

**PARKERSBURG,  
WEST VIRGINIA**  
COMMUNITY PROFILE



**Fair Shake<sup>®</sup>**  
Environmental Legal Services

## HISTORY



The city of Parkersburg was established as a town in 1811 and was established as a city in 1863 (Greater Parkersburg, n.d.). Parkersburg is the Wood County seat (Greater Parkersburg, n.d.).

View more information about the city here:

<https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/area-maps/parkersburg/>

Parkersburg played a small role as a part of the Underground Railroad.

A historical marker in Parkersburg on 2nd St. commemorates the bravery of a formerly enslaved woman named Jane as she escaped to freedom in 1843.



## ECONOMIC HISTORY



Parkersburg has long been home to various plastic and polymer manufacturers. Additionally, the city of Parkersburg is located near the Ohio River, U.S. Route 50 and Interstate 77, making the city an optimal location for oil and natural gas production and transportation(City of Parkersburg, n.d.).

The Parkersburg 2030 Comprehensive Plan says that future economic development will come from local reinvestment and development.

Read the Comprehensive Plan here:

<http://parkersburgcity.com/pc/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2030-Comprehensive-Master-Plan.pdf>

## GOVERNMENT

Parkersburg operates under the Mayor-Council form of government, where the mayor holds veto-power over the city council.

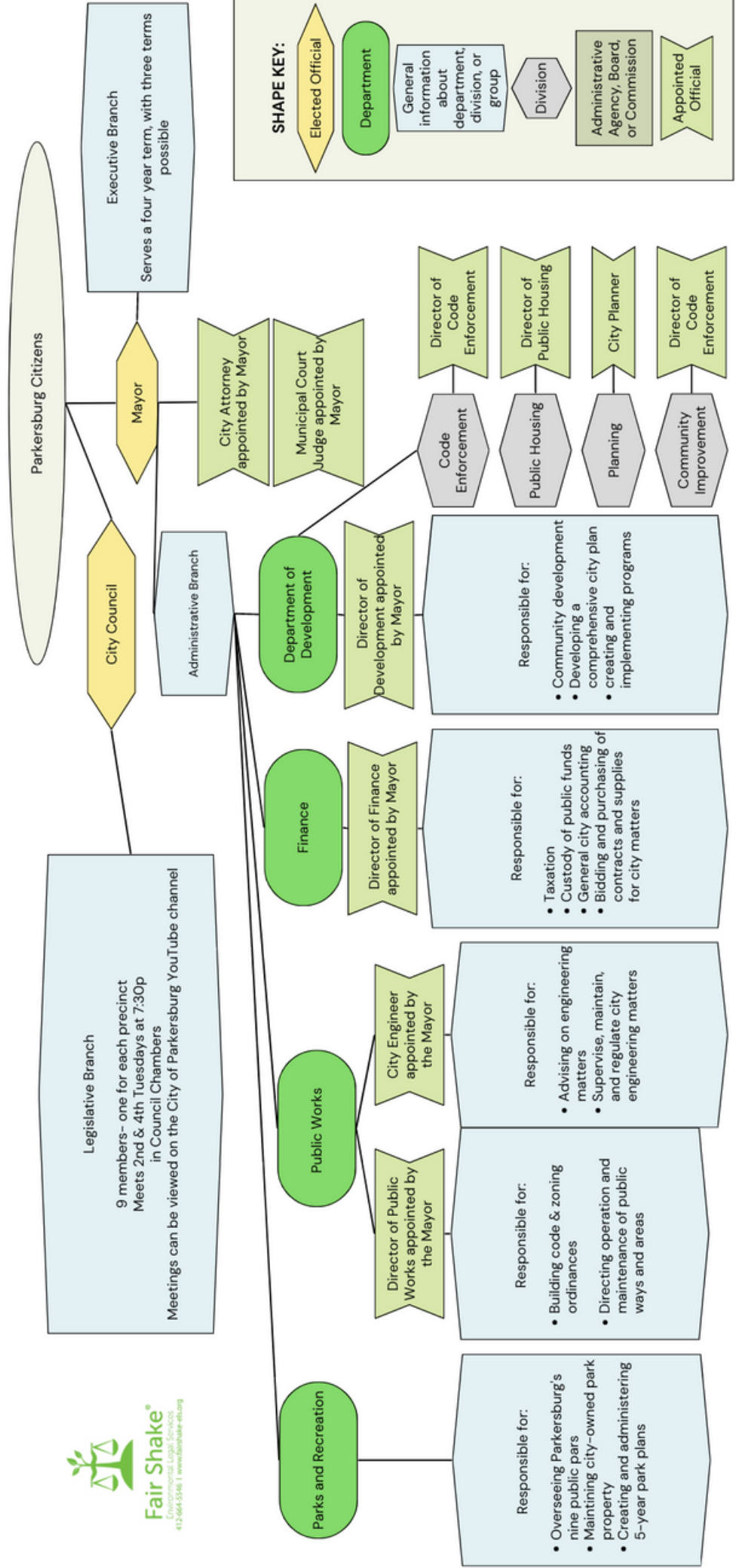
The mayor and city council members are elected by the citizens of Parkersburg.

The city council makes legislative decisions, like reviewing and passing ordinances and rules.

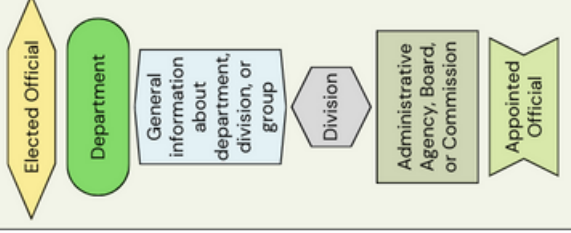
The mayor oversees the administration and enforcement of city ordinances and rules.



# PARKERSBURG GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



**SHAPE KEY:**



# PARKERSBURG GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

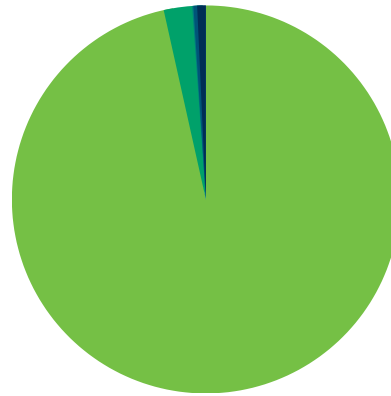
<p><b>Municipal Building Commission</b></p> <p>Three members appointed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire, purchase, and operate public buildings</li> <li>Apply for grants for building management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advisory Commission on City Parks</b></p> <p>Eleven members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that there are adequate recreational facilities in Parkersburg</li> </ul>	<p><b>Convention Center Authority</b></p> <p>Five members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage and operate the convention center complex in Parkersburg</li> </ul>	<p><b>Youth Center Advisory Board</b></p> <p>Nine members appointed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintenance and administration of Youth Center</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parkersburg Bicycle Advisory Board</b></p> <p>Up to eleven members nominated by Mayor and confirmed by City Council</p> <p>Quarterly meetings on 3rd Tuesday at 1:00pm in the Municipal Building Executive Conference Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create an alternative transportation plan and ensure safe cycling conditions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b></p> <p>Five citizen members appointed by City Council</p> <p>Meets every 3rd Wednesday at 6:30p in the Municipal Building in City Council Chambers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hear and decide on appeals related to zoning</li> <li>Reviews zoning conditional uses and variances</li> </ul>	<p><b>Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees</b></p> <p>Fifteen members, twelve of whom must be citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rule-making board for management and maintenance of the Hospital, hiring physicians, and admitting patients</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parkersburg Land Reuse Agency</b></p> <p>Five members, one of whom may be a citizen of Parkersburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may acquire property</li> <li>create land use plans</li> <li>issue bonds and receive funds from other government agencies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parkersburg Floodwall</b></p> <p>Five members appointed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintenance and operation of city floodwall systems</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Tree Commission</b></p> <p>Eight members, five nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council, one member from City Council, Public Works Director, City Arborist</p> <p>Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 12:30p at the City Park Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning, care, and beautification tree projects in Parkersburg</li> </ul>	<p><b>Julia-Ann Square Architectural Review Board</b></p> <p>Five members- one from the Development Department and four district residents. Members are nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council</p> <p>Meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 8:30a in the Municipal Building's small conference room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluates development proposals in the Julia-Ann Historic District</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parkersburg Downtown Design &amp; Façade Committee</b></p> <p>Six members- one member of City Council, two Central Business District business owners, one Central Business District resident, one member of a local design firm, and the Executive Director of Main Street PKB, City Planner as non-voting member</p> <p>Meets every 2nd &amp; 4th Wednesday at 9:00a in the Municipal Building's small conference room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oversee repair or improvement of downtown buildings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Urban Mass Transportation Authority</b></p> <p>Nine citizen members, seven appointed by the Mayor of Parkersburg, two from the City of Vienna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop comprehensive plan to evaluate and manage an urban mass transportation system in Parkersburg and Vienna</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Advisory Commission on Crime and Delinquency</b></p> <p>Fourteen members, one from each district and three representing local high schools nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make recommendations about programs and ways to reduce crime and delinquency in Parkersburg</li> </ul>	<p><b>Utility Board</b></p> <p>Five members including the mayor and four citizens to be appointed by the City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supervision and management of utility system</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building Enforcement</b></p> <p>Members are the Mayor, City Code Enforcement Director, City Engineer, one Mayor-appointed member</p> <p>Meets 1st Monday at 9:00a in the Municipal Building Executive Conference Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authority to approve the repair, improvement, or demolition of unfit buildings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Municipal Planning Commission</b></p> <p>Eleven members, one member from City Council, and one from another administrative department</p> <p>Meets every 3rd Friday at 12:30p in the Municipal Building- City Council Chambers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining Parkersburg's comprehensive plan</li> <li>evaluating ordinances, rezoning, annexations, major subdivisions, thoroughfare abandonment</li> </ul>	<p><b>PHS/Washington Avenue Architectural Review Board</b></p> <p>Five members- one from the Development Department and four district residents. Members are nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council</p> <p>Meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 3:30pm in the Municipal Building's small conference room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating development proposals on Washington Avenue</li> </ul>		

# CITIZENS

In 2021, the United States Census Bureau reported that Parkersburg has approximately 29,403 residents.

Black or African American

2.4%



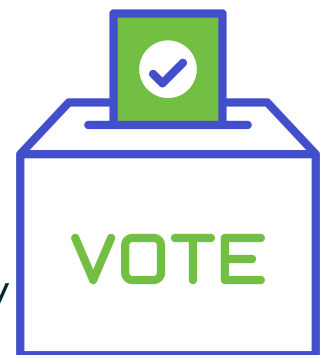
White

96.5%



The median household income is ~\$38,960 and around 63.9% of residents own their own home (United States Census Bureau, 2021)

In the most recent local election, approximately 23,109 Parkersburg residents were registered to vote. About 42.43% of those registered voters cast a ballot on at least one election or issue in November of 2022 (Wood County Courthouse, 2022).



Find out how to register to vote here:  
<https://ovr.sos.wv.gov/Register/Landing>

## CITY ATTRACTIONS

Parkersburg has a variety of local attractions including:

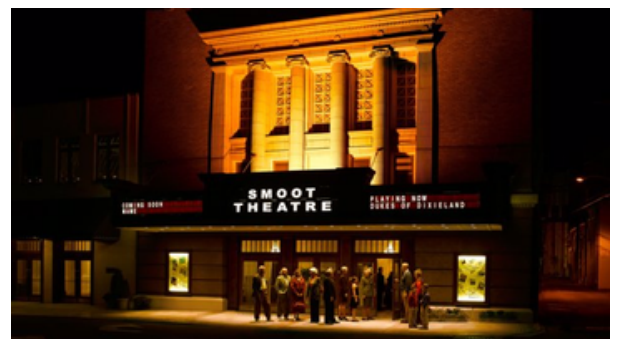
- The Julia Ann Historic District
  - <https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/julia-ann-square-historic-association/>



- The Parkersburg Art Center
  - <https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/parkersburg-art-center/>



- The Smoot Theatre
  - <https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/smoot-theatre/>



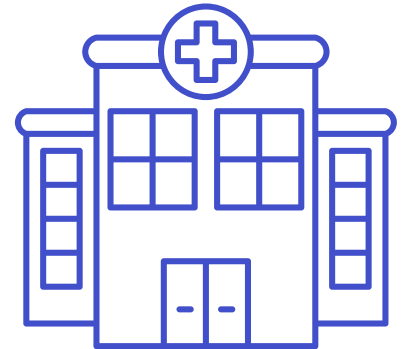
Find more information about local attractions here:  
<https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/what-to-do/>



## LOCAL INFLUENCES

Parkersburg has several hospitals and medical centers:

- Camden Clark Medical Center
- Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Parkersburg



Parkersburg is home to Mountain State College and a regional campus of West Virginia University

Parkersburg has several community programs, including the Boys and Girls Club of Parkersburg and the Parkersburg Art Center

Contact:

Parkersburg Boys and Girls Club:

<https://bgcparkersburg.org/s/contact-us>

Parkersburg Art Center:

[info@parkersburgartcenter.org](mailto:info@parkersburgartcenter.org)



## ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that the city of Parkersburg has these environmental issues:

- **Hazardous Waste:** Parkersburg has more hazardous waste than most other West Virginia cities.
- **Superfund:** There are more Superfund sites in and around Parkersburg than a majority of other West Virginia cities. Superfunds are abandoned hazardous waste facilities that the government has marked for clean-up.
- **Air Pollution:** Parkersburg also has higher levels of air pollutants that are known to cause health problems than a majority of other West Virginia cities, including ozone and Particulate Matter 2.5

### What is Environmental Justice?

*"Environmental justice is based on the reality that certain groups in society bear unequal environmental and economic burdens like poor air and water quality, as well as unhealthy living conditions resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations and/or federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies [...] Environmental justice is made possible when all communities have access to information and decision-makers that enable them to take action and create positive change for themselves" (Detroitans Working for Environmental Justice, n.d.).*

Watch this [video](#) to learn more.

### What environmental issues does my community have?

The state environmental data shown above gives a good picture of the environmental issues of the larger area, but communities within the same area can have very different living conditions.

The information and map on the next page show areas of concern within the community and the specific environmental justice burdens those areas face.

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERNS

## Area One

- Heart Disease
- Asthma

## Area Two

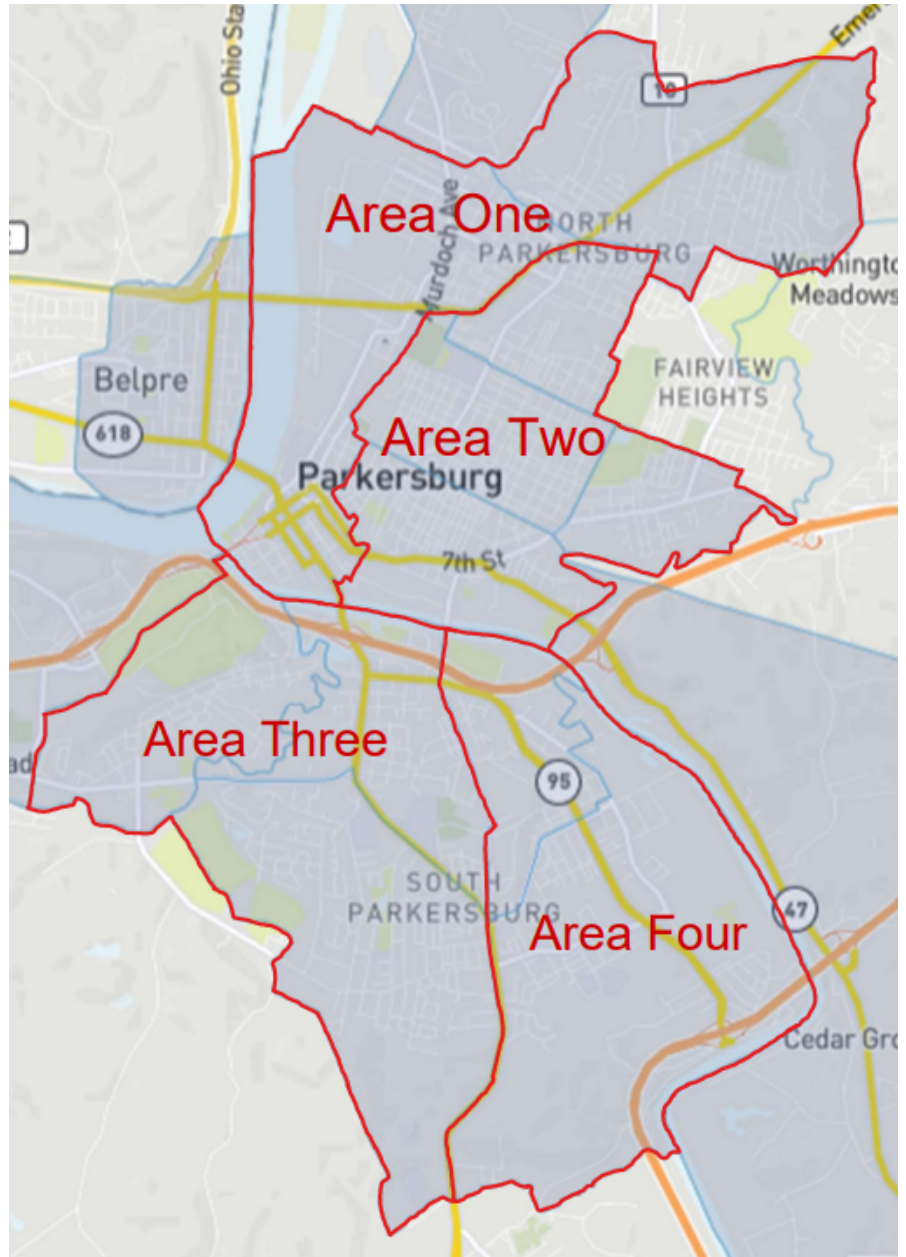
- Heart Disease
- Asthma
- Low Life Expectancy
- Lead Paint

## Area Three

- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Wastewater Discharge
- Flood Risk

## Area Four

- Heart Disease
- Asthma
- Low Life Expectancy
- Lead Paint
- Flood Risk



Learn how to find more information about your community [here](#)

## COMMUNITY VISION

Community members in Parkersburg have shared with Fair Shake ELS that they are most interested in increasing the beauty and quality of their spaces. Parkersburg citizens want to know more about how public art and increased green space can benefit their community.

Citizens are also concerned about food deserts and drug addiction within their communities.

## COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Do you want to learn about how to get involved in your community and make positive change?

Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services is developing a Community Ambassador program to train citizens to become local leaders and engage their community.

Reach out to:  
[sreed@fairshake-els.org](mailto:sreed@fairshake-els.org)  
234-255-0691  
to learn more



# PHOTO CREDITS

Black and White Market Street Photo:

<https://parkersburgcity.com/pc/about/history/#:~:text=The%20town%20area%20was%20laid,as%20a%20city%20in%201860.>

Historical Marker Sign Photo:

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=73565>

Downtown Aerial Photo:

<https://parkersburgcity.com/pc/about/welcome-to-parkersburg/>

Julia-Anne Street Bridge Photo:

<https://parkersburgcity.com/pc/about/history/#:~:text=The%20town%20area%20was%20laid,as%20a%20city%20in%201860>

Julia Anne Historic District House Photo:

<https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/julia-ann-square-historic-association/>

Parkersburg Art Center Photo:

<https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/parkersburg-art-center/>

Smoot Theatre Photo:

<https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/directory/smoot-theatre/>

## REFERENCES

- City of Parkersburg (n.d.) *At the corner of growth and opportunity*. Retrieved January 25, 2023 from <https://parkersburgcity.com/pc/about/economy/>
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice (n.d.) *What is environmental justice?* Retrieved January 31, 2023 from <https://detroitenvironmentaljustice.org/what-is-environmental-justice/>
- Greater Parkersburg, (n.d.) *Parkersburg, WV*. Retrieved January 25, 2023 from <https://www.greaterparkersburg.com/area-maps/parkersburg/>
- Sisk, T. (2020) A lasting legacy: Dupont, C8 contamination and the community of Parkersburg left to grapple with the consequences. *Environmental Health News*. Retrieved January 25, 2023 from <https://www.ehn.org/dupont-c8-parkersburg-2644262065.html>
- Wood County Courthouse (2022) *Election Results*. Retrieved January 31, 2022 from <https://woodcountywv.com/county-offices/county-clerk/election-voting-information/election-results/#1165-1224-general-2022>