CITY OF MT. PLEASANT
NEIGHBORHOOD WELLNESS CENSUS 2017
SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by the
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

Background
In 1997, the City of Mt. Pleasant conducted a Neighborhood Wellness Census (hereafter referred to as "1997 census"). The 1997 census reviewed properties that were classified as "401" residential properties by the City Assessor. No commercial, industrial, or multi-family apartment complexes were reviewed. That census resulted in a report that was provided to the City Commission in April 1998.

In 2017, the City of Mt. Pleasant conducted a new Neighborhood Wellness Census (hereafter referred to as "2017 census") using a similar approach to the 1997 census. This data provides an opportunity to understand the state of our neighborhoods today, while also offering an opportunity for comparison of neighborhoods conditions using the data collected in 1997.

Methodology
The 2017 census data was collected by two investigators during the spring and summer of 2017; field data collection began after the conclusion of the spring semester at Central Michigan University and was complete in early June 2017. Data collection was complete prior to the significant flood event that struck the community late in that month.

The investigators individually visited each parcel classified as "401" by the City Assessor and collected data on indicators of community health which are listed below. This data was collected on paper forms and then converted to a digital format for use in the City's geographic information system (GIS).

As in 1997, the data was analyzed at the neighborhood level. Neighborhoods were defined utilizing the "Economic Condition Factor" (ECF) areas established by the City Assessor since no other official neighborhood boundaries exist. ECF areas are set so that properties sharing similar characteristics are grouped together and typically use manmade or natural features (such as streets or waterbodies) as their boundaries.

In addition to the field collected data, the investigators also compiled primary source data from existing City databases for use as indicators. For instance, the Division of Public Works provided data on infrastructure

condition and the City Treasurer provided information on water bill payment. That data was also added to the GIS for analysis.

Some variables were scored on a scale range from 1 to 4, with 1 being the "best" condition or circumstance. Such variables were generally "condition" variables, such as road, sidewalk, roof, siding, or window condition. Other variables represent binary conditions measured on a 0-1 scale, generally representing a "yes/no" circumstance where a "0" represents "yes." Examples include whether a water bill is current, a driveway is paved, or parks are accessible within a half mile.

The 1997 census was also entered into GIS to facilitate comparison with the 2017 census data. Some data processing was required to both data sets for comparative purposes. For example, both data sets were weighted; the 1997 data was available only in percentage format for each neighborhood, while the 2017 data was in numeric format and available at the parcel level. In addition, between 1997 and 2017 the number of ECFs increased from 32 to 43, due to ECF subdivision or new ECF creation. The 2017 data was adjusted to reflect the earlier boundaries where possible. In areas where no or limited data was collected in 1997 no comparative analysis was performed.

Interpreting the Data
The 1997 and 2017 censuses both represent the conditions of neighborhood properties based upon a single observation. The data is aggregated at the neighborhood level so that broader conclusions about neighborhood wellness can be discerned.

Some indicators (for example *condition of lawn*) are subject to frequent change within a short time period whereas other indicators (for example *condition of street*) change relatively slowly and infrequently. All indicators should be viewed in light of their respective ease and frequency of change.

It is also important to note a distinction between variables which are typically within the control of the property owner or tenant (such as *condition of lawn*) and those that are not (such as *condition of street*).

Different enforcement, policy, and programming responses would likely be appropriate for different indicators in light of the specific characteristics of that indicator.

INDICATORS

Field Collected Data	Rating Scale	Yes/No
Abandoned or inoperative vehicles		X
Abandoned or vacant		X
Chimney condition	X	
Condition of accessory structure(s)	X	
Condition of curb	X	
Condition of driveway		X
Condition of driveway approach		X
Condition of foundation	X	
Condition of landscaping	X	
Condition of lawn	X	
Condition of porch	X	
Condition of roof	X	
Condition of siding/trim	X	
Condition of steps	X	
Condition of windows	X	
Construction status		X
Housing for sale in area	X	
Observed noise level	X	
Presence of graffiti	X	
Presence of lawn parking	X	
Presence of stray pets		X
Presence of trash	X	
Presence/visibility of address	X	
Sidewalk clearance		X
Primary Source Data		
	Rating Scale	Yes/No
Water bill payment status		X
Park proximity		X
Condition of alley		X
Condition of sidewalk	X	
Condition of street	X	

KEY FINDINGS

2017 Census

- Clear addressing of homes is a moderate issue, particularly in areas where homes are located further from the street such as the Southwest neighborhood (ECF 31).
- Graffiti remains relatively rare in the areas of the City observed as part of this study.
- Landscaping conditions were lowest in areas north of CMU (ECF 82) and north of Pickard (ECF 71). They were also relatively low in the Westside neighborhood (ECF 11, 21, 22, 23, and 24), the Flynn Lane area (ECF 66), and near eastside (ECF 51). These were also generally areas with a high concentration of rental properties.
- Trash accumulation was also prevalent in two areas with low landscaping conditions and high concentrations of rental properties: north of CMU (ECF 82) and the Flynn Lane area (ECF 66).
- Observed noise levels tended to be highest in neighborhoods near major corridors (High, Pickard, Mission), near the High School, and near CMU.
- Non-conforming uses are most prevalent in the Central neighborhoods (ECF 42 and 43).
- Unpaved driveways and driveway approaches are most common in the same areas of the City including the Westside neighborhoods (ECF 11, 21, 22, 23, and 24) and the far eastside neighborhood near Broadway and Isabella (ECF 58). Unpaved driveways also remain common in the north Central neighborhood (ECF 41 and 71).
- Parking on lawns is most prevalent in the Westside (ECF 21, 22, 23, and 24) and far North (ECF 71) neighborhoods. These are also neighborhoods with a high prevalence of unpaved driveways.
- As might be expected, park access through the City is outstanding. All but a small number of City residences are within ½ mile City-maintained parks or property owned by Mount Pleasant Public Schools which provide outdoor recreation and play space.
- Siding and trim conditions are lowest immediately north of CMU (ECF 82).

Comparing 1997 to 2017

- Many indicators saw little to no change across the community over the past 20 years, including the condition of chimneys, windows, paint, foundations, porches, steps, and lawns; and the presence of graffiti, house numbers, stray pets, and inoperative vehicles.
- Infrastructure maintained by the City was notably improved in condition, in particular curbs, streets, and sidewalks. The City's use of uniform infrastructure evaluation criteria in the scheduling of maintenance and capital improvement activities appears to be creating dividends for the community in the form of quality infrastructure.
- Many factors were notable in their significant improvement in 2017 versus 1997:
    - Roof condition improved across most of the City, with the exception of far northeast (ECF 50, 52, 57, and 59) and northwest (ECF 11) neighborhoods.
    - Trash accumulation was reduced across most of the City, especially in the Central (ECF 41, 42, 43, 81, and 82) and Westside (ECF 21, 22, 23, and 24) neighborhoods.
    - Fewer unpaved driveways were observed throughout the City, especially in the Central neighborhood.
- Several conditions improved significantly in the "tree" neighborhood (ECF 42) including lawn, porch, foundation, paint, window, chimney, roof, and step conditions; reduced trash accumulation; increased house numbers; reduced unpaved driveways and drive approaches; and reduced yard parking.
- More housing that appeared vacant was noted throughout the City in 2017. An exception was a reduction in observed vacancy immediately north and east of CMU (ECF 81).

NEXT STEPS

- Detailed data has been reviewed by members of the Neighborhood Resources Unit (NRU) which includes representation from Finance, Assessing, Economic Development, Planning & Community Development, Building Safety, Fire, and Public Works.
- Individual departments will utilize data for future capital planning or to help decide where to focus code enforcement activities.
- Baseline data on individual property conditions will be used during the educational period to assist residents and property owners with compliance with property maintenance standards should the City Commission move forward with such ordinances.