



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Location

Oberlin is a city of 1,605 located in north west Kansas, along Sappa Creek. The city is the county seat of Decatur County. US Highway 83 runs north and south through the city intersecting with US 36 which runs east and west throughout northern Kansas.

### History

Named after Oberlin, Ohio, Oberlin, Kansas was platted in 1878. Shortly after the towns founding in September of 1878 the Northern Cheyenne resisted government efforts to move them to reservation lands in Indian Territory. In one attempt 937 Northern Cheyenne men, women, and children were persuaded to move south where they suffered from lack of food and medicine. They fled the reservation to return north to their home in Montana. On their path traveling northward they lived off the land. They stole food, cattle, and horses; destroyed property;

and killed settlers as they passed through Sheridan, Decatur, and Rawlins counties. Today the Decatur County Museum has an exhibit and memorial for the victims of the raid.

The first newspaper in Oberlin was the Oberlin Herald, published in 1879. The same year Oberlin was voted to be the county seat for Decatur County. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy railroad used to pass through Oberlin in the 19th and 20th centuries but has since stopped service. The current courthouse was authorized for construction by the county commissioners in 1907 which was constructed at the intersection of S. Penn Ave and E. Hall Ave.

(Note: modified slightly from website.)

Sources: <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia>, <https://archive.org/details/kansasencyclop/500/mode/2up?q=oabin>

### Comprehensive Plan

This plan will accomplish the following for the City of Oberlin:

- I. Promote orderly growth and development for the community;
- II. Provide policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make better informed decisions about the future of the community;
- III. Provide a guideline for the location of future uses and developments within the planning jurisdiction of Oberlin;
- IV. Provide a vision and direction for the future planning period of the city, and;
- V. Act as an information and management tool for community leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments.

The Comprehensive Plan should evolve as changes in the land use, population, or local economy occur during the planning period.



## The Planning Process

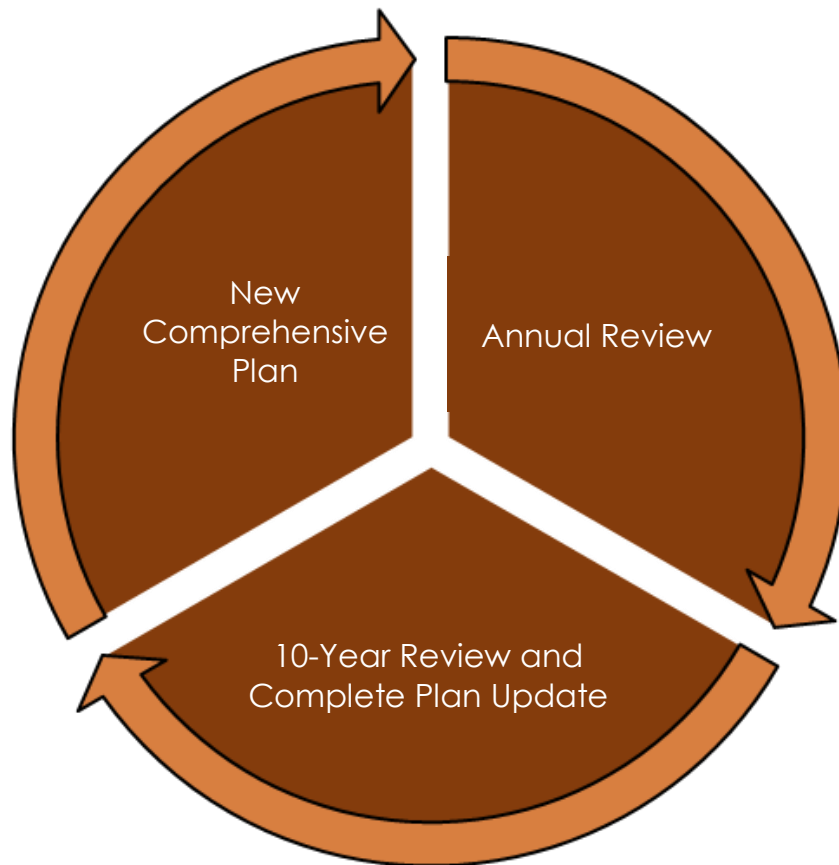
The Comprehensive Plan begins with the development of general goals and policies, based upon current and future issues faced by the community and its residents. These are intended to be practical guidelines for addressing existing conditions and guiding future growth.

In conjunction with the development of general goals and policies, a data collection phase occurs. Data are collected to provide a snapshot of the past and present conditions within the community.

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic, and social trends allows for the projection of potential conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. In addition, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions.

Therefore, it is important for Oberlin to closely monitor population, housing, and economic conditions impacting the city. Through periodic monitoring, the city can adapt and adjust to changes at the local level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic changes allows the city to maintain a useful and effective Comprehensive Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life for its residents, and raise the standard of living for all residents.

The Comprehensive Plan is ultimately a **blueprint** designed



to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies in the following areas:

- Housing;
- Economic development;
- Public facilities;
- Public safety;
- Communications, Utilities, and Energy;
- Hazards;
- Land use, and;
- Transportation

The Comprehensive Plan contains recommendations which when implemented will be of value to the community and its residents. Tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations will be identified through the process. Nevertheless, the implementation of the development policies contained within the plan is dependent upon the adoption

of the plan by the governing body and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the city.

## Plan Preparation

The Plan was prepared under the direction of the Oberlin Planning Commission, with the assistance and participation of the Oberlin City Council, City staff, and the citizens of Oberlin.

The time period for achieving the goals, developments, and programs identified in the Oberlin Comprehensive Plan is 20 years. However, the community should review the plan annually and update the document every 10 years (2035), or when major, unanticipated opportunity arises. Completing updates every 10 years or so will allow the





community to incorporate ideas and developments not known at the time of the present planning process.

### Plan Components

Kansas State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A "Comprehensive Plan," as defined in Kansas Statute §12-747.

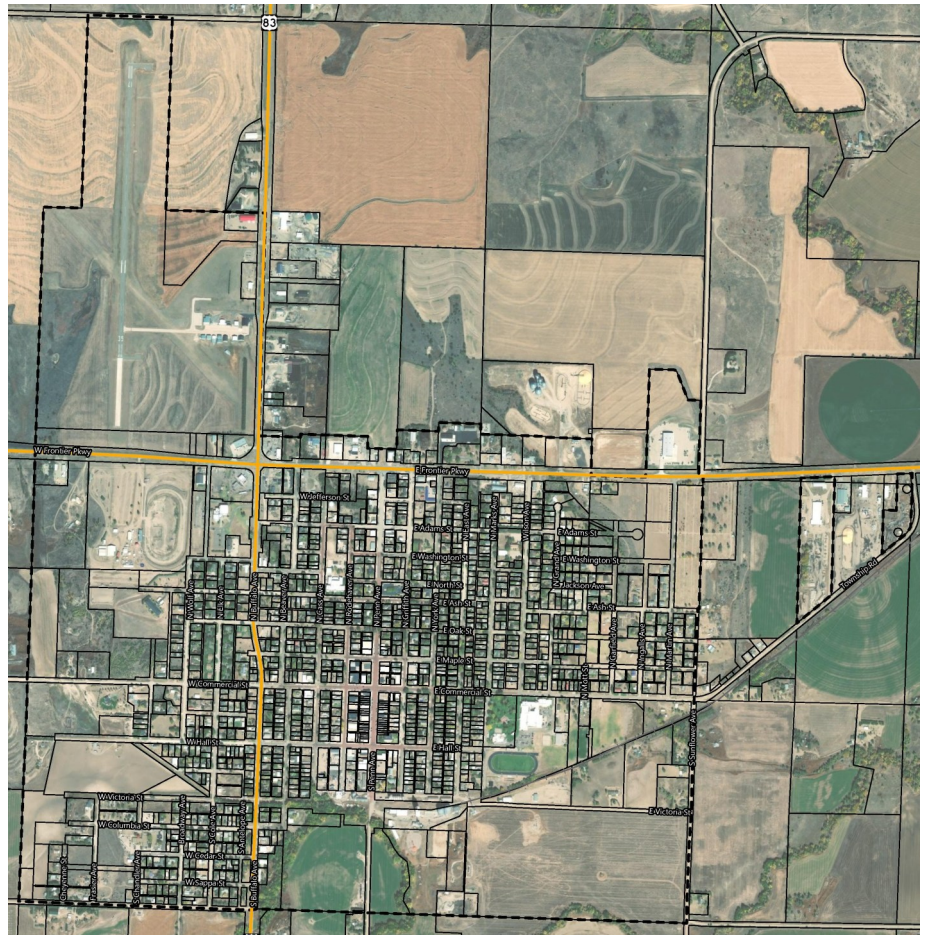
The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following chapters and sections:

- Introduction;
- Community Engagement;
- Population;
- Housing;
- Economic Profile;
- Public Facilities;
- Communications, Utilities, and Energy;
- Hazards;
- Land Use;
- Transportation, and;
- Implementation

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic, and social trends permit the projection of likely conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. Also, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions. Therefore, it is important for Oberlin to closely monitor population, housing, and economic conditions which may impact the community.

Through periodic monitoring, the community can adapt and adjust to changes at the local

**Figure 1.1: Oberlin City Limits, 2025**



Source: ESRI

level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic change allows the city to maintain an effective Comprehensive Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life, and to raise the standard of living for all residents.

The Comprehensive Plan records where Oberlin has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future. Having this record in the Comprehensive Plan will serve to inform city officials as much as possible. The Comprehensive Plan is an information and management tool for city leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering any and all future developments.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during the planning period. This information is the basis for Oberlin's evolution as it achieves its physical, social, and economic goals.

### Governmental Organization

The Oberlin City Council performs the governmental functions for the city. Pursuant to Kansas Stat., §12-754, the planning and zoning jurisdiction for the city includes the corporate area and may include land within three miles of



their corporate limits.

### Process for Adoption

When it is time to adopt the Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Commissioners adopts the plan by Resolution. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing. After the Planning Commission Public Hearing, the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the Board. Notice of the public hearings is required to be published in the newspaper of general circulation a minimum of 20 days prior to each hearing.



Photo 1.1: Signage at entrance of City  
Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

### Data Variations

In some chapters, American Community Survey ("ACS") data was used alongside U.S. Census Bureau data. ACS data is based upon statistical sampling from the U.S. Census Bureau's data; therefore, there may be variations in the numbers presented based on the source.

The Plan is only one of several tools within the toolbox which helps guide the community into the future.

Planned growth will make Oberlin more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and able to meet the standard of living and quality of life every individual desires.





## Chapter 2 Community Engagement

Community engagement is vital to a successful planning effort. Public participation makes it possible to have a clearer understanding of how the residents feel regarding their communities. During every planning process, there are limited numbers of individuals concerned about the effort either because things are going in a positive direction or specific issues do not impact them. Regardless, those concerns do not minimize the importance of community engagement. Knowing, recording, and then acknowledging what residents think of their communities makes the Comprehensive Plan truly a community's.

### Participation Methods

Transparent and frequent public participation was designed as a major component of this Plan. The process included multiple approaches. It was structured in a manner allowing for stakeholders to be involved in

numerous ways throughout the process - if stakeholders missed a meeting, they were still able to provide their thoughts and input through other means. The key elements of participation included:

- A project website;
- Postcards and informational posters;
- Stakeholder interviews;
- A town hall meeting, and;
- A Citywide survey

### Project Website

A special project website was established at the onset of the planning process. The project website served as a means to notify residents about upcoming meetings, inform them on the importance and purpose of comprehensive planning, provide links to input methods, and provide updates on the status of the project.

### Postcards and Posters

In order to get the most public participation possible, the planning team developed informational postcards and posters. The postcards and posters led readers to the project website and to the project survey. The postcards were distributed prior to the town hall meeting in November of 2024. The posters were placed at Rayes Grocery Store and the Post Office.

### Stakeholder Interviews

The planning team interviewed key stakeholders to get their input on the current state of the city, and what they view as the future of Oberlin. The following groups and or persons were interviewed:

- Members of Oberlin Unified School District 294, and;
- The Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corporation

Both groups gave the planning team their thoughts on the



strengths, opportunities, and challenges of living and working in Oberlin.

### **Oberlin Unified School District 294**

Oberlin USD 294 operates two schools in Oberlin, which is explored in Chapter 6 of this Plan.

Conversations began with where the District currently thrives. Members felt leadership, relationships between teachers and the School Board, funding, and class sizes are flourishing in Oberlin. The issues at the District center around aging facilities, which make attracting families and teachers alike a challenge.

Discussion then shifted to what the best outcomes would be for the District over the life of the Plan. A large scale bond issue passing to upgrade facilities, to attract and retain more teachers and families, was number one with a bullet. A bond issue passing would also keep the standard of education in Oberlin at a high level.

Lastly, the strengths and weaknesses of Oberlin were examined. Oberlin has a lot to offer; fiber is coming, strong educational system, a family-friendly atmosphere, and a strong Downtown. However, the negatives include lack of communication between governmental entities, an aversion to growth, and complacency. Promoting the positives and addressing these last three issues will be important for the City to undertake over the life of the Plan



Photo 2.1: Gateway Civic Center  
Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

### **Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corporation**

This organization is located in Oberlin and focuses on the economic growth of Decatur County, assists communities with grants, and helps with business revolving loans.

Conversations began with the organizations priority areas, which currently lie with the large issues of housing, bringing more businesses to town (restaurants and bars), business retention plans, and filling vacant buildings. The organization has also been working on a mural project with the City of Oberlin to build community vibrancy since December 2023. A third mural is underway as of the writing of this plan.

The conversation then shifted to the “good and the bad” in the community. The “good” includes historic preservation of murals and brick streets, as well as the volunteering nature of the community. In regards to the “bad” in the city, there should be

work done to improve nightlife and communication between entities. These items will be important to keep in mind over the life of the Plan.

### **Town Hall Meeting**

An open house meeting was held on November 20, 2024 at the Gateway Civic Center. At this meeting, attendees provided input on the Comprehensive Plan. The planning team transcribed all answers to the five questions, which informed all elements of this plan.

#### **What do you love about Oberlin?**

- A lot gets done: infrastructure especially
- Neighbors helping neighbors
- Rural
- Friendly
- Community feel
- Historic
- Peace and safety
- Has everything a person needs - young and old
- Good base of people that care
- Downtown and brick streets
- Sappa Park
- Respect for traditions





- Access to outdoor activities
- Activities across city
- Good hospital and clinic
- Gateway Civic Center

## What are the biggest opportunities Oberlin has for the future?

- GROW - Community foundation
- Business and industry
- Crossroad of two highways
- Influx of people leaving City life
- Remote work - housing and internet
- Tiny homes
- Shopping and dining
- Connecting/cooperating with cooking schools/programs
- Community space, coffee shop
- School/support
- Opportunities for the youth
- Accept change, working for said change
- Where is change occurring?
- Utilize the Gateway Center

## What are the biggest challenges Oberlin has right now?

- More connections at airport
- Housing - dilapidated housing
- Highway/Gateway Civic Center beautification
- Apathy
- Older population
- Attracting/retaining youth population
- Activities for young people
- Emergency, specialized care
- Getting information out to diverse age groups
- Agree to disagree disrespectfully
- Small town - knowing everybody
- Optimism about the future
- People using their voices to enact change
- Young people are not involved

## What city projects would you like to see undertaken in the next 10 years?

- Sappa Park - make it a more usable space
- Business and industries... ANYTHING
- Housing - all kinds
- Cooperative housing solutions
- Tearing down dilapidated housing
- Rehab housing
- Renovate school facilities
- More youth activities
- Kickstart activities, recreational activities
- Recreation Director
- Better internet
- Street maintenance
- Stormwater control
- Downtown Revitalization

## How would you describe the ideal Oberlin 20 years from now?

- Positivity
- Airport still thriving
- Improving outdoor recreation
- Growing
- Attractive
- Showcasing history
- Bustling downtown
- Healthy population - needs are met
- School and hospital are thriving
- Cooperation around community, entities
- More community involvement
- Opportunities being developed
- Diverse housing, smaller housing
- Cleaned up and connected
- Identity, marketing identity
- Peaceful and safe
- Continue to get a lot done
- Great infrastructure still

## Citywide Survey

SurveyMonkey, a web based survey tool, was utilized for

gathering more specific input on Oberlin. The survey process allows individuals to provide input while remaining totally anonymous. The survey data helped to identify what people want preserved, what needs to be changed, what makes Oberlin a comfortable place to live, and what their big ideas are for the future. The survey was open and advertised from October 2024 to April 2025. There were 131 responses, or approximately 8.0% of the population having taken the survey.

## Goals and Actions

Planning for future land use and development is an ongoing process of goal setting and problem solving aimed at creating the conditions for a better quality of life. Planning focuses on ways of solving existing problems within the city, and providing a action-oriented tool for local leaders and residents to achieve their vision for the future.

## Community Goals

The goals of this comprehensive plan are intended to address existing conditions and trends, and to address issues and concerns of citizens as expressed through community engagement. Goals for the comprehensive plan are presented throughout the plan. Certain chapters contains goals and action items to address each element.

- **Goals** are statements of what the citizens of Oberlin want to achieve. A goal should be stated in a manner allowing it to be accomplished. Goals in this plan may include specific



policies for land use and development. Goals inform policies of the City.

- **Action Items** are specific statements in support of goals. Action items are future-focused measures, projects, plans, or activities proposed to implement the comprehensive plan in the real world.

It is important to establish goals and actions over the short-term as well as long-term. Goals and action items should be evaluated, reviewed, and updated regularly as conditions and resources change.

### Tools and Strategies

There are a variety of tools and strategies lending further support to achieving the City's goals beyond specific action items identified in the comprehensive plan. These activities should be reviewed during regular plan maintenance and included in the plan if and when appropriate.

### Plan Maintenance and Review

As stated in the introductory chapter, the comprehensive plan is intended to address growth and development anticipated over the next 20 years. Goals are focused on the next 10 years, with more specific action items identified for short-term and long-term implementation. As noted in the final chapter, Implementation and regular review are essential to bring this plan to life.



Photo 2.2: Downtown Oberlin  
Source: Marvin Planning Consultants





## Chapter 3 Population

### Population

A community is made up of people. Population trends, therefore, affect all aspects of community encompassing housing, employment, and economy. This is also an ever changing variable with births, deaths, or migration constantly fluctuating.

Understanding population trends and applying them to the future is a critical action Oberlin should undertake. Decision-makers should understand where the city has been, where it is currently, and where it appears to be going. Projections provide a basis for the City's future land use and development decisions, even though population projections are only estimates and unforeseen factors will likely affect projections.

### Population Trends

As of July 1, 2023, the US Census Bureau estimates Oberlin's population as 1,605 residents.

Figure 3.1 on the next page contains the historic population between 1980 and 2020 for Oberlin compared to Decatur County and its unincorporated areas. The data provide a look at where the city has been and allows for the eventual projection of populations in the community.

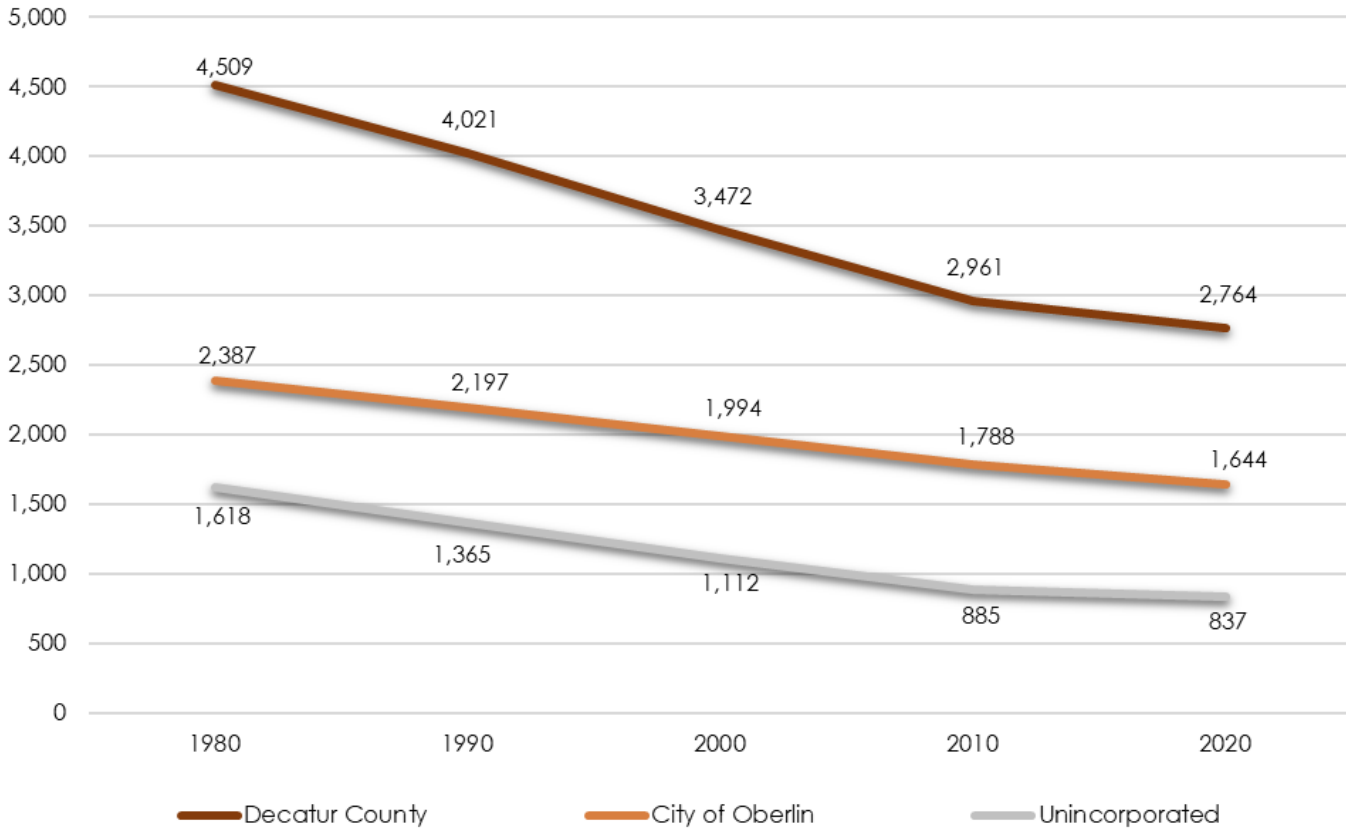
Oberlin saw a gradual decline over the 40 years, with the largest loss coming between 1990 and 2000. Throughout the time period Oberlin lost -31% (743 people).



Photo 3.1: Paul's Super Service Filling Station, 1930s  
Source: Kansas Memory, Kansas State Historical Society



**Figure 3.1: Population Trends for Oberlin and Decatur County, 1980-2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980 - 2020.

## Age Structure Analysis

Age structure is an important component of population analysis. By analyzing age structure, the city can determine the key dynamics affecting the population growth or decline as well as sustainability of Oberlin's population. Each age group affects the population in a number of different ways; the existence of large younger age groups means a greater ability to sustain future population growth compared to large older age groups.

Table 3.2 contains the age group structure for Oberlin in 2012 and 2022. The examination of age structures provides an understanding of where some of the population shifts are occurring. Reviewing population in this manner permits a detailed

analysis of which specific groups are moving in and out of the city. Negative changes in a group indicate out-migration or a combination of out-migration and deaths.

Oberlin saw growth in five age groups from 2012 to 2022. The 0-4 and 5-9 groups are always an increase, since these individuals were not alive for the 2012 American Community Survey. Outside of the 2022 age groups of 0-4 and 5-9 years, the other increases were in the 25-29, 30-34, and 40-44 age groups. Working age people migrating to a city is a good sign of a healthy economy attracting workers. When you eliminate the first two younger populations, 91 people moved into Oberlin during the time period. Adding the new births into the mix, the total

population growth was 273 people. There were nine age groups from 2012 having declined by 2022. The group with the greatest loss was the 85 and older age group, which lost 199 persons, or 64.6% over the period. The age group which lost the second most was the 20-24 age group. This age group lost 96 persons, or 86.5%. These losses are likely due to a combination of loss and outmigration.

## Age Profile

As seen in Figure 3.2, between 2012 and 2022, the median age in Oberlin fluctuated but ultimately increased from 49.8 to 53.1. Kansas's median age increased by 1.1 years. The median age in Oberlin exceeds Kansas's median age by over 16 years. Young people are moving out of Oberlin and typically not



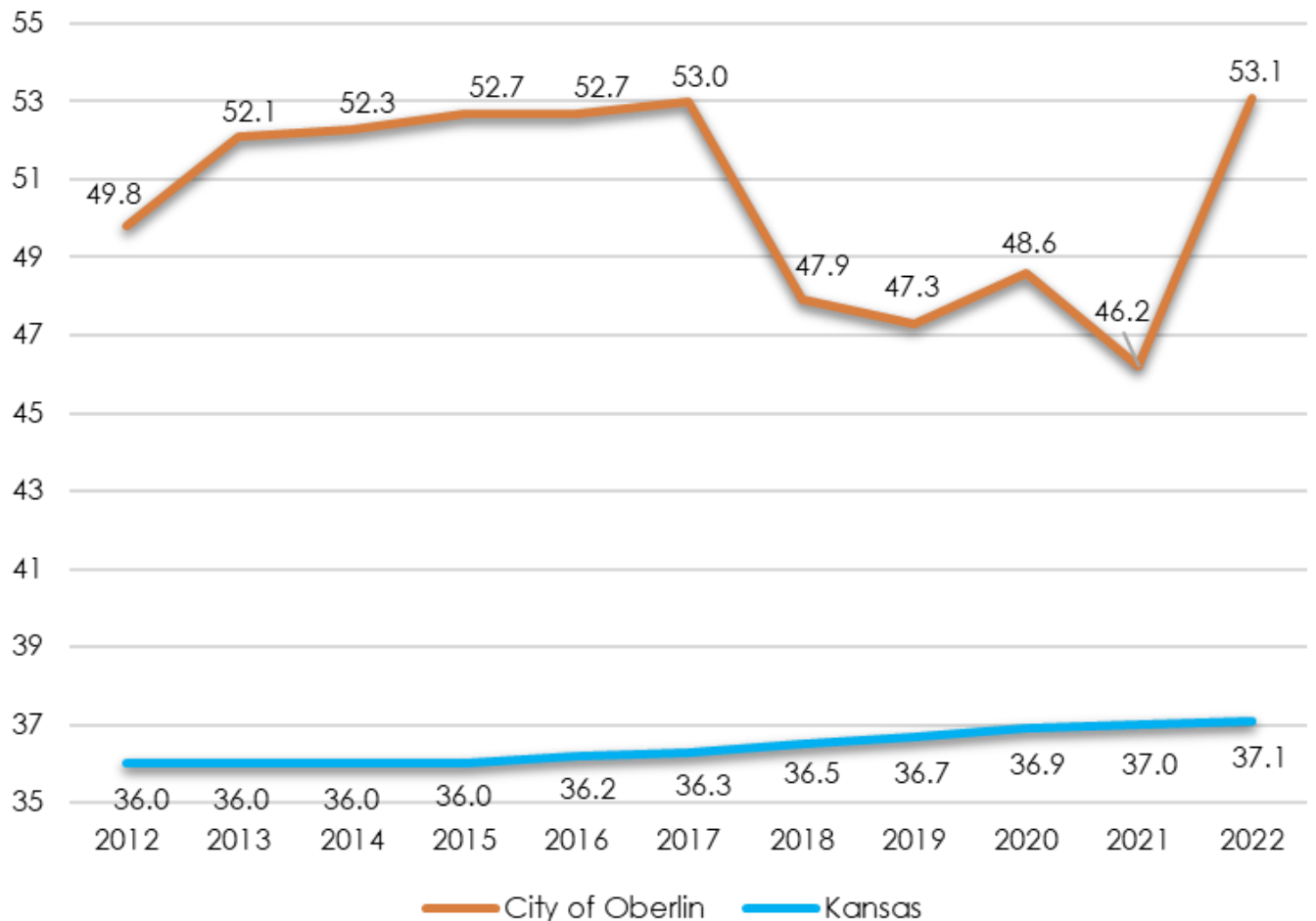


**Table 3.2: Age Characteristics**

Male and Female Populations 2012-2022					
Age in 2012	2012 population	Age in 2022	2022 population	Cohort Change	% Change
		0-4	86	-	N/A
		5-9	96	-	N/A
0-4	95	10-14	73	-22	-23.2%
5-9	124	15-19	100	-24	-19.4%
10-14	111	20-24	15	-96	-86.5%
15-19	60	25-29	111	51	85.0%
20-24	52	30-34	69	17	32.7%
25-29	142	35-39	81	-61	-43.0%
30-34	94	40-44	117	23	24.5%
35-44	168	45-54	117	-51	-30.4%
45-54	243	55-64	223	-20	-8.2%
55-64	298	65-74	293	-5	-1.7%
65-74	158	75-84	139	-19	-12.0%
75 & older	308	85 and over	109	-199	-64.6%
Total	1,853		1,629	-224	-12.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

**Figure 3.2: Median Age 2012-2022**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.



moving back until they are in their late 20's, which is partially responsible for the higher median age. Lastly, as of 2022, two of the largest age groups in the city are the 55-64 and 65-74 age groups, raising the median age overall.

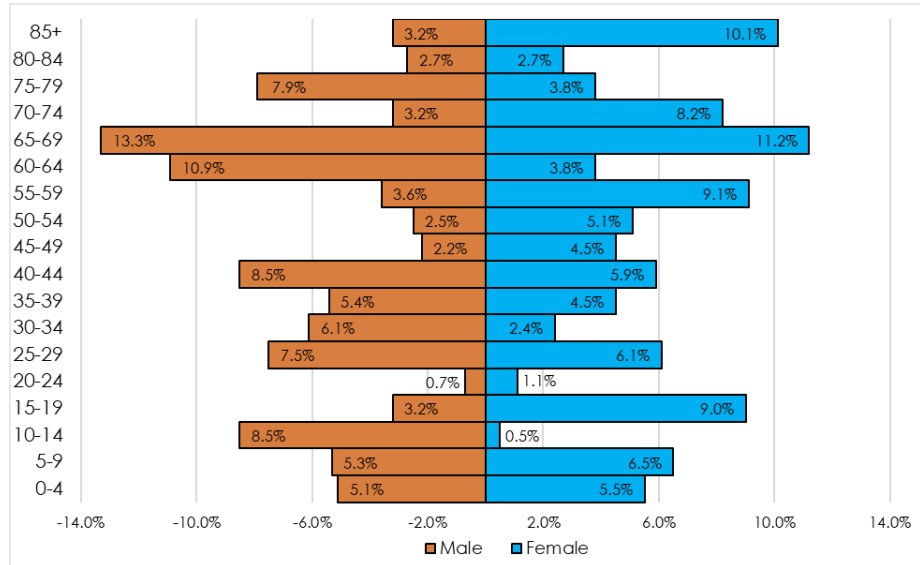
Figure 3.3 is a population pyramid of the current age structure of Oberlin, as reported by the ACS. The largest cohort of both males (11.2%) and women (13.2%) were aged 65-69 years. There was a greater share of women compared to men over the age of 50. Service providers for senior citizens should take this gender discrepancy into account during program planning. Among working age population (20-64), the smallest cohort among men (0.7%) and women (1.1%) were age 20-24.

## Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio examines the portion of Oberlin's supporting age groups historically dependent upon others for survival (those under 18 years and those 65 years and older). The dependency ratio is important to examine because it focuses on the number of dependent persons and if there is enough employed persons in the community to support the dependent populations and the employed population.

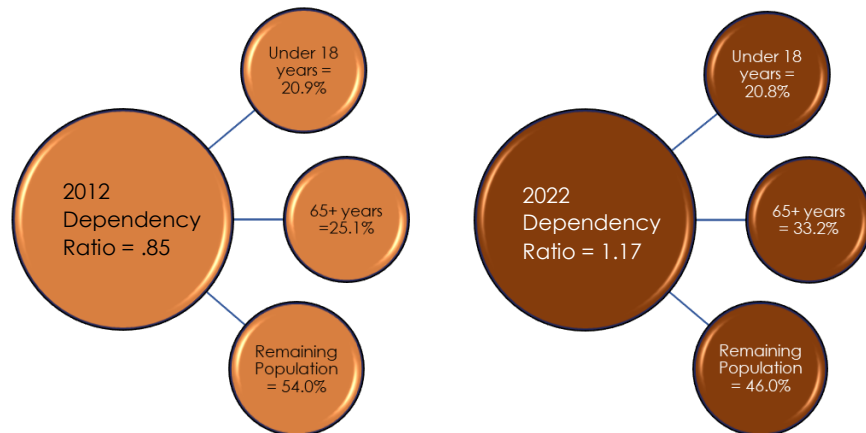
Figures 3.4 and 3.5 indicates the dependency ratios for 2012 and 2022 in Oberlin. The portion of persons less than 18 years of age decreased marginally by 0.1%. Those aged 65 years and older increased by 8.1% over the time period. In 2012, Oberlin had a dependency ratio of 0.85 (46.0%/54.0%). By 2022 the dependency ratio had increased to 1.17 (54.0%/46.0%).

**Figure 3.3: Population Pyramid 2022**



Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.

**Figures 3.4 and 3.5: Dependency Ratios 2012 (left) and 2022 (right)**



Sources: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

## Ethnicity

### Dependency Ratio

This ratio examines the portion of a community's earnings that is spent supporting age groups typically and historically dependent on the incomes of others.

< 1: 1 Independent resident is able to support more than 1 Dependent resident

=1: 1 Independent resident able to support 1 Dependent resident

>1: 1 Independent resident able to support less than 1 Dependent resident

(%18 years and younger + %65 years and older)  
divided by  
% of remaining population





**Table 3.3: Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	2012		2022		2012 to 2022	
	Number	%	Number	%	Net Change	% change
White alone	1,777	95.9%	1,521	93.4%	-256	-14.4%
Black or African American alone	24	1.3%	19	1.2%	-5	-20.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	14	0.8%	23	1.4%	9	64.3%
Asian alone	5	0.3%	0	0.0%	-5	-100.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	7	0.4%	0	0.0%	-7	-100.0%
Some Other Race alone	1	0.1%	21	1.3%	20	2000.0%
Two or More Races	25	1.3%	7	0.4%	-18	-72.0%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	24	1.3%	37	2.3%	13	54.2%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

Oberlin was predominantly White alone in 2012; this did not change by 2022. This will likely continue into the future for the city based on these trends. The White alone group decreased slightly following the population loss in Oberlin overall (a change of -14.4%). The Hispanic Origin (Any Race) population increased from 24 to 37 between 2012 to 2022. The Some Other Race population group also increased over the time period, growing from a person to 21 persons.

## Population Projections

Population projections are estimates based upon past and present circumstances. The use of population projections allows Oberlin to estimate the potential population in future years by looking at past trends. By scrutinizing population changes in this manner, the City will be able to develop a baseline of change from which future scenarios can be generated. A number of factors including demographics, economics, and social may affect projections positively or negatively.

At the present time, these projections are the best tool for predicting future population changes. There are many

methods to project the future population trends; the one projection technique used is intended to provide Oberlin a broad overview of possible population changes in the future.

## Trend Line Analysis

Trend Line Analysis is a process of projecting future populations based upon changes during a specified period of time. In the analysis of Oberlin, four different trend lines of population change were reviewed: 2010 to 2020, 2000 to 2020, 1990 to 2020, and 1970 to 2020.

A review of these trend lines indicates Oberlin will see varied levels of population changes between now and 2050. The following projections summarize the decennial population for Oberlin through 2050.

Year	1970 to 2020
2020	1,644 persons
2030	1,538 persons
2040	1,440 persons
2050	1,347 persons
Year	1990 to 2020
2020	1,644 persons
2030	1,493 persons
2040	1,355 persons
2050	1,230 persons
Year	2000 to 2020
2020	1,644 persons
2030	1,493 persons
2040	1,355 persons
2050	1,231 persons
Year	2010 to 2020
2020	1,644 persons
2030	1,512 persons
2040	1,390 persons
2050	1,278 persons

## Summary of Population



### LOW

The 20-year trend was selected for the Low Series and may be considered a worst-case scenario. It is unlikely that the city will continue to lose population at this rate, yet serves as a baseline for planning purposes. If local leaders are prepared for population at this level, they will be prepared for more moderate population change.

### MEDIUM

The 10-year trend was selected as the Medium Series. This projection assumes no major changes in the community, following the current level of population loss.

### HIGH

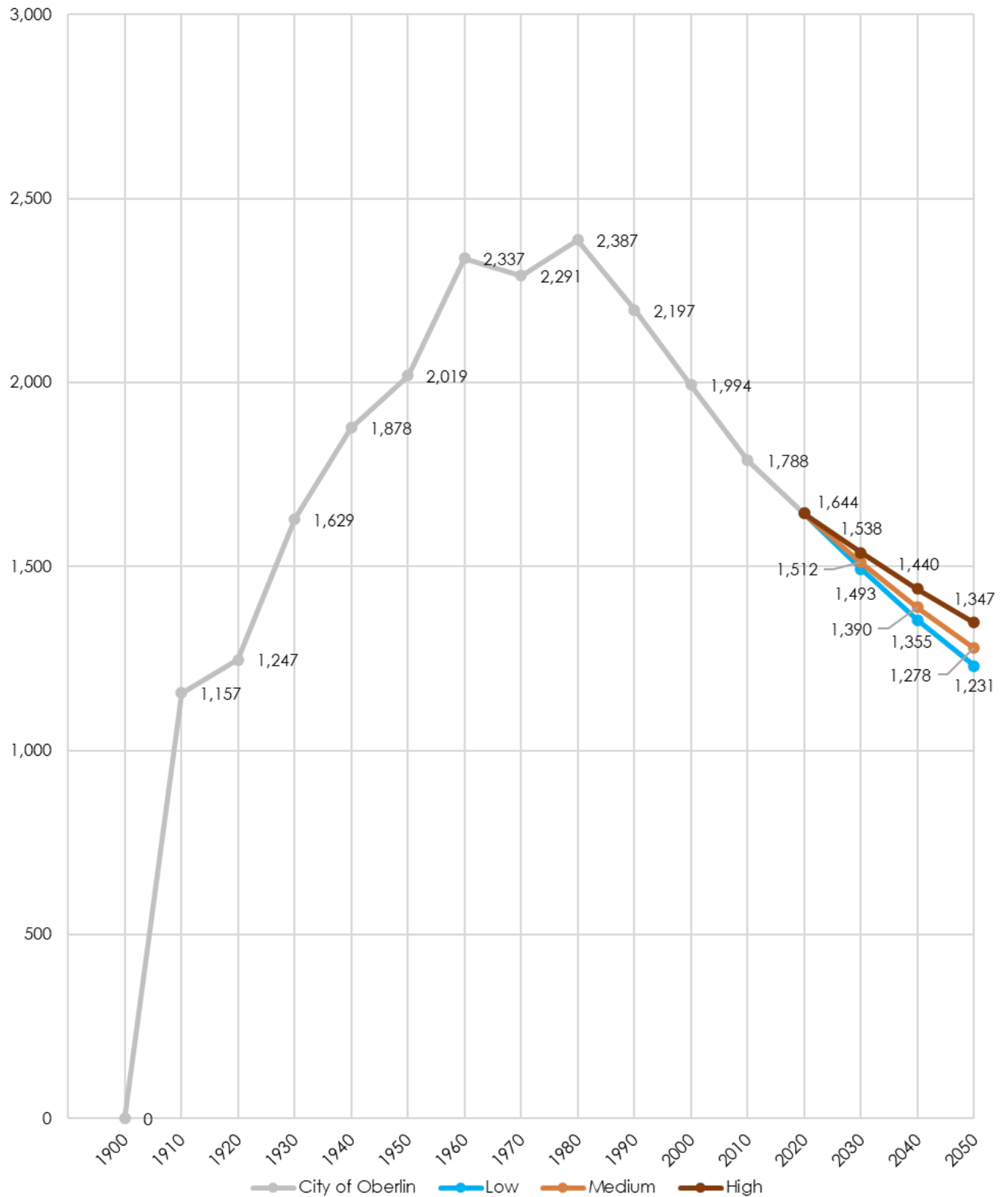
The long-term 50-year trend serves as the High Series. long-view evens out the ebbs and flows of population change. This is an optimistic scenario which can also serve as a goal for city leaders.

## Projections

Three population projection scenarios were selected as likely low, medium, and high series data points.



**Figure 3.8: Population and Projections for Oberlin**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1970 - 2020, Marvin Planning Consultants.





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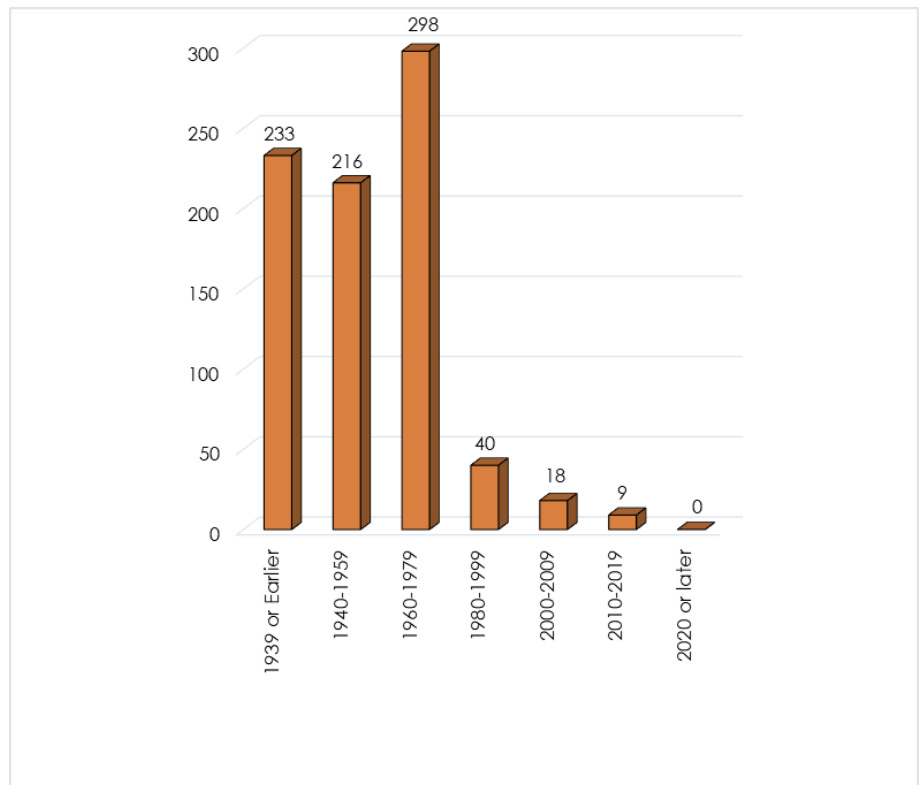
## Chapter 4 Housing

### Housing Profile

The housing profile examines past and present housing conditions in the city. Doing so identifies potential needs including provisions for safe, decent, sanitary, and affordable housing for all.

Projecting future housing needs requires several factors to be considered, including population change, household income, employment rates, land use patterns, and residents' attitudes. The following tables and figures provide information to aid in determining future housing needs and developing policies designed to accomplish the housing goals for Oberlin.

**Figure 4.1: Age of Existing Housing Stock**



Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.



## Existing Housing Stock

Housing stock age can reveal much about population and economic conditions of the past. Examining these data provides a better understanding of the overall housing quality in Oberlin.

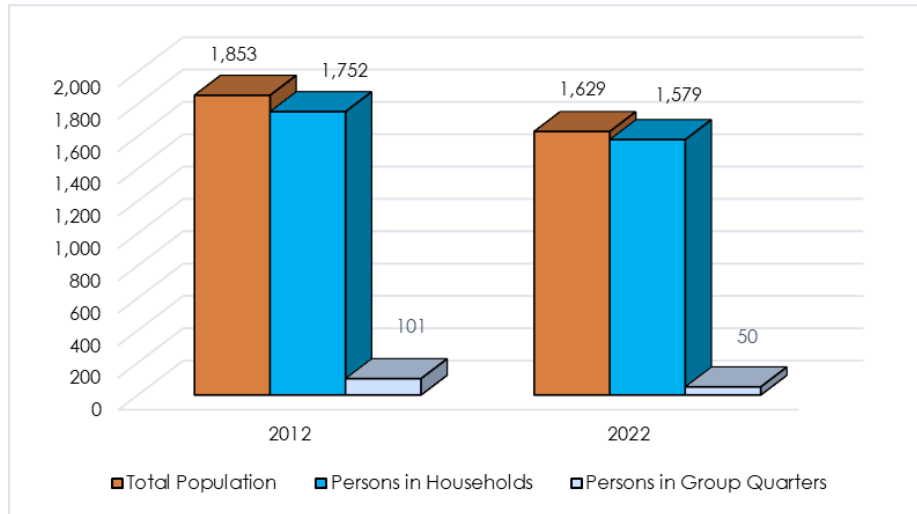
Figure 4.1 on the previous page indicates a large portion (233 homes), or 28.6% of Oberlin's 814 total housing units, were constructed prior to 1940. Between 1940 and 1980, an additional 514 houses were built. After this time period, very little housing was built in the community, and population generally declined. These data ultimately indicate the economy was relatively strong between 1930-1960.

A total of 91.8% of all housing units in Oberlin were constructed prior to 1980. Due to the age of these homes, there may be a need for special weatherization programs to bring these homes up to current energy efficiency standards.

## Persons in Households

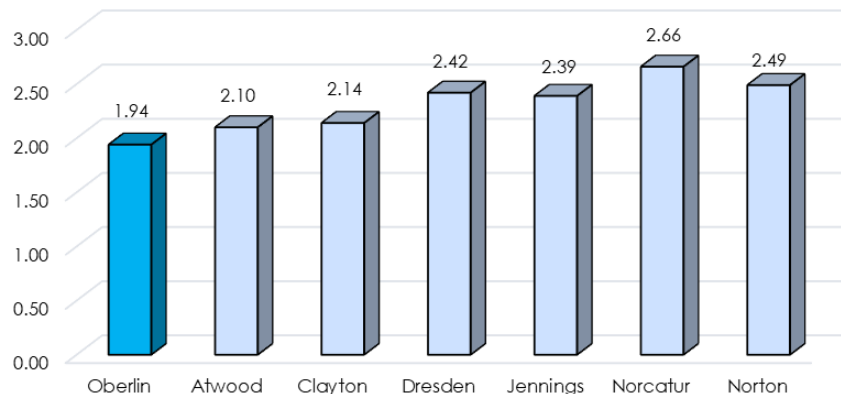
Households are typically single-family, duplexes, or apartments. Group quarters are places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. These units are owned or managed by an organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. These services may include custodial or medical care as well as other types of assistance, and residency is commonly restricted to those receiving these services. People living in group quarters are usually not related to each other. In 2012, 101 persons lived in group quarters in Oberlin, while in 2022, only 50 persons lived in group quarters in Oberlin.

**Figure 4.2: Persons in Households**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

**Figure 4.3: Persons per Households**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

**Table 4.1: Housing Units by Type**

Unit Type	2022
1-unit, detached	853
1-unit, attached	21
2-9 units	63
10 or more units	6
Mobile home, Boat, RV, Van, etc.	46

Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.

## Persons per Household

The average persons per household in Oberlin was 1.94 in 2022; which is near the normal trend in the Midwest and the

United States. The trend nationally has been towards a declining household size. Oberlin has the lowest persons per household size among peer





communities. The persons per household for Oberlin and its peer communities as of 2022 are shown in Figure 4.3.

## Occupied Housing by Type

Occupied housing units in the city decreased by 103 units from 2012 to 2022 (Figure 4.4). Renter occupied units decreased slightly by nine over the time period. According to ACS data, there are 175 vacant units in the city, up from 145 in 2012.

## Housing Type Breakdown

The majority of housing units in Oberlin, as of 2022, were 1-unit detached households (Table 4.1). These are likely single-family households. There were a small number of rentals in the city as well as mobile homes.

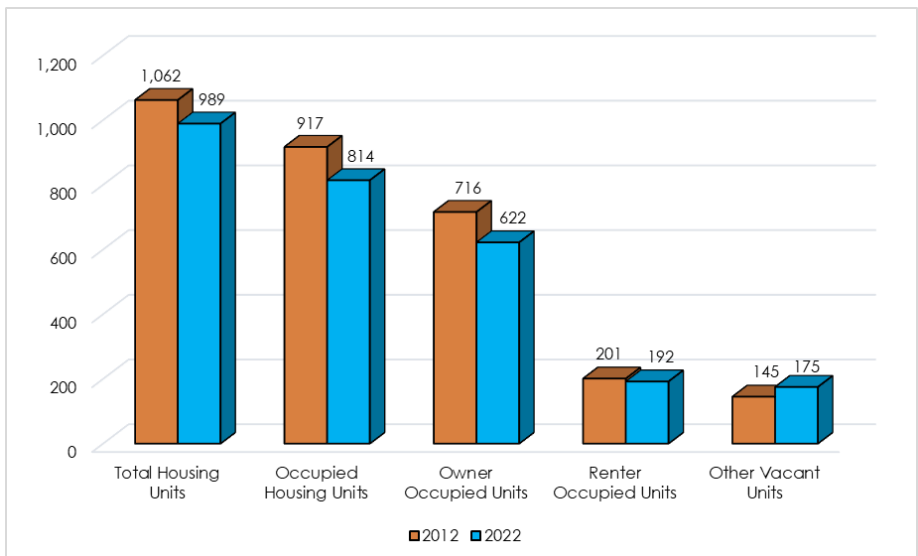
## Median Gross Rent

Median gross rent in Oberlin increased between 2012 and 2022 by \$233 (Figure 4.5). This is an increase of 47.7%. Median gross rent in Kansas increased by 37.9% between 2012 and 2022.

Comparing changes in median gross rents between 2012 and 2022 with the Consumer Price Index ("CPI"), "inflation", enables local housing costs to be compared to national economic conditions.

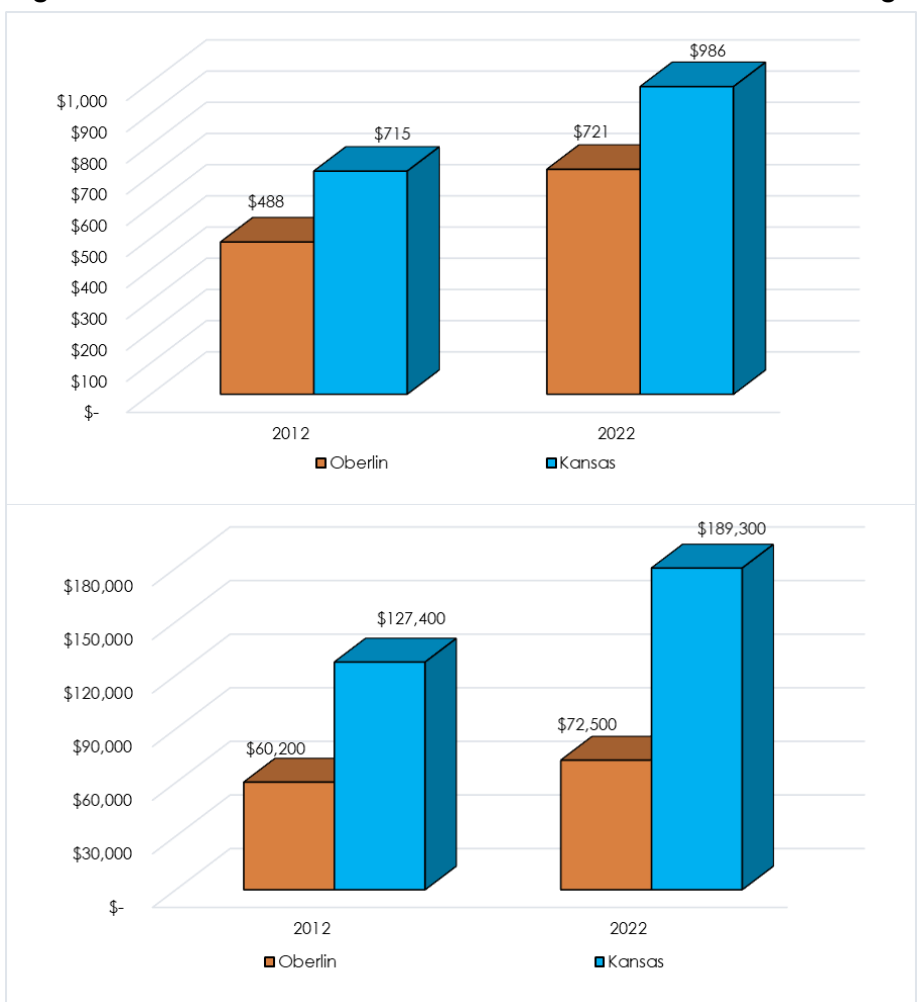
Inflation increased at a rate of 25.0% between 2012 and 2022, indicating Oberlin's landlords were making more money on average in 2022 compared to 2012 in terms of real dollars. Kansas's median gross rent grew well above the CPI over the time period.

**Figure 4.4: Occupied Housing by Type**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

**Figures 4.5 and 4.6: Median Gross Rent and Median Value of Housing**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.



## Median Gross Value

The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Oberlin increased from \$60,200 in 2012 to \$75,500 in 2022, or 17.0% (Figure 4.6). Over the same time period, the state's median value had increased by 32.7% from \$127,400 to \$189,300. Oberlin's median value of owner-occupied units was 38.3% of the state's median value in 2022. The median value of owner-occupied units in Oberlin increased at a higher rate compared to the CPI over the time period. The state's median value of owner-occupied units also increased at a higher rate compared to the CPI.

## Persons Per Household

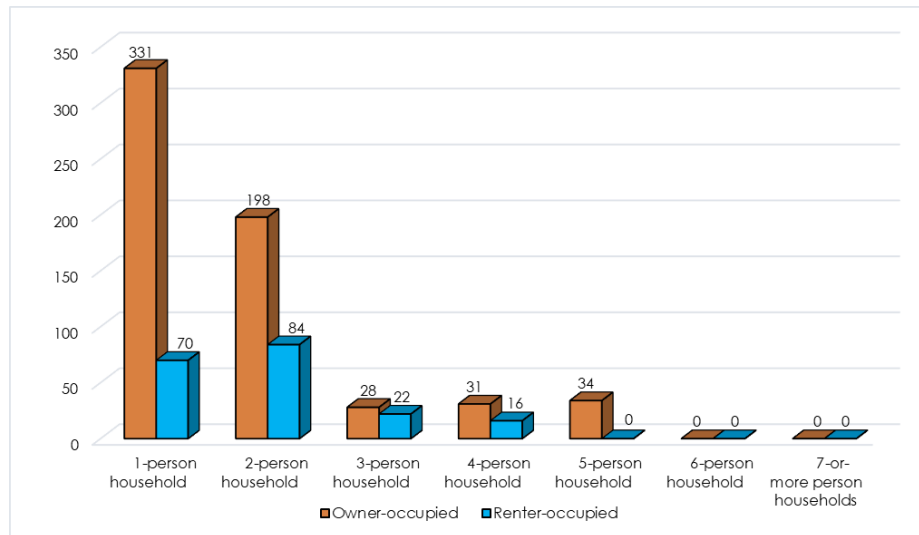
Figures 4.7 and 4.8 show tenure (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) of households by number and age of persons in each housing unit.

In 2022, the largest section of owner-occupied housing in Oberlin was in the 1-person household, with 331 units or 53.2% of the total owner-occupied units. By comparison, the largest household size for rentals was in the 2-person household with 84 renter-occupied housing units, or 43.8% of the total renter-occupied units.

In 2022, the age cohort representing the largest home ownership group were those between 65 and 74 years old. This age cohort represented 34.6% of home-owners. The 75 to 84 age cohort, the second largest, represented 14.5% of home-owners.

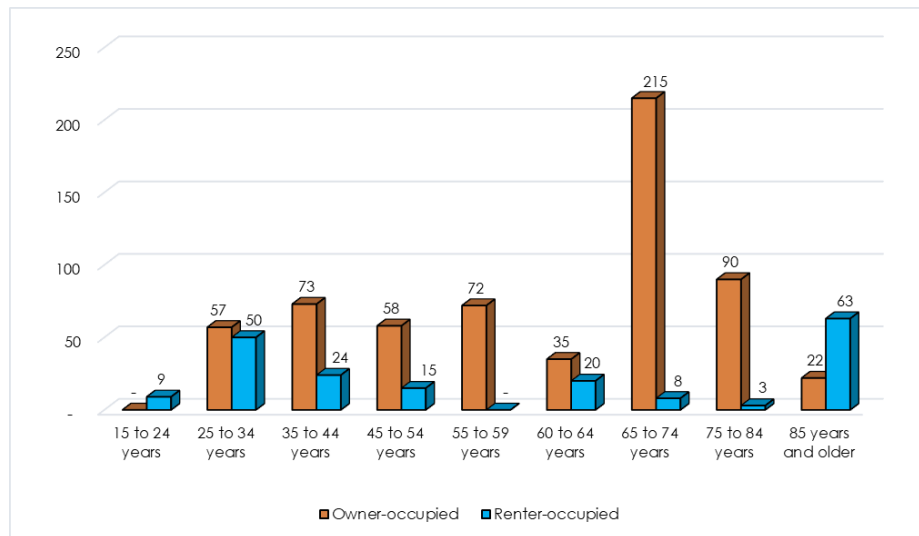
The largest renter cohorts were those ages 85 years and older

**Figure 4.7: Persons by Household Type**



Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.

**Figure 4.8: Age by Household Type 2022**



Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.

and the 25 to 34 age cohorts. These two cohorts represented around 85% of all renter-occupied units in 2022.

## Substandard Housing

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") guidelines, housing units lacking complete plumbing or that are overcrowded are considered substandard housing units. HUD defines a complete plumbing facility as hot and cold-piped

water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet; overcrowding is more than one person per room. In addition, anytime there is more than 1.0 persons per room, the housing unit is considered overcrowded, thus substandard.

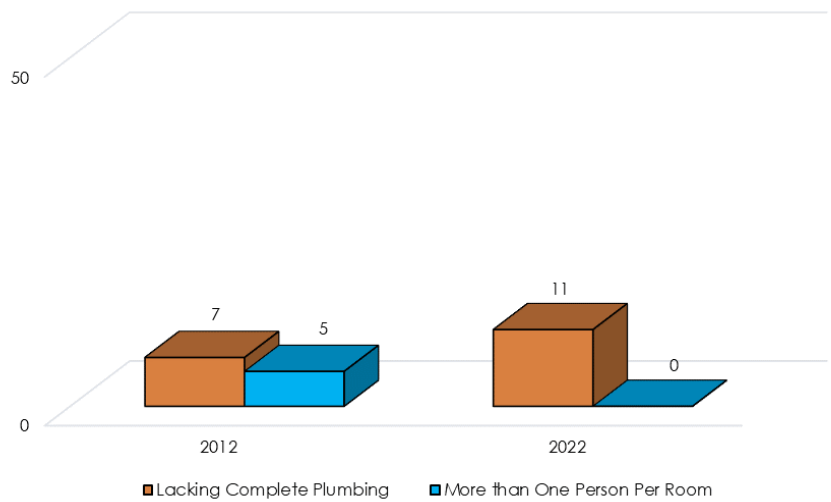
According to the ACS, there were 11 substandard units in Oberlin. Housing units containing major defects requiring rehabilitation or upgrading to meet building, electrical, or plumbing codes should also be



included in an analysis of substandard housing.

A comprehensive survey of the entire housing stock should be completed every five years to determine and identify the housing units which would benefit from remodeling or rehabilitation work. This process will help ensure the city maintains a high quality of life for its residents through protecting the quality and quantity of its housing stock.

**Figure 4.9: Substandard Housing Conditions 2012-2022**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.





### Housing Goals and Actions

#### Housing Goal H-1:

A variety of housing is available throughout the city.

##### Actions

H-1.1: Target redevelopment strategies toward vacant and abandoned properties.

H-1.2: Consider participation in a code enforcement program.

H-1.3: Explore feasibility of a Downtown Housing Initiative to rehabilitate/repurpose vacant upper story building spaces.

H-1.4: Encourage private development of "Missing Middle" housing in Oberlin.

H-1.5: Proactively extend public utilities to reduce the costs of development and encourage development in appropriate areas.

H-1.6: Monitor and regulate short term/vacation rentals to the extent allowed by Kansas statutes.

H-1.7: Regularly review zoning codes to accommodate changing housing needs.

H-1.8: Implement a clear development review process for new housing units, and rehabilitation/additions to existing units.

#### Housing Goal H-2:

Oberlin's residents in need have access to affordable, safe, and attainable housing.

##### Actions

H-2.1: Prioritize public funding for projects incorporating affordable, missing middle and/or workforce housing.

H-2.2.: Encourage the use of local and State grant dollars for commercial and residential building rehabilitation. Utilize sources such as the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

H-2.3: Work with affordable housing developers to create additional rental housing for very-low income families.

H-2.4: Explore creating a local Land Bank.

H-2.5: Access the K-State Research and Extension First Impressions Program to provide guidance on community beautification.



## Chapter 5 Economic Profile

### Economic Profile

Economic development is a process of investment to increase the well-being of a community. The creation of new enterprises and the retention and expansion of existing businesses enables the creation of jobs for current and new residents, and provides new sources of income.

A diversified economic base enables a community to respond to changing economic conditions, increase local income, create job opportunities, and improve the quality of life of a community. As Edward Hill of The Ohio State University wrote in *Economic Development Quarterly* (2023): “Economic development introduces new goods and services into a region’s portfolio of traded products or expands the productive capabilities of existing members of a region’s economic base.”

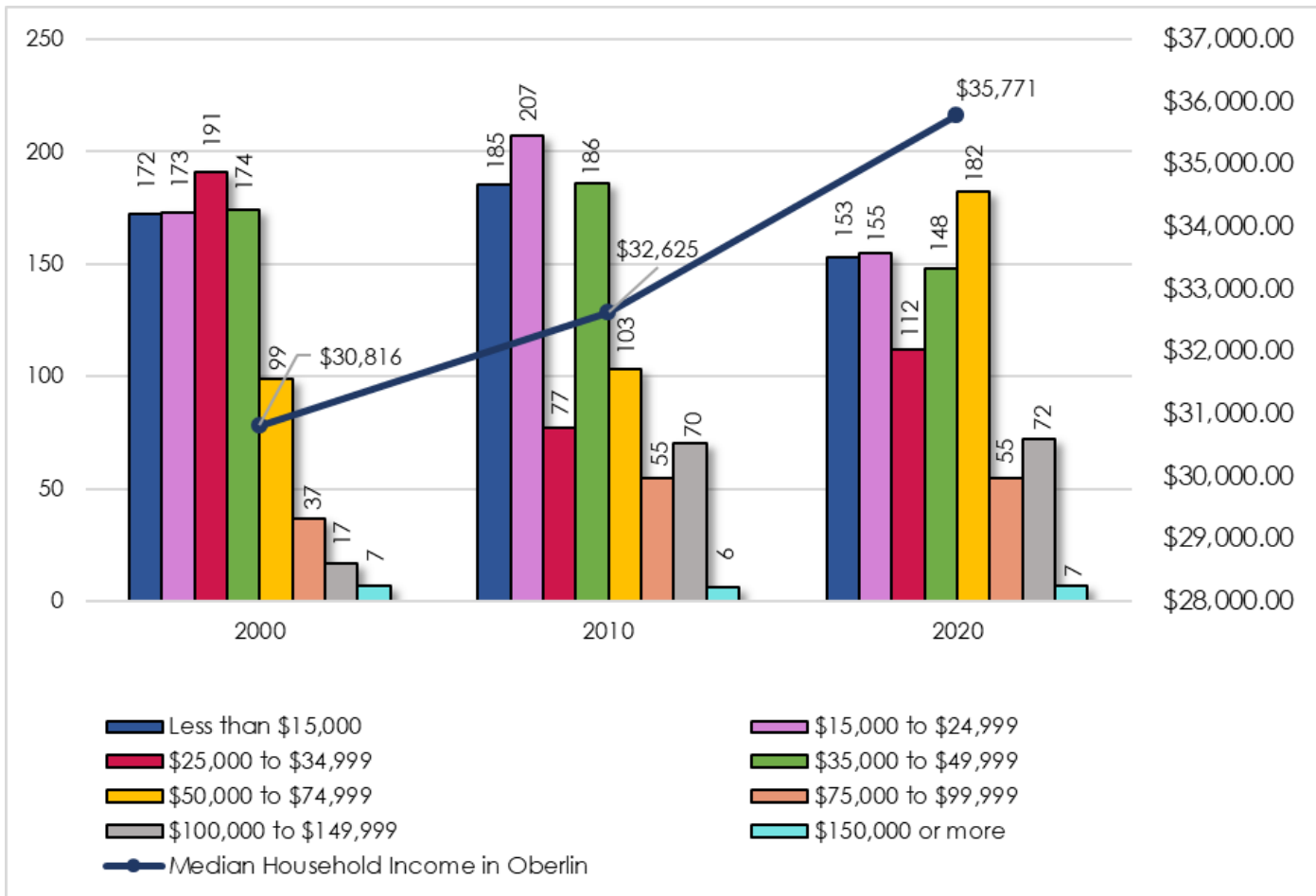
In this section, income and employment data and trends are presented and analyzed for Oberlin, Decatur County, and peer communities in the area, and the state of Kansas. This section also contains a more detailed analysis of commercial real estate trends.

Many economic data sources only cover counties. City-specific data is considered when available.





Figure 5.1: Household Incomes



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010 and 2020

## Income Statistics

Income statistics for households are important in determining the earning power of households in a community. These data were reviewed to determine whether households experienced income increases at a rate comparable to the state of Kansas and the Consumer Price Index ("CPI").

Figure 5.1 indicates the number of households in each income range for Oberlin from 2000 to 2020. The number directly above each column represents the number of households in each category. The household income range most commonly reported for the year 2000 was \$25,000 to

\$34,999 (22.0% of all households) while in 2010 the most common range dropped down to \$15,000 to \$24,999 (23.2% of all households). In 2020 the most common household income range increased to \$50,000 to \$74,999 (20.5% of all households). Those households earning less than \$15,000 accounted for 19.8%, 20.8%, and 17.3% of all households for the three time periods, respectively. These households account for the poorest of the poor in the city. In addition, the households earning less than \$35,000 made up 61.6%, 52.8%, and 47.5% of all households for the time period in Oberlin, respectively.

The median household income for Oberlin was \$30,816 in 2000, which was \$9,808 less than the state's median income of \$40,624. By 2010, the median household income increased to \$32,625 (an increase of 5%), which was \$19,289 lower than the state's median household income of \$51,914. By 2020, the median household income had risen again to \$35,771, which was a rise of 9.6% from 2010. The city's median household income was \$29,223 lower than the state's median household income of \$64,994 by 2020.

The CPI rose 50.5% over the time period, which indicates household incomes in Oberlin fell



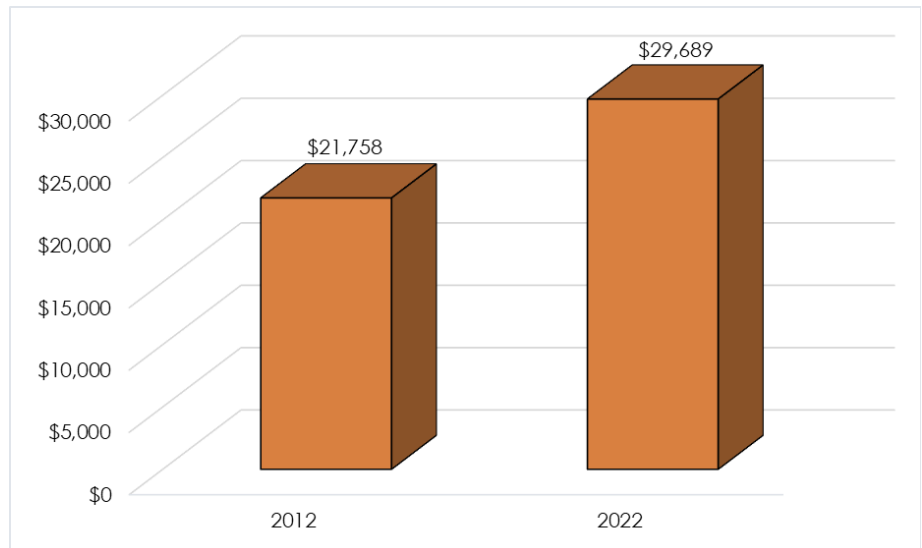


behind inflation, with an increase of 16.1%. Household incomes in Kansas rose by 59.9%, thus, the state exceeded the rate of increase in CPI.

## Per Capita Income

The per capita income in Oberlin increased from \$21,758 in 2012 to \$29,689 in 2022, or an increase of 36.4%. Oberlin's per capita income in 2012 was 81.2% of the state per capita income of \$26,845. Finally, in 2022, per capita income in Oberlin slightly decreased to 77.9% of the state of Kansas's per capita income (\$38,108).

**Figure 5.2: Per Capita Income**



Sources: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

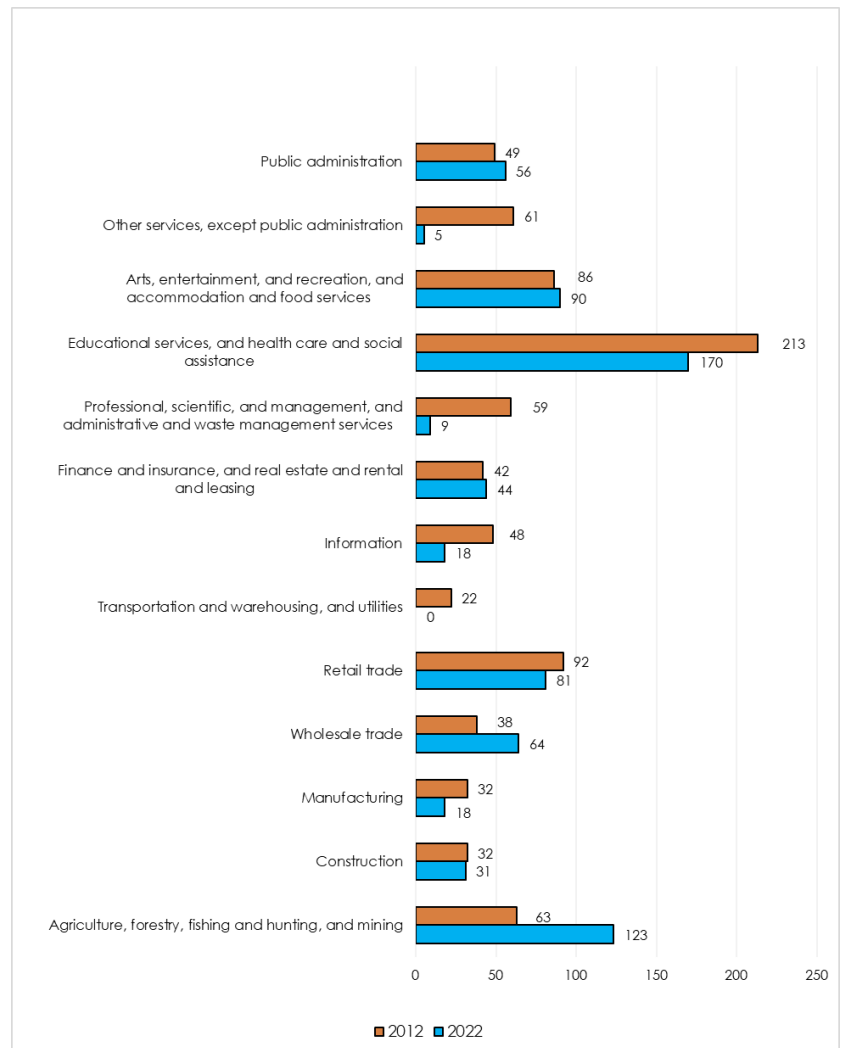
## Employment

The ACS estimates employment statistics for the people who live in an area. These represent people who live in the city of Oberlin, whether they work in the city or commute outside the city. If more people are employed in an industry, it may indicate opportunities for local job creation.

In Oberlin, 170 residents reported they worked in the Educational services, and health care and social assistance industry in 2022 (Figure 5.3). Commuting data suggest these persons commute out of the city to work elsewhere.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining is the next highest employer reported by Oberlin residents. There are agricultural businesses throughout Oberlin, with the highest concentration located north of US 36. There are also many agricultural establishments outside of Oberlin throughout Decatur County.

**Figure 5.3: Oberlin Residents' Employment by Industry 2012-2022**



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 through 2018-2022.

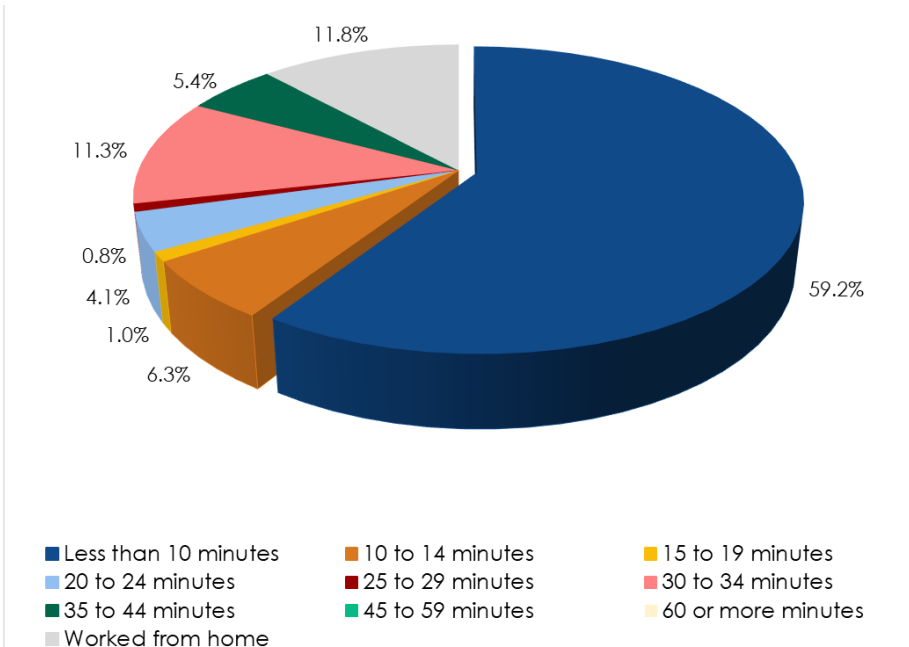


## Commuter Trends

Oberlin is part of a regional job market, with some local residents clearly leaving the city to commute to work elsewhere, as Figure 5.3 begins to suggest.

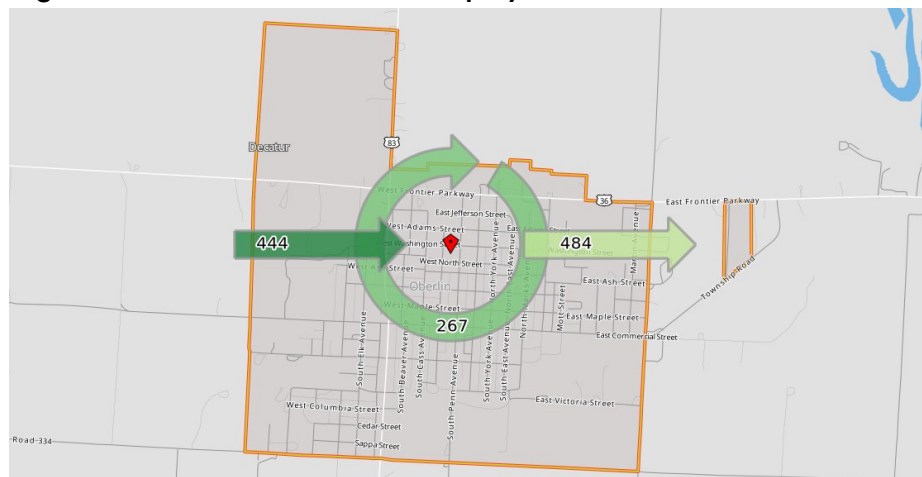
Travel time to work affects quality of life. If commute time becomes excessive, people may seek work closer to home or leave the community to move closer to their workplace. 71.0% of commuters traveled 10 minutes or less to work, including the 11.8% who worked from home (Figure 5.4). Those persons are presumably staying in Oberlin for work as the nearest town is a 15 minute drive away. 21.6% commute 20 or more minutes to work. There are no residents who commute over 45 minutes to work.

Figure 5.4: Travel Time to Work



Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022.

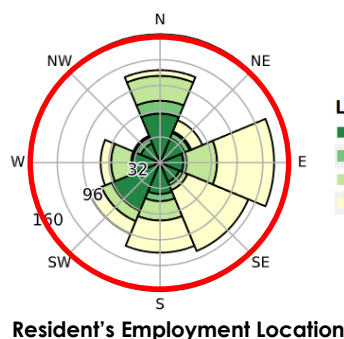
Figure 5.5: Flow of Resident and Employee Base in Oberlin



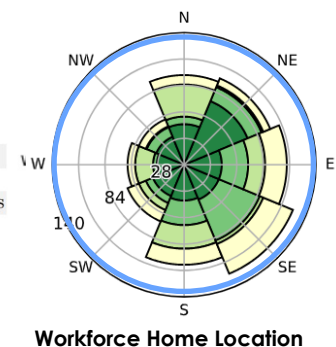
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021

Figures 5.6 and 5.7: Flow of Resident (left) and Employee Base in Oberlin (right)

Figure 5.6 shows the commute distance and direction for both employed residents and as well as work force. These data show over 40% of the employed population of Oberlin work in the city with 313 of those people working less 10 miles away. There was a sizable minority, 247 workers (32.9%), who commute over 50 miles each day to the east. Figure 5.7 shows Oberlin's workforce is originating primarily from the city as well as locations to the east and southeast such as Norton, Hill City, and Dresden.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021





## Economic Base

A community's economic base is built on the production of goods and services sold primarily outside the local area. The profits of base industries are returned to the community in the form of wages to employees and payments to local providers. Non-Basic employment relies on business activity providing goods and services within the local area, and the revenues of such sales re-circulate within the community in the form of wages and expenditures by local citizens.

Table 5.1 compares occupation categories of the communities of Decatur County, the county itself, and select neighboring area, with the state of Kansas overall. When the share of local residents in a certain occupation exceeds the state's, those jobs are considered "basic" jobs supporting "non-basic" jobs with income earned outside the community.

By analyzing the data at an occupational level, a further understanding can be gained as to what sectors are bringing income money to the city. These occupational categories include:

- Management business, science, and arts occupations
- Service occupations
- Sales and office occupations
- Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance
- Production, transportation, and materials moving occupations

Oberlin export goods and services produced in:

- Service occupations
- Sales and office occupations
- Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance

Table 5.4 presents the Base Multiplier for each area compared to the state of Kansas. The base multiplier is a number which represents how many non-basic jobs are supported by each basic job. The Base Multiplier for Oberlin is 4.8. For every job considered to be basic, 4–5 other local jobs are supported and/or impacted. Economic development programs typically focus on "basic" sector industries and occupations, to leverage the Base Multiplier factor.

Compared to its neighboring communities, Oberlin has more basic employment. It is vital the

city focuses on cultivating their base employment to ensure the money brought into Oberlin is spent locally.

### Basic employment

Basic employment is business activity providing goods and services primarily outside the area, the revenues of which are directed to the local area in the form of wages and payments to local suppliers.

Non-Basic employment is business activity providing goods and services primarily within the local area, and the revenues of such sales re-circulate within the community in the form of wages and expenditures by local citizens.

**Table 5.1: Basic Employment**

Location	Management business, science, and arts occupations	Service occupations	Sales and office occupations	Natural Resources, construction and maintenance occupations	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	Base Multiplier
<b>Oberlin</b>	24.00%	21.70%	28.80%	17.30%	8.20%	4.8
Dresden	73.30%	0.00%	13.30%	0.00%	13.30%	3.0
Jennings	61.50%	12.80%	2.60%	10.30%	12.80%	4.5
Norcatour	16.20%	17.10%	10.30%	19.70%	36.80%	2.9
Decatur County	34.70%	18.30%	19.60%	14.50%	12.80%	13.0
Norton County	28.40%	22.50%	25.80%	12.40%	11.00%	6.4
<b>Kansas</b>	40.30%	15.80%	19.90%	9.30%	14.60%	n/a

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021





### Economic Profile Goals and Actions

#### Economic Profile Goal EP-1:

Oberlin has a dynamic economic development program to support entrepreneurship, business retention and expansion, and industrial recruitment.

##### Actions

EP-1.1: Continue to support local economic development.

EP-1.2: Work with the Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corporation and/or the Oberlin-Decatur Area Chamber of Commerce to implement business retention & expansion programs to survey needs of local employers.

EP-1.3: Work with the Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corporation and/or the Oberlin-Decatur Area Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism to the area.

EP-1.4: Continue to utilize the City of Oberlin website to provide public access to development regulations and permit forms, as well as community profile information.

#### Economic Profile Goal EP-2:

There are sites available for commercial and industrial development.

##### Actions

EP-2.1: Implement a clear and consistent development review process to ensure timely permit review.

EP-2.2: Encourage renovation of existing commercial and industrial structures.

EP-2.3: Aid development or redevelopment through Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") where appropriate.

EP-2.4: Proactively extend public utilities to reduce the costs of development and encourage development in appropriate areas.

EP-2.5: Work closely with local and regional funding sources such as the Dane G. Hansen Foundation to access EDA and other funding sources for local economic development.

EP-2.6: Review provisions in development regulations to encourage small-scale manufacturing.

EP-2.7: Consider a focused study on redevelopment of Downtown Oberlin, including historic preservation and renovation of existing structures.

#### Economic Profile Goal EP-3:

There is an accessible system in-place for workforce development.

##### Actions

EP-3.1: Continue support of K-12 education to include skills-based training and creative partnerships with local businesses.

EP-3.2: Encourage expanded community college workforce training in Oberlin.

#### Economic Profile Goal EP-4:

Residents have options for remote work, including access to broadband.

##### Actions

EP-4.1: Promote and support the continued development, expansion, and accessibility of broadband and voice communication networks.



## Chapter 6 Public Facilities

### Public Facilities

State and local governments provide services to their residents through public facilities. It is important for all levels of government to anticipate the future demand for their services if they are to remain strong and vital. This chapter reviews facilities plans and parks and recreation facilities. In many cases, public and institutional services are provided by non-governmental, private or non-profit organizations for the community as a whole. These are important service providers and are an integral part of the community.

### Facilities Plan

The Facilities Plan component of this plan reviews present capacities of all public and private facilities and services. The Facilities Plan for Oberlin is divided into the categories of City Facilities, Education, Health Care, Communications, Utilities, and Parks and Recreation.

### City Facilities

#### City Hall and Offices

The Oberlin City Hall and offices are located at 1 Morgan Drive in the Gateway Civic Center. This facility houses the City Clerk, Treasurer, City Attorney, Code Enforcement Officer, and Utility Clerk.

Source: <https://www.oberlin-kansas.com/>

#### Oberlin City Library

The Oberlin City Library is located at 104 E. Oak Street. This facility has books, media, and technology available to check out. Classes, public computer access, and a 3D printer are offered onsite.

### Education

#### Oberlin USD 294

Oberlin is part of USD 294, a district within Decatur and Norton Counties. Oberlin is home to the elementary school, located at 201 W. Ash Street. Decatur County Junior/Senior High School is located at 605 E. Commercial Street. The district had 392 students enrolled during the 2023

to 2024 school year. The elementary school employs 19 full time teachers while the senior high employs 17.

Sources: <https://www.usd294.org/>; Kansas State Department of Education

### Regional Higher Education

Oberlin is not home to any higher education facilities. However, the city has multiple institutions located closely in the state and region. These include:

- Colby Community College (Colby);
- Northwest Kansas Technical College (Goodland);
- Fort Hays State University (Hays);
- North Central Kansas Technical College (Hays), and;
- McCook Community College (McCook, NE)

### Health Care

#### Decatur Health

This facility, located at 810 W. Columbia Street, is a critical access hospital, family practice clinic, and independent living



retirement community. Decatur Health also offers physical therapy, rehabilitation, diagnostic imaging, laboratory, and other specialty clinics.

Source: <https://decaturhealth.org/>

### Regional Health Care

Oberlin is located within a short drive to regional medical centers. The closest Level IV Trauma Centers are Norton County Hospital (Norton) and Rawlins County Health Center (Atwood). The closest Level II Trauma Center is Good Samaritan Hospital located in Kearney, Nebraska. The closest Level I Trauma Center is University of Colorado Hospital Authority located in Aurora, Colorado.

Sources: Kansas Department of Health and Environment; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

## Parks and Recreation

This section begins by examining the social, cultural, and recreational facilities found in Oberlin. This section then concludes with an examination of park standards used by cities, applied to Oberlin.

### Parks

Oberlin has two parks and two baseball fields. The first park, Oberlin City Park, is located at 124 S. Mark Ave. The park offers sheltered picnic areas, restrooms, playground, basketball court, pool, and a gazebo. The second park is Sappa Park, located to the northeast of Oberlin at 1898 1300th Road. The park offers camping and electrical hookups. Trails, playground equipment, and a disc golf course are available for recreation.

Sources: <https://oberlinkansas.gov/>



Photo 6.1: Sappa Park

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

### Recreation

#### Gateway Civic Center

The Gateway Civic Center is located at 1 Morgan Drive sharing a building with City Hall. This multi purpose facility has a gym, event center, theater, and meeting rooms.

Sources: <https://kmea.com/>

### Historic Standards

A standard used for decades regarding parks and recreation, as established by the National Parks and Recreation Association ("NPRA"), is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Another standard is the Small Community Park & Recreation Standards ("SCPRS"), 2003, which examines the primary areas of small community parks and recreation. This standard breaks parks down into five basic categories: sports fields, courts, outdoor recreation, leisure, and other facilities.

This resource also determines the minimum acreages for each and the total comes to 26.4 acres per 1,000 residents.

### Examining Standards

This section will examine both historic standards. Table 6.1 examines the NPRA and SCPRS standards for key facilities found in communities. The table is meant as a guide for Oberlin, instead of an absolute. For example, not all communities have BMX courses in their communities; actually in some cases these facilities may become a huge liability risk to the community due to the nature of the uses.

Table 6.2 examines standards as established in Small Community Park & Recreation Standards, 2003. Table 6.3 expands on the standards in Table 6.2 and applies it to the minimum amounts of land needed to meet these standards.



## LEGEND

- ### Facility Type

- 1: Gateway Civic Center
- 2: Oberlin City Library
- 3: Oberlin Elementary School
- 4: Decatur County Jr./Sr. High School
- 5: Decatur Health
- 6: Oberlin City Park
- 7: Sappa Park









**Table 6.1: Parks and Recreation Standards**

Organization	Standard	2020 pop	Parks and Recreation Needed
NPRA	10A/1,000 residents	1,644	16.4 Acres
SCPRS	15.5A/1,000 residents	1,644	25.5 Acres

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

**Table 6.2: Population served per Park System Facility**

Facility Category	Parks System Facility Type	Total Population served by one facility	# of facilities Needed per 1,000 residents
Sports Fields	Soccer/Multi-Use Field	1,050	1.0
	Ball Field (Baseball/Softball)	1,640	1.5
Courts	Tennis Court	1,030	1.0
	Basketball Court	1,100	1.0
	Volleyball Court	7,540	7.0
Outdoor Recreation	Small Skate park (7000 sf footprint)	6,410	5.9
	Full-sized Skate park (17,000+ sf footprint)	15,560	14.4
	BMX Track (Standard ABA Certified)	6,250	5.8
	Paved Multi-purpose Trail (per mile)	960	0.9
	Dirt/Gravel Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	430	0.4
Leisure	Playgrounds (per 3,200 sf of fully developed area)	6,270	5.8
	Family Picnic Area	160	0.1
	Group Picnic Area (w/ Shelter)	2,780	2.6
	Park Bench	130	0.1
Other Facilities	Swimming Pool (outdoors)	8,250	7.6
	Outdoors Events Venue	2,380	2.2

Source: Small Community Parks and Recreation Standards, 2003



**Table 6.3: Small Community Parks Land Standards**

Facility Category	Parks System Facility Type	# of facilities Needed per 1,000 residents (Demand)	Acres required for one facility	Total Acres required per 1,000 residents (park land standards)
Sports Fields	Soccer/Multi-Use Field	0.95	2.21	4.4
	Ball Field (Baseball/Softball)	0.61	3.77	3.7
Courts	Tennis Court	0.97	0.17	0.3
	Basketball Court	0.91	0.16	0.3
	Volleyball Court	0.13	0.10	0.0
Outdoor Recreation	Small Skate park (7000 sf footprint)	0.16	0.18	0.0
	Full-sized Skate park (17,000+ sf footprint)	0.06	0.50	0.0
	BMX Track (Standard ABA Certified)	0.16	3.12	0.0
	Paved Multi-purpose Trail (per mile)	1.04	2.43	4.9
	Dirt/Gravel Multi-Use Trail (per mile)	2.33	1.83	7.3
Leisure	Playgrounds (per 3,200 sf of fully developed area)	0.16	0.14	0.0
	Family Picnic Area	6.25	0.01	0.1
	Group Picnic Area (w/ Shelter)	0.36	2.06	2.1
	Park Bench	7.69	0.00	0.0
Other Facilities	Swimming Pool (outdoors)	0.12	0.34	0.0
	Outdoors Events Venue	0.42	3.19	3.2

Source: Small Community Parks and Recreation Standards, 2003



**Table 6.4: Population served per Park System Facility**

Type of Park	Optimum Size	Service Area	Uses
Mini Parks	.2 to 1 acre	Residential neighborhoods within ¼ mile radius	A walk-to facility that provides play and passive recreation for the immediate vicinity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground equipment</li> <li>• Picnic tables and shelters</li> <li>• Open turf</li> <li>• Natural areas</li> </ul>
Neighborhood Parks	5 to 10 acres	Residential areas within ½ mile radius	A walk-to facility with amenities that are predominately neighborhood-oriented (not competitive sports): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play areas</li> <li>• Tennis courts</li> <li>• Basketball courts</li> <li>• Open field for casual and multi-use play</li> </ul>
Community Parks	20 to 40 acres	½ mile to 3 miles	A drive-to facility that serves multiple neighborhoods and includes both competitive sports and passive recreation facilities that are typically not provided in neighborhood parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active sports facilities grouped for efficiency where possible (three to four tennis courts, two or three basketball courts, etc.)</li> <li>• Lighted sports fields with bleachers</li> <li>• Small passive areas for neighborhood park functions</li> <li>• Community center for indoor recreation including kitchen, meeting rooms and large open exercise area</li> <li>• Natural area with trail</li> </ul>
District / Regional Parks	40 to 150 acres	5 mile radius	A city-wide drive-to resource primarily for nature-oriented activities and/or major sports facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large children's playground (with theme)</li> <li>• Lighted active sports facilities (tennis, baseball, soccer, etc.) grouped in complexes for efficiency</li> <li>• Significant dedicated natural areas with trails and passive park uses</li> <li>• Community center</li> </ul>
Natural Resource Area	based on resource	Entire community	Lands set aside to preserve unique natural resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remnant landscapes</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Visual/aesthetics buffering</li> </ul>
Greenway (trails and linear parks)	25 ft. width minimum; 200 ft. or more optimal	Based on resource availability and opportunities	Ties park system components together to form a continuous park environment
School – Park	10 to 15 acres minimum	Based on school district's school distribution policies	Combines parks with school spaces
Sports Complex	40 acres or more	Entire community	Consolidates heavily-programmed athletic fields to larger and fewer sites
Special Use	Variable	Variable	Covers a broad range of park and recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use

Source: National Parks and Recreation Association



## Public Facilities Goals and Actions

### Public Facilities Goal PF-1

The City of Oberlin provides accessible public buildings and facilities required to provide public services to the citizens of the city.

#### Actions

PF-1.1: Continue maintenance and repair on City Hall and other municipal structures.

PF-1.2: Coordinate facility needs with Decatur County and look for opportunities for shared cost-savings.

PF-1.3: Support public library facilities and content needs to meet a growing, diverse population.

### Public Facilities Goal PF-2

Historic sites and places are protected and maintained.

#### Actions

PF-2.1: Support efforts to designate and preserve historic buildings.

### Public Facilities Goal PF-3

Oberlin has a modern, efficient Education system.

#### Actions

PF-3.1: Continue support of K-12 education and coordination with public and parochial schools.

PF-3.2: Continue support of daycare facilities.

PF-3.3: Include Oberlin Public Schools in review of large development projects, to assure accommodation of future students.

PF-3.4: Encourage community college workforce training in Oberlin.

### Public Facilities Goal PF-4

Residents have access to a variety of parks and recreation facilities close to home.

#### Actions

PF-4.1: Develop a city-wide parks and recreation master plan.

PF-4.2: Continue to maintain and make incremental improvements at city parks.

PF-4.3: Incorporate accessible playground and recreation equipment meeting ADA standards into all park improvement plans.

PF-4.4: With the importance of keeping and attracting families, continue to evaluate, plan, and prepare for improvements and long-term maintenance of the swimming pool.

### Public Facilities Goal PF-5

The City has a multiuse trail network suitable for a variety of users.

#### Actions

PF-5.1: Establish a trails system to connect public facilities including parks and public schools.

### Public Facilities Goal PF-6

Area attractions are well-promoted to local residents and regional visitors.

#### Actions

PF-6.1: Support local and regional marketing of local and regional attractions.



## Chapter 7 Public Safety

### Public Safety

The protection of public safety is a key responsibility of local government and is also a prominent component of the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter describes current Oberlin fire protection, emergency medical services ("EMS"), law enforcement, and emergency management.

### Fire and EMS

The Oberlin City Fire Department provides fire and rescue services within the city's boundaries. The department's fire hall is located at 602 N. Penn Ave.

Oberlin City Fire Department is a 100% volunteer department. The department provides 24/7 response to all fires, vehicle accidents, HAZMAT/chemical spills and medical emergencies for the people who live and visit their district. The department also assists other area agencies when requested upon mutual aid.

Decatur County Fire District provides Sappa Park with fire and EMS services.

Source: <https://hub.kansasgis.org/>

### State Fire Marshal

The State Fire Marshal's office conducts fire safety inspections on most properties open to the public. Codes used in these inspections are outlined in Chapter 31, Article 1, Section 34.

### Law Enforcement

The Oberlin Police Department provides law enforcement services in the city, located at 107 W. Commercial Street. The department has five full time sworn officers on staff.

Source: <https://www.kansas.gov>

### Emergency Management

Emergency management involves the coordination and integration of activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capabilities to prepare for,

respond to, recover from, or mitigate against threatened or actual disasters or emergencies, regardless of cause. This includes man-made and natural disasters. The discipline and profession of emergency management applies science, technology, planning, and management to deal with extreme events which can injure or kill large numbers of people, do extensive damage to property, and disrupt community life.

Emergency management is integrated at the local, state, and federal levels. All disasters start at the local level. When a local disaster declaration is made because local resources have been overwhelmed, a request may be made for assistance from the Kansas Department of Emergency Management ("KDEM"). Should state resources ever become overwhelmed, a state disaster may be declared and the governor can request assistance from the Federal Emergency



Management Agency ("FEMA"). Emergency response operates within the principles of the National Incident Management System ("NIMS") and the Incident Command Systems ("ICS").

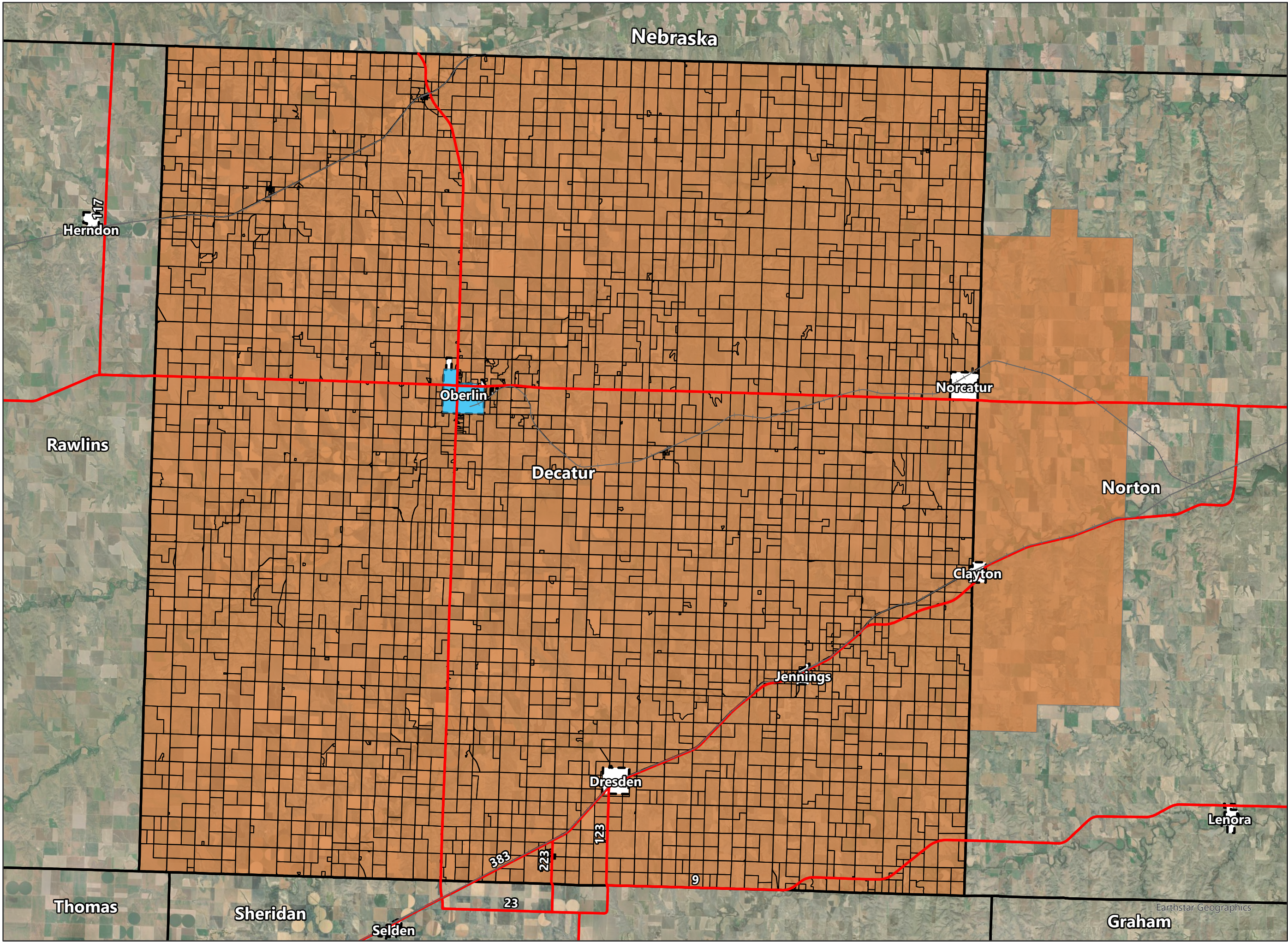
It is the responsibility of all elected and appointed county or local officials to protect citizens' lives, and public and private property from the effects of hazards and disasters.

Decatur County Emergency Management is responsible for facilitating the continuation of government operations in times of disaster or major emergency. It coordinates county, city, private sector and volunteer services to facilitate and enable continuity of operations countywide.



Photo 7.1: Decatur County Courthouse  
Source: Marvin Planning Consultants



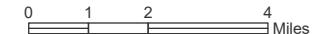


LEGEND

- Railroads
- Highways
- County Boundaries
- City Limits
- Parcels
- Fire and EMS Districts**
  - Decatur County Fire District 1
  - Oberlin City Fire Department



PROJECTION: KS State Plane (Ft.)  
DATUM: NAD 83  
DATE: 6.12.25









### Public Safety Goals and Actions

#### Public Safety Goal PS-1

Law Enforcement services are provided to the community.

##### Actions

PS-1.1: Identify specific ways to work cooperatively between the City and the County Sheriff for law enforcement.

PS-1.2: Continue to regulate and mitigate nuisance and code enforcement cases.

#### Public Safety Goal PS-2

Fire Protection services are provided to the community.

##### Actions

PS-2.1: Continue to support and maintain a quality Fire Department.

#### Public Safety Goal PS-3

Emergency Medical Services are provided to the community.

##### Actions

PS-3.1: Continue support for Emergency Medical Services.

#### Public Safety Goal PS-4

Emergency Management services are provided to the community.

##### Actions

PS-4.1: Continue to participate in emergency management programs and exercises.



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## Chapter 8

# Communications, Utilities, and Energy

Communications, utilities, and energy are essential to a community's wellbeing. Quality infrastructure may be a selling point for new residents to move to a community. This chapter describes each industry as they apply to the City of Oberlin.

Communications includes traditional media such as newspapers, television and radio, and telephone service, as well as new media including broadband internet. Utilities includes public and private services including electricity and natural gas, water, and wastewater service. Energy includes both traditional carbon-based fuels and renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and biofuels.

Energy includes both traditional carbon-based fuels and renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and biofuels.

### Communications

In this day and age, strong and reliable communication methods

are critical to all people. As humans, we want to stay in touch with our families, friends, and the day to day activities and news occurring around us. This section provides the different communication media available in and around Oberlin.

#### Cable

Presently there are no local television stations located in Oberlin. The city is in the Wichita/Hutchinson media market where many of the over the air stations serving the area originate.

#### Radio

23 terrestrial radio stations can be found in Oberlin. These stations are located in Nebraska and Kansas. The furthest station broadcasting from Oberlin is KMMJ in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Source: [radio-locator.com/oberlin](http://radio-locator.com/oberlin)

#### Telephone and Internet

According to the US Census Bureau's ACS estimates, in 2012, there were 24 housing units in

Oberlin without access to a telephone. Two housing units were counted in this category in 2022.

The ACS reported in 2022, 86.0% of households in Oberlin had an internet subscription, including 68.6% with a cellular data plan, 55.9% with cable, fiber optic, or DSL hardwire, and 20% with satellite internet service.

AT&T is the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier ("ILEC") for telephone service in Oberlin. DSL Nex-Tech is the primary internet provider, and will be providing fiber to every home in Oberlin by the conclusion of 2025.

#### Utilities

Utilities in Oberlin include water, sewer, electric, gas, trash, and recycling. The city does not provide recycling. These services provide city residents with basic needs, all of which will have to adjust as the city grows.



### Electricity

Residents are provided electricity from the City of Oberlin. The city operates and maintains the electrical distribution system.

Source: City of Oberlin

### EV Charging

As the number of Electric Vehicles ("EVs") on the road increases, annual demands for electricity to charge them will grow as well, especially along Interstate highways. There will be increasing demands on electrical infrastructure as home and public chargers are added to existing loads. Time-of-day metering would likely encourage EV charging overnight, which would help mitigate spikes in electric loads.

Additional information on traditional and renewable energy generation is presented later in this chapter. Additional information on EVs is presented in Chapter 12 Transportation.

### Energy Use by Sector

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, electricity use in Kansas rose to 41,961 million kilowatthours (kWh) in 2021, an increase of 2.6 percent from 39,483 million kWh in 2020. In 2022 the industrial sector used 27.9 percent, the residential sector used 34.4 percent, and the commercial sector used 37.6 percent. The use of electricity produced off-site is ultimately constrained by transmission capacity. Distributed generation of electricity (from wind farms or solar farms) is also constrained by capacity of the regional transmission grid.

In 2022, Kansas used 309 billion cubic feet of natural gas, around 1 percent of the United States'

total consumption.

Source: <https://www.eia.gov/electricity/state/Kansas/>

### Residential Energy Use

Energy is consumed in the residential sector primarily for space heating, water heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, cooking, clothes drying, and lighting. Fuel used for motor vehicles by household members is included in the transportation sector—electricity use will increase with increased use of electric vehicles ("EVs") requiring home charging stations. Natural gas met over one-half (63%) of residential energy needs in Kansas in 2022, followed by electricity (26%).

Oberlin residents primarily utilize natural gas and electricity for heating, as well as propane. 5% of residences reported using electricity in the most recent ACS.

Statewide, there were 887,534 residential natural gas customers in Kansas in 2022, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

### Commercial Energy Use

Commercial uses include buildings such as retail stores, nonmanufacturing businesses, motels, health and education institutions for energy use reporting. Government uses are included in this sector for these reports. Common uses of energy in the commercial sector include space heating, water heating, refrigeration, air conditioning, and cooking.

Statewide, there were 86,997 commercial natural gas customers in Kansas in 2022, according to the Energy

Information Administration.

### Industrial Energy Use

Energy use in the industrial sector covers fuels for manufacturing, construction, mining, agriculture, and forestry. Energy to transport products is included in the transportation sector.

Statewide, there were 7,703 industrial natural gas customers in Kansas in 2022, according to the Energy Information Administration.

### Energy Generation

According to the Energy Information Administration, In 2023, Kansas obtained 46% of its total in-state electricity net generation from wind, 27% from coal, and 17% from nuclear power.

All major utilities in Kansas, including Evergy, are members of the Southwest Power Pool ("SPP"), which operates as the Regional Transmission Organization ("RTO"). SPP oversees the bulk electric grid and wholesale power market in the central United States on behalf of a diverse group of utilities and transmission companies in 14 states (Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming).

As an RTO, SPP does not own the power grid; it independently operates the grid minute-by-minute to ensure power gets to customers and to eliminate power shortages. The role of SPP is to ensure the reliable supply of power, adequate transmission infrastructure, and competitive wholesale electricity prices for a



575,000-square-mile region including more than 60,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines.

Source: <https://www.kcc.ks.gov/electric/transmission-distribution>

### Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is energy from naturally replenishing sources; virtually inexhaustible in duration but limited in the amount of energy available in the short-term. Statewide, Kansas is moving towards renewable and away from legacy fuel sources. For example, while almost 62% of the state's electricity was generated by coal in 2012, only 32% came from coal in 2022.

The major types of renewable energy sources are:

- Biomass
- Hydropower
- Geothermal
- Solar
- Wind

Capacity of long-range power transmission lines can be a limiting factor for renewable energy production, since the electricity generated must be transferred into the regional or national power grid. Local, distributed power generation may be more practical in areas with limited access to the transmission grid.

### Biomass

Biomass is renewable organic material coming from plants and animals. Biomass was the largest source of total annual U.S. energy consumption until the mid-1800s. The use of biomass fuels for transportation and for electricity generation is increasing.

The Biomass category of renewable energy sources includes biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, along with wood waste, landfill gas, and similar fuels. Most biofuels are used as transportation fuels, but they may also be used for heating and electricity generation. In 2022, 0.09% of the states total energy generation was biomass.

Among the nation though Kansas is the ninth largest ethanol producer and has been growing in this industry for the past 20 years.

Source: [carboncaptureready.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/KS\\_7\\_23\\_2020.pdf](https://carboncaptureready.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/KS_7_23_2020.pdf)

### Carbon Sequestration

Efforts are under way to capture and store carbon dioxide generated by Kansas industrial sector. In the case of ethanol, carbon capture equipment will extract CO<sub>2</sub> from the ethanol production process and transfer the gas via a carbon dioxide pipeline to an underground geologic sequestration site near the plant.

It is likely carbon capture and storage ("CSS") systems will continue to expand in scope and size. Most carbon pipelines are used in oil fields for enhanced oil recovery. As noted by the Congressional Research Service (June 2022), "Transporting CO<sub>2</sub> in pipelines is similar to transporting fuels such as natural gas and oil; it requires attention to pipeline design, protection against corrosion, monitoring for leaks, and safeguards against overpressure... [the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ("PHMSA")] applies safety requirements to

CO<sub>2</sub> pipelines similar to those for pipelines carrying hazardous liquids such as crude oil and anhydrous ammonia."

The US Department of Transportation and the State of Kansas regulate interstate gas pipelines and hazardous liquid pipelines. The state of Kansas does not have legislation for allowing the state to permit carbon pipelines.

### Biogas and Anaerobic Digestion

On-farm biogas production has a long history with recent technological innovation. A digester is a sealed vessel in which anaerobic digestion of organic matter occurs. The bacteria feed off manure and, in the process, release biogas (methane) as a by-product. Farmers can use digesters to improve the quality of manure and reduce odors, with the energy content of the methane being a by-product. Biogas generated from anaerobic digestion processes is a clean and environmentally friendly renewable fuel. There are many uses for this fuel, including use in engines, generation of electricity, heat and hot water systems, and even refrigeration.

Source: [www.eia.gov/energyexplained/biomass](https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/biomass)

### Hydropower

Hydropower was one of the first sources of energy used for electricity generation. Until 2019, hydropower was the largest source of total annual U.S. renewable electricity generation.

Kansas has a long history of generating electricity with hydropower, which until recently was the largest source of





renewable energy in the United States. Hydroelectric accounted for about 0.03% of Kansas's annual electricity generation in 2022.

Source: [www.eia.gov/energyexplained/hydropower](http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/hydropower) and <https://www.hydro.org/>

### Geothermal

Geothermal energy is heat within the earth. Geothermal energy is a renewable energy source because heat is continuously produced inside the earth. People use geothermal heat for bathing, for heating buildings, and for generating electricity. Geothermal electricity generation requires water or steam at high temperatures (300° to 700°F). According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), geothermal heat pumps are the most energy-efficient, environmentally clean, and cost-effective systems for heating and cooling buildings.

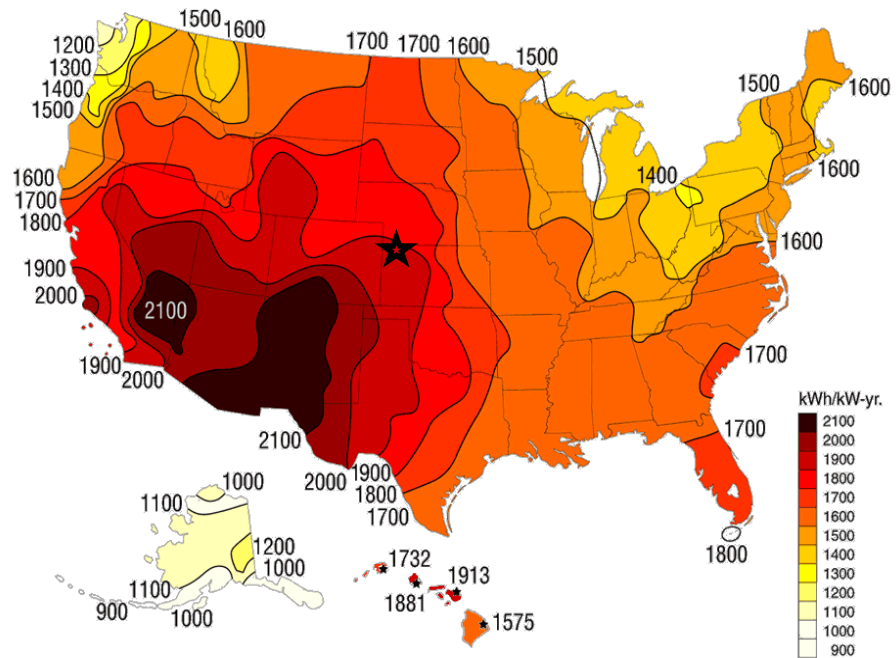
Source: [www.eia.gov/energyexplained/geothermal](http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/geothermal)

### Solar

A photovoltaic ("PV") cell, commonly called a solar cell, is a nonmechanical device which converts sunlight directly into electricity. Some PV cells can convert artificial light into electricity.

The efficiency at which PV cells convert sunlight to electricity varies by the type of semiconductor material and PV cell technology. The efficiency of commercially available PV modules averaged less than 10% in the mid-1980s, increased to around 15% by 2015, and is now approaching 20% for state-of-the-art modules. Experimental PV cells and PV cells for niche markets, such as space satellites, have achieved nearly 50%

**Figure 8.1: Solar Potential, Oberlin, Kansas**



Source: Solar Energy Industries Association

efficiency.

Rooftop solar has increasingly become an option for many homeowners and small businesses. The direction and pitch of the roof affect the amount of energy produced, as do nearby trees or other structures.

Only 0.1% of Kansas's electricity was generated by solar in 2022, but the capacity increased by 500% since 2019.

In general there is greater solar resource range in western Kansas (Figure 8.1). However, solar is also being used to firm the variances in wind power generation and evening power flows on the electric transmission grids, as well as diversifying generation portfolios. The American Farmland Trust has developed general principles for siting solar development on active farm land:

1. Prioritize solar siting on buildings and land not well suited for farming;
2. Safeguard the ability for land to be used for agriculture;
3. Grow agrivoltaics for agricultural production and solar energy;
4. Promote equity and farm viability.

The Midwest Energy Community Solar Array in nearby Colby has a production capacity of 1.0 megawatt.

Sources: [www.eia.gov/energyexplained/solar](http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/solar), [farmland.org](http://farmland.org), and <https://www.seia.org>

### Wind

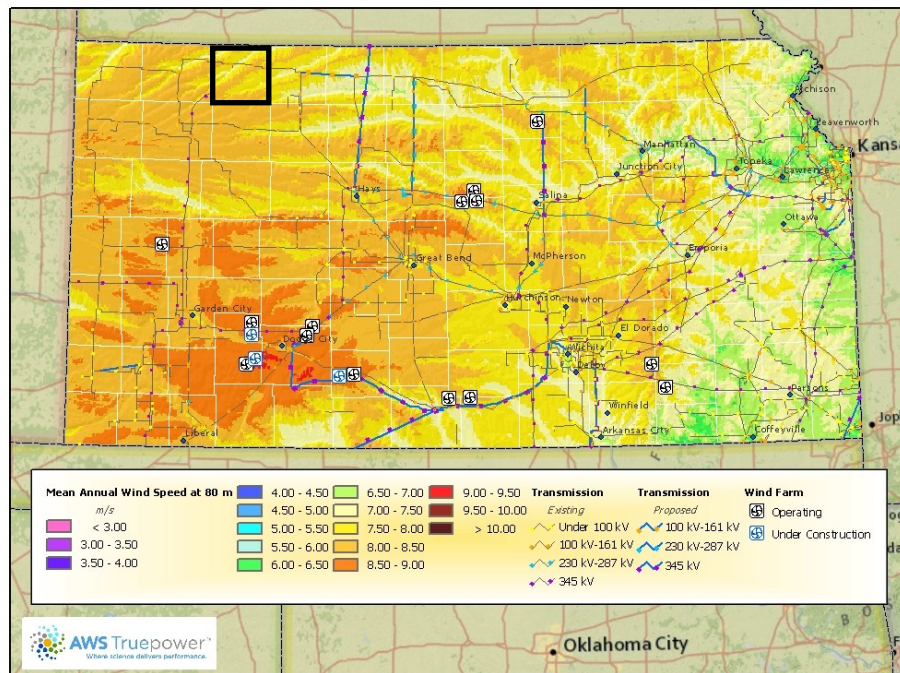
The wind blows in Kansas and an increasing share of Kansas's energy comes from renewable wind energy. The state's wind generation grew from 11% of electricity generated in 2012 to 47% in 2022.

According to the US Department of Energy's Office of Energy





**Figure 8.2: Average Annual Wind Speed at 80m**



Source: AWS Truepower, 2010

Efficiency & Renewable Energy, "Areas with annual average wind speeds around 6.5 meters per second and greater at 80-m height are generally considered to have a resource suitable for wind development. Utility-scale, land-based wind turbines are typically installed between 80- and 100-m high although tower heights for new installations are increasing - up to 140 m - to gain access to better wind resources higher aloft." Figure 8.2 shows mapped windspeeds of a range from 7.5-8.5 m/s in Decatur County.

Individual sites may be powered by Small Wind Energy Systems, a type of wind energy conversion system ("WECS") with a rated capacity of 100 kilowatts or less. Technological advancements are driving the growth of the small wind power market by making turbines more efficient and cost-effective. Small wind turbines can operate efficiently

on wind speeds of just 9 miles per hour.

The location of large commercial utility-scale wind farms must be carefully planned. There are several installed utility-scale wind farms near Colby.

Sources: <https://eerscmmap.usgs.gov/ushwtbl/>

### Net Metering

Since 2009, private electricity generating facilities with capacity at or below 25 kilowatts may operate under Kansas's net-metering statutes. Any excess generation produced by the system will be credited at the utility's avoided cost rate and carried forward to the next billing period. Any excess remaining at the end of an annualized billing period is to be paid out to the customer. The law was amended in 2014 to establish net metering for the state's investor owned utilities.

Source: <https://www.kcc.ks.gov/electric/net-metering-in-kansas>

### Solar/Wind Easements

Kansas's solar and wind easement provisions allow property owners to create binding solar and wind easements for the purpose of protecting and maintaining proper access to sunlight and wind. Counties and municipalities are permitted to develop regulations, or development plans protecting access to solar and wind energy resources if they choose to do so. Local governing bodies may also grant zoning exceptions to solar and wind energy systems which would be restricted under existing regulations, so long as the exception is not substantially detrimental to the public good.

### Resources

#### Brownfields Assistance

A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Reinvesting in these properties increases local tax bases, facilitates job growth, utilizes existing infrastructure, takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment.

#### KDHE

The State of Kansas offers assistance with redeveloping brownfield sites. For example, the Kansas Division of Environment conducts Site Assessments providing preliminary environmental information to determine if there is contamination on a property. The KDHE offers these assessments to communities at



no cost.

A new site is entered into the Identified Sites List database and prioritized for a site assessment. Site assessment activities include a review of historical site activities, regulatory and operational history, and land use. If the site conditions warrant, the Site Response Unit may sample environmental media including soil, groundwater, surface water, or sediment, and any wastes which may be present. The Site Assessment Program uses a variety of intrusive and non-intrusive technologies including direct-push technology, geophysical tools, mobile analytical methods such as X-ray fluorescence and gas chromatography, and auger drilling.

When a site assessment is completed, the results are compared to existing risk-based standards, and the site is either resolved, referred for further future site assessment, considered for a KDHE remediation program, or referred for Federal response actions.

Source: <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/405/Site-Response-Unit>

### KSU TAB

The Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields ("KSU TAB") is an organization which supports cities and counties across the Midwest in redeveloping their brownfield inventory. KSU TAB has a network of professionals and university staff who work together on custom teams for each project KSU TAB receives.

Specific services KSU TAB offers include:

- Technical presentations, workshops and seminars on

brownfields-related topics

- Strategic planning and redevelopment visioning workshops
- Economic feasibility and sustainability analysis
- Identification of potential funding sources
- Assistance with environmental justice issues
- Guidance in finding and contracting with environmental firms
- Independent review and summary of technical documents
- Community outreach liaison service between you, state or federal agencies, or other entities
- Assistance with sustainability education and planning
- Assistance with soil analyses for community gardens placed on brownfields

Assistance from KSU TAB comes on a first come first serve basis at no charge.

Source: <https://www.ksutab.org/>



### Communications, Utilities, and Energy (“CUE”) Goals and Actions

#### CUE Goal CUE-1:

Oberlin residents have options for remote work and community participation.

##### Actions

CUE-1.1: Continue to support local news.

CUE-1.2: Support continued improvements in high-speed wired and wireless communications.

CUE-1.3: Regularly review zoning regulations for conformance with broadband technological advances and FCC mandates.

CUE-1.4: Regularly update the community calendar on the City of Oberlin website.

CUE-1.5: Proactively update the community calendar to create greater visibility and participation in community events.

#### CUE Goal CUE-2:

Utility Infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs of residents, visitors, and employers.

##### Actions

CUE-2.1: Work with Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc. to plan for long-term access to power generation capacity.

CUE-2.2: Maintain and extend powerlines as the city grows.

CUE-2.3: Maintain the quantity and quality of domestic water supply.

CUE-2.4: Make water and sewer service improvements to match projected future needs.

CUE-2.5: Maintain capacity for wastewater treatment.

CUE-2.6: Proactively extend public utilities to reduce the costs of development and encourage development in appropriate areas.

#### CUE Goal CUE-3:

Energy Infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs of residents, visitors, and employers.

##### Actions

CUE-3.1: Maintain City Utility back-up and peaking power capacity.

CUE-3.2: Promote consumer energy conservation measures, in partnership with utility providers.

#### CUE Goal CUE-4:

Renewable energy facilities - biomass, geothermal, wind, solar - are carefully planned.

##### Actions

CUE-4.1: Provide for individual property owners to utilize small-scale, distributed renewable energy generation, eligible for net metering.

CUE-4.2: Limit utility-scale renewable energy facilities within the city limits and ETJ, to avoid impacts on future development.

CUE-4.3: Periodically review zoning regulations for conformance with technological advances in renewable energy generation.



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## Chapter 9 Hazards

### Hazards

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. It begins with local governments identifying natural and manmade disaster risks and vulnerabilities common in their area. After identifying these risks, they develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from similar events. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction.

The impacts of hazard and potential damage can be avoided, or at least lessened, with thoughtful land use and development practices. Hazard mitigation informs the entire emergency management cycle.

This chapter summarizes findings of the Kansas Homeland Security Region A Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020, and references resources for mitigation planning. The Federal Emergency

Management Agency ("FEMA") requires hazard mitigation plans be updated every five years to reflect changing conditions.

### Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Kansas Homeland Security Region A Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated in 2020 by Blue Umbrella Solutions, LLC, and approved by FEMA in compliance with requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Developing a hazard mitigation plan is not only good public policy for a resilient community, but participation in and adoption of a hazard mitigation plan is also required to become eligible for certain federal funding sources.

The 2020 plan update process was lead by local planning representatives and Emergency Management offices in Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, and Wallace counties. The City of Oberlin was represented by the City Clerk.

### Hazard Mitigation Goals and Objectives

The hazard mitigation plan includes goals, objectives, and action items, including:

- Goal 1: Reduce or eliminate risk to the people and property of Kansas Region A from the impacts of the identified hazards in this plan.
- Goal 2: Strive to protect all vulnerable populations, structures, and critical facilities in Kansas Region A from the impacts of the identified hazards.
- Goal 3: Improve public outreach initiatives to include education, awareness and partnerships with all entities in order to enhance understanding of the risk Kansas Region A faces due to the impacts of the identified hazards.
- Goal 4: Enhance communication and coordination among all agencies and between agencies and the public.



### Critical Facilities

The hazard mitigation plan identifies a broad range of Critical Facilities for each participating jurisdiction. The participating governing bodies identified these facilities as communications facilities, emergency operations centers, fire stations, government buildings, hospitals and other medical facilities, and police stations.

### Hazard Risk Assessment

The hazard mitigation plan includes a description of the hazards considered, including a risk and vulnerability assessment. Decatur County experienced the following hazard events, each within varied time periods:

- Agricultural Infestation: 19 incidents between 2009 and 2018
- Dam and Levee Failure: Zero incidents reported
- Drought: 136 incidents between 2009 and 2018
- Earthquake: Two incidents between 1979 and 2018
- Expansive Soils: Zero incidents reported
- Extreme Temperatures: 66 between 2009 and 2018
- Flood: 8 days with events between 2010 and 2019
- Hailstorm: 32 incidents between 2010 and 2019
- Land Subsidence: Zero incidents reported
- Landslide: Zero incidents reported
- Lightning: Zero incidents reported
- Soil Erosion and Dust: Zero incidents reported
- Tornado: Two days with events between 2010 and 2019
- Wildfire: Zero incidents reported

- Windstorms: 33 days with events between 2010 and 2019
- Winter Storms: 26 days with events (reported for entirety of Region A)
- Civil Disorder: Zero incidents reported
- Hazardous Materials: Zero incidents reported
- Major Disease: One incident as of 2020
- Radiological Incident: Zero incidents reported
- Terrorism: Zero incidents reported
- Utility/Infrastructure Failure: Zero incidents reported

Countywide, 325 hazard events were logged, with \$61,522,551 million in crop damage reported between 2009 and 2018.

### Mitigation Strategy

The primary focus of the mitigation strategy is to identify action items to reduce the effects of hazards on existing infrastructure and property based on the established goals and objectives. These actions consider the most cost effective and technically feasible manner to address risk.

The intent of each goal and set of objectives is to develop strategies to account for risks associated with hazards and identify ways to reduce or eliminate those risks. Local planning teams evaluated and prioritized mitigation and strategic actions. These actions included: the mitigation and strategic actions identified per jurisdiction in the previous plan; additional mitigation and strategic actions discussed during the planning process; and recommendations from consultants for additional

mitigation and strategic actions based on risk probability and vulnerability at the local level.

Actions to implement the hazard mitigation strategies for the City are presented in Table 9.1. Selected projects depended on the significance of each hazard present. The information listed in Table 9.1 are the mitigation actions identified by the City of Oberlin during the planning process.

### Plan Maintenance

Each participating jurisdiction in the hazard mitigation plan is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the plan during its five-year lifespan. Plan review and updates should occur annually, with a complete update occurring every five years. At the discretion of the governing body, updates may be incorporated more frequently, especially in the event of a major hazard or as additional mitigation needs are identified. This comprehensive plan should also be reviewed regularly and updated when the hazard mitigation plan is revised.



**Table 9.1: Identified Mitigation Actions**

Description	Hazard Addressed	Responsible Party	Overall Priority	Goal(s) Addressed	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Proposed Completion Timeframe	Current Status
The City of Oberlin is committed to continued participation and compliance with the NFIP.	Flood	NFIP Administrator	High	1, 2	Staff Time	Local	Continuous	In progress
Assess flood prone areas and recommend flood reduction measures to city planners ("NFIP").	Flood	NFIP Administrator	High	1, 2	\$10,000	Local	Continuous	Not started, lack of funding
Purchase and distribute NOAA All Hazards Weather Radios for the entire community.	All Hazards	City Manager	High	1, 2	\$5,000	Local, State, Federal	Five Years	Not started, lack of funding
Construct a community safe room.	Tornado, Windstorm	City Manager	High	1, 2	\$350,000	Local, State, Federal	Five Years	Not started, lack of funding

Sources: Kansas Homeland Security Region A Hazard Mitigation Plan



### Resources

FEMA and the American Planning Association ("APA") work together to provide resources to communities for hazard mitigation planning. Their report *Hazard Mitigation: Integrating Best Practices into Planning* (2010), identifies effective multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation strategies and tools based on a series of case studies for large and small towns and rural jurisdictions across the United States.

In 2020, the APA adopted a Hazard Mitigation Policy Guide, which includes 13 Guiding Policies on hazard mitigation. The guide supplements and updates APA's earlier report, with a focus on recent severe hazard occurrences. Plans need to consider not just mitigation, but adaptation to changing conditions and situations.

Source: [planning.org/nationalcenters/hazards](https://planning.org/nationalcenters/hazards)





### Hazard Goals and Actions

#### Hazard Goal HZ-1:

The City provides adequate support for goals and objectives of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

#### Actions

HZ-1.1: See Table 9.1.

HZ-1.2: The City maintains conformance with the National Flood Insurance Program ("NFIP").

HZ-1.3: Consider participating in Federal Emergency Management Agency's ("FEMA") Community Rating System ("CRS") to provide flood insurance premium discounts to property owners and tenants.



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## Chapter 10

### Land Use

#### **Oberlin's Land Use**

Land use and development are the primary focus of the Comprehensive Plan. The land use element does not regulate land use - it is a general guide for future decision making. The Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory; however, the Plan reflects the community's ability and preferences to guide and plan for development and land use policy.

The Comprehensive Plan - in particular the land use element - plays a fundamental role as the substantive basis for regulations implementing the Plan such as zoning, subdivision, and floodplain management. A clear land use element provides a vision for the future and helps prevent, or at least minimize, conflicts between different uses of land.

It is essential for the land use element to reflect the wants and needs of Oberlin's residents and

property owners, within the constraints of the landscape. This chapter addresses the statutory requirements of the land use element, describes existing land use, and presents the future land use plan. This chapter also discusses the community character of Oberlin and action items for building on this unique character.

#### **Land Use Element**

This section is intended to meet the requirements in Kansas Statutes Annotated 12-747 that the Comprehensive Plan include: "The general location, extent and relationship of the use of land for agriculture, residence, business, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and other community facilities, major utility facilities both public and private and any other use deemed necessary".

The land use element is based on an understanding of how Oberlin's citizens have built their community. All of the other

elements presented so far in this plan, from demographics to hazard mitigation, inform the analysis of existing land use to determine recommendations for future land use.

#### **Existing Land Use**

Land in Oberlin and the surrounding area has been developed for many different purposes. Existing land use includes both the use of buildings and parcels of land. The use of land is constantly changing - this Plan presents a snapshot in time of existing land use. It is essential to have a solid understanding of existing land use at a point in time to carefully consider future land use policy.

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

The utilization of land is best described in specific categories providing broad descriptions where numerous businesses, institutions, and structures can be grouped. For the purposes of the





Comprehensive Plan, the following land use classifications are used:

- Agricultural/Vacant;
- Residential Estates;
- Single-Family Residential;
- Multi-Family Residential;
- Manufactured Housing;
- Commercial/Industrial;
- Public/Institutional;
- Parks/Recreation, and;
- Transportation/ROW

These land use classifications are used throughout both the existing land use analysis as well as the future land use plan to ensure continuity and methodology.

## Land Use Constraints

While certain areas are well situated for different types of growth and development, they may also be subject to constraints discussed throughout this plan. These constraints may direct development elsewhere, or they may simply be issues to be improved and resolved. Constraints to land use include concerns such as:

- Water availability;
- Limited opportunities for in-fill development;
- Neighborhood impacts of existing commercial and industrial uses, including visual blight;
- Cost to extend infrastructure including streets, electricity, water, and sewer service;
- Agricultural uses;
- Transportation such as highways and railroads;
- The reach of the gravity-fed sewer system, without adding lift stations, and;
- Willingness of adjacent property owners to sell land at prices which the market will support

**Table 10.1: Existing Land Uses**

Use	Acres	Share of Developed Area	Share of Total Area (acres)
Residential	328.3	32.2%	25.9%
Residential Estates	59.3	5.8%	4.7%
Single-Family Residential	240.4	23.6%	19.0%
Multi-Family Residential	25.9	2.5%	2.0%
Manufactured Housing	2.6	0.3%	0.2%
Commercial/Industrial	95.4	9.4%	7.5%
Public/Institutional	301.1	29.5%	23.8%
Parks/Recreation	49.7	4.9%	3.9%
Transportation/ROW	244.8	24.0%	19.3%
<b>Total Developed Land</b>	<b>1,019.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>80.5%</b>
Vacant/Agriculture	246.9	-	19.5%
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>1,266.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Sources: Marvin Planning Consultants; Decatur County Appraisers

## Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The City of Oberlin has the option to exercise planning and zoning jurisdiction over the unincorporated area of Decatur County within three miles of the city limits, known as the extraterritorial jurisdiction or ETJ. As of the writing of this plan, Oberlin does not exercise the ETJ into Decatur County.



### LEGEND

- District

- 

PROJECTION: KS State Plane (Ft.)  
DATUM: NAD 83  
DATE: 6.19.25

0    0.05    0.1    0.2  
Miles





## FLU Map





**Future Land Use to be completed with zoning.**



## Community Character

Every community has a unique character distinguishing a specific place from every other place. Character encompasses many aspects of the community, from the street grid, lots and blocks, to the brick storefronts downtown and homes in tree-lined neighborhoods, to the extensive prairie stretching from the city into the countryside.

## Signage and Wayfinding

Community character includes a combination of physical and psychological experiences. Residents and visitors learn to “read” a place based on formal and informal clues.

### Community Entrances

There is only one chance to make a first impression on visitors, and potential new residents and employers. Community entrances are a statement welcoming new and returning people to town. A well-designed monument sign conveys a message more than mere words. Entrance signs should reinforce the community brand with curbside appeal. Landscaping improves this appeal.

### Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to how people find their way around the community. Appropriate signage helps people walk and/or drive to specific locations in the community. Wayfinding would more easily direct visitors to downtown, public facilities, and city parks.

A unified wayfinding system does not need to be elaborate, but it does need to easily convey a message as well as be legible to drivers as well as pedestrians.

### Signage

Signs are an important form of communication. Sign control - or the lack of sign control - can have a significant impact on the community's appearance and economic competitiveness.

The image of a community is fundamentally important to its economic vitality and the signs along a community's streets can greatly affect the image of a place. Sign clutter is ugly, costly, and ineffective; “When everyone shouts, no one can be heard.”

Commercial signage on the street and building front helps people get where they need to go. A good sign code is pro-business because an attractive business district will always attract more customers than an ugly one. Signs can be well designed at a human scale, or they can create visual clutter and distracted driving as pedestrians and motorists search for their destination.

On city streets, ground-mounted monument signs are an effective form of commercial signage. They can also be designed to fit into the overall architectural character of a specific building or development.

### Landscaping

Landscaping is critical to creating a positive community character. It also filters drainages (such as bio-swales) and provides buffers; Landscaping makes a particular impression in areas such as:

- Along streets, especially major thoroughfares;
- Along parking barriers;
- Near commercial and public buildings, and;

- In public spaces

Landscaping should include a variety of organic and hardscape materials, appropriate to Oberlin's environment. These may include:

- Xeriscaping (not “zero-scape”);
- Grass and ground cover;
- Shrubs and trees, and;
- Street furniture

Street trees, for example, not only improve the appearance of the community, but also provide erosion control and drainage as well as breaking up large expanses of concrete and asphalt.

As new development and re-development occurs in Oberlin, the City should work closely with developers and property owners to ensure there is appropriate landscaping installed and maintained to improve the appearance of the community.



# Chapter 11 Transportation

## Connections

Transportation connects people and places. A well-connected transportation network features a variety of linkages between origins and destinations - between work and home, school, recreation, and retail services. A community has a higher quality of life when it is easier to "go around the block", when neighbors can be neighbors, and people have accessible choices to drive, walk, or bike.

## Streets

Oberlin's primary street network includes state highways, county roads, and city streets and alleys. Maintenance and construction of the street network is a cooperative effort.

## Functional Classification

The street and road network is classified by function:

- Expressway - major roadway for state or regional access
- Arterial - major road with high

volumes of traffic, primarily connecting places to each other

- Collector - street with less traffic, connecting local traffic to arterial roads
- Local - street with low traffic volumes and slow design speeds, primarily uses for direct access to property

US Highway 36 runs east-west through Oberlin and is functionally classified as a Minor Arterial by the Kansas Department of Transportation ("KDOT"). US Highway 83 runs north-south through Oberlin and is functionally classified as a Principal Arterial Other by KDOT. Two major collectors feed into Oberlin from the southwest and northeast - RS 899 and RS 901, respectively.

## Frontage on a Public Road

New homes should have access to an existing public street or road, other than a roadway designated as a minimum maintenance road or other

unimproved roadway.

A property owner may use a dedicated right-of-way or public road easement, if they improve the street to the city standard.

## Billboards

Off-site commercial advertising, commonly referred to as "billboards" advertise goods or services which are not sold or produced on the premises where the sign is located. The Federal Highway Beautification Act ("HBA") of 1965 regulated the location of billboards on federal-aid highways. The "Kerr Amendment" allowed outdoor advertising in commercial and industrial zones. Many communities do not allow billboards, due to concerns with distracted driving and visual blight as a form of visual pollution. The National Association of Realtors has reported nearby billboards hurt residential property values.

In 2022, the US Supreme Court





ruled in the case of City of Austin v. Reagan National Advertising local sign codes may continue to strictly regulate off-premise advertising. The city may want to revisit current zoning for signage to offer greater protection to adjacent property values.

### KDOT

The headquarters of the Kansas Department of Transportation ("KDOT") District 3 is located in Norton. KDOT's Surface Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2025-2028 included several projects in Decatur County.

Proposed projects include:

- Bridge Replacement over Prairie Dog Creek on Railroad Avenue located 0.4 mile W of Clayton: \$803,000
- High Performance Signing Program Project on Routes US -83, US-36, K-383, K123, and K-223: \$592,000
- K-9 milling and overlay: \$1,289,000

### Sidewalks and Trails

Many communities have invested in good places to walk or ride a bicycle. A complete network creates safe, comfortable, and accessible multimodal routes for people walking and bicycling.

The City has a basic sidewalk network. However, many of these sidewalks are aging and segments are often missing, forcing people to walk in the streets. Also, too few intersections have accessible curb ramps, creating an obstacle for users with strollers and wheelchairs, or who simply find curbs difficult to maneuver.

Multi-user trails are becoming a popular piece of infrastructure for everyday transportation as well as exercise and recreation. Respondents to the community survey expressed support for multiuse trails and sidewalks, including handicap curb cuts.

### Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") was signed by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. The ADA is intended to make sure people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

The KDOT Roadway Design Manual provides guidance for design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in conformance with ADA. This includes having a transition plan when structural modifications are required to provide accessibility, including curb ramps.

Sidewalks on rights-of-way and bridges must be at least four-feet wide, provided there are larger passing spaces every 200 feet. (Driveways may be considered as passing spaces.) A shared-use path must be a minimum 10 feet wide, with 11-14 feet preferred in certain situations. ADA parking spaces must be provided for vans as well as passenger vehicles.

### Railroads

A branch of the Burlington Northern Railroad terminuses in Oberlin in the southeastern portion of the city. The closest passenger rail service is located in McCook, Nebraska (Amtrak).

### Air Travel

Oberlin Municipal Airport (OIN) is a public-use facility located east

of Oberlin. OIN has an elevation of 2,706.8 feet. The airport has two runways, both paved in asphalt. The airport is owned by the City of Oberlin.

The nearest scheduled passenger air service is available at the McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport. Flights are available from this facility to Denver, with service from Denver Air.

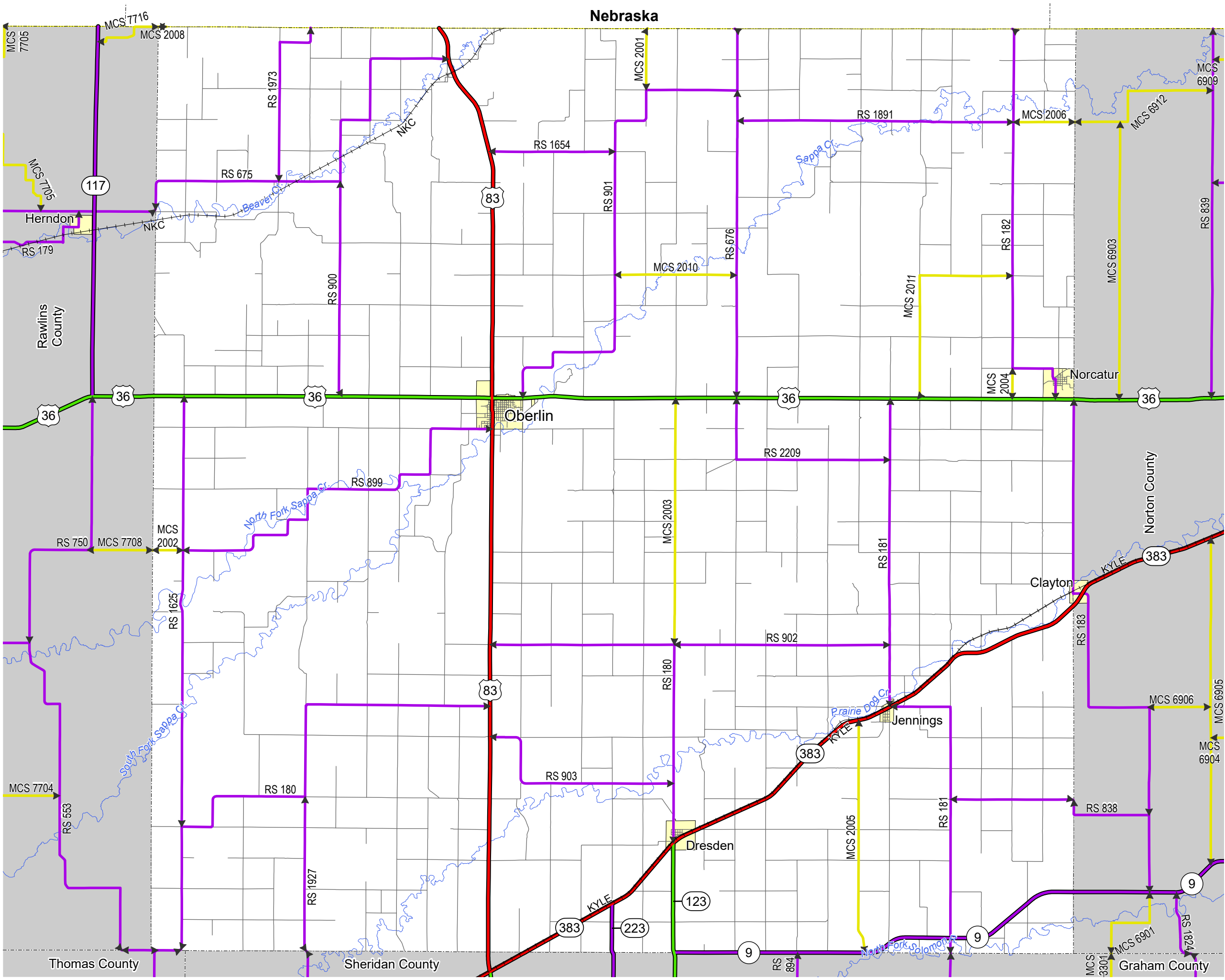
Sources: <https://www.airnav.com/airport/K75>; <https://www.cityofmccook.com/132/Airport>

## Transportation

### Resources

#### Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Electric vehicles ("EVs", also known as battery-electric vehicles) require off-board electric charging stations. Although the majority of EV owners charge at home, public charging and workplace charging stations are necessary for trips away from home.



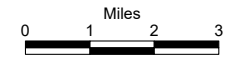
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION  
5 - 10 YEAR FUTURE

- Interstate
  - Other Freeway/Expressway
  - Other Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
  - Local Road
- OTHER FEATURES
- Railroad
  - Incorporated City Limit

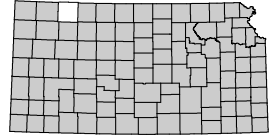
COUNTY APPROVAL: 4/23/2013  
F.H.W.A APPROVAL: 6/18/2013



FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP  
**DECATUR COUNTY**  
**KANSAS**  
 PREPARED BY THE  
**KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**  
 IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**



MAY 2023



KDOT makes no warranties, guarantees, or representations for the accuracy of this information and assumes no liability for errors or omissions.







### Transportation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

#### Transportation Goal T-1:

The city's street network continues to meet the needs of local users and those passing through the city.

##### Objectives and Policies:

T-1.1: Annually review the City's One- and Six-Year Plan for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

T-1.2: Continue regular maintenance of streets and sidewalks citywide.

T-1.3: Prioritize paving and drainage improvements on gravel streets and areas with inadequate surface drainage.

T-1.4: Continue to work with Kansas DOT on improving State roads and highways.

T-1.5: As the industry evolves, review zoning requirements for EV charging stations.

#### Transportation Goal T-2:

Multi-modal transportation infrastructure is provided for walking, bicycling, and public transportation where appropriate.

##### Objectives and Policies:

T-2.1: Support local transit providers.

T-2.2: Encourage maintenance, replacement, and installation of sidewalks throughout the city.

T-2.3: Complete and maintain ADA improvements to sidewalks throughout the city.

T-2.4: Establish a trails system to connect public facilities including parks and public schools.

#### Transportation Goal T-3:

Air transportation is available for Oberlin's residents, visitors, and businesses.

##### Objectives and Policies:

T-3.1: Support maintenance and improvements to the Oberlin Municipal Airport.

T-3.2: Coordinate development review in the vicinity of the Airport with Decatur County and the airport's management.



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## Chapter 12 Implementation

### Implementation

Successful community plans have the same key ingredients: "2% inspiration and 98% perspiration." This section of the plan contains the inspiration of the many city officials and residents who have participated in the planning process. However, the ultimate success of this plan remains in the dedication offered by each and every resident.

There are numerous goals and action items in this plan. These items should inform annual workplans and budget-setting to assure progress continues to bring the plan to life.

### Action Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is not intended to sit on a shelf. The plan is intended to be put into action. Goals and action items specific to each plan element are included in the relevant chapter.

### Evaluation of Development Proposals

Development proposal applications should be carefully reviewed against the goals and of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the specific requirements of the development regulations. This plan is not regulatory; however, the underlying regulations are based on compatibility with this plan. Each development application should address how the specific proposal meets the goals of the comprehensive plan.

In cases in which a proposal is not clearly supported by the plan, the developer should be encouraged to improve the project to meet the community's goals. On the other hand, approval of a proposal not in conformance with the comprehensive plan would point to the need to review and update the plan to better serve the citizens of Oberlin.

### Implementation Action Items

This plan recommends several implementable action items which can be undertaken immediately. These include:

- Implementing the Goals outlined in the Downtown Economic Development Plan;
- Implementing the Recommendations and Strategies in the outlined in the Transportation Chapter;
- Floodplain Regulations & Mapping;
- a Capital Improvement Program, and;
- Plan Maintenance

The City Council will have a critical role in implementation of this plan through the annual budgeting process. Elected officials, staff, and volunteers take the primary role in implementation of the comprehensive plan.

Other action items are





referenced in support of activities by other entities which support implementation of this plan.

### **Comprehensive Plan Maintenance**

#### **Annual Review of the Plan**

A relevant, up to date plan is critical to the on-going planning success. To maintain both public and private sector confidence; evaluate the effectiveness of planning activities; and, most importantly, make mid-Plan corrections on the use of city resources, the Plan must remain current. The annual review should be performed each January to begin the calendar year. This review should result in a report from the Planning Commission and Staff to the City Council and the citizens of Oberlin.

#### **Unanticipated Opportunities**

If any innovate development and/or redevelopment opportunities arise which impact any elements of the plan and which are determined to be of importance, a plan amendment may be proposed and considered separate from the Annual Review and other proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

The Comprehensive Plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by Kansas law and provide for the organized participation and involvement of citizens.

#### **Ten Year Review**

As discussed in the Introduction, the Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year plan. However, the Planning Commission should review the plan annually and update the document at least every 10 years (2035), or when major,

unanticipated opportunity arises. Completing updates every five years or so will allow the City to incorporate ideas and developments not known at the time of this planning process.

# Appendix

## Survey Results

**#1: Please answer the following General questions as indicated above.**

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Oberlin's history and architecture should be preserved.	38.93%	42.75%	16.03% <sup>1</sup>	2.29%	0.00%
There are adequate after-school programs available.	10.77%	27.69%	40.00%	20.00%	1.54%
High school kids travel too far for entertainment and jobs.	18.46%	28.46%	26.15%	23.08%	3.85%
Middle school kids don't have anything to do with their free time.	14.62%	26.15%	24.62%	28.46%	6.15%
The future of Oberlin is more important than preserving its history.	20.47%	29.92%	26.77%	18.11%	4.72%
Overall, Oberlin is a good place to live.	28.46%	43.08%	14.62%	10.77%	3.08%
Oberlin has a likeable rural and small town atmosphere.	28.68%	52.71%	6.20%	10.85%	1.55%
Local government officials are responsive to community needs.	8.46%	38.46%	30.77%	16.15%	6.15%

**#2: Please answer the following Economic Development questions as indicated above.**

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I had the means, I would start or invest in a small, local business.	22.48%	37.98%	21.71%	14.73%	3.10%
It is too hard for small businesses to survive here.	23.26%	43.41%	15.50%	17.83%	0.00%
Oberlin should offer tax incentives to fill vacant buildings downtown.	25.58%	39.53%	19.38%	13.18%	2.33%
New business should be along US Highway 36 and in the Downtown.	27.91%	48.06%	18.60%	4.65%	0.78%
The City should keep all new business development within city limits.	5.47%	28.91%	31.25%	32.03%	2.34%
I would pay extra taxes for improvements downtown.	7.81%	17.19%	28.91%	25.78%	20.31%
New and expanded manufacturing or assembly plants will bring the kinds of jobs we need.	35.94%	41.41%	13.28%	7.81%	1.56%
There is a strong available workforce in Oberlin.	1.57%	26.77%	28.35%	31.50%	11.81%
There are enough part-time jobs for high-school students.	3.15%	27.56%	25.98%	39.37%	3.94%
Retaining youth is key to Oberlin's future.	39.37%	41.73%	13.39%	4.72%	0.79%
Retaining current business is key to Oberlin's economic survival.	32.81%	52.34%	14.06%	0.78%	0.00%
Recruiting new business should be priority for the City.	39.06%	44.53%	14.06%	2.34%	0.00%
Existing business districts should be revitalized.	13.39%	47.24%	32.28%	6.30%	0.79%
We should partner with neighboring communities for the future of our region.	25.00%	42.97%	27.34%	4.69%	0.00%



### #3: Please answer the following Development/Housing questions as indicated above.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Commercial real estate is over-priced in Oberlin.	22.03%	20.34%	44.92%	10.17%	2.54%
Old buildings/houses should be cleaned up or torn down.	47.01%	32.48%	13.68%	3.42%	3.42%
The entrance to Oberlin is attractive.	1.72%	32.76%	15.52%	37.93%	12.07%
The City should be more proactive in supporting existing industries and businesses in Oberlin.	24.35%	49.57%	19.13%	6.96%	0.00%
Oberlin has a variety of housing options.	2.59%	24.14%	21.55%	34.48%	17.24%
Real estate and rental rates are less expensive than surrounding counties.	4.35%	27.83%	40.87%	14.78%	12.17%
Oberlin needs more public housing.	10.26%	29.06%	32.48%	23.08%	5.13%
Most homes in Oberlin appear to be in good condition.	0.85%	47.86%	20.51%	27.35%	3.42%
New housing should be located next to the corporate limits and connected to existing services.	4.31%	34.48%	52.59%	6.90%	1.72%
More affordable housing is needed for young families.	23.93%	53.85%	17.09%	3.42%	1.71%
Older adults need more housing and assisted living facilities.	12.82%	46.15%	32.48%	7.69%	0.85%
There needs to be more apartments, town homes, or duplexes.	15.52%	43.10%	23.28%	16.38%	1.72%
Enough homes are for sale in the \$150,000 to \$300,000 range.	15.38%	39.32%	32.48%	9.40%	3.42%
I would buy a condominium or town home if I could afford one.	9.40%	17.95%	27.35%	25.64%	19.66%
There are enough rental properties in Oberlin.	3.42%	5.98%	35.04%	41.88%	13.68%
I would support a program to strengthen community pride and appearance.	22.22%	52.99%	16.24%	5.13%	3.42%
Developers should be allowed to build residential subdivisions in rural areas.	12.82%	41.88%	33.33%	7.69%	4.27%
Developers should be required to enhance roads and bridges.	17.95%	46.15%	27.35%	6.84%	1.71%
Developers should be required to locate next to corporate limits and connect to existing services.	5.98%	37.61%	47.01%	8.55%	0.85%

### #4: Please answer the following Renewable Energy questions as indicated above.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The City should focus on developing technology and energy resources.	11.30%	44.35%	28.70%	12.17%	3.48%
Wind farms will strengthen our economy.	6.96%	19.13%	25.22%	20.00%	28.70%
Solar farms will strengthen our economy.	7.83%	23.48%	33.91%	18.26%	16.52%
Wind farms can be attractive.	5.22%	15.65%	20.87%	20.87%	37.39%
Solar farms can be attractive.	4.39%	17.54%	26.32%	24.56%	27.19%
I think large wind mills would ruin my view of the landscape.	35.65%	19.13%	20.00%	18.26%	6.96%
I think large solar farms would ruin my view of the landscape.	23.48%	20.87%	32.17%	18.26%	5.22%
Wind energy will help us protect other natural resources in Oberlin.	6.09%	23.48%	26.96%	20.00%	23.48%
Solar energy will help us protect other natural resources in Oberlin.	9.57%	27.83%	29.57%	18.26%	14.78%





### #5: Please answer the following Recreation questions as indicated above.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There should be more places where kids can hang out with their friends.	29.31%	37.93%	17.24%	11.21%	4.31%
There are plenty of extracurricular activities and events for kids.	6.03%	32.76%	25.00%	25.00%	11.21%
There are adequate senior citizens activities.	1.72%	35.34%	40.52%	18.97%	3.45%
There are adequate adults activities.	1.72%	25.00%	19.83%	39.66%	13.79%
I often use community centers and/or walk-n-bike paths, tracks, or trails.	3.48%	33.04%	21.74%	33.04%	8.70%
There are not enough places to exercise, or they are too far away.	10.43%	21.74%	24.35%	40.00%	3.48%
Outdoor recreation options are limited in Oberlin.	12.07%	40.52%	14.66%	25.86%	6.90%
There are adequate cultural opportunities, events and activities.	3.48%	26.09%	27.83%	33.04%	9.57%

### #6: Please answer the following Transportation questions as indicated above.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
City roads are in good condition.	6.03%	27.59%	13.79%	34.48%	18.10%
I would be willing to pay additional taxes for road improvements.	6.03%	31.03%	24.14%	22.41%	16.38%

### #7: Please answer the following Public Safety/Health questions as indicated above.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Police, EMS, and fire protection are adequate.	15.65%	55.65%	15.65%	10.43%	2.61%
I receive good health care locally.	9.48%	27.59%	25.00%	21.55%	16.38%
I feel that adequate senior services are available.	4.35%	35.65%	34.78%	20.87%	4.35%
I feel that adequate senior services are affordable.	4.31%	25.00%	48.28%	18.10%	4.31%
I feel that adequate child care is available.	6.09%	27.83%	34.78%	23.48%	7.83%
I feel that adequate child care is affordable.	3.48%	21.74%	47.83%	18.26%	8.70%



### #8: If you cannot find what you want/need in Oberlin, where do you go?

Item	Oberlin	McCook	North Platte	Colby	Hays	Garden City	Great Bend	Wichita	Online/Internet
Entertainment (such as movies, miniature golf, etc.)	20.18%	78.07%	25.44%	27.19%	33.33%	11.40%	2.63%	7.89%	37.72%
Outdoor recreation (such as hunting, hiking, boating, etc.)	25.24%	31.07%	10.68%	4.85%	9.71%	2.91%	0.97%	4.85%	0.97%
Outdoor recreation (such as hunting, hiking, boating, etc.)	46.08%	24.51%	9.80%	6.86%	10.78%	3.92%	4.90%	3.92%	0.98%
To play sports (such as basketball, tennis, golf, etc.)	66.67%	41.11%	10.00%	22.22%	17.78%	6.67%	3.33%	5.56%	1.11%
Indoor exercise (such as walking, aerobics, weights, etc.)	67.78%	30.00%	7.78%	6.67%	10.00%	3.33%	1.11%	3.33%	4.44%
Swimming (outdoor or indoor)	68.09%	40.43%	6.38%	15.96%	9.57%	4.26%	2.13%	4.26%	1.06%
Culture events (such as theater, concerts, museums, etc.)	46.85%	47.75%	19.82%	18.02%	26.13%	6.31%	1.80%	14.41%	3.60%
Festivals and Fairs	77.78%	40.74%	12.04%	12.04%	17.59%	1.85%	0.93%	7.41%	1.85%
Grocery Shopping	62.93%	87.07%	9.48%	34.48%	11.21%	6.03%	2.59%	1.72%	11.21%
Furniture	9.52%	63.81%	20.00%	15.24%	21.90%	6.67%	0.00%	2.86%	31.43%
Clothes	19.30%	57.02%	21.05%	21.05%	21.05%	6.14%	2.63%	7.89%	57.02%
Vehicle (car/truck)	5.61%	65.42%	17.76%	20.56%	24.30%	5.61%	1.87%	9.35%	20.56%
Farm equipment	36.36%	43.94%	10.61%	24.24%	13.64%	3.03%	7.58%	1.52%	18.18%
Antique's	43.28%	37.31%	8.96%	7.46%	14.93%	7.46%	0.00%	1.49%	17.91%
Gas/Convenience items	91.15%	40.71%	8.85%	23.01%	12.39%	6.19%	4.42%	5.31%	2.65%
Hardware/Lumber	64.22%	48.62%	25.69%	12.84%	20.18%	4.59%	0.92%	3.67%	7.34%
Other shopping	34.26%	67.59%	30.56%	29.63%	37.04%	14.81%	3.70%	13.89%	40.74%
Dining out (fast food)	25.66%	91.15%	20.35%	43.36%	31.86%	10.62%	3.54%	8.85%	1.77%
Dining out (with sit-down service)	40.18%	84.82%	22.32%	41.96%	33.93%	10.71%	3.57%	8.93%	1.79%
Bar/Entertainment	43.21%	59.26%	12.35%	28.40%	25.93%	9.88%	3.70%	11.11%	2.47%
Community clubs or groups	66.67%	25.00%	7.14%	9.52%	8.33%	4.76%	3.57%	2.38%	5.95%



## #9: Access to quality goods and services is important. How available are these to you?

Question	Very Available	Available	Neutral	Less Available	Not Available	N/A
Daycare - children	7.34%	17.43%	26.61%	11.01%	5.50%	32.11%
Daycare - adults	1.85%	9.26%	24.07%	10.19%	12.04%	42.59%
Grocery store	35.78%	45.87%	9.17%	6.42%	1.83%	0.92%
Banking	52.25%	36.04%	6.31%	2.70%	0.00%	2.70%
Tech support computers	7.27%	21.82%	20.91%	26.36%	16.36%	7.27%
Tourism	2.75%	22.02%	19.27%	24.77%	20.18%	11.01%
Arts and culture	3.64%	20.00%	24.55%	34.55%	9.09%	8.18%
Nursing home facilities	9.17%	33.03%	21.10%	14.68%	2.75%	19.27%
Assisted living facilities	5.50%	24.77%	31.19%	11.93%	7.34%	19.27%
Meals on wheels	8.26%	33.03%	22.94%	6.42%	3.67%	25.69%
Senior services	10.28%	32.71%	23.36%	7.48%	1.87%	24.30%
Main street retail	9.91%	40.54%	23.42%	21.62%	2.70%	1.80%
Restaurants: Family Friendly	8.04%	16.96%	11.61%	45.54%	16.96%	0.89%
Restaurants: Bar/Sports Bar	5.45%	20.00%	10.00%	41.82%	20.91%	1.82%
Restaurants: Fast Food	3.67%	8.26%	5.50%	40.37%	39.45%	2.75%
Healthcare facilities	11.01%	36.70%	23.85%	17.43%	6.42%	4.59%
Recreational facilities: Indoor	4.59%	25.69%	23.85%	25.69%	14.68%	5.50%
Recreational facilities: Outdoor	5.50%	30.28%	19.27%	32.11%	5.50%	7.34%
Agricultural support (such as dealerships, parts, and repair)	7.34%	40.37%	16.51%	14.68%	2.75%	18.35%

## #10: What is/will be your plan for retirement?

- None of the above: 11.71%
- Already retired: 16.22%
- **Stay in Oberlin: 30.63%**
- Seek a nearby location: 3.60%
- Stay in Kansas: 12.61%
- Move to another state: 25.23%
- Elaborate (please specify): comments below
- Live here
- I would Probably like to find a new place with new things to do.
- I would want to get out of this town and even maybe the state
- after graduation
- i like this town i never leaving even when im retired
- i would move to colorado
- Get far far away from this

- town because it's boring and kids have nothing to do
- I want to move to a different country
- just not too sure
- I will go at the age of 60 to a place most likely chosen at random to retire for the rest of my days
- Not sure
- unknown at this time
- Not sure
- Not sure but likely move
- I'm not interested in staying in Oberlin after my parents pass on. Too many regulations to live here. I'd rather live in peace.
- I'd like to be closer to my family
- Dresden KS
- Move closer to children
- Travel
- Will likely move near kids or to

- a place with more to do
- We are retired, own our own home and plan to stay here in Oberlin
- Possibly stay in Oberlin but travel elsewhere often
- Too many years until retirement to know
- Will eventually move to be near kids/grandkids
- Small home here but also travel often
- Helping with the grandkids
- Moving out of USA
- Taxes are too high for services provided in Oberlin as well as cost of water and utilities.





### #11: How long have you lived in Oberlin?

- Less than 1 year: 2.68%
- **1 to 5 years: 22.32%**
- 6 to 10 years: 12.50%
- 11 to 15 years: 12.50%
- 16 to 20 years: 8.04%
- 21 to 30 years: 16.96%
- 31 years to 40 years: 12.50%
- 41 years to 50 years: 3.57%
- 50+ years: 6.25%
- I don't live in Oberlin: 2.68%

### #12: Please tell us your age range.

- **Under 18 years: 20.54%**
- 18 to 19 years: 0.00%
- 20 to 24 years: 0.89%
- 25 to 29 years: 6.25%
- 30 to 34 years: 6.25%
- 35 to 39 years: 12.50%
- 40 to 44 years: 10.71%
- 45 to 54 years: 9.82%
- 55 to 64 years: 9.82%
- **65 to 74 years: 20.54%**
- 75 to 84 years: 2.68%
- 85 and over: 0.00%

### #13: What is your role in the community?

- City Leadership: 3.64%
- **Resident: 83.64%**
- Business Owner: 16.36%
- Other (please specify): 18.18%; comments below
- *I do nothing at all that is useful.*
- *Student*
- *I can help other people that need a babysitter*
- *A student*
- *student*
- *student*
- *Employee*
- *Decatur Health*
- *Active volunteer in community*
- *Grew up here*
- *Work in Oberlin on a few boards*
- *Volunteer, board member of organization*

- Volunteer
- Teacher
- Land owner
- School Board member, fairly involved in the community
- Professional
- *I have been a business owner and was active in community work for many years. I still work part time in town.*
- Healthcare professional

### #14: How many children do you have/had in your family?

- 0: 23.85%
- 1: 7.34%
- 2: 22.94%
- **3: 25.69%**
- 4: 10.09%
- 5+: 10.09%

### #15: What age/grade level are your children? Select all that apply.

- Daycare/Preschool: 15.91%
- K-5: 30.68%
- 6-8: 31.82%
- 9-12: 18.18%
- College: 6.82%
- **Grown (adult): 47.73%**

### #16: My children live: (select all that apply).

- **At home: 54.12%**
- Away at college: 4.71%
- Grown - Living in Oberlin: 10.59%
- Grown - Living in Kansas: 27.06%
- Grown - Living out-of-state: 32.94%

### #17: Education style for my children (select all that apply).

- **Public 89.66%**
- Private 3.45%
- At home 6.90%
- N/A 5.75%
- Other (please specify): 2.30%; comments below
- *idk*
- *also online, not happy with school situation/very bad here*

### #18: Employment

- **Employed Full-Time: 49.51%**
- Employed Part-Time: 5.83%
- Self-Employed: 8.74%
- Stay at home parent: 2.91%
- Unemployed: 9.71%
- Retired: 23.30%

### #19: Which of the following industries is your primary income? (US Census categories).

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining: 17.00%
- Construction: 2.00%
- Manufacturing: 0.00%
- Wholesale Trade: 2.00%
- Retail Trade: 3.00%
- Transportation and warehousing and utilities: 3.00%
- Information: 0.00%
- Finance, Insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing: 6.00%
- Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management: 1.00%
- Educational, health, and social services: 18.00%
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services: 1.00%
- Other services (except public administration): 3.00%
- Public administration: 7.00%



- **Retired: 20.00%**
- Disabled: 4.00%
- Other (please specify): 13.00%; comments below
- student
- Mowing.
- unemployed
- I am an unemployed minor
- County
- Newspaper
- City
- Social security
- out of state government
- Healthcare
- Oil field
- Rentals
- Ministry

### #20: Do you work in Oberlin?

- Yes: 45.28%
- **No: 54.72%**

### #21: How far is your commute to work?

- Work at/from Home: 7.14%
- **Less than 10 minutes: 39.80%**
- 10 to 14 minutes: 5.10%
- 15 to 29 minutes: 7.14%
- 30 to 44 minutes: 9.18%
- 45 to 59 minutes: 2.04%
- 60 minutes or more: 2.04%
- Retired: 20.41%
- Other (please specify): 7.14%; comments below
- student
- unemployed
- unemployed
- Disabled volunteer
- Combination of at home and up to 250 miles commute.
- Out of state 250 miles or more

### #22: Highest Level of Education

- Grade/Middle School: 13.00%
- High School: 19.00%
- GED: 2.00%
- Community/Technical/Vocational: 21.00%
- **4-year College/University: 30.00%**

- Graduate/Advanced Degree: 16.00%

### #23: What brought you to Oberlin?

- **Family: 41.51%**
- Retirement and Family: 6.60%
- Work: 20.75%
- Retirement: 2.83%
- Always lived here: 22.64%
- School District: 1.89%
- Other (please specify): 16.98%; comments below
- I was born here
- I don't even know I wish I never came here
- My family lives there
- Small town living
- Born here.
- I want to support the family tradition in growing our community.
- Less stressful life
- Born here
- In Dresden, moved from CO due to disability
- Desire to return to hometown and ensure an upbringing for my children similar to the one I experienced.
- God lead us here
- Boyfriend
- Wanted to live in a small town atmosphere to raise our children and be near family
- Friend
- Moved here when got married. Spouse grew up in nearby town

### #24: I plan to retire in Oberlin.

- **Yes: 42.31%**
- No: 38.46%
- Already Retired: 19.23%

### #25: I am confident in Oberlin's future.

- Yes: 23.15%
- **No: 42.59%**
- Not sure: 34.26%

### #26: List the one most important quality of Oberlin that must be preserved.

- The relationship most of the community shares
- Reload
- people
- work
- subway
- the hospital because they help people get better and get to live their life a lot longer, sometimes
- crossroads
- The schools
- schools
- The museum
- cots
- My friends
- its history
- Small Town feel
- Small town atmosphere and friendliness
- Quaint atmosphere
- Unsure
- This community pulls together in times of tragedy and supports one another. However, this quality has also been abused over the years.
- The downtown charm.
- Quality of life
- Small town feel and safety
- The county roads
- The museum
- Sappa
- History
- Small town spirit. How neighbors help each other when times get tough.
- Working together for common goals
- Serenity
- History
- The Historical aspect
- Museum
- Welcoming community
- Attractive town
- Ability to grow.
- Small town warm atmosphere.
- I am not sure, all the things



that were once good about it are almost all gone.

- Small town values
- Since of community and kindness
- Main Street.
- Way of life
- People
- Be transparent, this town is on a slow death slide. To much interest in appearance. No interest in employment development, taxes are too high, wasted payroll, dog catcher with a car, street sweeper that doesn't sweep, the list goes on. If you want support cut the BS out and work for the citizens
- Hometown feel
- Sense of community
- The concept of "small enough to know you, large enough to serve you". The attractive small-town charm is what draws people in, but having a local business or solution for most of someone's needs gives a person a sense of pride.
- Sense of community.
- Safe, inexpensive place to live
- The love people have put into this community.
- Brick streets
- The character of the community is charming but we must stay realistic as well.
- Small town charm with a sense of community, history, architecture.
- Citizen participation in the city to help preserve the community.
- Small town vibes. Friendliness.
- Downtown
- Must keep hospital and schools
- The potential for improving the livability of the community.
- Town pride and care for the

survival of our community

- Working with others well
- Safety
- God and Family
- Supporting our community that is already here.
- history and historic buildings and such
- Small town feeling
- Community support! Most people are willing to help others when help is needed.
- Affordability
- Heritage
- Small town atmosphere, safety
- The old buildings such as the grade school, the landmark and Masonic building
- Water, electricity
- Safety
- Quality Hospital access
- Historical downtown area
- The fair.
- Access to quality healthcare
- Friendliness
- Safety and loving community aspect
- Businesses
- downtown
- Our history and traditions
- The school system

### **#27: List the one thing that most needs to be changed about Oberlin.**

- I believe there needs to be attempt to create more sustainable environment for businesses. Many resturants and other businesses seem to close every year due to a lack of exposure and income.
- The road
- more businesses
- work
- school
- they need to redo the elemantary gym.
- more activities
- The hospital

- the grocery stores
- Food options
- The house prices
- The people
- the looks of some buildings, since some look rundown
- Quality of the schools
- Economic growth
- Jobs
- nosy people telling you what you can and can't do
- Unsure
- The community wants change but refuses to take action to bring about change.
- Curb appeal on both of the highways and all entrances coming into Oberlin.
- Mental and Emotional Health
- Working together better. Some controlling individuals
- The county roads
- Adult entertainment
- Not moving forward - being progressive should be pushed
- Things around to do, places to eat or even shop
- Industry so Oberlin will survive & hopefully grow.
- Schools need replacement
- More jobs are needed and more houses.
- Affordable housing
- Change, Oberlin needs to change with the times in order to survive.
- The people in charge running off all the businesses and opportunities
- Quality of student education.
- How we get businesses here
- There's nothing to do besides bowl
- Dilapidated houses
- Get rid of Sharee Dempewolf and don't let he mom try to run the town. What is Chris's track record. Lives off of husband!
- Code enforcement that is way over the top. Good grief. Taking people to court.





- Elderly & disabled. Make a program to help them if you don't like them
- people/taxes/cost of living
- Housing costs
- Accepting change
- Stop the deterioration and somehow install the lost sense of pride.
- Less taxes
- Oberlin needs to be more open and willing to accept new people of all walks of life and the business/businesses they bring.
- Racism
- The City Management , we are run by amateurs and the popular vote not by experienced administrators. Be Transparent !
- Reasonably priced a day better quality produce and groceries
- Lack of individuals willing to work
- Attitude towards growth and new businesses. We seem scared to invest in opportunities. New industry should be given enough incentive that they don't even want to look anywhere else. New industry, if it stays, will pay for itself multiple times over. We need to kick the "we can't afford it" attitude. We can't afford NOT to do it. Updated school facilities are a MUST. Continuing the update to city utility systems is a MUST. Offering incentives to new businesses is a MUST. New housing opportunities are a MUST.
- Pride in maintaining property.
- Drugs, large number of unemployed people of working age
- Their school mascot
- Larger population
- The attitude and negativity in improving the community.
- We need to do better and work together to bring more to Oberlin.
- A m e n i t i e s , e a t i n g establishments.
- Keeping citizens informed about financial responsibility, quit saying yes to every expenditure that gets brought up, example the school bond. A new school does not attract people, rather people move here for economic gains and stability.
- More MDs
- Properties need to be maintained well. Personal and Business.
- People should be more friendly and welcoming
- Need to work on infrastructure - streets, housing
- Improve the desire to strengthen the economic advances available to us.
- Increase willingness to change so we can act on a future-forward mindset and take advantage of opportunities for new business to come to town, for more people to move to town.
- Attitude
- Lowering tax rates
- Acceptance that change can be good.
- need jobs
- Remove or cleanup dilapidated buildings
- Negativity! Stop feeding it!! Facebook makes Oberlin look like constant complainers. I don't know that I would move here if I read all the comments/ fighting at times.
- The people need to be more welcoming
- Opportunities for work
- Resources for new businesses
- Update the schools, more restaurants
- The appearance (lots of run down properties)
- Housing & Jobs
- Jobs
- New school buildings/more economy
- Work on getting business/ manufacturing here
- more open to industry.
- GET RID OF THE METHAMPHETAMINE PROBLEM! QUIT ACTING LIKE IT DOESN'T EXIST!!!!
- The mentality. It seems the vast majority of people talk about growth and economic opportunity but those who talk about it also hinder those who want to do the work to get it done. There is a "good ole boys" mentality in Oberlin that will keep it held back. The devastating attachment to nostalgia has kept this town from moving forward. How do you lose a pizza hut? There are too many signs that Oberlin is dying and will continue to do so. The long term trajectories are not good for rural Kansas towns. There is this dependence on Hansen grants. Nobody is personally invested in anything. The belief is that Hansen will come along and fund a project, but when a grant funds a project no one has skin in the game. Hansen forks out 17 million per year with a goal to make NW Kansas a place where people want to live. But people continue to leave. Unfortunately I don't think you can un-ring this bell.
- More options for eating
- Resistance to change. Sexism and racism.
- Open mindedness and support for change and new businesses, families, opportunities in Oberlin.



Those in authority need to make Oberlin a welcoming environment for new opportunities instead of working against those who come into do good works. We could be better as a community about welcoming in productive families, we don't have many that move here to work and contribute to community so we get these types we should as a community rally around them and give support and be open minded to new ideas, thought processes and opportunities. What happened with the small group of community members who rallied together and signed a petition against the city selling previously donating land and property to the Miriam's Hope Ministry is absolutely disgusting and should never have happened. Actions like that make me ashamed to call Oberlin my hometown. Change can be good. We have to figure out how to appeal to younger, working class families or there will be no future for Oberlin. Currently we are only drawing in retirement age and poverty level individuals and families to our community and we don't have enough working class to support them all. We need more do'ers and more positivey.

- More business
- A walking path that connects Sappa Park to town.
- We need manufacturing or something similar. Also housing.
- Local government such as county attorney and local

pd, sheriff and county commissioners

### #28: What makes Oberlin a comfortable place to live?

- It is a very simple town that is relatively affordable. The prices of houses seem to go up tremendously while the average income does not increase in the same magnitude.
- It's not a big town so we don't have to worry about bad things
- having less expensive houses.
- subway
- it does not
- the peaceful sounds and places that you can go and not have a problem.
- small
- The warm environment
- movie theaters
- is not me no like
- people
- Something actually fun to do
- its a quiet town
- Small population
- Friendly, small town
- More rental property
- Community of giving and kindness in times of need. Relatively safe to raise a family
- The size.
- Small knit community where you know everyone.
- The slow pace and certain positive people within the community
- I honestly can't think of something.
- Quiet place to live
- It's not
- Small town feel
- Small town
- Small town spirit of helping each other.
- Good people
- Peaceful
- It's not everyone leaves town everyday for work. Look at

Atwood for a role model

- Good community.
- Small town atmosphere, neighbors
- Quiet and welcoming
- Small Town atmosphere
- Nothing
- Comfortable? I suppose low crime.
- not sure anymore
- Quiet
- Quit
- A sense of community and security.
- Quite
- Country
- Not much lately
- Has restaurants
- Small town
- Knowing most everyone around you, knowing that if you need something, a neighbor is likely to help you out. Knowing that most everything you need is a 5 minute drive away.
- Safety, convenient to services.
- It has always previously been the feeling of safety, comfort, and affordability; however, I've seen that changing in recent years.
- The wonderful people
- Community support
- Small town feeling.
- Mostly quiet town that is well kept.
- Small town atmosphere, similar to many small towns across America
- Location. Peaceful. Quiet. Friendly.
- Affordability of housing
- Nice friendly people, quiet streets, available health care, senior citizen help at pharmacy, senior center and great young people
- We have most of what we need to be comfortable here. In comparing Oberlin to other communities, we have



a lot to be grateful for, we just need to support continued improvement.

- The cost of living is low.
- Not much crime
- Safety for children
- Quiet neighborhoods
- Safety and proximity to our income
- peaceful
- Enough service's available without to leave town. Quiet. Could use a coffee shop or little restaurant but the population (number Of people) and income levels kind of determine what we support
- The people!
- It's safe for the most part
- Small town
- Close to larger towns
- Small town atmosphere, safety, no traffic
- Quiet neighbors and not as busy.
- Safe
- Safe, lower cost of living
- Small town feel.
- Welcoming
- Friendly people
- Cost of living is lower.
- There are kind people in the area. We have been blessed with wonderful friends that have supported us incredibly. But the small vocal segment keeps things stagnant.
- Small town feel and tight knit community
- Small town familiarity
- Cost of living, safety, community and team spirit
- Great people
- Small town feel
- Small town and nice people
- That the crime rate is lower then most of the surrounding towns

**#29: What's your big idea for the future of Oberlin? The Comprehensive Plan update offers us an opportunity to envision the future of Oberlin. Submit your "Big Ideas" for the future by using the comment feature to share your thoughts.**

- I believe a major improvement that could be made is trying to refill at least part of the sappa lake to create more tourism. There is nothing attractive about sappa the way it is. It is one relatively useless building and some trees. It is only used because it is seemingly the only place to "camp" or gather near Oberlin. I believe the state would be willingly to give some grant to sponsor our park. I believe fishing would bring a lot of business to the fishing store on the highway from out of town visitors coming to town to fish. The county could easily support the health of the lake. The entire project would cost a fair amount of money but I believe their is a large profit margin that could be taken advantage of.
- I'm not sure
- getting a better school
- ldk
- a lot of entertainment
- ldk
- more food
- My big idea is that we fix houses
- none, really
- I don't know
- The EDC office needs to be more proactive in the recruitment of businesses.
- A housing development that is affordable. A booming

industry moves in and creates jobs. More activities for families to do on the weekends, and better food options.

- One bite at a time. Seeing the needs for Oberlin and breaking it down to see follow through. My current goal is to uplift morale, inspiration, hope, and support for different needs.
- To not have corrupted law enforcement and even more importantly non corrupt fire department
- A restaurant- not fried foods
- We could use a drone factory. With the weather here, if a drone can fly here it can fly anywhere. It would be more high tech, and could hire younger people to keep the youth here.
- Few small manufacturing or assembly business
- Need more shopping, restaurants, industry and housing
- Business
- More Industrial, fix the school buildings we have, lower taxes, did I mention lower taxes!
- Bring industry here
- We need an arcade in the old Family Dollar building
- Develop a rails to trails project
- Bring jobs to town
- Get all your streets paved in city limits. It's not the 1800's. Shouldn't have sand streets. Atwood has their alleys paved. Fix your bridges too. Let's join 2025 being actually in it. We don't need to be in the 1800's
- Need to have decent paying jobs and affordable housing
- More community sourced foods being less reliant on big stores supping us.





- None
- Need more jobs
- Repair the schools, they are big enough and luxury should not be an option, education is the only thing needed.
- Invest in small business to revive downtown. Avoid pricey niche business.
- Support and pass a substantial bond allowing our school system to make the improvements that it needs. No major updates have occurred since 1966, and there are plenty of needs to address. Open a well-above-average restaurant and bar/ brewery that doubles as simple breakfast and a coffee shop in the mornings. A coffee shop with enough seating can be the heart of a community. We need a restaurant to be proud of and to draw people from the surrounding communities. Open up a housing development with nice, larger houses catered to young, mid/ large sized families. It takes people of all types and means, but think about the types of people that will make the biggest impact on our community.
- Encourage local residents to start their own businesses and help them grow.
- A factory or business that employees many people.
- Open more businesses downtown
- We become a positive community again that works together to improve our school and healthcare systems. We must move forward in technology and time in order to recruit and keep young families here.
- Little thriving hub on the prairie- for those looking for a small town with some fun for a night or weekend, but enough going on to make it a permanent place to live, work and raise a family. Get businesses back downtown and fill up the vacant unused buildings.
- Look at Atwood and the businesses they have. Oberlin has to be more forward looking to capture businesses possibly through tax incentives. At least it would provide jobs which creates local spending of goods and the sales tax associated with it
- Look at improving Oberlin for work and health, NOT what looks good and make you feel good that you did something
- Since we do not have restaurants we should bring in a food truck once or twice a month at the gazebo location or at Sappa Park. This would bring people out. Serving beer always helps. :-)
- Would love to see some experiences that would draw people here regularly. More walking trails in and around town
- I would like the area on Penn Ave that is paved from the sign on U.S 36 to about the pioneer family statue turned into a parkway rather than an ugly slab.
- While it's not a new Big Idea, the improvements of our school facilities is critical to our growth. We need to understand that making the needed upgrades will not only improve the school buildings, but also improve our changes of recruiting hospital staff, teachers, new businesses and strengthening our general economy. We need to position ourselves to succeed, not just be kind if ok.
- A bike path from town to Sappa Park, a new school for our kids and teachers to learn and teach without health and comfort problems, More rigorous learning so our kids are well-prepared for college, fix sidewalks to be handicap-accessible, knock down abandoned houses so we have room for more quality housing, force those who are not using buildings downtown to sell or set up a service open to the public for a minimum number of hours each week. Allow the next big business wanting to set up in Oberlin actually set up here and require certain improvements from them (ex: if they need to build a road/ utilize a bridge, then they need to help maintain the road and bridge they are using), if solar/wind companies set up, ensure they have a fund for removing their equipment if they go bankrupt, and ensure they will provide x amount of energy to the town and surrounding community, and set aside dollars for community/ school improvements.
- Figure out something that can sold on the internet to the whole world.
- Start cutting over paid and not needed city employees and spending to reduce tax rates and get new businesses here.
- Veterans Park, better groomed trails at Sapa,
- new Local Industry
- Growth through grants, vision and willingness to support local. Positivity and everyone



working together, things can happen. I don't know that it has to be one big thing but lots of little make big things happen.

- It would be great if we could bring a large employer (manufacturing etc) to town and a tasty bar and grill and of course pass a school bond for single campus
- Bring in something big like a factory to provide more jobs. As well as a full rec program for the kids that includes all sports not just baseball.
- Would love to see industry & jobs brought to town. Need affordable housing
- I have no Big ideas
- Increase total housing, and find ways to bring in some form of manufacturing industry. Invest in the flipping future of our community.
- I have had multiple ideas for Oberlin, and the funds to carry them out, but after prayer and being denied long term planning for our project we have decided to never invest here. My idea was a camp and retreat center, with high ropes course, low ropes course and a plethora of activities and overnight camps for youth and families. I also was looking at starting a cafe/bakery but again, I can't invest in a town that doesn't want a long
- Attract a large manufacturer or business to employ a large number of people
- Amazon or similar type warehouse that offers many entry level job opportunities. Allowing feed yards and dairy's to come in when they want to. This brings money, workers, people and industry to our community. We also

need more places for the farmers to spend their money locally, they want to but we have lacked the ability to monopolize on our main industry of agriculture. The surrounding towns have done better with this.

- Bring in or at least be more attractive to businesses looking for a great community
- I would love to see more things for the local kids to do here to keep them from getting harassed by our local of and sheriff department

### #30: What is your vision for Oberlin? Share your vision for the short- and long-term improvements that will make your community better in 2044.

- Refill part of sappa. Read suggestion above.
- I'm not sure
- they improve our school and district
- to keep it the way it is, peaceful and calming
- more stuff to do
- activities
- I feel like using detergent that children aren't allergic to at daycares will really help the kids and environment.
- repaint/restore some things.
- Get a better small business plan
- A housing development that is affordable. A booming industry moves in and creates jobs. More activities for families to do on the weekends, and better food options.
- Renewing community renaissance. Art, Education, Sports, Events, opportunities, mindfulness in helping those in need (including ourselves),

and allowing people to grow in their way.

- Short term - better county roads Long term- even better county roads
- Show people it's okay to cheer others on.
- Expanding enough to give people more entertainment, but not so much that it's not a small town anymore
- We sit at the crossroads of two highways so let's use that to our advantage. Need to get industry here that can be easily shipped out.
- Growing, healthy, prosperous, with renovated houses and schools and more businesses and people.
- More business, restaurants, a place where people can call home. Get what they need here and not have to shop in other towns & cities
- Oberlin won't make it to 2044 at this point
- Getting younger families to move here
- Arcade and community building
- A community that appeals to both the younger adults and the older adults
- Jobs
- Nice homestyle restaurant that serves breakfast & lunch. Get more concerts in town. What happened to the art show?
- Jobs jobs jobs
- Recruit new businesses and advertise the unique location that Oberlin has to offer with the two highways 83 and 36 that intersect our city.
- A trail leading to Sappa park so people can hike and bike without having to go on the highways. Making the deserted railroad track into a trail leading to Sappa. It's safer to just cross the highway



rather than riding/walking on the highway to be able to access the park.

- None
- More jobs
- With no industry and very little work force We are doomed. We are a retirement/ welfare community
- Fill the empty business spaces, have hours that working people need for shopping, competitive pricing so the community can afford to shop locally
- Short term - continue to invest in infrastructure, make investments in the education system, healthcare system, housing, and industry attraction. Continue to focus on town appearance and aesthetics. Maintain the assets that we have. Long term - multiple housing developments or repurposing of dilapidated spaces to meet the housing needs of all population groups, multiple new businesses/industry to provide the jobs for a larger population, a continually-updated education system, having a local, quality source for all of the basic needs so people don't feel the need to shop or travel out of town.
- Short term-maintain current services, including new school facility.
- Short term: open businesses with availability to items not easily found here. Long term support and reach more small businesses with opportunities to sell their products.
- We are a thriving town that comes together to improve healthcare and our schools to make a community that wants to improve on for our future generations.

- Keeping County, City and School budgets and levies in check to keep people staying in the area but also doing some needed updating and upkeep around town to keep up with the times and needs and wants change.
- I'll be dead by 2044
- get rid of the abandoned, rundown houses and put in livable dwellings. Find businesses to fill
- the empty stores downtown.
- A community that believes it can succeed and works together to do just that. Having the major long term improvements completed (main street water project as an example) will allow the additional improvements to our shopping area. Remembering we have to start at the bottom and work up!!! Literally!!!
- My short-term vision is applying for city grants and allowing taxes to increase (I know it's hard, it's hard for me, but it's necessary to get things done) so that we can make our town attractive to businesses looking for a place to start. I also think our schools need to be knocked down and rebuilt ASAP. Who wants to move to a place and start a business if pipes will leak on their kids and they can smell bat guano in the school?
- Oil production-Drill Baby Drill
- Growing businesses and adding housing.
- School pride and improvement. Stable industry to increase workforce.
- Industry and housing for young employees and families, which will offset rising living costs

- Better healthcare available locally is both a short and long term improvement. I know the hospital is working on this but getting and retaining several good physicians needs to happen to make this work. There are also grants now available for that so hopefully that will help some. Having a good school (note I didn't say new school because new isn't always better --maybe just improved school facility wise - something that is affordable for the tax payers) that is well maintained and is a source of a quality education. Quality, consistent daycare options. Quality, affordable, well-maintained housing. All those listed above are ways to get people to move to, stay in and desire to live in Oberlin. All those should be at the forefront of the vision for maintaining and growing Oberlin. I often hear we need to get our kids to move back but then when they move back, we expect them to do things the way we want them done. We, me included, forget that we were once young and had ideas that were successful and some not so much. We need to welcome people to town not wonder why they are here. We, as a community, need to start acting like we like living here and welcome new people regardless of whether they do things like we have always done and be positive and stop saying, that won't work or we tried that and nobody liked it. Maybe some did like it but those with the louder voices are the ones who didn't. Positivity grows positivity and the same goes





for negativity. It is important to have people in service related jobs that actually like their job and are friendly because these people are the faces of Oberlin to visitors and potential residents/business people.

- See question 29
- Short term clean up properties Long term bring more for the kids to do, especially the gap between coach pitch aged kids and high school.
- Industry of some sort, fixing up downtown buildings & having businesses in them (not people living in the lower levels of the buildings), Tear down dilapidated houses, building new affordable housing
- Increase housing and expand city limits by buying property-no eminent domain. Invest in renewable energy, industry, and entertainment for people. Tear down unused decrepit houses.
- more jobs
- A vibrant safe place to raise grandchildren!
- More projects and programs focused on youth development and support in learning a skill or trade with incentives in place for them to bring those skills back to our small town.
- New/updated school. Rebranding of school. More volunteers for the fair.
- I would love to see oberlin bring in more business to Oberlin offer them a tax break to Make the want to choose Oberlin and we need to make more affordable housing available

### #31: What type(s) of outdoor recreation are most important to you?

- Fishing, Hunting, Hiking.
- Things I can do with friends and family
- football baseball
- the parks that are here and the pool
- none in oberlin, but fishing, hunting
- Munu u
- volleyball
- festivals
- Fixes houses
- Garden based ones
- Camping
- Walking, racing, camping.
- Walking trails in town or accessible in the city limits.
- Walking, and I personally want to help improve existing paths with Rich at Sappa.
- Smooth Driving down the county roads
- Waking
- Soccer fields.
- Nice trails to walk
- Hiking, archery, etc.
- Golf, walking areas, baseball and softball for kids.
- ATV paths would be great
- Fishing/hunting a rodeo would be nice
- We need water at Sapa Park! Lake/pond
- Golf
- Any
- Walking trails, biking trail
- We have plenty
- Sports and parks
- Hiking and biking
- Biking, kayaking, camping
- None
- Fishing
- Parks with things for children to do, with bbq facilities
- Golf - we have one of the nicest 9-hole golf courses around but a stagnant membership will not be able to fund the cost of the facility

continually. Invest in this space. Make sure people know about it. Very nice pool, make sure we maintain it. Need collaboration from the school and county on a recreation director to centralize the youth sports programs.

- walking safely on paved streets.
- Hiking
- Hiking
- Pickle ball, walk/bike trail accessible from town without driving or crossing highway.
- camping, hiking, golf, bbq
- Think outside, no box required. Parks, hunting, fishing, any outdoor activity
- A path from town to Sappa Park along the abandoned railroad bed would benefit many people and bring people to our community for camping and recreating at Sappa Park.
- Walking
- Walking
- It's important to the community but doesn't have that much impact to my day to day activities.
- As an older retired person, outdoor recreation is not as easy to accomplish.
- walking in nature is most important for physical and mental health. A place near downtown that is handi-cap accessible to enjoy flowers and grasses. Add butterfly gardens to city park, the empty lot near The Bank, or the rest area near the 36-83 hwy intersections so there are easy-access areas to enjoy a walk in town. Plant the grass medians near the library with short wildflowers and grasses. work with Pheasants Forever to enhance the trail system and the wildflowers and



grasses in Sappa Park (not just food plots for hunting) so that everyone, not just hunters, can enjoy Sappa. Add signage to identify and teach the public about plants and animals found in Sappa, and their importance to the ecosystem and to humans.

- Hiking
- Shooting, drinking, golf
- Fishing , kayaking,
- running/walking trails/bike paths
- enjoy the scenery
- I would love to see more walking trails that are not dirt and are in town. I would love to see adequate sidewalks that go around the park area so young families and even grandparents can walk with children in strollers and on bikes while enjoying the park.
- walking, hunting
- Fun activities for kids and adults
- My outdoor recreation currently is following my kids sporting events.
- Sports so we don't have to rely on other towns for our children
- Golf, kids sports (it's too bad they have to go to Norton or McCook to participate in those events for the younger kids)
- N/a
- Hiking, biking, and hunting
- Biking
- Safe walking trails.
- walking or running trail Golf Baseball / softball
- I'd love to see us seal and fill up Sappa with some more water walking/biking path
- Hunting and fishing
- Hunt and fishing