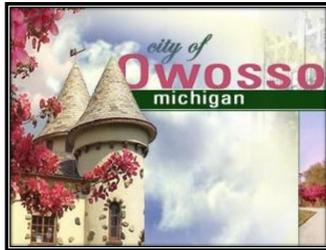


INTRODUCTION

This project was completed by six senior Urban and Regional Planning practicum students at Michigan State University during the spring of 2011. The key reason for this project is that the City of Owosso currently does not have a master plan; the State of Michigan now requires every city to have one. The practicum team worked with Adam Zettel who is the Assistant City Manager and the Director of Community Development for the City of Owosso, Michigan.

This project is only part of the master plan that will be developed by the City of Owosso. The following elements are vital pieces of data that the city can utilize to identify past and current trends which may affect future development and growth of the city.

To aid the City of Owosso in producing a viable master plan, the practicum students analyzed population, socio-economics and housing data. In addition to data analysis, the practicum team developed a public participation plan and community survey that the city can utilize as it moves forward with the production of the master plan.

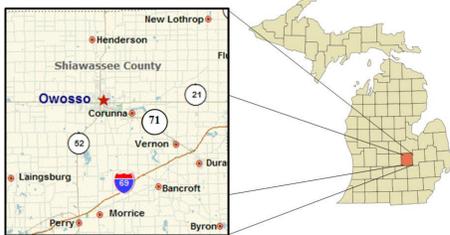


CITY OF OWOSSO

Owosso is centrally located in Shiawassee County, Michigan. The city was incorporated in 1859 and began as an agricultural community. With its close proximity to large automobile manufacturing centers, the city had a strong manufacturing base.

Notable features of Owosso:

- Shiawassee River
- Baker College
- Steam Railroading Institute
- Memorial Hospital
- Community Airport
- Curwood Festival



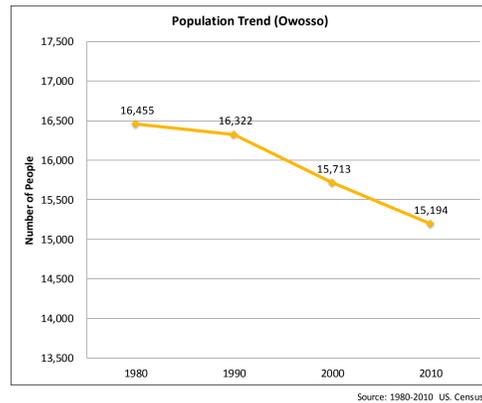
Curwood Castle: Is a very unique icon of Owosso. It is located in Curwood Castle Park, along the Shiawassee River. It was built for James Oliver Curwood, who used it as his writing studio.

Steam Railroading Institute: The SRI was founded by the Michigan State Trust for Railway Preservation. The SRI is home to the #1225 Pere Marquette, the largest operating steam locomotive in the State of Michigan.



COMMUNITY TRENDS

Population



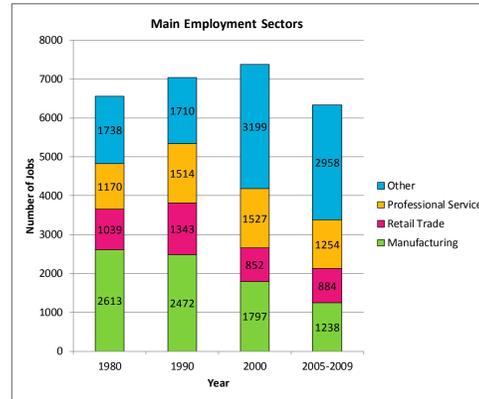
Key elements analyzed:

- The population of Owosso has been decreasing
- Owosso is racially homogeneous
- Average age is increasing but it is lower than other comparable areas
- The number of high school graduates is higher than other areas
- College educational attainment for those 25 and over is lower than other comparable areas
- Index and Non-Index crime rates are increasing

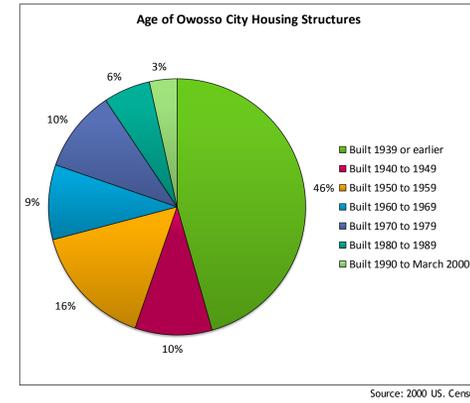
Socio-economics

Key elements analyzed:

- Median income is increasing, but remains lower than other comparable areas
- The poverty rate has increased
- Manufacturing employment decreased
- New job sectors are emerging including:
 - Arts and entertainment
 - Professional, scientific and management services
 - Construction
- Unemployment rate has increased



Housing



Key elements analyzed:

- The number of renter occupied homes is increasing
- Housing vacancy rate has increased
- 46% of housing structures were built before 1940 and 72% of housing structures were built before 1960. This is higher than other comparable areas
- The average persons per household has remained consistent
- The average selling price of homes is decreasing

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

After analyzing the preceding data, the practicum team has determined five key areas that need to be considered throughout the rest of the planning process to guide future development.

Aging Population

- Different needs than average citizen
- Providing services for an aging population can be difficult and expensive

Community Identity

- Explore creation and implementation of a marketing campaign to promote the city
- Resident participation is vital

Community of Education

- Evaluate relationship with Baker College
- Mutual relationship could benefit both the city and Baker College

Housing Situation

- Communicate presence and availability of resources
- Concern of vacancy rates and number of rental units

Public Participation

- Keep multiple constituencies involved throughout the master plan development process

ELEMENTS OF A MASTER PLAN

As cities grow and develop, there are many aspects that need to be taken into consideration. These aspects include: population growth, strength of the local economy, housing stock, infrastructure, as well as other public services. As a way to guide and direct these aspects, it is important for a city to develop and maintain a master plan.

A master plan:

- Is a road map for the future of a city
- Is a long range plan for growth and development
- Guides public/private decisions regarding land use and public facilities
- Is a policy-based document
- Provides guidance to authorities and land users

Chapters of Owosso's Master Plan:

- 1: Purpose and Intent
- 2: Goals and Objectives
- 3: **Social and Economic Characteristics** (Team's Focus Area)
- 4: Transportation
- 5: Utilities and Public Facilities
- 6: Parks, Recreation and Natural Features
- 7: Existing Land Use
- 8: Critical Areas and Issues
- 9: Future Land Use
- 10: Actions and Implementation

REFERENCES

For more in-depth information on this project, please visit the School of Planning Design and Construction website at www.spdc.msu.edu

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Goals and Objectives:

- Find ways to incorporate public in the master planning process.
- Create ways to share information between citizens and city officials.
- Create ways in which the public can give input on their vision for the future of Owosso as well as being an active part of the development and approval of the master plan.

Methods: Examined comparable communities in the Great Lakes Region to identify viable models of public participation plans. Used these materials as well as other resources to compile recommendations for the City of Owosso.

Modified Timeline to Allow for Public Participation:



Recommendations:

- Communication- easy access to information
- Collection of public opinion data- Ways in which the public can convey their opinions
- Educational outreach- Educate the public on how the master plan process works
- Future vision for Owosso- Bringing residents together to create a vision for Owosso's future
- A clear connection between public input and the decision making process- There must be a connection between the final plan and public input gathered throughout the process



Practicum Team conducting focus group with local residents on February 17, 2011