

Introduction

Utica faces several challenges including connection between downtown and Jimmy John's Field, lacking streetscape and wayfinding signage, minimal open space, and a mismatched downtown. The City of Utica and the Macomb County Department Planning and Economic Development approached Michigan State University for assistance. The result of this is the Downtown Utica Sub-Area Plan, a plan that provides a socioeconomic profile, an existing conditions profile, planning recommendations, and funding assistance examples to implement these recommendations.

Utica, Michigan

Population: 5,144

Area: 1.78 sq. Miles

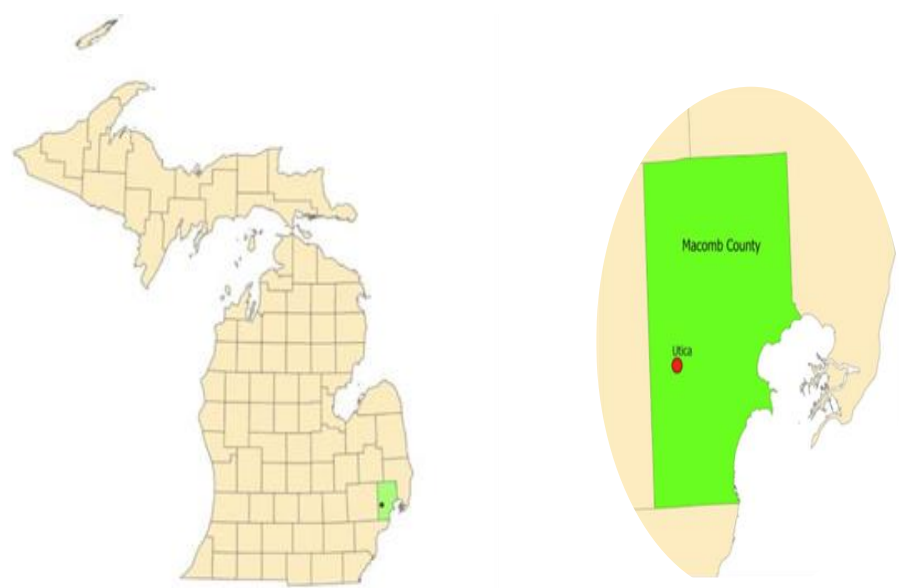


Figure 2: Location of Macomb County in Michigan

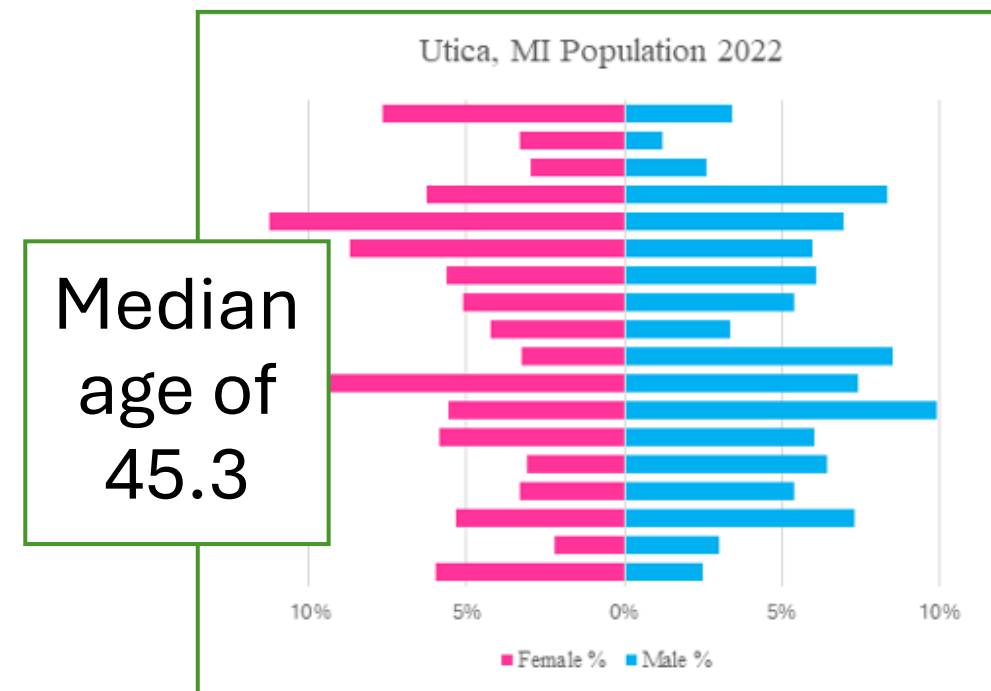
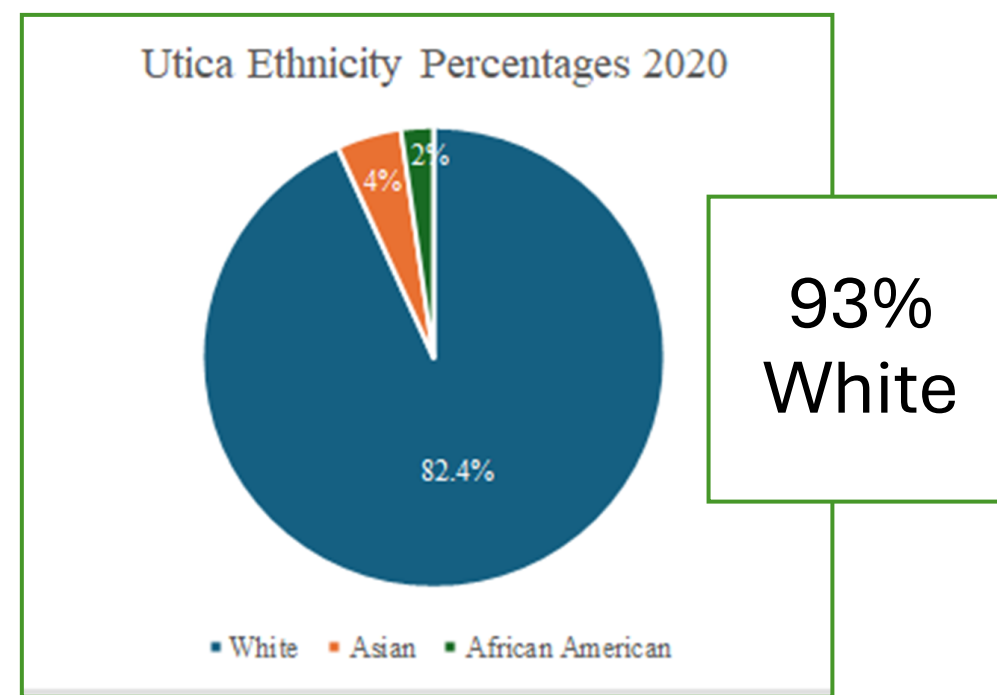
Project Area

The project boundaries for the Downtown Utica Sub-Area plan run along Auburn Road, starting from Jimmy John's Field to the west and ending at Van Dyke Avenue to the east. This includes all parcels along Auburn Road in that area.



Demographics

Utica's population majority identifies as white. The median age in Utica has been consistently increasing. The city is lacking in younger age groups.



Community Engagement

Utica residents participated in an online survey and community visioning meeting



- Concerns of pedestrian safety
- Desire for improved streetscapes
- 41% of respondents visit downtown 1-2 times a week



- 53% of respondents said temporary or seasonal events would draw them downtown more
- 57% of respondents walk when going downtown

Strengths. Weaknesses. Opportunities. Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths

- Jimmy John's Field
- Memorial Park
- Traditional downtown form
- Small town charm
- River Bend Trail-

Weaknesses

- Boring streetscapes
- Pedestrian safety
- Underutilized downtown space
- Gap between downtown and Jimmy John's Field

Opportunities

- Highlighting historic downtown
- improving pedestrian and cyclist amenities
- Temporary uses of downtown space

Threats

- Limited housing options
- Lack of community gathering space
- ageing population
- Zoning limits potential for mixed-use development

Recommendations



Bridge Connectivity

- Add rapid flashing beacons at crosswalk
- Repaint crosswalk
- Implement space saving lighting along bridge
- Widen sidewalks and add landscaping to bridge
- Reduce speed limit

Open Space

- Join MIFMA
- Repurpose alley N. of Auburn Rd. into a pedestrian zone
- Revitalize Memorial Park with lighting and art installments



2018

Streetscapes

- Plant street trees along Auburn Rd.
- Implement pedestrian infrastructure
- Repaint crosswalks and consider raised crosswalks
- Improve and add to current wayfinding signage



Downtown Form

- Reestablish DDA
- Enforce design standards
- Adjust zoning to prioritize and encourage mixed-use development
- Implement height and density regulations

