flight Training	Traded			
				611513	611	Apprenticeship Training	Traded			
				611630	611	Language Schools	Traded			
				611691	611	Exam Preparation and Tutoring	Traded	BuffTutor; SMK Tutoring Service		
		611699	611	All Other Miscellaneous Schools and Instruction	Traded	Julie Billiart School Akron				
		2	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	611210	611	Junior Colleges	Traded	Hondros College of Nursing		
				611310	611	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	Traded			
		3	Educational Support Services	611710	611	Educational Support Services	Traded			
		4	Research Organizations	541711	541	Research and Development in Biotechnology - nanobiotechnologies research and experimental development laboratories	Traded			
				541712	541	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Biotechnology) - nanotechnology research and experimental development laboratories	Traded	Daystar Clinical Research		
				541720	541	Research and Development in the Social Sciences and Humanities	Traded	Akron Social Design & Research		
		5	Professional Organizations	813920	813	Professional Organizations	Traded			
		Related Clusters		Marketing; Business Services; Distribution & eCommerce; Biopharma; Insurance; Communications; Performing Arts; Financial Services; Printing;						

Financial Services

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
16	Financial Services	1	Financial Investment Activities	523910	523	Miscellaneous Intermediation	Traded	
				523920	523	Portfolio Management	Traded	Forward Thinking Wealth Mgmt; Trinity Financial-Ins
				523930	523	Investment Advice	Traded	
				523991	523	Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities	Traded	
				523999	523	Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities	Traded	
				525910	525	Open-End Investment Funds	Traded	
				525990	525	Other Financial Vehicles	Traded	
		2	Credit Intermediation	522120	522	Savings Institutions	Traded	
				522190	522	Other Depository Credit Intermediation	Traded	
				522210	522	Credit Card Issuing	Traded	
				522220	522	Sales Financing	Traded	
				522291	522	Consumer Lending	Traded	
				522292	522	Real Estate Credit	Traded	Summit County Land Bank
				522293	522	International Trade Financing	Traded	
				522294	522	Secondary Market Financing	Traded	
				522298	522	All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation	Traded	
		522320	522	Financial Transactions Processing, Reserve, and Clearinghouse Activities	Traded	Western Union Agent Location		
		522390	522	Other Activities Related to Credit Intermediation	Traded			
		3	Credit Bureaus	561450	561	Credit Bureaus	Traded	
		4	Monetary Authorities - Central Bank	521110	521	Monetary Authorities-Central Bank	Traded	
		5	Securities Brokers, Dealers, and Exchanges	522310	522	Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers	Traded	Third Financial Service Corporation
				523110	523	Investment Banking and Securities Dealing	Traded	
				523120	523	Securities Brokerage	Traded	
				523130	523	Commodity Contracts Dealing	Traded	
				523140	523	Commodity Contracts Brokerage	Traded	
		523210	523	Securities and Commodity Exchanges	Traded			
		Related Clusters	Insurance; Marketing; Business Services; Distribution & eCommerce; Education;					

Hospitality and Tourism 1-4

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
22	Hospitality and Tourism	1	Spectator Sports	711211	711	Sports Teams and Clubs	Traded	Akron Inner City Soccer Club
				711212	711	Racetracks	Traded	
				711219	711	Other Spectator Sports	Traded	
		2	Amusement Parks and Arcades	713110	713	Amusement and Theme Parks	Traded	
				713120	713	Amusement Arcades	Traded	
		3	Cultural and Educational Entertainment	453920	453	Art Dealers	Traded	
				712110	712	Museums	Traded	The Rage Gallery; Simon Perkins Stone Mansion
				712120	712	Historical Sites	Traded	
				712130	712	Zoos and Botanical Gardens	Traded	Akron Zoo
				712190	712	Nature Parks and Other Similar Institutions	Traded	
				713210	713	Casinos (except Casino Hotels)	Traded	
		4	Gambling Facilities	713290	713	Other Gambling Industries	Traded	Copley News Lottery & More
				Marketing				
Related Clusters								

Hospitality and Tourism 5-7

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
22	Hospitality and Tourism	5	Other Tourism Attractions	114210	114	Hunting and Trapping	Traded	
				713920	713	Skiing Facilities	Traded	
				713930	713	Marinas	Traded	
				713990	713	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries	Traded	
				721214	721	Recreational and Vacation Camps (except Campgrounds)	Traded	
		6	Accommodations and Related Services	561591	561	Convention and Visitors Bureaus	Traded	
				721110	721	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	Traded	
				721120	721	Casino Hotels	Traded	
				721191	721	Bed-and-Breakfast Inns	Traded	Portage House Bed & Breakfast
				721199	721	All Other Traveler Accommodation	Traded	
				721211	721	RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Campgrounds	Traded	
		7	Tourism Related Services	721310	721	Rooming and Boarding Houses	Traded	Heart of the Home foundation
				487110	487	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation, Land	Traded	
				487210	487	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation, Water	Traded	
				487990	487	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation, Other	Traded	
				532292	532	Recreational Goods Rental	Traded	
				561510	561	Travel Agencies	Traded	
				561520	561	Tour Operators	Traded	
561599	561	All Other Travel Arrangement and Reservation Services	Traded					
Related Clusters		Marketing						

Marketing, Design and Publishing

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
29	Marketing, Design, and Publishing	1	Advertising Related Services	541810	541	Advertising Agencies	Traded	
				541850	541	Outdoor Advertising	Traded	
				541860	541	Direct Mail Advertising	Traded	
				541870	541	Advertising Material Distribution Services	Traded	
				541890	541	Other Services Related to Advertising	Traded	
		2	Other Marketing Related Services	541613	541	Marketing Consulting Services	Traded	Paramount Publishing Group
				541820	541	Public Relations Agencies	Traded	
				541830	541	Media Buying Agencies	Traded	
				541840	541	Media Representatives	Traded	
				541910	541	Marketing Research and Public Opinion Polling	Traded	
		3	Design Services	541410	541	Interior Design Services	Traded	
				541420	541	Industrial Design Services	Traded	
				541430	541	Graphic Design Services	Traded	FUZE Digital Design and Imaging; Brand Standard
				541490	541	Other Specialized Design Services	Traded	
		4	Publishing	511120	511	Periodical Publishers	Traded	
				511130	511	Book Publishers	Traded	Multicultural Publications
				511140	511	Directory and Mailing List Publishers	Traded	
				511199	511	All Other Publishers	Traded	
				519110	519	News Syndicates	Traded	
				519120	519	Libraries and Archives	Traded	Odom Boulevard Public Library; Maple Valley Branch Library
				519130	519	Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals	Traded	
		519190	519	All Other Information Services	Traded			
		Related Clusters	Music; Printing; Distribution & eCommerce; Business Services; Performing Arts; Education; Insurance; Communications; Financial Services; Biopharma; Video Production; Jewelry; Hospitality;					

Performing Arts

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
37	Performing Arts	1	Performing Artists	711110	711	Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	Traded	None Too Fragile Theatre
				711120	711	Dance Companies	Traded	
				711130	711	Musical Groups and Artists	Traded	
				711190	711	Other Performing Arts Companies	Traded	
				711510	711	Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	Traded	
		2	Promoters and Managers	711310	711	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities	Traded	
				711320	711	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events without Facilities	Traded	
				711410	711	Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	Traded	
Related Clusters	Music; Marketing; Business Services; Video Production; Education; Insurance;							

Printing Services

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
39	Printing Services	2	Support Activities for Printing	323120	323	Support Activites for Printing	Traded	
		3	Printing Services	323111	323	Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)	Traded	Sticker slouch llc
				323113	323	Commercial Screen Printing	Traded	
				323117	323	Books Printing	Traded	
		4	Greeting Card Printing and Publishing	511191	511	Greeting Card Publishers	Traded	
Related Clusters	Leather Products; Apparel; Marketing; Paper & Packaging; Insurance; Business Services; Plastics; Education;							

Transportation and Logistics

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
45	Transportation and Logistics	1	Air Transportation	481111	481	Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation	Traded	
				481112	481	Scheduled Freight Air Transportation	Traded	
				481212	481	Nonscheduled Chartered Freight Air Transportation	Traded	
				488111	488	Air Traffic Control	Traded	
				488119	488	Other Airport Operations	Traded	
				488190	488	Other Support Activities for Air Transportation	Traded	
		2	Specialty Air Transportation	481211	481	Nonscheduled Chartered Passenger Air Transportation	Traded	
				481219	481	Other Nonscheduled Air Transportation	Traded	
		3	Ground Transportation Support Activities	488210	488	Support Activities for Rail Transportation	Traded	
				488490	488	Other Support Activities for Road Transportation	Traded	
				488510	488	Freight Transportation Arrangement	Traded	
				488991	488	Packing and Crating	Traded	
		4	Trucking	488999	488	All Other Support Activities for Transportation	Traded	Drivers club21
				484121	484	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload	Traded	VIP Trucking
				484230	484	Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Long-Distance	Traded	
		5	Bus Transportation	485210	485	Interurban and Rural Bus Transportation	Traded	
				485510	485	Charter Bus Industry	Traded	
Related Clusters	Distribution & eCommerce							

Video production and Distribution

Cluster Code	Cluster Name	Subcluster Code	Subcluster Name	NAICS 2012	NAICS 3-Digit	Industry	Traded vs Local	Businesses
48	Video Production and Distribution	1	Video Production and Distribution	512110	512	Motion Picture and Video Production	Traded	Production Works Inc
				512120	512	Motion Picture and Video Distribution	Traded	
				512132	512	Drive-In Motion Picture Theaters	Traded	
				512191	512	Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services	Traded	
				512199	512	Other Motion Picture and Video Industries	Traded	
Related Clusters	Music; Communications; Performing Arts; Marketing							